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Mainstreaming equality in the context of superdiversity: A school case study

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Abstract

The Equality Act (2010) consolidates a range of equality duties in the UK to ensure that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. As public institutions schools must be able to demonstrate how they tackle discrimination and actively promote equality.
This paper sets out a case study of one secondary school as it incorporated the Equality Act into the life of the school. The school is set in its London and UK contexts, as the society around it copes at the same time with recession and burgeoning cultural diversity. The paper explores the variety of mechanisms which were developed to ensure the equality duties reflect the needs of stakeholders and are embedded in policy and practice.

Keywords: *Equality Act; Equality Duty; superdiversity.*

Context

i. The Equality Act 2010

The UK Equality Act 2010 codifies in one place the array of anti-discrimination law that has regulated pay, race relations and employment duties affecting disability, age, religious belief, gender and sexual orientation. It is also consistent with the EU Equal Treatment Directives. It stipulates that there must be equal treatment in access to employment and in public and private services for everyone with 'protected characteristics'. These are race, religion, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital/civil partnership status, and pregnancy. The new Public Sector Equality Duty, in effect from April 2011, imposes on schools a duty to work towards eliminating discrimination and harassment; advancing equality of opportunity between people who do, and who do not, share a protected characteristic; and fostering good relations between people who do, and do not, share these characteristics.

ii. Chace Community School : case study school

Chace Community School is situated in Enfield, a north London borough with just under 300,000 inhabitants. A little over 5% claim unemployment benefit, but this masks pockets of deprivation. About 60% are described as white British. White people of Irish,

Greek, Turkish or Kurdish background make up a further 16%. Around 4% to 6 % each have Indian, Caribbean or African heritages. (www.londoncouncils.gov.uk website.)

This cultural mix is reflected in the school's intake. As a comprehensive under local authority control, its student population of 1,350 is derived solely from the community immediately surrounding it. It has an equal gender balance. Just under half of its students (43%), much higher than the national average (22%), come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds reflecting the diversity of Enfield's community. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language (28%) is over twice the national average (12%), with over forty home languages spoken by Chace students. About one in four students (24%) is eligible for free school meals, the principal deprivation indicator used in the UK. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (24%) is above the national average (21%). Their needs are varied and primarily include behavioural, emotional or social difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of its students in receipt of a statement of special educational needs is in line with similar schools nationally. (Raiseonline 2011, Chace Community School.)

Some realities of diverse Britain

i. Realities: signs of progress

One might expect the economic recession, and the UK coalition government's austerity programme, to have left Britons dispirited about their future. Indeed, 65% have said they are pessimistic for Britain's immediate prospects. However, people retain a 'stubborn optimism' (Katwala, 2012, p. 2) for their own prospects and those of their own locality. Interestingly, settled minorities have both more optimism and more patriotic pride.

> Banish the hostile tone of so much discussion of immigration and integration; replace it with recognition that millions of people are desperate to play as big a part as possible in the nation's economic, social and cultural growth. (Birrell, 2013, p. 8)

In the British Futures poll for 2013, conducted by Ipsos MORI, 61% agreed they would rather be citizens here than anywhere else (Jolley, 2013). A full half of us feel that respect for people's right to free speech, even when we disagree with them, is the essential characteristic for participation in our society (Katwala, 2013). This is closely followed by respect for the law and the ability to speak English. Few thought being Christian (7%) or white (6%) was important to being British; respect for other ethnic backgrounds (29%) and faiths (26%) was deemed more fundamental. 'White and ethnic minority Britons, immigrants and the British-born all agree that they matter.' (Katwala, 2013, p. 22) Although the picture is mixed, there appears to be a growing ease with multicultural Britain. 'In many ways, Britons are becoming more tolerant of difference and more welcoming of diversity.' (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010.) In 1990 the Conservative politician, and close ally to Mrs Thatcher, Norman Tebbit told the *Los Angeles Times* that 'a large proportion of Britain's Asian population [would] fail to pass the cricket test.' They would support India or Pakistan over their adopted England.

