Minority Ethnic Pupils’ Experiences of School in Scotland (MEPESS)
MINORITY ETHNIC PUPILS’ EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL IN SCOTLAND (MEPESS)

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Asylum seeker: A person who has fled from his or her home country in search of safety, and applied for political asylum (the right to a place of safety) in another country.

Black: This is a term that has undergone considerable change and development since the 1950’s. As several different meanings are currently in use, it should be used with caution and understanding. The North American Civil Rights Movement challenged the term’s earlier negative connotations and redefined it to refer to those peoples who suffered from and struggled against white racism, and whose cause was justice and equality. ‘Black’ replaced the derogatory terminology applied to African-Americans such as ‘negro’ or ‘nigger’ and gained positive connotations for its users.

In Britain, including Scotland, there has been an attempt to use this socio-political meaning to unite the victims of racism (whatever the specific gradation of their skin colour, or their geographical or ethnic origins) in opposition to its perpetuation and effects. Additionally, there has also been a desire from visible minority ethnic peoples to self-define themselves, including being defined as members of groups distinguished by ethnicity, nationality or religion. In recent years the all-encompassing version of ‘black’ has been used less often, being replaced by such terms as ‘black and Asian’, ‘black and ethnic minority’, ‘black/minority ethnic’. The term is still used in its broad ideological, inclusive sense but is increasingly used to refer to people of African and Caribbean origin.

The term ‘Black’ has recently been challenged by African communities in Scotland as being particularly divisive and unhelpful. This relates to the way classifications have been used within the 2001 Census. Currently classifications are confused with some ethnic groups being categorised under ‘Colour’ as in ‘Black African/Black Caribbean’ and other ethnic groups such as Asians being categorised not under colour codes but according to national origins such as ‘Indian/Bangladeshi/Pakistani’.

Ethnic minority: The term ‘ethnic minority’ is mainly used to denote people who are in the minority within a defined population on the grounds of ‘race’, colour, culture, language or nationality. In Scotland, in practice, those referred to as ‘ethnic minorities’ are mainly identified as those groups of people who have come from the ‘new commonwealth’ to live in the country since the 1950’s, that is, visible minorities. However, this excludes the many ‘ethnic minorities’ from England and Europe who settled in Scotland before and since the 1950’s. See also the term ‘Minority Ethnic’.

Ethnic monitoring: Before deciding on the categories to use, think about what is required for what particular purpose. The Census categories are ‘official’ and many statistics are published using them, but they can cause offence when used insensitively. If monitoring the use of
interpreters, then should records be kept of languages? If monitoring the appropriateness of care offered in life crises, such as childbirth, sudden accident, ageing and death, then should records be kept of religion? If seeking to identify whether there is racism, or ethnic bias, in provision of services, then should use be made of the Census categories, or of other categories, decided in consultation with minority ethnic service users?

The Race Equality Advisory Forum (REAF) which was convened by the Scottish Executive in 2001 recommended that whatever ethnic monitoring terminology is adopted, it should satisfy the following criteria:

- be clear, coherent, and consistent
- embrace all without homogenising
- encourage individuals to identify with their own descriptors
- not be hierarchical
- not be seen to favour any group over any other
- not be divisive
- focus on ethnicity rather than ‘race’
- be open to re-definition and change
- not have direct resource implications

The REAF report has avoided using the terms such as ‘black’ or ‘white’ or ‘black and/or ethnic minority’, ‘black/minority ethnic’ because REAF argues that they:

- lack clarity and thus risk misleading the public
- are open to abuse by seeming to give leverage to one group over another
- risk leading to division rather than solidarity
- reinforce racism, especially towards Africans and people of African background

**Families:** The term is used here to denote domestic structures of care, attachment and responsibility in the raising of children and young people by adults.

**Gypsy/Traveller:** This term is complex in that it is often used as a generic catch-all term to describe groups of people who have a more transient or nomadic way of life. Within this generic term, for most people there will be a preference for either the term ‘Gypsy’ or ‘Traveller’, depending on individual or family self-classifications.

There are also others who define themselves as Occupational Travellers. These are people who as well as having a more transient and nomadic way of life also have jobs which require seasonal mobility. Some Gypsy/Travellers may choose to live permanently or for periods of their lives within the settled communities. Gypsy/Travellers have a specific ethnic identity with a cultural and linguistic heritage for as far back as 1,000 years to Northern India. The focus should not be on the different preferences of names and titles within the group but on issues of exclusion or prejudice which act as barriers for Gypsy/Traveller individuals and communities.
Minority ethnic: In recent years, attempts have been made to acknowledge that ethnicity is a characteristic of all individuals and groups, majorities and minorities alike. In the past the term ‘ethnic minority’ tended to suggest that the minority or marginalised status of such a group arose from its ‘possession’ of ethnicity itself, rather than to the low value ascribed to its particular ethnicity in the wider, ‘majority’ cultural/ethnic environment. The use of ‘minority ethnic’ as an alternative term goes only some way to improving matters. It draws attention to the commonality of ethnicity and indicates that it is the non-inclusion of particular types of ethnicity which results in minority (i.e. relatively powerless) status. However, it remains a code for ‘visible minorities’ rather than minorities in general (e.g. Gaelic speakers or adherents to the Catholic faith).

Sometimes documents will use the term ‘minority ethnic’ instead of ‘ethnic minority’. The switch in the use of the terms has had some impact mainly among people aware of the issues, but the use of the term is not yet widespread, particularly with the general public and is sometimes a cause of confusion. In line with other government resources and documents, this report adopts the use of the term ‘minority ethnic’.

Multicultural: This term is in widespread use. Rather than referring literally to the existence of a plurality of cultures in a given situation, it tends in Britain to be reduced to a colour analysis that indicates the presence of a mixture of black and white components where the white components are seen as dominant. The term can also be used to develop meaning for sectors, for example, ‘multicultural education’.

Multicultural education: This is an educational approach, which positively seeks to acknowledge diversity in culture, faith, language and ethnicity in relation to school ethos, curriculum and home-school-community partnerships. In America the term multicultural education covers all areas of equity and diversity.

Parents: This term is used as a shorthand for principal carers of children and young people.

Racism:

Personal Racism: Broadly used to refer to the ideology of superiority of a particular race over another. This notion of superiority is then applied to and embedded in structures, practices, attitudes, beliefs and processes of a social grouping which then serves to further perpetuate and transmit this ideology. Racism appears in several, often interrelated forms, e.g. personal, cultural, institutional and societal. This refers to the negative/antagonistic thoughts, feelings and actions which characterise the outlook and behaviour of racially prejudiced individuals. It may also refer to the effects of such perspectives and activity on those against whom they are directed. Personal racism can have a significant effect on reproducing inequalities particularly if the individual concerned is in a position of power. Personal racism can be open and explicit or covert and implicit.
**Cultural Racism:** This is when a particular culture perceives itself as superior to others. It is often when one culture is dominant that systematic cultural racism can take place. The dominant culture then imposes its patterns, assumptions and values on others, often in a manner that many do not even notice. This becomes the ‘common-sense culture’ taken for granted as part of everyday life. An example is in the use of language as a way in which one cultural group can impose itself on another with discriminatory outcomes. In Scotland it has often been argued that using words like ‘Paki’ or ‘Chinky’ is not discriminatory, as it is part of the Scottish vernacular. Yet ‘Paki’ and ‘Chinky’ are terms which are commonly regarded by minority ethnic groups as offensive and derogatory. However, the challenging of these terms in Scotland continues to be met with resistance by some Scottish people. This is an example of how language as a cultural expression is used to perpetuate cultural racism. Multicultural education/cultural diversity programmes are often a response to addressing cultural racism.

**Institutional Racism:** the common definition now used across the UK is derived from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report – 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. It persists because of the failure of the organisation openly and adequately to recognise and address its existence and causes by policy, example and leadership.

**Refugee:** Since the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee has been defined as ‘a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution; or a person who is a victim or potential victim of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or of a particular political opinion’. In Britain the term refugee is now being used to mean people who are no longer asylum seekers because the Home Office has granted them leave to remain.

**White:** The term used to describe the skin colour of the inhabitants of Europe and their emigrant populations. It is literally inaccurate but has connotations of power, sophistication and progress, for example, ‘white civilisation’. The classification depends upon a racialised and hierarchical division of the world’s human population. The roots of this differentiation were expressed in European imperial expansion. ‘White’ has a less positive connotation when linked with racism or supremacy.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and context

1.1.1 Social research on ‘race’ in Scottish public policy is in its infancy because of a legacy of widespread denial of racial inequality and discrimination across Scotland (Netto et al, 2001; Netto & Almeida Diniz, 2001; SABRE, 2001). For too long, it seemed that policy makers, academic researchers, service providers and the general public were wedded to the belief that racism was not an issue ‘north of the border’.

