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Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland

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RACIAL EQUALITY AND SCOTTISH SCHOOL EDUCATION: Ensuring today's young people are tomorrow's confident citizens

Racial Equality and Scottish School Education

This briefing draws on research on black, minority ethnic, migrant and refugee young people in Scotland from the period 2004-2016 conducted by the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES) at the School of Education, University of Edinburgh and their partners, particularly Newcastle University and the University of St Andrews, and also from academics associated with Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migration network (GRAMNet). A list of publications that have emanated from these respective research studies is included at the end of this briefing. The briefing highlights some recurring themes, which teachers and school managers could usefully reflect on as they take forward the indicators in How Good Is Our School 4 (HGIOS4) (Education Scotland 2015) and the development of their own professional standards.

Everyday racism and discrimination

Young people are acutely aware of everyday racism on the basis of accent, skin colour, faith, dress, nationality and ethnicity. Young people (majority and minority) were mostly comfortable with diversity but wanted more opportunities to talk about racism as well as new expressions of racism based on Islamophobia, anti-immigration attitudes and religious intolerance.

Researcher: *"Do you learn about things like racism and diversity issues and things like that?"*
Dala (female, 16-18, Greater Glasgow): *"A little bit but not, not as much, I think there should be more, yeah more on that. But I think, I think the school like to play happy families a little bit."*
Researcher: *"In what way?"*
Dala: *"I don't know, I think they, they're kind of, we have our incidences but sometimes I think, not at this school but sometimes they like to brush them under the carpet a little bit these kind of racism incidents. But I think there should be more awareness of it, there definitely should be more awareness of it."* (referring here to Islamophobia)

However, a recurring theme over the years has been that teachers at all levels of education report a lack of confidence in discussing these issues. Where teachers have opened up spaces for discussion or proactively engaged with these issues, young people have noted these and welcomed such opportunities. Our research suggests that the majority of teachers can identify overt racism such as name-calling or when racist terminology is used. However, many are far less aware of how low-level racism is occurring or can impact. The absence of overt racial incidents is often taken as a proxy for all being well. Some report a fear of getting it wrong or offending and others are deterred by a potential backlash from parents and not being sufficiently confident of support from school managers or their employers.

"I get uncomfortable with the word anti-racist... when you start using emotive words like 'racist' or 'anti-racist', it evokes all kinds of different impressions on people. So we talk about the egalitarian side of things." **(Headteacher, Primary)**

"We deal with everyone in the same way. They come through the door and they're just part of this school. And it doesn't really matter what their background is." **(Teacher, Secondary)**

Young people have developed coping strategies such as fending off ignorant comments with humour, refusing to take offence or trying to educate the person making the comments. Some avoided placing themselves in unfamiliar social spaces and instead withdrew from open interactions. A greater worry was how young people appeared to dismiss experiences of racism as something that 'just happens'.

*"The children are aggressive here and unpredictable. They often tell unpleasant things to me like 'Polish b******d', 'F****** Pole' but I do not pay attention to what they say anymore, they talk like this to all the Polish kids."* **(Andrew, male, 13, Scottish Highlands)**

"…I feel like everybody you know all minorities do experience racism now and then but you just kind of you know, it's kind of have to deal with it I guess." **(Rani, female, 16-18, Greater Glasgow)**

Key questions for reflection

Does your school or establishment create enough opportunities to talk about racism as well as new expressions of racism based on Islamophobia, anti-immigration attitudes and religious intolerance?

How does it do so?

How are pupils engaged in shaping such learning?

The impact of 'not recognising': misrecognition and invalidation

Our collective research highlights the prevalence of simply 'not recognising' who the other person is. In the area of young migrants, failure to acknowledge the previous educational experiences of young migrants due to the belief that this background is limited can result in young people not being effectively assessed. This can lead to incorrect expectations about the pace of learning for the pupil, a failure to assist the pupil progress appropriately and ultimately a significant impact on the young person's aspirations and life opportunities.

There are also examples of misrecognition as a result of skin colour. For example, Donald, a young Asian boy who is Catholic, has been misrecognised by his peers and his teachers in terms of his faith.

"… Most people actually do [think I am Muslim]. Like, and our RE teacher once thought I was a Muslim because of my skin colour. Then, yeah and when I first came to this school some of my friends now were shocked that I was a Catholic. They thought I was Muslim as well." **(Donald, male, 12-15, Greater Glasgow)**

Misrecognition signals a lack of recognition of diversity and is based on certain assumptions because of how people look.

