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National policy and practitioner practice in the UK

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Diversity in the United Kingdom

A diverse population

In the UK 'minority ethnic group' generally means 'non-white', though there are other minority cultures. Ethnic data is collected by the individual (or their parent) assigning themselves to a category: this assignation may change in different circumstances. Many of non-UK European origin would self-categorise as 'White other', but third (or more)-generation people of Polish or Italian descent, for example, might say they were 'White British'.

There are substantial numbers of members of minority ethnic groups in the UK, many of long-standing on their local areas and of UK birth; others have settled in the UK more recently.

Ethnic groups as part of whole population in England & Wales

	Number (000's)	% of total			
Mixed	660	1.3	**Chinese/other ethnic group**	447	0.9
White/Black Caribbean	237	0.5	Chinese	227	0.4
White/Black African	79	0.2	Other ethnic group	220	0.4
White/Asian	189	0.4			
Other Mixed	155	0.3	**All minority ethnic groups**	4,519	8.7
Asian/Asian British	2,272	4.4	**White**	47,521	91.3
Indian	1,036	2.0	British	45,534	87.5
Pakistani	714	1.4	Irish	642	1.2
Bangladeshi	281	0.5	White Other	1,345	2.6
Other Asian	241	0.5			
Black or Black British	1,140	2.2			
Black Caribbean	564	1.1	**Total population**	52,041	100.0
Black African	480	0.9	% of total population		
Other Black	96	0.2			

Source: Office of National Census (2003) Census 2001: *National Report for England and Wales*, Table S101

Minority ethnic groups generally have younger populations than the white population, so their proportion in schools is higher than their proportion in the population. Some new groups ('white/black Caribbean mixed', 'white/Asian mixed') have very young populations (about half younger than 15), and there are also high proportions of young people in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani-origin populations. We only have the country of birth of the non-UK European population. Well-established communities of European

origin (egg. Irish, Italian, Polish and Greek) are mostly UK born, but many will regard themselves as Italian, etc.

An outstanding characteristic of many of these groups is that they are distributed in varied and uneven patterns: predominantly in London Boroughs and in urban areas, with relatively low numbers in rural areas or smaller towns, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Teachers in a diverse community

Teachers are now asked for their ethnic background: about 4.7% of all teachers (15% in London) are of non-white background. (DfES (2004). About 0.4% qualified to teach in a non-UK European Community country (pre 2004 membership), and two-thirds of these work in London, the South East and Eastern regions.

The proportion of teachers of either minority ethnic or European origin is low in relationship to the proportion of pupils in schools from minority ethnic groups or from Europe. This table offers some indication of this, drawn from data given above, not all of which is strictly comparable.

	White	Minority ethnic	EC (other than UK)
School Population: (5-14)	5,848,000	837.000	48,000*
%	86.8%	12.4%	0.7%
Teachers: 000s	420	16	2**
%	94.9%	4.7%	0.4%

* born in the EC other than the UK ** qualified to teach in the EC other than the UK

There are ongoing concerns about the low proportion of people from minority ethnic groups entering teacher training: in 1999 it was 6.3%, and in 2004 8.7% (HESA, 1992). This is a smaller proportion of the age group. 14.1% of undergraduates of known ethnicity in 2001 were from a minority ethnic group. Thus teacher training is currently less attractive than other professional careers for young people from minority ethnic groups. Some minority ethnic trainees feel that they have a particular contribution to make because of their understanding of minority ethnic pupils (Wolverhampton Race Equality Consortium, 1999). However, racial stereotyping and racist attitudes in schools may deter them, and in some minority group communities, teaching is not seen as a high status job (Carrington *et al.*, 2000). Trainees from minority ethnic groups are more likely to drop out of courses, particularly during school placements: 9% withdraw before the end of the course, compared with about 5% of white trainees. Some students from minority ethnic groups encounter racism from some teachers and pupils.

All teacher training in England is intended to prepare trainees for teaching in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual society. This is specified in standards to be achieved: there are 26 standards: the following refer to culture, language and ethnicity, expressed as what a successful trainee should be able to do.

S1.1 … have high expectations of all pupils: respect their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds … .

S2.2 … be familiar with the programme of study for citizenship …(which variously includes appreciation of the range of religious and ethnic identities; the need for mutual respect and understanding'; and the origins and implications of diverse identities)

S3.1.2 … take account of and support pupils' varying needs so ethnic groups can make good progress (TTA 2001).

Annual surveys of newly qualified teachers on the quality of their training show that the two aspects rated lowest were working with children for whom English was an additional language (good/very good – 20%) and teaching pupils from minority ethnic groups (good/very good – 30%).

Educational policies for diversity

Educational policies towards diversity have been shaped by government policies: the policies below should not be viewed as discrete entities or as sequential.

Assimilation (early to mid 1960s): Assimilationist theories dominated the post-war period: they argued that 'alien' minority ethnic cultures (following Commonwealth immigration) were inappropriate and needed to be assimilated into 'mainstream' 'homogenous' British culture, to maintain social cohesion. Minority communities would absorb majority values and behaviour over time and assimilate into British society. They were assumed to have cultural and linguistic deficiencies, which were obstacles to assimilation (Dorn and Hibbert, 1987) and linked to low educational achievement: these pupils needed to be 'compensated' for cultural and linguistic disadvantages (DES, 1963).

Assimilation/Integration (mid to late 1960s to early 1970s): Equal opportunities, an acceptance of cultural diversity and mutual tolerance of cultural difference began to be seen as essential for integration (Gillborn, 1999), but minorities and their cultures were still viewed as problematic, creating 'serious educational difficulties' for schools (DES, 1971:1). This phase was short-lived: it led to disproportionate numbers of minority ethnic pupils being labelled as having deficient cultures and language structures. The policy failed to recognise societal prejudice and denied assimilation to minority groups.

Multicultural education (l970s-1980s): Multiculturalism was a major shift by the dominant majority to recognise 'different' cultures (Anthias and Yuval-Davies, 1992): individuals could maintain their individual 'minority' identity at the same time becoming part of the wider society. Minority groups were encouraged to speak for themselves. Schools recognised and affirmed the cultures of minority groups. It moved from negative stereotyping/pathologising to a positive recognition and increased tolerance of diversity. Acculturation (Troyna, 1987) suggested that as minority groups come into greater contact with the majority both cultures become closer. Multiculturalism fails to explain the continuation of difference or how acculturation occurs (Hatcher and Troyna, 1993), views minority cultures as 'fixed' and homogenous, focuses on the individual rather than society (May, 1999; Troyna, 1987), and fails to acknowledge the complexities of 'race', racism, identity and culture.

Equal educational opportunities (1970s-): Equal opportunities had liberal egalitarian origins, supporting equality of opportunity and of outcomes: it aimed to improve individual/group life chances by removing discrimination based on class, race and sex, focusing on equality of opportunity for all. The policy assumed that everyone started from the same point, competed on equal terms and thus had equal outcomes. But given

education's propensity to reproduce social inequalities, equal opportunity policy is more likely to engender inequality rather than equality.

The Swann Report (1985): The Swann Report ('Educational for All') (DES, 1985) identified minority ethnic educational needs and factors affecting educational attainment including teacher expectations, cumulative disadvantage and racism in schools. The system should 'prepare all pupils, both ethnic majority and ethnic minority, for life in a society which is both multi-racial and culturally diverse' (DES 1985:xii) through a (multicultural) curriculum based on shared values. The Report advocated pluralism, acknowledging minority pupils' cultural backgrounds and their right to maintain cultural values and practices would foster minority ethnic achievement. Racism and racial disadvantage contributed to negative experiences and low achievement. The Report catalysed the implementation of multicultural policies and 'weak' anti-racist policies (Rattansi, 1992:13).

Anti-racist education (1980s-): Multiculturalists and proponents of equal opportunities lacked a focus on structural inequality and the endemic nature of racism: this led to the emergence of anti-racist practice. Anti-racist approaches are the antithesis of equal educational opportunities, based on an analysis of structural inequality and a redistribution of power. Practice should take account of social complexity (political, ideological, economic) and encourage the analysis of racism on inter-personal, institutional, state and international levels (Sarup, 1991). The approach encourages teachers to explore how 'race' and racism are implicated in policy and practice. A difficulty with this is the focus on racism and racial discrimination excludes all other issues. Anti-racist education/praxis has been criticised for viewing all white people as racist and failing to address how schools could respond to societal racism, and for not recognising that teaching about racism does not necessarily lead to change (Gilroy, 1992).