However, in its first term of office, the Scottish Parliament signalled a significant shift by introducing major social and political developments which address the systemic barriers that lead to social exclusion in the lives of significant sections of Scottish society. Part of this climate of strategic rethinking has included an acknowledgement of the issue of ‘racism’ in ‘mainstream’ Scotland.

1.1.2 There has been a range of initiatives in Scottish education since the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report by Sir William Macpherson in 1999 which recognises the important role education has to play in promoting racial equality and educating for the prevention of racial prejudice and discrimination.

1.1.3 A few weeks prior to the publication of the Macpherson report, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) published an audit toolkit for schools entitled A Route to Equality and Fairness (HMIE, 1999) which provides advice to schools on how to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts to achieve equality of opportunity.

1.1.4 Shortly after this, the Scottish Executive formed the Race Equality Advisory Forum (REAF) which prepared a race equality strategy to combat ‘institutional racism’ in public policy in Scotland. This included a section on education. The REAF Education subgroup consulted extensively with education practitioners and put forward 56 recommendations covering all levels of Scottish education. One of the recommendations was to commission research on the experience of minority ethnic pupils in Scottish schools.

1.1.5 About the same time, the Scottish Executive Central Research Unit (CRU) also commissioned an audit of research on race-related issues in Scotland in the past ten years. The CRU report, Audit of research on minority ethnic issues in Scotland from a ‘race’ perspective, published in the autumn of 2001 (Netto et al, 2001), also includes an education chapter. The education chapter documents over 100 pieces of research related to race and education, although only a few of these had been fully funded national research programmes. One of the recommendations of that piece of work was to further
investigate the effects of racism, particularly institutional racism, on equal access and fairness for current and future minority ethnic learners.

1.1.6 Prior to this, the then Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) had commissioned the first national review of educational research (*The Education of Minority Ethnic Groups in Scotland – A Review of Research*, Powney et al, 1998) and more recently the Scottish Executive commissioned *A Review of Developments in Inclusive Schooling* (Campbell et al, 2001). SABRE, a network of black researchers and community activists, published its ethical code for researching ‘race’, racism and anti-racism in Scotland (SABRE 2001).

1.1.7 This research was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) to examine the experiences of minority ethnic pupils in schools in Scotland. When this research was commissioned in November 2001, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RR(A)A2000) had not been enacted in Scotland. However, by the time the research concluded in March 2003, the RR(A)A2000 had been in place for some four months. The positive duty placed on public authorities by the RR(A)A2000 had already caused local authorities and schools to re-examine their approach to the promotion of race equality and the prevention of racial discrimination. Had this study commenced a year after the onset of the RR(A)A2000, some of the findings might have been significantly different, such as the availability of quantitative data.

1.1.8 Nevertheless, this study now provides an excellent baseline from which to measure progress in the area of race equality in Scottish education for the years to come.

This is the first Scottish study that aims to look at the experiences of minority ethnic pupils in school. The claim that Scotland has an ‘inclusive education system’ (Paterson, 2001) remains unproven. In the absence of data to date, it is not known how minority ethnic pupils perform in school, or how their parents perceive their education. Neither is there systematic data on how teachers and schools have put in place policies and practices to take forward race equality.

Evidence to date, however, highlights significant institutional barriers that render minority ethnic communities invisible or marginalised with regard to their cultures, languages, faiths, policy, research and provision (Almeida Diniz and Usmani, 2001; Arshad, 2001; Netto et al, 2001; Hampton, 1998; Powney et al 1998).
1.2 **Aims and objectives**

1.2.1 The central aim of the research study was to identify and document the experiences of minority ethnic pupils in a range of school settings in different parts of Scotland. The specific objectives of the research were to:

- identify key factors relating to ethnic diversity which promote or restrict inclusion
- examine the experiences of minority ethnic pupils in terms of educational attainment, participation in school activities, personal and social skills
- establish teachers’ and pupils’ perceptions of minority ethnic pupils’ educational achievements, experiences and expectations
- establish the factors which affect minority ethnic pupils’ achievement and attainment
- determine the impact on minority ethnic pupils of different teaching and learning styles, curriculum provision and assessment systems

1.3 **Methods**

1.3.1 **Data collection**

The main methods of data collection were semi-structured interviews and focus groups with a range of stakeholders, that is, pupils, parents and teachers. Other data gathering methods were also used, such as the use of postal questionnaires, documentary evidence and analysis of quantitative data. Quantitative data was sought from each authority for the selected schools in respect of standard grade results and 5–14 attainment levels in the five subject areas.

It was agreed that the study would take place in four authorities named A, B, C and D for the purposes of this report. Initially, each authority was invited to assist the identification of twelve schools (5 primary, 4 secondary and 3 special) that the authority regarded as best matching the following criteria:

(a) Considered by the authority to be an example of ‘good practice’ as an inclusive school

(b) Varied in ethnic composition and include:
   - schools that have a concentration of pupils from a particular ethnic group
   - schools that have a selection of pupils from different ethnic groups
   - schools that have a small number of minority ethnic pupils

From this total of 48 nominated schools the research team selected a final sample of 24 schools (3 primary, 2 secondary, 1 special, in each of the 4 education authorities). The
study team, in negotiation with each authority link officer, ensured that selected secondary schools were ones with middle to high numbers of minority ethnic pupils within their authorities. Primaries were selected with one school with low minority ethnic pupil population, another with middling numbers and another with relative high numbers of minority ethnic pupils in each authority. The reason for this was to ensure that there was a large enough sample to enable a quantitative analysis of examination performance and also to avoid the risk of breaching confidentiality or identifying any individual pupil.

Given that social class was one of the key determining factors affecting attainment (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Sewell, 2000), schools selected also served a range of communities and postcodes.

All selected schools were written to and questionnaires were sent to each member of staff. Questionnaires were sent in bundles to each school with individual letters, questionnaires and a self-addressed stamped envelope for each teacher to use.

A total of 1055 questionnaires were sent out with 247 (23.4%) returned complete and a further 12 returned as nil returns.

Individual interviews were held with teachers while focus groups were used with young people. Interviews with parents were a mixture of focus groups and individual telephone interviews. Access to young people and parents was organised through contacts, community groups, agencies and individual workers.

A total of 81 teacher interviews (one by telephone), 96 pupil interviews and 38 parent interviews took place. Of the 24 schools, documentary evidence of how schools embedded race equality into their policies and practice was obtained from 23. Quantitative data was not easily obtainable although some data was obtained from two authorities. Further comment about methodology on how data was obtained for each of these areas is further developed within subsequent chapters.

1.3.2 Issues arising in relation to methodology

Access to schools

The research hit timescale issues from the outset. Although a generous timescale was offered for negotiating access into schools for interviews and gathering of documentary evidence, the whole process of accessing schools took three months longer than anticipated. This was in part due to the different methods used by the four authorities for selecting schools for the study team.

Two authorities negotiated with individual schools and then submitted names of schools that had agreed to take part. One authority wrote to the twelve schools selected in their area informing them that the authority had given permission for this study to proceed and that their school had been selected to take part. A fourth authority provided the study
team with the names of twelve schools which had been contacted, but indicated that it was dependent on the individual school whether they wished to be involved. The problems arose from this authority when no secondary schools offered themselves for the study. The study team waited to receive names of all schools before commencing the study, however, after a three month delay proceeded without the names of the two secondary schools. Two secondary schools from the fourth authority eventually took part five months later than other schools.

Workload issue
The issue of school workload affected the timings of this study. All timescales changed dramatically as research tasks were unable to be progressed due to difficulty in accessing some schools for interviews and non-receipt of school documentation.

Most headteachers or senior management staff interviewed subsequently apologised for the delay in getting into their schools and expressed a hope that the study team had a reasonable response rate for the questionnaires. They explained that genuine workload and stress issues meant staff found it virtually impossible to commit time to additional activities other than core teaching and assessment requirements.

Had the original timescales been in place, issues of school holidays would not have mattered, but as responses were slow in terms of questionnaire returns and access to staff interviews the study had to wait until the next school session to commence school interviews. Further holidays in September and October caused additional gap periods when the study team could not contact teachers for interviews.

However, the majority of schools, once they agreed to move onto the interview stage, set up the interviews relatively quickly.