Twenty years on, the cricket test no longer applies: 60% say that immigrants should support whoever they wish, without this implying disloyalty towards the country they had settled in (Katwala, 2012). There may be a positive multicultural afterglow following a year of patriotic celebrations, including the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic Games. The British Futures 2013 poll, which questioned 16 to 75 year olds' pride in UK institutions, placed the National Health Service, the armed forces and the GB Olympic team at the top. All three appear as diverse as the country itself.

> Not only do they serve the country in diverse ways, they are made up of people from every corner of Britain, of different backgrounds, accents and ethnicities, and we see them, all three, as emblems of Britain at its best. (Jolley, 2013, p. 3)

ii. Realities: the London exception

Those born outside Britain are marginally more likely to say they belong strongly to Britain than to any of its constituent countries (England, Scotland or Wales); the British-born tend the other way (British Future, p. 11). The 2011 census suggests that the British nations are less apart from the country than its capital is. Whereas 81% of the population now describes itself as white British, in London it is 45%. 37% of its residents were born outside the UK. Even so, the pattern is shifting: ten years ago 80% of the country's black African population lived in the capital; now the figure is just 58% (*The Economist*, 2012.)
Alex Massie notes how London and the north-east of England are

> estranged and, increasingly, scarcely recognisable as parts of the same nation. London, buzzing, polychromatic, multilingual, global; the north-east, white, stagnant, left behind. (Massie, 2013, p. 7)

In the north-east 80% described themselves as 'English', 25% also as 'British'; 45% in London said they were 'English', 40% also as British. Increasingly 'English' is a term which connotes white, whereas 'British' is a label which sits comfortably with multi-ethnicity, with super-diversity.

This might explain why London is more at ease with the changing fabric of the nation than the nation is itself. British Future, 2012, found 57% in London say immigration has been good for business and entrepreneurship – 10% higher than the rest of the country.

Fig. 1 What % net effect have people born outside the UK had on the following?	
Food and restaurants	+60
Entrepreneurs/ business starters	+36
Premier League football	+25
Film/ fashion/ arts	+26-29
Housing availability	-60
Job availability	-56
Crime/ disorder	-48
Schools	-25

(Based on Jolley, Katwala, 2012, p. 27)

The country as a whole has welcomed 'multi-culturism', if this is taken to refer to the cultures of food, fashion and football. But it is not yet reconciled to the social impacts of immigration. People worry about immigration out of proportion to the levels they themselves experience. In the north-east of England and in Wales, where just 5% of residents were born elsewhere, a fifth cite immigration as a top source of local tension. The figure is the same in London, but there over a third are immigrants.

> This suggests that there are limits to how far immigration can be addressed through a focus on practical responses to local pressures, such as on housing, schools and surgeries… The regional pattern also suggests that immigration anxiety often reflects *general economic insecurity* more closely than the local scale of immigration. (Katwala, 2013, p. 10-11)

iii. Realities: young people and schools

Youth unemployment in January 2013 was running at 21.9%. The recent Unicef report, which ranks the richest developed nations for overall childhood well-being, said that current government policies were likely to reverse gains made since their 2007 report. They warned that 'since 2010 the downgrading of youth policy and cuts to local government services are having a profound negative effect on young people.' (Unicef, 2013.) Despite this the young are more likely to be optimistic about themselves and their families: net optimism for 16 to 24 year olds is 37%. (Jolley, 2012.)