The new racism/cultural racisms (1980s-2000s) and the National Curriculum (1988-): The 'new racism' assumes cultural difference and incompatibility (Barker, 1981) between minority and majority groups. Culture serves as a euphemism for 'race' and allows teachers in multi-ethnic settings to operate with 'culturally implicit biological deterministic categories' (Gurnah, 1987:15). Cultural racism assumes Britain is monocultural and that the majority form a unified white nation state who share British culture, history and identity and who have a 'common' sense of 'belonging' (Gilroy, 1992). The National Curriculum established in 1988 was intended to improve standards through access to a curriculum reflecting and inculcating British traditions, culture and history. Pupils were to be treated without reference to their cultural and 'racial' identities, thus diminishing the perceived 'threat' from 'inferior' cultures to 'British identity'.

Institutional racism (1999-): The interpretation of racism and racist practice has moved from personal prejudice towards recognising institutional manifestations. This was emphasised in the Macpherson (1999) inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, a black teenager murdered in South-East London in 1993. The Report concluded that racism was 'deeply ingrained' in all organisations and institutions: institutional racism was defined 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 prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist

> stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people (Macpherson, 1999:28, para. 6.34).

The Parekh Report (2000) reiterated concerns about hidden forms of institutional racism in the 'structures and cultures of public bodies': if institutional racism is to be tackled, occupational cultures needed to be addressed.

Citizenship education (2002-): Citizenship education was added to the National Curriculum in 2002 to develop social and moral responsibility, political literacy and become active citizens, and maintain social cohesion. It expects teachers to raise awareness of minorities and to help the majority group to develop 'tolerance' (especially religious tolerance) of 'Others'. It is questionable if citizenship education can meet the needs of all pupils, particularly of minority pupils in predominantly white schools. As with assimilation, multicultural and anti-racist education, citizenship education has the potential to unite, marginalise and exclude diverse populations (Osler and Starkey, 2004) from the curriculum.

Preliminary research findings

Interviews were conducted with teachers, head teachers, training institutions and student teachers, focussing on multiculturalism, Europe, racism and xenophobia, civic and political rights. They were asked what areas they thought needed further training and support.

Developing an understanding of a multicultural society

Teachers and headteachers seemed to have a varied understanding of a multicultural society. Those working in more rural or predominantly 'white' areas seemed to have a more limited understanding of minority ethnic groups and their educational needs: for some their only experience of working with pupils from diverse backgrounds had been during teaching practice placements.

> Where we live we don't get a huge exposure to a multicultural society, either European or from other countries (white British female student).

A headteacher of a predominantly white school (with noted good practice) wanted to learn more of the backgrounds of her pupils and the school now asks for information about languages spoken in the home and culture. To develop a greater awareness amongst pupils the school has introduced activities such as art workshops that focus on world art to 'demystify and make things less strange' for pupils who haven't experiences a more representative mix of ethnic and religious backgrounds. This school tried to provide 'opportunities to expose the children to something new and something that they perhaps won't encounter otherwise'. Europe was an opportunity to focus on 'something different' in the curriculum.

> A lot of our children travel to Europe, so that comes more naturally into the curriculum because they will bring back experiences and photographs and souvenirs from Europe, so that can arise more naturally than further afield.

The staff were beginning to draw on their own experience of travel and work abroad in their delivery of the curriculum, and while such initiatives do not permeate all levels of

the curriculum, they are helping pupils question prejudices and stereotypical assumptions.

Those respondents (teachers, headteachers, teacher educators, students) with greater understanding of multiculturalism had acquired this through the media, teaching in urban multicultural contexts and experiences such as travel and work abroad and living in diverse communities, rather than through specific initial or continuing professional development. Respondents from minority ethnic communities suggested that their understanding of multiculturalism was also influenced by their own experiences and sense of identity.