Access to young people
Gaining access to young people proved difficult and revealed barriers to access of a completely different order and complexity. In the four authorities, contact was made with key organisations in the voluntary sector or lead individuals working with minority ethnic groups to identify young people for focus groups. Three of the four organisations did not manage to organise a single focus group; the fourth organisation organised one focus group of five young people. Focus groups of young people were eventually organised through the use of individual minority ethnic community workers, small community organisations and education trade union contacts in each authority identified by the study team. These issues of accessing young people are explored further in the chapter on young people’s experiences. However, some explanations offered by the organisations who had difficulty accessing young people included:

- minority ethnic young people in Authority X being over-researched
- young people expecting payment for involvement (this study did not offer any financial rewards for taking part unlike previous scoping studies which had offered financial incentives for taking part, thereby creating the expectation)
• lack of ongoing and regular structures for minority ethnic young people contributing to their invisibility on the youth scene

• language or faith classes for young minority ethnic people were not necessarily appropriate opportunities to recruit for a focus group

This study focused on exploring the experiences of minority ethnic pupils in schools rather than attempting to compare and contrast majority and minority ethnic pupil experiences. This was decided upon the basis that it is highly unlikely that a compare-and-contrast approach would be meaningful in any significant way. The experiences of minority ethnic pupils in Scottish schools will never be the same as majority ethnic pupils in that minority ethnic pupils are being educated in a system where the majority of the teaching force is white and from the ethnic majority grouping. This is also within a context where racism is still primarily directed at people whose skin colour is not white\textsuperscript{11} and where faiths, cultures and languages which are not Scottish are seen as ‘foreign’.

As the study did not intend to interview majority group pupils, it was not deemed appropriate to access minority ethnic pupils via formal routes such as schools. It was also felt given the context within Scotland, with fairly low numbers of minority ethnic pupils, potential interviewees would be highly visible and unlikely to want to be seen to be different and taking part within interviews or focus groups within formal settings. Bloor et al, 2001, recommend that the venue for focus groups should always be chosen with an eye to recruitment and minimising the numbers of refusals and non-arrivals. This study felt that minority ethnic young people were more likely to participate in informal settings outwith school premises.

While there are no such places as ‘neutral’ locations, venues chosen were ones which were easily accessible by public transport or ones the study team could guarantee less likelihood of encountering racism. These proved to be very important factors to allay parental concerns.

Representation
From the literature review conducted for the study, studies on school ethos and pupil experiences have largely under-represented visible minority ethnic pupil experiences and within that some ethnic groups are even less represented. Equally, research projects on minority ethnic issues have tended to concentrate on information relating to the larger minority ethnic groups. This study was therefore mindful to ensure a range of young people from a range of minority ethnic groups were interviewed, including young people from mixed-race backgrounds.

\textsuperscript{1} Scottish Executive statistics show that non-white people were more than three times as likely to be victimised by groups of four or more perpetrators than white people. See www.onescotland.com – Racism today.
Scottish Executive statistics show that non-white people were more than three times as likely to be victimised by groups of four or more perpetrators than white people. See www.onescotland.com – Racism today.

Focus on ‘visible minority ethnic pupils’
The main focus of the study was on ‘visible minority ethnic pupils’, that is, those who are most easily and immediately distinguished as ‘different’ by physical traits such as skin colour and are likely to be particularly susceptible and vulnerable to racial discrimination and disadvantage. Recent Scottish Executive research shows visible minority ethnic communities were more than three times as likely to be victimised by groups of four or more perpetrators than white people (www.onescotland.com, 2002).

The study does acknowledge that racism against other minority ethnic groups such as Jewish, Polish, Italian and Irish people exists and these communities may also face racial discrimination and disadvantage. In addition, other minoritised groups such as Gypsy/Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers also face similar exclusion. However, this study is unable to span the complete spectrum of minority ethnic groups and is working on the basis that if the needs and rights of those at the sharpest end are being met and upheld, then it is more likely that other minority groups will also benefit from such ethos and practices that emerge and are developed.

Multiple discrimination
Though the main focus of the study was on issues of race equality affecting ‘visible minority ethnic pupils’, we were mindful of the interrelatedness of social factors, including gender, disability, class and geography, and their impact on multiple identities and forms of multiple discrimination. In particular, the study was committed to ensuring that minority ethnic disabled pupils with ‘special educational needs’ were included. Very little is currently known about the representation and experiences of minority ethnic disabled youngsters, including those who are identified as having ‘special educational needs’ (SEN) in Scottish schools (Almeida Diniz and Usmani, 2001; Stalker, 2000). Our review of the literature led us to conclude that the relationship between race, ethnicity and SEN is complex and under-researched and merits a study in its own right. What we have conducted should be regarded as a small-scale enquiry and not an in-depth study of the effectiveness of SEN provision for minority ethnic disabled children. It is an attempt to provide broad themes that may form an agenda for future research into the educational experiences of minority ethnic disabled children in Scottish schools.

1.3.3 Limitations to methodology

The study had several strands and used a range of data collection methods, each one time-consuming in its own right. The study was also highly dependent on the availability of existing data for the quantitative part of the project and the goodwill of authorities, individual schools, individual young people and parents to generate the qualitative
material for the study. Though overall the goodwill was there, translating this goodwill into actual time for interviews was harder.

Focus groups did not always run with the agreed numbers as participants failed to turn up which meant additional focus groups had to be arranged. Inclement weather and cancellation of trains prevented at least two focus groups already organised from going ahead.

The issue of ‘payment’ to young people for turning up to focus groups proved to be quite a significant factor. In two authorities, we were informed by local organisations that previous research teams with minority ethnic people had ‘paid’ for attendance and this had created an expectation among organisational workers and through them to young people and their peers in that area that this study would do the same. It is suspected that because this was not the case it may have acted as a barrier to participation. This study did not choose to ‘pay’ participants in cash but rather in kind (through generous hospitality in terms of food and travel expenses for attending focus groups as we wanted genuinely interested young people to take part rather than to attract those who were there ‘just for the money’). However, towards the end of the study, a small attendance fee was paid to some focus groups in some areas and this had the predictable desired effect of ensuring good attendances in focus groups.

1.4 Ethical considerations

Ethnic classifications
In this study, the ethnic categories used were finalised after much discussion about the appropriateness of the Census categorisations and consideration of comments that emerge from the Race Equality Advisory Forum (REAF) that any classification framework should not entrench racial hierarchies and encourage ethnic divisions. This study is aware of the dissatisfaction that currently exists with the Census classifications. This study acknowledges the anxiety of some minority ethnic communities in Scotland, particularly sections of the African communities, that the confused manner in which ethnicity, nationality and colour are used, and particularly the boxing of Africans as a colour code instead of being offered the right to identify themselves on the basis of their different ethnic, national and cultural backgrounds ‘unlike Asians’ is divisive. The study acknowledges there is at present no ‘ideal’ template for ethnic classifications.

Bearing in mind the concerns expressed within the REAF report, the study chose the following categorisations for the postal questionnaires.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anonymity and confidentiality
This study covered a high profile issue – ‘race’ – in interviews with respondents (pupils) who are potentially vulnerable and wary about involvement in this kind of research. This study wanted to ensure that individuals and schools taking part would feel comfortable to speak openly and share experiences without the worry of being identified.

It was therefore important that all our respondents were assured that none of their comments would be attributed to them as individuals. To protect confidentiality, as far as possible, we do not include a list of schools or individual respondents who took part. When using quotes, we use the minimum of identification to prevent individual schools from being identified. A lot of care has been taken to ensure anonymity of individual respondents and schools in writing this report. This has resulted in the loss of use of some data that would have been informative, but revealing, of some schools or authorities.

Permission and safety
As already mentioned, we ensured a safe environment for young people and parent interviews. Permission was sought from all parents/carers of young people interviewed and the study team spoke to any parent/carer who wanted further information and reassurance about the validity of the study. Additionally, all interviews with young people were done with interviewers who had been checked and cleared by the Scottish Criminal Records Office (SCRO) (Disclosure Scotland) in line with national guidelines on working with children, or had present in the room an adult with SCRO clearance.