Young people, and the communities they live in, support the ethnic mixing that is going on in UK schools. Despite parental choice being a central plank of government education policy for several years, and despite the current government's support for 'free schools' which will increasingly allow faith groups to establish their own exclusive schools, only 19% of whites and 10% of non-whites think that parents' choice should trump other considerations, even if this leads to ethnic ghettos. (Saggar, 2012.) Blacks and Asians are keenest on ethnic mixing (60%), with more than half of whites agreeing.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's 2010 review, *How Fair is Britain?* shows where there remain gaps between different groups in terms of their access to education and public services. They note that, especially in London, there are signs that socio-economic background and membership of a minority ethnic group are lessening as indicators of progress at school. Attainment gaps between ethnic groups at GCSE (the exam taken by most 16 year olds) are narrowing. Chinese girls are the highest performing of any cohort, with even those on free school meals achieving more highly than any ethnic group, regardless of their social status. Exclusion rates (where students are removed from their school for either a fixed term or permanently) continue to show a worrying racial aspect in English schools. Whereas Asian children can expect to be excluded at a rate of five per 10,000, those from a black Caribbean heritage are removed from school at six times that rate. For Gypsy and Traveller children the exclusion rate is higher still.

71% of permanent exclusions in England are for students with an identified special educational need (SEN). 17% of this group achieves the educational benchmark of five

good GCSE including English and Maths – far below levels achieved by those without SEN (61%). Children on free school meals are less than half as likely to achieve the same benchmark, confirming that social and economic background remains a significant barrier to equality. Across the country, at the start and end of compulsory education and at degree level, girls outperform boys.

iv. Realities: diversity at Chace Community School

Absence and Exclusions.

Fig. 2 Absences and exclusions analysed by ethnic group

Group	Number on roll %	School % Absence	National % Absence	School % Fixed Term Exclusion	National % Fixed Term Exclusions
School	1311	6.85	6.55	9.24	8.73
SEN	2.7	8.15	8.82	24.32	27.03
British	55.1	7.62	6.67	9.62	8.75
Any other white	19.3	5.17	7.06	6.38	6.76
White and black African	0.8	6.66	6.31	14.29	13.04
White and black Caribbean	2.5	7.64	7.91	2.94	18.89
White and Asian	0.9	7.29	6.36	0.0	7.12
Any other mixed	2.6	4.99	6.63	15.63	10.42
Indian	0.5	1.51	4.63	0.0	2.41
Pakistani	0.5	12.47	7.04	16.67	7.30
Bangladeshi	1.4	6.98	6.40	0.0	5.92
Any other Asian	1.1	3.97	4.72	0.0	3.72
Black Caribbean	2.2	7.47	5.86	6.25	17.53
Black African	4.3	4.42	4.03	22.73	10.35
Any other black	1.1	4.47	5.44	13.33	15.25
Any other ethnic group	4.5	7.55	5.87	14.29	6.57

(Data derived from Raiseonline, Chace Community School, September 2011. Families are asked to self-identify their ethnic group when they join the school.)

The table above was compiled and analysed by the school's deputy head in charge of Equalities, Andrew Noon. It shows school absence rates by ethnic group broadly in line with the national picture. The most notable feature is that, although 55.1% of the entire school are identified as British, they account for just 7.62% of school absence. The attendance of the combined 6.8% who are described as mixed race is much worse, with 26.58% of the recorded absences. It appears that these figures are largely replicated across the country, and would indicate a worrying finding given that there is a known correlation between attendance and attainment. Conversely, the group described as 'any other white' (at Chace, that mainly means Turkish, Greek and Kurdish), while making up nearly a fifth of the entire cohort record only one in 20 of the absences.

The school's returns for fixed term exclusions are again, very broadly, in line with those nationally. The most notable exceptions are a radically lower rate of exclusions for mixed white and black Caribbean children at Chace; and more than double the national

figure for exclusions among black African students. Again, the school's British and 'any other white' students are excluded at a rate far below their prevalence in the community. As with the country generally, SEN students at Chace are excluded more frequently and are more likely to be absent than their proportion of the cohort would seem to warrant. Looking at the data for the academic year 2011-12, Noon also found that, of the 88 exclusions that took place, only three were coded for racist abuse (all by boys.) Similarly, for those who were isolated internally for less severe incidents (known as APP), only three of the total 175 were for racist abuse. Across the school, four in every 100 white English or white British students were excluded, while 7% of them were placed on APP; for all black and black British students, the corresponding figures were eight in every 100, and 14%. In other words, Noon found that black students were exactly twice as likely to receive a fixed term, or internal, exclusion than white English or white British ones were. His other main finding was that nine in every 100 Greek Cypriots were excluded over the same period, making them the largest 'offending' ethnic group. He noted also that boys were twice as likely to be excluded as girls.