"I remember when I first made like one of my friends like someone like two years ago, and she was like 'what are you?' And I was like 'well Sikh'. She was like, 'what like a Muslim?' And I was like, 'no like Sikh'. And she was like, 'is that not the same as Muslim?' And I was just like, 'Oh

God, no!' And she was like, 'I don't get it, so you are Muslim.' 'No' people actually just think that if you are brown, you are Muslim." **(Sikh focus group, female, 16-18, Aberdeenshire)**

"…the way I speak and the way I act, I think is Scottish , but it is my skin colour…people think that I am not Scottish." **(Renuka, female, 16-18, Glasgow)**

These comments about being 'misrecognised' as Muslim came from a focus group of African female pupils:

Participant 1: *Yeah that is another thing. Every time like they are, it has happened to me in this school actually as well actually. I will get my lunch, and the woman is like "it is not halal" haha. I say, "I am not a Muslim!"*
Participant 2: *I know. I get that all the time.*
Participant 1: *It is okay, I understand, I get it a lot. …But most of the time in school, they will be like, "Why are you not off for Eid?" "I am not a Muslim!"*
(African focus group, female, 16-18, Glasgow)

If Donald and Renuka's (and the other young people's) experiences were single instances of misrecognition then a swift intervention would set the matter right. However, repeated misrecognition, which characterises the daily experiences of many young people like Donald and Renuka, can result in young people having to repeatedly explain who they are. This is wearing and is important to consider in any overall discussion about wellbeing. These experiences can be seen to be "micro-invalidations" that are corrosive in that it diminishes the individual.

The energy that it takes to counter or only live with constant misrecognition is unlikely to be fully understood by those who do not experience such daily invalidations.

Key questions for reflection

How does your school understand or engage with the concept of misrecognition?

Does it take active steps to safeguard against it?

How does your school use the curriculum as a tool for tackling misrecognition?

What more could be done?

How can schools fully recognise everyone and ensure that their sense of self is validated?

Strategic cultural negotiators, not 'outsiders'

Our research shows that young people from minority backgrounds are often straddling cultures, identities, religion and languages. For example, those who are migrants with developing bilingualism in English might within a school setting be perceived by staff as an English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupil, placing them as 'outsiders'. However, at home, they are seen as 'cultural experts' in the new language and customs, putting them in roles and responsibilities which may not be required of their English speaking non-migrant peers.

Research also tells us that looking and sounding different often carries the label of 'other'. Young black, minority ethnic and migrant young people often employ complex, sophisticated and multiple strategies to ensure they feel safe, are valued, recognised and can 'join'. What is clear is that young people are skilled at adapting depending on the context.

"I feel Scottish with my friends and you know the way we talk. Soon as I come back home speaking in Urdu and you know it's like I'm back in Pakistan." **(Maalik, male, 16-18, Fife)**

Others do not feel bound by traditional ways of categorisation by the Pupil Census or other profiling frameworks.

"I would use Scottish Muslim on my Instagram actually…yeah; I would say I'm proud to be Scottish and Muslim at the same time. So if I go to England I'm automatically the minority and doesn't matter if I'm Muslim or not I'm still Scottish. So I think being Scottish and Muslim is quite unique and plus I'm Indian and Pakistani as well so I'm a Scottish Muslim and Indian and Pakistani." **(Amber, female, 16-18, Dumfries)**

The young people in the various studies were open, confident and accustomed to traversing boundaries, whether those be social boundaries or spatial boundaries (home and school).

Key questions for reflection

How can schools as sites of learning enable such young people to flourish so that young people continue to become confident straddlers rather than to try to hide or assimilate into what is perceived as the 'norm'?

Does your school actively welcome the diversity and the cultural and linguistic capital brought into the school community by migrant children from BME backgrounds?

How is such a welcome/acknowledgement systematically embedded into learning and teaching?

Valuing the linguistic diversity of today's classrooms

The Scottish Government's 1+2 Languages Strategy complements existing areas of adequate provision and practice in the acquisition of multilingualism in education in Scotland. These areas of strength include Gaelic-medium education (GME), British Sign Language (BSL), recognition of Scots as a language in its own right, English as an additional language (EAL), and heritage language/complementary schools[1].

The development of Gaelic-medium education provides clear examples of how successful immersion education can develop bilingual competency and raise the educational achievement of learners. In addition, there is evidence of isolated pockets of good practice in teaching community languages in schools under the 1+2 languages strategy; e.g. British Sign Language (BSL) in Falkirk schools and Polish in schools in Edinburgh.

[1] These are schools with a focus on heritage language teaching and cultural activities that are often established by community members. They invariably take place in the evenings or at weekends and in the UK are run voluntarily.

However, our research across Scotland has shown that teachers feel under-prepared and have an insufficient professional knowledge base to support the English-language development of children and young people learning English as an additional language (EAL).