Dealing with ‘distress’ or ‘exposures’
There were one or two instances where the issue evoked distressing or stressful accounts by young people of racism and its consequences. At least one of these accounts gave cause for concern in terms of legality and professional competence. On that occasion, a senior member of the research team, after seeking permission from the young person discussed the account with the young person’s parent. This was in part to offer support but also to ensure correct steps were taken to address the issues shared with the research team. On that occasion, the parent assured the team that the school, authority and police were already dealing with the case.
The control the researcher holds of information divulged in interviews can be immense. The study team agreed from the outset that given the sensitive nature of this subject of inquiry, it was entirely possible that the team would uncover poor practice and stark examples of racism. The team recognised it had an obligation to take disclosed matters further if it involved child protection issues.

**Terminology**
The study recognised that a range of terms are used to describe members of minority ethnic communities, for example, ‘black’, ‘black and minority ethnic’, ‘ethnic minorities’ and ‘minority ethnic’.

This study has retained terms used by respondents, school and authority documents or in published reports. However, this study uses the term ‘minority ethnic’ and except where it is stated otherwise, the term minority ethnic refers to the ‘visible minority ethnic’ communities in Scotland as described above in the section on ‘Focus on visible minorities’.

**Commitment to anti-racism**
The study team is strongly committed to an anti-racist approach in Scottish education, including all aspects of social and educational research. In drawing up the research design we were explicit in our commitment to race equality perspectives in our conceptual approach and methodology. Part of this included an acknowledgement of the social and political discourse on race equality in Scottish research as well as taking account of the advice laid out in the Ethical Code of Practice produced by the Scottish Association of Black Researchers (see Appendix 1).

The study tried to optimise the mutual understanding of interviewer and respondents through the use of interpreters, where requested, or other mediums of the participants’ choice. The entire study accepted as read that institutional, society, cultural and personal racism existed. The study did not set out to prove or disprove the existence of racism. The study aimed to find out about the experiences of minority ethnic young people within an educational framework that has largely marginalised race issues and, indirectly, the issue of racism.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature was initially structured around the research questions that were key to the MEPESS project. However, while the research team was carrying out planned fieldwork, a number of significant developments were taking place and it was important that account was taken of them in the study.

First, new data became available from the 2001 Census and the 2002 School Census respectively. The analysis of the 2001 Census of Scotland indicated the scale and variation of ethnic and faith diversity between Scottish local authority areas and the summary results of the 2002 School Census highlighted the ways in which ethnic diversity is developing in schools. The questions about ‘ethnicity’ that were included in both Censuses, and those about religion that were included for the first time in the 2001 National Census, mean that the baseline data that Scotland requires in order to be able to monitor the experience of minority ethnic families is now available.

Second, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 came into operation and required all public bodies to have a Race Equality Scheme in place by November 2002. As a result, the Scottish Executive, the Inspectorate of Education and local authority education departments have published their individual schemes, summarising the measures that will be implemented in their organisations from now on. Data of a kind that has not been available before is being collected and reported on a regular basis. Significantly, the Inspectorate has commenced monitoring by ‘racial group’. The MEPESS fieldwork straddled this time of change, too early to capture the race equality schemes of individual authorities, but in time to report on the new forms of data monitoring now being finalised by SEED in the Scottish Exchange of Educational Data (www.scotxed.net).

Third, the Scottish Executive launched its anti-racism campaign, ‘One Scotland. Many Cultures’. In advance of the campaign, the results of two national surveys (sample sizes 1,081 and 1,045) were published showing that 56% of people regard racism as a serious problem, 13% believe they had been victims of racist abuse, while 75% do not regard themselves as racist, 24% regard themselves as slightly racist and 1% as strongly racist (the full research details can be found at http://www.onescotland.com/one_scotland). For the first time there is compelling, official, national evidence that racism is a serious issue for Scotland.

It could thus be argued that there is a new, and welcome, transparency in Scottish social policy discourse, a recognition that Scotland must reveal and face the facts both of racism and of ethnic group differences in pupil experiences of schools. However, within that transparency, controversy remains. In the introduction to the 2001 Census for Scotland there is mention of the debate that is now underway about the appropriateness of the ethnic categories that have been in use since 1991. There is also discussion of the compromise that was required in order to resolve the debate about whether there should
be any questions on religion (www.gro-scotland.gov.uk); these questions were not mandatory and one in twenty Scots did not complete the question on ‘current religion’.

Appendix 2b presents a summary of data from the 2002 School Census for Scotland. This indicates that there is an extraordinary level of non-compliance with the requirement to complete details about pupils’ ethnic backgrounds. Across Scotland, no details about ‘ethnicity’ are given for 6.2% of pupils. Moreover, the rate of non-compliance varied greatly between the cities. In Aberdeen and Dundee the rate of non-compliance was three times that of the other cities. Additionally, the data shows that the rate of non-compliance varies between special schools (4.4%), primary schools (5.6%) and secondary schools (8.0%).

2.2 Census 2001 – diversity in Scottish cities

Many of the reports of the 2001 Census for Scotland have now been published, including key data relating to Scotland’s six cities, Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Stirling. The data relating to Ethnic Group and Current Religion indicates how much variation there is between the cities. Each has experienced its own ‘specialised’ in-migrations. Nonetheless, there are some generalisations that can be made.

All six cities are overwhelmingly ‘white Scottish’, only in Glasgow do the visible minorities account for more than five per cent of the total population. This ‘white-ness’ is reinforced by the sizeable minorities of ‘Other White British’ origin, especially in Edinburgh, Stirling and Inverness where they account for ten per cent and more, and of the smaller minorities of ‘White Irish’ origin in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling and Dundee.

As can be seen in the data of the relative size of each ‘ethnic minority’ group, visible minorities are not distributed evenly across the cities. No one group dominates numerically among minorities in all the cities.
Table 2a – Census 2001, Selected Data: Ethnic Group/Ranking by Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group Ranking by Size</th>
<th>Aberdeen</th>
<th>Dundee</th>
<th>Edinburgh</th>
<th>Glasgow</th>
<th>Inverness</th>
<th>Stirling</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other South Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Scottish / other Black</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2b – Census 2001, Selected Data: Current Religion/Ranking by Size of Minority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Religion Ranking By Size of Minority</th>
<th>Aberdeen</th>
<th>Dundee</th>
<th>Edinburgh</th>
<th>Glasgow</th>
<th>Inverness</th>
<th>Stirling</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data for the different wards within the cities, that is, the catchment areas for schools, was not available at the time of writing. However, from analysis of the 1991 Census (Hampton and Dalton, 1994) and other studies (Powney et al, 1998; Netto et al, 2001) it is known that, while there are some areas of ‘cluster’ with dense settlements of Pakistani and Indian communities with their children thus comprising large minorities in their local schools, most minority ethnic families live in mainly white areas and their children are pupils in mainly white schools. While the populations in the six cities continue to be
mainly ‘white’, between one in a hundred and one in twenty of their populations are now visible minorities.

2.3 The Scotland school census – diversity in Scottish schools

In August 2003, summary results of the Scotland’s 2002 School Census were published, including, for the first time, details of the ethnic background of pupils and teachers in the three publicly funded sectors: primary, secondary and special schools. (www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/00272-01.asp).

Appendix 2b presents a summary of the key data. This data shows that 3.5% of pupils in primary, 2.7% in secondary and 3.9% in special schools are of ‘ethnic minority’ background. In all sectors, Asian Pakistanis constitute the largest minority ethnic group, in Primary (1.2%) and Secondary (1.0%), and especially in the Special schools (2.2%) where they account for more than all the other minority ethnic groups combined. No other minority ethnic group has such consistent presence in all sectors. Whereas Asian Indians comprise 0.4% of primary pupils, they are outnumbered by Chinese pupils in secondary schools, 0.6% of primary and 0.4% of secondary pupils are of ‘mixed’ racial background.

With regard to the ethnic backgrounds of teachers, the summary results do not give the same level of detail but are collated by minority ethnic groups. The data shows that 3.6% of primary teachers are from a minority background, 7.9% of secondary teachers and 9.5% in special schools. What it does not reveal is whether these teachers are spread across schools in Scotland, or are clustered in specific authorities, or even in specific schools. Neither does the data distinguish how many of the minority ethnic numbers are ‘visible’ minority ethnic teachers.

The 2001 Census thus confirms that the population in Scotland’s schools is mainly, even overwhelmingly, ‘white’. It is worth noting that whilst minority ethnic pupils make up one in every twenty-five pupils in schools, there is considerable ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity among this small population. When the data for schools within individual education authorities is studied, we anticipate that it will confirm the findings of the Census data for the six cities: that is, we anticipate that it will indicate that Scottish education authorities is mainly white, that each has its distinctive minority ethnic profile and there are clusters in which the population of minority ethnic pupils account for higher proportions than the national norm.