Attainment at GCSE, 2012.
Andrew Noon used the published exams data and analysed for gender and ethnicity. Girls performed significantly better than boys. The difference was most marked in the 5+ A*-C (all subjects) measure. The attainment of white English students was above that of the cohort on the 5+ A*-C (including English and Maths) measure, but below on the 5+ A*-C (all subjects) measure.
Overall, black or black British students performed significantly below the cohort, the boys in particular achieving poorly. Black girls, indeed, achieved grades higher than the cohort in general.
This was reversed for Turkish girls, who performed significantly below the cohort on the 5+ A*-C (including English and Maths) measure. Turkish boys performed in line with the cohort.
Mixed race (various), Greek and Asian/Asian British students all achieved above the level of the cohort on most measures.

Mirroring the picture elsewhere in the country, Chace's lowest-performing cohorts were therefore black and black British boys, Turkish girls, and boys in general.

How schools have responded to equalities duties

Prior to the Public Sector Equality Duty of April 2011, public bodies including schools were required to work towards eliminating discrimination and harassment and to promote equality with regard to gender, race and disability. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission found

> Very few studies have investigated *any* of the equality duties work carried out by schools. This is an under-researched area within education. No comprehensive research into how schools in England and Wales implemented the three equality duties (for gender, disability and race) has been conducted to date. (EHRC, 2011, p. v)

The EHRC inquiry looked at schools which had a single equality policy or scheme, and those which also had an action plan with targets for the three equality duties. 88% had a single equality scheme, but only three in ten matched this with an action plan. Only 82% could point to actions they had taken to deal with gender inequality, whereas for disability it was 93%.

Nine in every ten schools described something they had done to address the race equality duty, which had a measurable, positive outcome.

> Schools were most likely to say that they have worked to raise awareness, tolerance and understanding, and that they hold multicultural days, conferences and/or assemblies. They also mentioned forging links with schools and communities overseas; using interpreters; building links with parents; monitoring progress, and dealing with racist incidents. (EHRC, 2011, p. ix)

The main impact of all this, cited by schools, was an increase in pupils saying they felt valued. Schools said there were also improvements in engagement, well-being and a sense of aspiration, and narrowing of gaps in attainment and a reduction in incidents of a racial nature.

Schools were keen to meet their obligations but tended to say that a lack of time and financial resources, indifference from parents, and a need for staff training were barriers to addressing the equality duties. They were markedly confused by, even ignorant of, the Public Sector Equality Duty (in place from April 2011) and had done very limited work on the further 'protected characteristics'.

> The majority of schools are engaged with the importance of equality and there are clear signs that the duties are having some impact on their actions and pupil outcomes; this is good news. However, many schools in England and Wales are not, generally speaking, operating fully within the equality duties framework. Rather, the evidence suggests that schools are falling somewhere along a scale of adherence to and adoption of the duties and consequently there is some considerable variation in schools' capacity to link pupil outcomes to the equalities framework. (EHRC, 2011, p. xiii)

How Chace Community School responded to the new Public Sector Equalities Duties

i. Baseline data

Analyses of the school's absence, exclusions and exam performance data are detailed above. They found the school to be broadly in line with national averages, but with specific issues for black and black British students, Turkish girls and boys in general.

ii. In-school research and consultation

Andrew Noon is the deputy head with responsibility for equality. He devised a research matrix involving all key stakeholder groups. He also reviewed the school's incident

reporting procedures, on the presumption that there was an under-recording of events with equal opportunities implications.