'"I feel more qualified to meet the needs of other children. I'm expected to meet the needs of EAL learners, but I've not been given the training..." **(Class Teacher, Lothians)**

"It is a major difficulty, at first to know what is the ability of the new pupil because of the limited language. This is an issue in particular for some of our subject staff, for example Mathematics teachers who face the barrier to know what the pupils are capable of doing. This is an issue we should not sweep under the carpet because we feel welcoming and we feel that we are integrating the pupils pretty well." **(Secondary school Head Teacher/Rector, Scottish Highlands)**

With the exception of Urdu and Chinese there are almost no opportunities in mainstream schools to learn the heritage languages in use among Scottish school children and young people. Research shows that developing children's first languages is integral to their identity, home literacy practices and cultural heritage but in the absence of policy it is left to the efforts and resourcefulness of individual schools, teachers, minority communities and concerned parents to establish and organise their own community schools or options to provide this.

For some children and young people, provision of out-of-school activities to support children's language learning can assist with developing learner confidence and the promotion of educational aspirations. This is particularly important for children and young people such as Roma pupils who are faced with multiple deprivations (racism, poverty) and lack opportunities to tap into well-informed networks.

Our research continues to evidence that there are still perceptions of speaking a language other than English as a deficit and impairment. For example, it is still not uncommon to hear teachers talk about pupils with languages other than English in terms similar to those used for special educational needs ('severe EAL case', 'student has no language', etc.).

'I would print things in a larger font to meet his reading needs' **(Classroom Teacher, Edinburgh)**

And from a parent's perspective, the story of Julia, aged 13:

Julia (13 years old, female, Aberdeen) migrated to Scotland two years ago. She immediately joined the local school; problems with communication in English became an obstacle to making friends in her new environment. The school did not offer any 'social' support, and her Scottish peers began to ridicule her. She regressed and became introverted. Going to school became a sad necessity. Finally, her parents brought their depressed daughter to a psychotherapist. **(Polish mother report, Aberdeen)**

Research also evidences that pupils considered reluctant, timid and otherwise challenged have blossomed when allowed to speak their language and to recognise its worth.

Key question for reflection

How can schools ensure that they value the linguistic skills of all pupils and meet the needs of a diverse learning population in terms of language and communication?

Opportunities and aspiration: the critical importance of supporting children facing multiple disadvantage

A key group of young people covered by our research were Roma children and youth. 'Change' was a major theme running through the experiences of Roma people, and their life course had quite often been anything but orderly. There were numerous discontinuities caused by repeat migration, changes in their families' circumstances, relative and absolute poverty and health problems. Under these circumstances, schools were for many of them a constant, which gave them a sense of stability. Many children relied on schools for access to other services, either to provide them with information on activities or services available or to take them to services, such as shops or leisure facilities like a cinema or sports centre. Some Roma young people reported in Govanhill in Glasgow:

Researcher: *What about the cinema? Have you been to the cinema?*
Veronika (11): *We went to the cinema once with the school.*
Researcher: *What about with your family or friends.*
Veronika (11): *No, never.*
Researcher: *Do you ever go to the sports centre.*
Veronika (11): *Not like this one [points at a picture].*
Klaudia (8): *We go to the gym in school.*
Researcher: *And outside the school, do you go to any gym or pool?*
Veronika (11): *No, there's not many here.*

Raising children's and parents' aspirations is an important aspect of making Roma children aware of the opportunities they have for the future. Roma migrants often live in considerable poverty and are likely to reside in the most deprived areas in cities or at the periphery. The ability to reach out and harness the insights and knowledge of minority communities, parents and agencies that work with the communities is crucial in assisting young people who face multiple deprivations. However, teachers and schools are not always able to find routes to enable such collaborations.

"Trying to get parents to come in is still difficult. We have a thing on a Tuesday morning called 'play along maths' so we've got like a bag with a maths game in it and the idea is that the parents come in and they play with their child in class and then they can take it home. The uptake is very slow and even if we book interpreters, parents don't show up." **(Heather, Primary school teacher, Glasgow Govanhill)**

There is a great deal of discourse about closing the attainment gap between children from the highest income families and those from the lowest income families. The Scottish Government has committed to substantially eroding this gap over the next decade.

Discrimination is a barrier to attainment. Closing the Gap needs to engage not just with economic matters but be sophisticated and consider where issues of poverty intersect with gender, race, language and so on. We need to be asking how the Scottish education system is enabling young people who are experiencing everyday racism, misrecognition, invalidation, who are not having their social and linguistic capital recognised or valued, and living with multiple disadvantage, to meet their full potential.

Key question for reflection

Does your school meet the needs of children who have experienced multiple disadvantages such as Roma children?

Does it create opportunities for children who have very few opportunities outside of school?

Conclusions

A significant number of children and young people in Scotland are experiencing multiple expressions of racism and discrimination:

- Everyday racism and micro-aggressions
- Misrecognition and invalidation
- Undermining of their cross-cultural skills
- Undervaluing of their language skills
- Multiple deprivations.