2.4 Mainly white schools

In her study of racism in the rural areas of Scotland (Angus, the Highlands, North Ayrshire and the Western Isles), Philomena de Lima chose the title Needs not Numbers (de Lima, 2001) in order to emphasise the fact that public service providers (including education) should not continue the habits of the past. She identified a prevailing attitude
that there is ‘no problem here’ and that minority ethnic groups are regarded as having ‘no needs’ because they are small in number, ‘invisible’ and ‘silent’. Her finding was that minority ethnic people in rural areas are more isolated in every sense of the word, vulnerable to racist harassment and unaware of the services to which they are entitled.

Research studies of mainly white schools in England have identified the same negative attitudes. Cline et al (2002) surveyed the performance of over 34,000 pupils in mainly white schools in 35 education authorities in England. They defined ‘mainly white’ as those where 4–6% of pupils were from minority ethnic backgrounds. They found that by 1996/97 all secondary and three quarters of primary schools had at least some minority ethnic pupils and only eight education authorities had very few or no schools with a significant proportion of minority ethnic pupils (more than 4%).

They point out that the great majority of teachers across England can now expect to work with minority ethnic pupils at some point in their careers, yet, they also found that few teachers received initial or in-service training that allowed them to gain relevant understanding, confidence or skills. They studied 14 schools more closely and reported that none had a fully developed strategy for preparing pupils, through the curriculum, for life in a diverse society. Rather, the teachers saw their school or class as trying to treat ‘all children equally’, thus downplaying ethnic and cultural differences.

The main conclusion to be drawn from this study is that there is an onus on all schools to respond to diverse needs, not to wait for numbers to grow to some future ‘critical’ point when action may be considered. This is an important lesson for the few schools in Scotland where there are no visible minority ethnic pupils, those where minority ethnic pupils form a small proportion of the intake, and the few schools in urban areas where they form a large proportion within the school.

This shift in thinking is made more urgent by the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees who have been dispersed by the Home Office to Glasgow, a high proportion of whom are being given leave to remain. This development has precipitated considerable demographic change in schools in the areas in which they have been housed. By August 2000, in advance of the main dispersal programme, Glasgow estimated that there were 1,110 ‘international’ children in 21 primary and seven secondary schools (TES, 29.12.00). Most of the asylum seeker families are Muslim and from countries that have experienced ethnic tensions, persecution and war. Their children need intensive language support, skilled induction into Scottish school systems and insight and sensitivity from teachers and other pupils of the extraordinary trauma that the new arrivals have experienced (Arshad et al, 1999; Closs et al, 2001; Macaskill and Petrie, 2000; Rutter, 2001).

A finding that is consistently reported in studies of mainly white schools is the contrast in awareness and understanding between teachers and pupils. This indicates that minority ethnic pupils have a stronger sense of ethnic identity, even when they were ‘playing white’. Teachers on the other hand tended to be oblivious both to the issue of ethnic identity and to how pupils handle it among themselves, including the negative experience
of racist name calling and verbal abuse. Patricia Donald and two other primary school teachers in Central Scotland investigated the impact of multiculturalism and anti-racism in local, mainly white, primary schools. They found that as soon as children were encouraged to talk about their everyday lives, racist language and racist incidents were revealed, increasing with age, whereas teachers continued to think that there is ‘no problem here’ (www.scre.ac.uk/spotlight/spotlight54.html). The researchers concluded that when schools devise new policies on race equality, minority ethnic children’s views must be sought if these initiatives are to be effective.

Troyna and Hatcher (1992: 41–45) developed an important piece of ethnographic research which was conducted in mainly white primary schools. They studied everyday interaction among the children, as a backcloth and formative environment, to the incidence of racist behaviour, especially the less spectacular, relatively ordinary and routine ‘trivial’ incidents. They found it instructive to apply a ‘Flashpoints’ model in their study, so that any racist incident involving children could be understood within its context, the immediate prehistory, the biographies of the individuals concerned, the sub-cultural worlds of the children, the institutional ethos absorbed by the children, the cultures of the locality and community within which they lived, the prevalent systems in play, whether racist or anti-racist, and the structural context of power relations between groups perceived as ‘racially’ different. Troyna and Hatcher maintain that while a school cannot stop in order to analyse in depth every single racist incident, it is crucial to learn how to identify the different levels of social process at play and to detect which are the exception and which are unexceptional and everyday. This cannot be achieved without engaging with the everyday experiences of pupils as they learn from each other the meaning of both friendship and hostility. A theory of children’s relationships has to be able to account for both friendships and hostility. It has to be able to explain both the dynamic towards equality and harmony and the dynamic towards dominance and conflict, ... the actual network of relationships that exists at any one time is the product of negotiations and struggle between many children’s versions of it. Boys, for example, may attempt to impose an unequal power relationship at the expense of girls, who may counter it with their own egalitarian version. Arguments between friends may entail struggle over social power between them. Thus the social network is constantly changing as shifts in power change relative subject positions (1992: 45).

2.5 Key factors which promote or restrict inclusion – racism in schools

An appreciation of ethnic diversity and awareness of anti-racism are increasingly recognised as essential components of a “good” education, regardless of local conditions (Campbell et al, 2001: 43).

Studies of pupils and young people are quite consistent in arguing that whilst ‘race’ is a factor in considering the extent to which minority ethnic pupils feel ‘included’ in school, their teachers are often oblivious to their concerns. In England and Wales where the library of publications about white and minority ethnic pupil experiences is now growing, studies have been carried out in schools in mainly white areas as well as in areas of dense
minority ethnic settlement. This contrast between pupil concerns about ‘everyday racism’, among white as well as minority ethnic pupils, and teacher awareness is reported time and again (Kelly, 1991 and 1994; see also Macleod’s 1998 report on children’s calls about racism to Childline).

Hampton carried out her fieldwork in Glasgow in the aftermath of the death of the schoolboy Imran Khan, a Pakistani schoolboy who died after being stabbed in a fight between Asian youths and white youths (see TES editorial, 18.12.1998). Using 13 focus groups in schools and community settings with facilitators for discussion allowing 83 participants to describe and discuss experiences, problems and needs in their own words, Hampton and her team made special efforts to capture the experiences of Chinese and African-Caribbean young people along with Asians, and youths of white and ‘mixed’ ethnic origin. The young people she questioned felt that racism occurs on a daily basis, incidents occurring most frequently in schools, as well as on the streets, in shops, and in the neighbourhood. The racism is overt, especially in certain residential areas and so common that, for instance, name calling is endemic. They complained that people in authority, teachers and police, are indifferent, disinterested and even racist, and that little effective action was taken in schools. (For corroboration of their complaints see Andrew Johnson and Aamer Anwar commenting on Scottish schools in TES, 06.12.2002 and 14.12.2001)

Racism was felt to have a devastating effect on both individuals and communities, lowering confidence and esteem in individuals, generating fear when it was known that there had been a murder or suicide as a result of racism. Key areas of concern were:

- Young people are not significantly involved in the planning and implementation of youth activities.
- The needs of young people are not understood and appreciated.
- The needs and concerns of young people are masked by the ‘gatekeepers’ and community representatives who are consulted by service providers.
- Young people should be given the opportunity to be involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of anti-racist strategies.

Virdee and his colleagues undertook an ethnographic study of boys in a secondary school in Greater London, focusing on racial harassment (Virdee et al, 1999) and analysed some instructive elements. Working with 54 pupils, aged 11–12 and 14–15, in 18 ‘friendship based’ group discussions they found:

- Younger white pupils rarely drew on racist discourses whilst interacting with minority pupils.
- Racism played a greater part in structuring the lives of older minority pupils in school than younger ones. For older minority pupils, in many ways, racism represented the
defining issue. All had been subjected to some form of racist harassment in school, ranging from occasional physical attacks to regular verbal abuse and subjected to racist discourse in situations where an authority figure was absent, thereby reducing their chances of being reprimanded.

- There was more overt racism when pupils were engaged in some form of competitive activity, such as team games.

- The school’s condemnation of racism had the effect of deterring some pupils from drawing on it for fear of consequences. Whilst where there was a relative absence of racism in school, more racism was experienced journeying to and from school.