A single equalities and community cohesion checklist for governors

The checklist offered a self-evaluation of compliance with statutory regulations and indicators of priorities for any arising action plan. Against a series of 'best practice indicators' the governors scored the school for how well it addressed equality duties for each 'protected characteristic': race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/ belief, gender reassignment, marital status and pregnancy. They expressed confidence that Chace had already done work in most of these areas and this work was ongoing. Against some of the indicators, one or sometimes two were unsure as to the school's work in regard to gender reassignment, marital status and pregnancy. (Sample indicators: 'The school's Governing Body is representative of its community.' 'All members of the school community are actively encouraged to participate in the life of the school.' 'The school environment is accessible and welcoming with positive images of all members of the community.' 'Stereotypes are actively challenged across all the dimensions of the school community.')

A single equalities and community cohesion checklist for staff

Staff responses were broadly similar to those of the governors. Staff were less likely to be aware of the policy structure, and there was a greater frequency of those who felt that no work on the area had yet begun, although the needs had been identified. Again, the 'protected characteristics' of gender reassignment, marital status and pregnancy provoked the most uncertain responses.

Telephone interviews with disabled parents

These interviews were carried out by telephone during the week of 11th March 2012. Three parents who were registered disabled or are suffering from serious chronic and illness were interviewed.

All three respondents were very positive about the supporting role of the school and the sensitivity with which situations are addressed. All three respondents felt that the school was sympathetic to disability and that they were treatment was fair and in line with that of other parents and carers. The only identified area for development was access at parents' evenings. All three respondents understood the difficulties that these meetings caused and did not expect separate meetings with all members of staff. As Chace has so few disabled parents/carers, however, the school is considering a system where telephone updates are provided around the times of such events.

Small-group interviews with parents

These interviews were carried out by Noon in small groups during February 2012. In all, 15 parents were interviewed. They covered a range of ethnicities including:

Ghanaian White British

Greek	Mixed British and Asian
Kurdish	Italian
Bangladeshi	Turkish

Of the parents interviewed, 3 reported incidents of bullying. In two of these cases they felt that the issue was dealt with quickly and effectively. None of the parents expressed concern about bullying related to being in a minority. Parents were unanimous in their praise for the professionalism of form tutors and their commitment to the pastoral aspects of their role. They felt that communication with form tutors and heads of learning was very good. They appreciated the openness and friendliness with which they were treated by school leaders when they had needed to talk to them. Three parents noted that there were fewer examples of student work visible in school than at primary school and one pointed out that there were very few images of students, beyond the reception area. They appreciated the privacy with which they were treated when they visited. The parents described the school as approachable and friendly in its relationships with parents and carers, 'You are treated as an equal. No-one talks down to you.' And they praised efforts to treat everyone as an individual: 'It's a very *personal* place.'

Parents all felt that there children had been well served by the curriculum. They felt that option choices were fair and appropriate and that 'all students had the opportunity to choose from all subjects'. They valued the quality of teaching. All parents attending said that the extra-curricular opportunities offered at Chace were very good and that these were equally appealing to students from all ethnic backgrounds. One parent praised the opportunities for parents to cook alongside their children. The quality of Drama was mentioned by a couple of parents. A number of parents praised the after-school provision for GCSE students to improve grades. One parent said he was amazed at how much support his children were getting.

The transition support for SEN students (moving to Chace from their primary schools) was described as 'fantastic' by one parent. 'There was a real sense that they understood my child.' The summer school was considered very effective at easing vulnerable students into life at Chace and helping them become part of the community.

Parents all described their children as happy at school. All felt that their children were 'cared for'. The educational opportunities which the school provides were appreciated and parents of all ethnicities and religions felt that the school served its community well.

Small- and large-group student voice activities: race and religion

Noon conducted initial interviews in groups of four between January and February 2012. These were 'single ethnicity' and mixed age. The eight groups represented the largest ethnic groups in the school. In each case there are more than 20 current students identified as being of this specific ethnic group. For the purposes of presentation, I have reduced the number of areas discussed and just reproduced the responses from the white British and the black and black British participants.