If Scotland is to have an education system founded on the values of wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity, which the Curriculum for Excellence is based on, and which delivers social justice for all, teachers need space and time to refresh and update their understanding of how these emerging race equality issues impact on their thinking and pedagogy. In particular, teachers need to be supported to develop an awareness of how low-level everyday forms of invalidations can impact on the identity, esteem and attainment of black, minority ethnic and migrant learners. The General Teaching Council Professional Standards asks each teacher to reflect on issues of social justice and inequality but more importantly to consider what this means in practice. One element of this would be to find a way to become more familiar with the everyday 'street level' experiences of minority ethnic young people and to develop strategies to address those forms of racism, as part of a whole school approach to tackling racism and promoting equality.

Teacher confidence in working with multilingual class cohorts needs to be enhanced as services such as English as an Additional Language provision are being reduced. In addition, consideration needs to be given how schools as sites for learning can work with communities and other partners to provide spaces for the teaching of community languages for all learners in mainstream schools. Mechanisms could also be explored to generate collaboration between mainstream and heritage language/complementary schools to allow children's multilingual learning to become more visible.

How Good is Our School (4) 3:1 highlights the importance of wellbeing in the context of maximising learner successes and achievement. How can schools and teachers do more to have a 'shared understanding' of what wellbeing would mean for pupils from diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds?

Equality and inclusion issues relating to issues of race, culture and ethnicity are understandably framed around how to support pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is far less recognition that engaging in diversity work and embedding equalities has benefits for all pupils. There is also less discussion about how this can be done via the formal and informal curriculum. What is clear from research evidence is that the aspirations and life trajectories of black, minority ethnic and migrant young people can be enabled or disabled by

the attitudes of the majority. Work, therefore, needs to be done to assist *all* young people to both value diversity but also to act for justice.

Teachers are working in a climate of cuts, austerity budgets, staff shortages, reduced availability of supply teachers, and high workload, so it is vital that school managers and those with leadership roles in the education system support and resource the work that is necessary for teachers to enhance their skills, knowledge and confidence around challenging racism.

In HGIOS4, references to equality and inclusion are largely located within Indicator 3.1 under the heading *Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.* This key quality indicator provides a basis for considering equalities issues. However if we are serious about equalities and anti-discriminatory matters then these themes have to be considered across other indicators such as the ones to Leadership of Learning (1.2), Leadership of Change (1.3), Management of resources to promote equity (1.5), Safeguarding and child protection (2.1), Curriculum (2.2), Learning, Teaching and Assessment (2.3) and Personalised support (2.4). What are some of the ways we can achieve this?

Next Steps:

In partnership with the University of Edinburgh Teacher Education Partnership and the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), three face-to-face Saturday seminars and one webinar will be held to enable teachers and school managers to engage with the above issues. The seminar will draw from research evidence and provide a forum to hear from practitioners about the issues they face as well as providing practical advice on ways forward. The seminar has been developed in such a way that participants will have some pre-seminar reading and post-seminar activities. This enables the professional learning from the seminar to be included in the individual's Professional Review and Development (PRD) discussions and inform the five-yearly professional update for the GTCS. Teachers may also wish to submit a claim for Professional Recognition to the GTCS discussing their learning and the impact this has had on themselves, learners and colleagues: http://bit.ly/2bVJ0KB.

Teachers need only sign up for one seminar as all seminars (other than the webinar) will follow the same format. Spaces are limited for each face-to-face seminar. All seminars will run from 09.30am – 2.30pm. Refreshments and a light lunch will be provided. To sign up, please email Jonathan Hancock at Jonathan.Hancock@ed.ac.uk / phone 0131 651 6152 or 0131 651 6371.

Date and time	**Location**	Please register by:
October 29th 2016 09:30 – 2:30	Wolfson Medical School Building, Glasgow	October 14th
November 5th 2016 09:30 – 2:30	MacRobert Building, University of Aberdeen, 581 King St, Aberdeen	October 21st
November 12th 2016 09:30 – 2:30	Room 1:19, Paterson's Land, Moray House, School of Education, Edinburgh	October 28th

Webinar November 16th 2016
For those that cannot attend the half-day seminar, we will be offering a Webinar on

Wednesday 16th November starting at 7.00pm. This session however will be curtailed in length (limited to one hour) and those attending will not be able to utilize it for recording for Professional Recognition. We apologise for this.

You will need access to a computer and fairly good broadband speed to access the webinar. We will be taking questions during the webinar. To book for the webinar, please email Jonathan Hancock at Jonathan.Hancock@ed.ac.uk / phone 0131 651 6152 or 0131 651 6371. Once you have registered for either the face-to-face seminars or webinar, a confirmation will be sent to you with further details of any pre-reading.

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