The conclusion that he reached was that racism structured social relations, a process that he called ‘balkanisation’. He found minority ethnic pupils employed a range of strategies to negotiate racism in school. The dominant strategy employed was that of ‘racial formation’ constructed around the identity of ‘Asian’. The processes of racialisation and racism were decisive factors in encouraging many minority pupils to appropriate the ascribed racial identity of ‘Paki’ and using it to forge an imagined community of ‘Asians’. Importantly, rather than competing with white pupils for places in the school football team and risk being subjected to racism, many of the Asian boys chose to withdraw from these competitive arenas and create their own ‘racially specific’ spaces free from the risk of racist harassment where they organised football matches for ‘Asians only’. However, this development had its own consequences in so far as it reinforced the racist impression held by many of the white pupils that ‘Asians always stick together’. Hence, whilst this development tended to reduce the number of potentially racist interactions between white and Asian pupils, it did little to undermine the racist images the former had of Asians (12–13).

Unfortunately, apart from a brief research report, Virdee et al’s research has not been published (however, see also Virdee, 1995 and 1997). His suggestion that racist harassment structures the lives of male minority ethnic pupils and contributes to some form of segregation in social relations within this secondary school is a salutary tale of which we should take note in relation to changing interactions between girls and boys, and over the years as pupils mature. Nonetheless, this finding must be treated with caution because ‘balkanisation’ is a concept that can only gain value if it is more strongly contextualised when the research is published in full. At present, ‘balkanisation’ acts as a headline flag of the ways in which pupil racism and response to racism develop and change over time. The contrast between the ebb and flow of primary pupil rivalries and friendships, and group formations among male secondary pupils is marked.

Such research based on listening to young people and observing their social interaction in relation to racist behaviour is still rare. But is there not more knowledge about the occasions when pupils have reported racist incidents? After all, since schools in Britain have been expected to record such incidents since 1988, there should be data available for analysis, nationally, as well as locally.
2.6 Institutional racism

There must be an unequivocal acceptance of institutional racism and its nature before it can be addressed, as it needs to be, in full partnership with members of minority ethnic communities. (MacPherson, 1999: 6.48).

The highest profile account of ‘institutional racism’ is contained in the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, which concentrated its attention on racial inequality in public institutions in Britain. There are clear implications for the Scottish education system. Institutional racism combined with personal racism in education practice can affect all pupils, as targets, agents or witnesses. The impact on minority ethnic pupils in particular can be serious, especially if they learn that teachers are unable, or unwilling, to acknowledge racism or to work with pupils in challenging racial discrimination (Hampton and Dalton, 1994).

OFSTED (1999) examined the ways in which schools were alert to the racism experienced by pupils of different ethnic groups within and outwith schools. It explored how they sought to support their pupils in resolving racist conflict and dealing with hostility in their lives, in their pastoral care systems, in mentoring, promoting good standards of behaviour, links with parents and the wider community, and promoting good race relations (25–44). It concluded that:

- Strong pastoral care systems are especially vigilant and responsive to pupils made vulnerable emotionally and physically by taunting and racial abuse.

- Effective pastoral care is also characterised by the reinforcement of positive behaviour and the highlighting of respect for others.

- A few of the schools have developed strategies aimed at specific ethnic groups, for example, Gypsy/Traveller pupils. Specific pastoral strategies involve recognising the hostility, stereotyping and racism often directed at Travellers and taking steps to counter this, and acknowledging their needs as a minority group.

- In one school voluntary counsellors (of whom one is Asian) offer guidance to pupils on racism, bullying and work problems.

- Specific provision for the pastoral needs of Black Caribbean youngsters is rarely initiated by the schools.

- Whilst most schools monitor behaviour (and implement sanctions such as exclusion) systematically, this rarely takes account of ethnic background other than in relation to incidents involving racially abusive language or physical injury. The lack of ethnic monitoring leaves schools open to the danger of stereotypical ‘impressions’ and gives no sound basis for initiatives to address any real difficulties.
• Schools vary greatly in the kind of initiatives they undertake to improve their links within ethnically mixed neighbourhoods and with specific ethnic communities.

• The establishment of harmonious race relations in the most effective schools is seen to require a wide range of purposeful and constructive strategies, positive behaviour management policies with sufficient time for issues to be discussed and resolved, regular and appropriate in-service training, a multicultural and anti-racist curriculum, close parental and community links, pupil organisation which takes account of ethnic and gender balance, the boosting of pupils’ self-esteem books and materials which avoid stereotypical and inaccurate images, school social events aimed at pulling together different life experiences, staffing establishments which reflect the ethnic make-up of the school and the community.

• Specific investigations into, for instance, playground behaviour, experiences on the way to and from school, and responses to serious incidents such as an outbreak of violence, require not only reactive, but also proactive responses, e.g. development of playground strategies, planning safety strategies with pupils and the development of conflict resolution strategies.

• None of the schools denies the existence of racism, but their ethos makes it easier in some schools for pupils to discuss and attempt to counter it whereas in others, pupils, especially boys, clearly experience racism but are reluctant to talk about it. Often it is the groups which are small in number which suffer most and the level of hostility faced by Gypsy/Traveller children is probably greater than for any other minority ethnic group. Unless staff take a lead, pupils will not raise the issue themselves.

Gillborn and Mirza (2000) emphasise the need for an inclusive strategy around racist incidents. They characterised such an approach as one in which there was evidence of:

• strong leadership on equal opportunities and social justice (from the LEA and the headteacher in particular).

• seeking and using pupil and parent perspectives.

• designing and enacting clear procedures for recording and acting on racist incidents.

• generating and sustaining an ethos that is open and vigilant, which enables pupils to discuss ‘race’ issues and share concerns.

• developing and communicating high expectations accompanied by a clear view that under-performance by any group is unacceptable.

• reviewing curricular and pastoral approaches to ensure their sensitivity and appropriateness.
• using ethnic monitoring as a routine and rigorous part of the school’s LEA self-evaluation and management.

A recurring principle in the research discussed above is that the schools which challenged racism most effectively and in which pupils of all ethnic groups were likely to thrive socially as well as educationally, were schools in which teachers know, understand and respond to what is happening among pupils. However, knowing what is happening in youth culture in a multiracial society is no easy task for researchers or teachers. There is a need for qualitative research of the experiences of children and young people, girls and boys, of Asian, African, Chinese, immigrant and refugee background. But qualitative studies require rigorous research discipline if they are not to become merely anecdotal and fail to develop insights that can be generalised.

2.7 Monitoring minority ethnic pupil educational attainment

Given the sizeable effect that gender, ethnic origin and social background have on educational outcomes and life chances in Britain, one might expect a large volume of statistical data in the area. There is in fact rather little evidence from large, repeated, cross-sectional, nationally representative surveys and longitudinal studies are even more rare. (Demack et al, 2000: 118).

OFSTED (1999) reported on a thematic inspection report on initiatives to raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils, especially Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Gypsy/Travellers. A sample of 48 schools, 24 primary and 24 secondary in 25 LEAs was selected according to the percentage of pupils from the four priority groups – Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Gypsy/Travellers. Also, a further 34 schools were visited because they had been identified as demonstrating good practice in relation to minority ethnic pupils. It reported that:

• While the attainment of minority ethnic groups as a whole is improving some groups continue to under-achieve.

• The performance of Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils in the early years of schooling remains depressed, improves once they are proficient in English, but remains lower in GCSE results.

• Black Caribbean pupils make a sound start in primary schools but their performance declines markedly in secondary school.

• Gypsy/Traveller pupils are the group most at risk with generally low attainment in secondary schools.

• Girls from minority ethnic groups attain more highly than boys.
Gillborn and Mirza (2000) analysed new data emerging from 118 LEA submissions (81 of which monitored for ethnicity) to the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG, instituted in 1999). In spite of problems of variability in the quality of data, especially the exclusion of Chinese and Gypsy/Traveller pupils, they were able to identify the following ethnic variation in achievement of five or more higher grade GCSEs:

- White pupils were the highest achieving group in four LEAs, second highest in a further 26 LEAs, lowest attaining in six LEAs.

- African Caribbean pupils were more likely to attain than White pupils in nine LEAs, although in 34 LEAs African Caribbean pupils failed to keep up with their White counterparts.

- Indian pupils were more likely than White to attain in 67 LEAs.

- Pakistani pupils were more likely than White to attain in 35 LEAs.

- Bangladeshi pupils were more likely than White to attain in 21 LEAs.

In other words, for each of the principal minority groups there is at least one authority where they attain higher than the other groups. Nonetheless, inequality of attainment is a significant and persistent problem for many minority ethnic groups.