Fig. 3 Results of group interviews based on ethnicity.			
Best Practice Indicators (BPI)	**Ghanaian**	**Black Caribbean**	**White British**
What do we do to prevent bullying happening at Chace? Does this work/could it be better?	Bullying isn't an issue, really.	Chace is a mixed place and that helps because mostly people are treated as individuals.	Some bullying happens everywhere. Most of the time Chace is friendly and that helps.
Do you think members of staff respond fairly and consistently to all incidents of bullying and harassment?	Yes. Staff are fair. Some are better than others.	Most teachers try really hard to be fair. Others have favourites.	Some teachers are better than others. You do feel that there are favourites sometimes.
What out of school hours activities are you involved in? Do we provide opportunities in and out of school hours that appeal to you?	Debates and homework clubs. Sports clubs as well. Revision sessions.	There are lots of opportunities for stuff out of hours. Some people do lots; other people go home as soon as possible. There isn't a pattern.	There are lots of clubs for younger students and there get to be less as you move up. You just get revision and coursework, which is important.
What do we do at Chace to actively challenge stereotypes of groups in our school community?	People make comments about other groups, but most of the time it's boys winding each other up.	Some teachers see black people as loud, but we're not all the same. Caribbean people are all different.	Sometimes people use stereotypes, like 'terrorist' or similar. They don't seem to mean it, but it's not nice. Nobody talks about it.
Does Chace feel welcoming to you and members of your family when they visit? Do the displays and images we use around the school etc. represent your 'part' of the community?	Very friendly. Chace is a white school, but it's friendly.	A friendly school. Most people are white, but you don't feel different.	A very welcoming, friendly school. People are nice here.

(Adapted from Andrew Noon, 2012.)

These comments, and others collected by Noon, support the premise that the school is seen as friendly, respectful of all ethnicities and religions, and is rarely troubled by bullying. Issues of islamophobia recurred in the discussion, and this appears to be having some negative impact on the Muslim students. (Comments such as 'immigrant', 'terrorist', 'towel-head' and 'Somali pirate' can sometimes be heard.) Students appear to like the idea of seeing examples of people they can truly relate to, challenging stereotypes. There are concerns about parents' evenings because the school's efforts to provide translators from among the older students in the school are not always successful. This was felt mainly by the Turkish participants. However, students feel their parents are welcome and pleased with the school. Students believe Chace is a

community where everyone is given chances and supported, regardless of the groups they belong to. All groups strongly agreed with this.

Noon then took some of the key statements and patterns from the group interviews and used them as part of a larger, mixed group exercise. This involved groups of 15 students representing a range of ethnicities, including some who had not been previously represented. In these groups they discussed what students' views of the wider community were, before considering life at Chace. He then stuck the statements randomly around the room and asked the group to score whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement by writing a number from 1-5 (5 being strong agreement).

Fig. 4 Results of large group discussions – mixed ethnicity

Statement	Ave Score	Comment/Reflection
Sometimes name calling is a problem because people use Race or religion as a way of winding others up	4.6	Strongly agree. Students are aware that children pick up on each other's most noticeable characteristics when arguing/winding up. They are aware that it is inappropriate but most don't perceive it as serious racism/religious discrimination (or even homophobia.)
We avoid stereotypes at Chace and try to stop them when they are used	1.8	Disagree. Some students feel 'labelled'. This labels do not necessarily correspond to a particular group (it can be 'naughty', 'loud', 'trouble') and some students do not distinguish between individual reputation and stereotype.
Everyone is given the same opportunities at Chace	1.8	Disagree. This is possibly the most surprising response. Discussing it revealed that the statement had often been interpreted on an individual level and students perceive individuals as being treated better. No-one made a comment linking the statement to race/gender/religion or other equalities issue.
Most students have a real sense of belonging at Chace	2.2	Disagree. This is disappointing and contradicts the feelings expressed in interviews. There is no indication this is linked to equal opportunities. Interestingly, the interviews with Kurdish students showed that they valued being part of Chace more than being Kurdish.
Our displays around school don't always celebrate the range of different people in our school	2.5	We don't have a lot of celebratory displays or examples of people to aspire to.
Students feel safe and happy at Chace.	2.7	A few individuals aside, there was no suggestion of gang-related threat etc. The statement was a poor one as it linked two different questions: most felt safe but happiness was less common.