Schools and teacher education institutions in multiethnic areas unsurprisingly placed a greater emphasis on multiculturalism being embedded in the curriculum. This is partly because of the ethnic mix and languages spoken by pupils and teachers in the respective institutions, and partly the institutional commitment to inclusion and social justice. In such schools multiculturalism was associated with developing an understanding of other groups, respecting, valuing and celebrating other cultures in an environment of mutual respect, tolerance and co-operation. Multiculturalism is explored through the curriculum, during assemblies and special events in the calendar (October is Black history, Diwali in November; Jewish New Year, various international days). Church schools sometimes used assemblies to encourage respect for other religions. Pupils were said to be receptive of multiculturalism and researched to find more about similarities and differences between cultures.

Student teacher awareness of multicultural issues was initiated, rather than fully developed, through professional studies and studying inclusion modules. These approaches, constantly being revised, are seen as constrained the time available in the course. Predominantly white institutions felt they could do more, a view shared by students.

Schools and teacher education institutions seemed keen to widen their resource base to develop the multicultural curriculum and ensure its relevance to pupils and students, so they have a more informed understanding. Those applying to teach (or study) are expected take on the commitment to develop greater cultural awareness.

Developing an understanding of Europe

Europe was absent from teacher training experiences and classroom practices for the majority of respondents. Headteachers suggested that instead of a specific emphasis on Europe, the priority was on 'being part of a wider, global world', and that 'Europe' might be embraced within this. Traditional European links with countries such as Spain and France were being extended through international links more reflective of the ethnic composition of schools. Activities such as sending pupils to the continent for history field trips were not necessarily seen as focussing on Europe, but as part of teaching about 'the world out there'. Schools are forging links with the Caribbean, Japan, China, Australia, the Ukraine and Turkey, coinciding with the development of global citizenship and valuing the cultural legacies of different groups.

Some respondents had difficulty engaging with the concept of European identity, expressing uncertainty as to what it meant. A minority expressed a sense of being European because of their increased travel to European countries and having European

friends. Some talked of national (and local) identities taking precedence over a 'European' identity. One teacher said his pupils did not think about Europe much 'because they don't see it in their faces everyday'.

Racism and xenophobia

Schools and teacher education institutions emphasised their commitment to addressing racism. One school was particularly proud that when the school was recently inspected the inspectors reported that there was no racism or bullying in the school.

In multiethnic areas schools suggested that racism and xenophobia were approached with sensitivity, for example looking at religious intolerance. Students said schools were quick to stamp on racism. Exploring issues of racism and xenophobia are less likely to be a key focus in predominantly white schools. Student teachers are asked to analyse a school's policy documents on race equality and how racism should be addressed, but for students attending predominantly white institutions with limited experience of diverse ethnic groups this did not always help develop appropriate strategies. A tutor pointed out that students would be less likely to develop appropriate strategies if they were placed in schools that were not strong on addressing racism.

Civic and Political rights

While all schools talked of educating pupils to become 'good', responsible citizens (locally and globally), primary schools particularly felt this was limited by the timetable, and was also funding dependent.

Developing and maintaining minority ethnic pupils cultural identity

Schools were generally in favour of developing and maintaining minority ethnic pupils cultural identity. For example, in one school Muslim girls were allowed to wear headscarves and have their arms and legs covered in physical education. But there was concern that fostering cultural identity be approached positively, so as not to exclude or alienate that smaller ethnic groups. It was suggested that there were limits to the expression of cultural identity, or 'anybody could do anything'. Pupils are expected to adhere to the school uniform policy, for example (when thee is such a policy).

Conclusion

Our data suggests that teaching in multicultural contexts does not necessarily increase understanding if it is not high on the curriculum agenda. There are competing demands for training resources, and training on multicultural issues in some urban areas is restricted to the first year of qualified training.

For those studying or teaching in white monocultural environments there was an acknowledgement that more training and support is needed if practice is to be effective. A particular concern for staff in such areas is how to address the lack of awareness of multiculturalism through the curriculum, particularly where staff hold contentious views and do not understand the issues or the terminology.

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