How far are these findings confirmed in other data? Since 1987, DfES (formerly the Department for Education & Employment, DFEE) has published annual data from its Youth Cohort Study (YCS), a series of longitudinal surveys that contacts a sample of an academic year-group or ‘cohort’ of young people in the spring following completion of compulsory education and again one or two years later. A focal point in the data for secondary school Year 11 focuses on the benchmark of 5 or more GCSEs in the higher grades of A to C; data used to significant effect in analysis of ethnic group variations. The YCS provides the best available estimate with information about the proportion of pupils in each ethnic group that attained five higher grade GCSEs (or their equivalent). In the YCS data, Gillborn and Mirza, 2000 identified the following:

- Each of the main ethnic groups now achieve higher attainments than ever before.

- However African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils are markedly less likely to attain five higher grade GCSEs than their White and Indian peers nationally.

- In 1997, each of the minority ethnic groups has shown an improvement that is greater than that of the White cohort.

However, while White and Indian pupils have improved year by year since 1988, the attainments of African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi are less consistent. Indian pupils have made the greatest gains in the last decade, enough to overtake their white peers as a group. Bangladeshi pupils have improved significantly but the gap between
them and white peers is much the same. African-Caribbean and Pakistani pupils have drawn least benefit from rising attainment, the gap between them and their White (and Indian peers) is bigger now than ten years ago.

Gillborn and Youdell (2000) published their analysis of ethnic variation within the government drive for educational achievement. Between 1988 and 1998, the proportion of 16 year-olds attaining at least five A to C grades in GCSE rose from 30% to 46%. But there have also been growing inequalities between different parts of the education system, for instance, the growing number of pupils attaining no pass grades and the gap between schools performing at the top and bottom quartile points. 30% of boys attained the benchmark compared with 42% of girls and ethnic variation has become more marked with 50% of Chinese, 40% of White and Indian, 25% of Pakistani, 20% of Bangladeshi and 19% of Black pupils achieving the benchmark in 1993 (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000: 33–38). In other words, while there is clear evidence that ‘during the late 1980s and early 1990s at precisely the point when overall educational achievements were rising sharply, the inequalities of achievement between social classes also increased and these inequalities are even greater than those noted by gender and ethnic origin’ (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000: 39).

Demack et al (2000) reported on their analysis of social class, ethnicity and gender variations in attainment in five cohorts of school leavers between 1988 and 1995. They made four linked findings. First, they identified ‘two distinct attainment clusters’ and revealed that the lower attainment cluster is falling further behind the higher attainment cluster. Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students are in the lower cluster, Indian and Chinese students are in the higher. Second, they found that the ‘gender gap’ in favour of girls over boys is widening in all ethnic groups. Third, they found that when examination results are considered, social class differences were the largest, followed by ethnic differences. Fourth, the large social class gap was found in all ethnic groups, and for both girls and boys.

We have to remember that those ethnic groups with the lowest education attainment are those with disproportionately large numbers in the lowest social class groups. Their problems are ones of both ‘race’ and social disadvantage. The evidence calls into question a primary focus on educational standards in overall school performance (Demack et al, 2000: 138).

The findings all point in the same direction. In England and Wales ethnic inequalities are evident, and have widened in recent years in spite of, perhaps because of, the overall raising of educational attainment in GCSEs. Most notably, Indian and White pupils have sustained their positions as most successful, while Bangladeshi pupils have improved significantly but not enough to close the gap. Pakistanis and African-Caribbean pupils have gained least from rising attainment. However, in some LEAs and in some schools, the lower performing ethnic groups do better.

In Scotland, the major impediment to study of ethnic variation in attainment has been the lack of a national and reliable database, an issue that is being addressed post-Stephen
Lawrence through the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and specifically by the Scottish Exchange of Educational Data. Until now there has been great variation between local authorities and schools in the practice of systematic recording of ethnic and gender categories in education data. At present, there is a virtual absence of statistics on the presence, performance, choices, aspirations, experiences and outlooks of minority ethnic learners in relation to the various levels and types of educational provision in Scotland (Netto et al, 2001: 33 and 44). When Scotland has the essential statistical data, we might expect to find similar social class, ethnic and gender differences. But we should not predict which ethnic groups will be found to perform better in all schools. Ethnic variation and racial inequality do not develop in a vacuum but are meshed into other forms of inequality. The principles of analysing ethnic and racial inequality in their full context of social class and gender are now being embedded into educational research.

2.8 Factors which affect minority ethnic pupils’ achievement and attainment

Evidence indicates that there are differences in educational experiences and outcomes in Scotland relating to social disadvantage and discrimination, linked to class, ‘race’ and ethnicity, gender, special educational needs and disability (Campbell et al, 2001: 115).

Education is central to the Scottish Executive’s policies for Social Inclusion (Scottish Executive, 1999). If schools can succeed not only in being more effective for some of their pupils, but also in being more inclusive for all, this would ensure that the rate of low achievement can be reduced (Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act, 2000). On the one hand, there is the longstanding and distinctively Scottish inclusive emphasis on egalitarianism and democracy, the lad o’ pairts, on the other, there are the facts of serious under-achievement and growing levels of social deprivation and disadvantage which suggest that schools are not inclusive in their processes and equitable in their outcomes (Brown & Riddell, 1992; Powney et al, 1998; also Riddell, 1999).

In relation to the issue of gender, average figures for attainment have improved for both females and males over the past three decades but the gain in attainment by males has not been as great as for females and gender differences persist throughout all stages of schooling. The average figures conceal far greater differences in school experiences between high attainers and low attainers of both sexes and between those from advantaged and disadvantaged home backgrounds. Social class remains a greater source of inequality and under-achievement than gender.

In other words, the drive towards greater school effectiveness in pupil attainment that has dominated the politico-educational agenda in recent years is now being questioned (Demack et al, 2000; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). Schools are not achieving better education for all, the reduction of inequality and greater social inclusion. For instance, while there has been a marked and laudable, reduction in the numbers of pupils leaving school with no awards at Standard grade, who are these pupils, why were they not included, and what will be their fate in the world outside? It is
possible that the overall rise in attainment is obscuring, even precipitating, increased polarisation and fragmentation. This possibility must be explored, tested for social class, gender, and ‘race’ and ethnic differences within the averages.

The question of whether school effectiveness differs between specific groups of pupils is of critical importance, especially now that Scotland is diversifying faster than ever before. Today, there are few schools where there are no visible minority ethnic pupils; on the contrary there are many schools where they form a small proportion of the school roll and there are some schools where they are present in large numbers. Yet, because there has been no ethnic monitoring in educational data, schools remain ‘colour blind’. We simply do not know what is happening on the ground in primary and secondary schools. We do not know the ways in which pupils and teachers are adapting and changing in the face of racism and ethnic diversity.

Both OFSTED and Gillborn include frequent examples of good practice in their accounts of LEAs and schools but with repeated emphasis on the need for integrated, inclusive strategies. They prioritise comprehensive responses to whatever form of challenge schools identify, whether it be, for example, creative use of assessment data, or comprehensive response to a major racist incident. What they do not commend, is ‘cherry-picking’ of techniques and tactics without a fully developed policy and pedagogic context.

OFSTED (1999) presents examples of good practice in primary schools. They include in-depth analysis and response to ethnic variation in attainment, including response to the particular needs of Black African refugee boy pupils (14: 48 and 23:88), raising low staff expectations of Bangladeshi pupils (18: 64), a family literacy project aimed in particular at Pakistani families (34: 131), positive structuring of playtime (39: 151) and bringing down the barriers between majority white and small minority of Asian pupils in a rural infant school (42: 163). Examples of good practice in secondary schools include school and department head analysis of GCSE subject results by ethnicity and gender (15: 52 and 21: 79), analysis of the outcomes of school procedures by gender and ethnicity (18: 67), ethnic-sensitive monitoring of progress (22: 85), creation of an Attendance Unit to work supportively with pupils on the basis of monitoring (30: 117 and 119), routine analysis and response to monitoring of exclusions checking for year group, ethnicity and gender (31: 123), initiating a pupil away-day conference and consolidating a proactive stance of conflict resolution in relation to racial problems (40: 156) and responding to the dangers pupils face on their way home from school (41: 159).

Blair (2001) investigated why it is that in the sea of Black ‘under-achievement’ there are some islands of good practice schools in which Black pupils do better than elsewhere. She identified three major factors:

- Understanding by the adults in the school of the political and social concerns of their students and the willingness and courage to address them, however uncomfortable or difficult.
• Adult understanding of, and empathy with, the needs and concerns of adolescents. There is a need for teachers to be in tune with the particular age-group of students they teach in order to cater appropriately for them.

• The school’s willingness to work with parents as genuine partners in the pursuit of a socially and academically rewarding experience for students.