(Adapted from Andrew Noon, 2012.)

These results were radically different from those produced by the small-group interviews, and may have been affected by the dynamic of stronger individuals present. Alternatively, the larger group may have 'licensed' students to say what they really believed, relieved of the conformism that is often present in small groups conducted by a senior teacher. In any case, they indicated that the school may have been complacent about its self-perception as a welcoming community.

A range of responses to the Equalities Duty consultation

Andrew Noon, as deputy head with responsibility, commissioned two audits in relation to equal opportunities provision, of the taught curriculum and of attendance at extended learning activities.
Every student has lessons in Religious Education, dealing with the full range of world religions. The school also has an impressive whole-school assembly programme, raising issues of homophobia, developing world countries, celebrations of lesbian, gay and black history, bisexual and transgender month, and the achievements of disabled young people. Through subjects such as English, history, sociology and drama, students learn about women's rights, black civil rights, anti-discrimination laws and homophobia.

709 students attended extended learning opportunities between September and March 2012. This represented 53% of the school population. Total attendance for the period was 2910 (*an average of 2.2 sessions per student on roll.*) Of 709 students attending these opportunities at least once, 45% were male and 55% female. The boys who did attend, however, attended more frequently. For most ethnic groups, attendance patterns were broadly in line with the overall picture. The average attendances of groups with more than 20 students were as follows:

Fig. 5 Analysis of attendance at extended learning opportunities and clubs 2011/12 by ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Average sessions attended per student
White English	2.0
Turkish	2.5
Turkish Cypriot	1.9
Black Caribbean	2.6
Black Ghanaian	3.5
Mixed White and any other ethnicity	2.4
Kurdish	2.6
Greek (and Greek Cypriot)	0.5

(Derived from Noon, 2012)

Greek students showed significantly lower attendance than any other group. There appears to be no other significant difference between the engagement of ethnic groups in extracurricular activities.

Student voice responses indicated that the school was suffering from an under-reporting of discriminatory and bullying-related events. Addressing this, the deputy head revised the incident report form and had all subsequent cases of discriminatory behaviour

referred to himself. By this simple mechanism, the school would become more self-aware and could hope to reduce the occurrence of such incidents.

The school now has in place an Equality Scheme and an Equality Objectives (action plan), both published on its website. To improve stakeholder voice with regard to equality, it has convened 'equality groups' of students, parents and staff to oversee to school's work in the protected areas. With a particular focus on islamophobia, the school plans to train staff on the implications of the Equality Duty. Through posters, the visibility of positive role models and a promotional video shot by a sixth-form student, the school will advertise its commitment to diversity and will challenge stereotypes. Data on attainment, attendance and exclusion, broken down by 'protected characteristic' as far as is possible, will be presented to senior and middle leaders so as to better inform curriculum design and interventions. Dialogue will be opened with affected groups (particularly Greek students) to better encourage their participation in extended learning activities.
The Equality Objectives now sit within the Chace Improvement Plan, which is monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

Next steps for Chace Community School

The school faces significant challenges. The gaps in the attainment of some of its ethnic cohorts, of its SEN students and of its boys make this the clear priority of its equalities work. The worsening financial pressures, which many of its families can expect to face, may exacerbate the problems of equal access that already exist. There may also be a need to foster more harmonious relations between students with, and without, protected characteristics.

The school, on the other hand, has many reasons for optimism. Its school leadership is strongly ideologically committed to diversity in all its guises; and Andrew Noon, its deputy head, has improved upon the best practice recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in undertaking thorough-going internal consultation and convening equalities oversight groups among school stakeholders. And, despite the wider economic gloom, the capital – and perhaps the country too – is growing more accustomed to its superdiverse character.

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