She demonstrated that if a school is willing to honestly address the issues that beset minority ethnic groups (for example, Black or Gypsy/Traveller students) it is more likely to embrace the issues that exist, whereas schools that take a ‘colour-blind’ approach are more likely to develop a ‘racially hot’ environment marked not only by resentment and conflict but by disaffection and more likely than not, under-achievement’. One school that was effective in strong leadership, positive ethos and with high expectations of students when visited, revealed a high level of negativity among the Black students, especially the Black boys, thus indicating that their concerns were either not known or not heeded.

Black secondary school students seem to speak with one voice about the nature of their experience of schooling; they feel they are unfairly treated by teachers, teachers have low expectations of them, teachers discriminate against them, do not treat them with respect, do not listen to them, and stick up for and support each other. At Northern Catholic, the school studied by Blair, the staff decided to listen to the grievances that were brought to them by students and then find strategies for developing a culture which created a positive learning environment for Black students (for instance introducing African Studies and Irish Studies), understanding issues from the point of view of the students, developing a culture of mutual respect so that students learned they would be believed until, after investigation, the facts proved to be different. What was needed in Northern Catholic was not only strong and determined leadership and a clear vision of what was right for the school, but enough teachers who were committed to the process of continuous improvement to create the momentum for change and provide the support needed for this to be effective.

In 2001, Campbell et al’s team submitted their review of developments in inclusive schooling in Scotland to SEED. They reported on the available research in the three fields of special educational needs, ‘race’, ethnicity and gender. They open their chapter on ‘race’ and ethnicity with two important remarks:

... ‘race’ and ethnicity can be hugely important aspects of people’s sense of identity and their experience of different life chances. However, it should not be assumed that these issues will always be the most significant for all individuals or in all contexts.

... the importance of ‘race’ and ethnic diversity cannot be judged in relation to the proportion of a population. The underlying issues of social justice, and the global nature of modern population and information flows, mean that an appreciation of ethnic diversity and an awareness of anti-racism are
Increasingly recognised as essential components of a ‘good’ education, regardless of local conditions.\cite{p43} 

Including pupils and pursuing equality are not simply about providing children with access to school. They require consideration of inclusive and equitable processes and outcomes throughout inclusive education. These are important and timely developments which must be considered alongside wider social and economic policies e.g. tackling child poverty, promoting social inclusion and reducing social exclusion:

- An understanding of ethnic diversity and anti-racism are widely seen as essential components of inclusive schooling.

- This is true regardless of whether minority ethnic groups are a significant part of a school’s population.

- There are important connections at the pupil level between academic achievement, motivation, behaviour, attendance and self-esteem.

- There are strong arguments therefore, for addressing these links in school improvement initiatives which seek to promote inclusion.

- Focusing on pupils’ experiences and views of school, and promoting the involvement of pupils and parents is important both for school improvement projects and initiatives to promote social inclusion\cite{Campbell et al, 2001: 10}.

Richardson\cite{2000} emphasises if ‘inclusive education’ is to be achieved, then formalities, policies and procedures are not sufficient, above all it is about ‘the love and imagination of inspired teachers’ and about listening, welcome and inclusion. For Richardson\cite{Richardson and Miles, 2003}, learning to recognise and challenge racism is a fundamental in creative teaching.

The indicators of good practice can be various. During the conduct of the study, MEPESS was alert to the signs in policies, staff responses and pupil discussions, that there may be a holistic, pupil-centred, inclusive approach that is succeeding in some important ways. It is important to highlight as many examples of good practice as possible. ‘Cherry-picking’ of initiatives by individual teachers working without school support, signs that the senior management in a school has been persuaded of the need for change, all should be sought in the hope that the advantages of whole school, inclusive ethos and practice can be realised for visible minority ethnic pupils.

2.9 Racial equality and special educational needs

The field of Special Educational Needs (SEN) remains deeply contested even without introducing the issue of race equality. As in other countries, Scotland has witnessed a number of national consultation reports and changes in legislation that have been

What was of particular interest to the MEPESS study is whether educational research and these policy initiatives had given due regard to issues of ethnic and racial diversity. The research team has drawn on publications by Scottish researchers, other more recent policy-related material and innovative development work that is being done by MELDI, a black-led organisation that works with minority ethnic disabled people in Scotland (www.meldi.org). This has enabled us to arrive at themes that were of significance for the design of the MEPESS study. As will become apparent, there is a serious lack of research literature on the topic of ‘race’ equality in SEN policy and practice across the United Kingdom. We found well documented evidence that indicates that white disabled children experience high levels of social control and discrimination in schooling because of environmental, structural and attitudinal barriers to their participation in mainstream education as well as competing arguments about the validity of the notion of ‘SEN’ and its effectiveness in delivering an education based on the rights of disabled persons (Allan, 1999; Stalker, 2000; Watson et al, 1999). These studies have much to offer in understanding the experience of minority ethnic pupils in general. However, we should also point out that very little is currently known about the representation and experiences of minority ethnic disabled pupils, including those who are identified as having SEN, in Scottish and English schools. This in turn raises questions about the extent to which this group of pupils receives equal opportunities in education and whether local authorities are in a position to comply with recent legal obligations concerning both race and disability equality (Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000; Education Disability Strategies, Scotland, 2000).

2.10 The place of ‘race’ in SEN policy and research

Reflecting on research literature in England and Scotland, Almeida Diniz has consistently argued that SEN policy-related research has adopted a ‘colour-blind’ approach by failing to acknowledge ethnicity or ‘race’ as factors in the design and analysis of research studies (Almeida Diniz, 2000/2001; Almeida Diniz and Reed, 2001; Almeida Diniz and Usmani, 2001). Attempting to explain the neglect of ‘race’, he has contended that changes to SEN educational policy and practice have been hampered by competing discourses that have often been conducted by different interest groups. For instance, he says that problematic questions about the educational performance of black minority ethnic pupils have centred on notions of ‘under-achievement’, ‘school exclusions’, or ‘bilingualism’ and that these arguments have been conducted within discourses on ‘anti-racist education’, or ‘bilingual education’. Rarely have links been made with current debates on ‘inclusive education’ that are dominated by concerns about disability and SEN.
In evidence to the Scottish Parliament Committee of Inquiry into SEN, he stated:

The discourses on special educational needs and inclusive education are themselves exclusive. They have failed to recognise issues of race and racism ... mainstream services are failing to give due regard to racial, ethnic diversity in service provision. (Scottish Parliament, 2001:120).

Almeida Diniz notes that the sole reference to issues of ethnicity in current SEN is a clause that states that learning difficulties that arise from the child’s home language should not be equated with the legal definition of ‘learning difficulties’. He then argues that such an emphasis on ‘their’ languages and cultures may have deflected attention away from the reality of racially discriminatory practices that have led to the misdiagnosis of the genuine barriers that some minority ethnic pupils experience in learning (Usmani, 1999; Almeida Diniz and Usmani, 2001). They conclude that the racialisation of educational policy and practice means that traditional notions of ‘access’ and ‘participation’ that are evident in mainstream ‘inclusive education’ discourses are unlikely to command the confidence of black minority ethnic communities, including those who have disabled children. They welcome the approach taken by the Scottish Parliament committee, which acknowledged the existence of institutionalised racism as a feature in special education stating:

The Scottish Executive should undertake systematic ethnic monitoring and ensure that this informs strategy ... Racial equality issues are not given sufficient consideration and black and minority ethnic families are disadvantaged by insufficient information and an inequitable distribution of resources. There is a shortage of bilingual Educational Psychologists and evidence from MELDI indicates that schools are generally not inclusive of children’s culture, background and experiences, or that of their parents. (Scottish Parliament, 2001: 7, xix and 41).

Finally, they point out that such an explicit acknowledgement is rare in SEN policy discourses and highlight two recently published national policy reports which demonstrate a shift in thinking concerning service provision for minority ethnic disabled children and their families by acknowledging the issue of ethnicity and institutional discrimination (Audit Commission, 2002; The Mental Health Foundation, 2002). The first of these titled, Special Educational Needs: a mainstream issue, reports on the situation in England and Wales. The second Count Us In includes Scotland in its enquiry into the mental health needs of young people with learning disabilities and offers a detailed analysis of the institutionalised barriers experienced by minority ethnic disabled young people in accessing services in health, social care and education.

During the course of the MEPESS study, Audit Scotland was conducting its inquiry on provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Its report was published recently (Auditor General Accounts Commission, 2003). With regard to provision for minority ethnic pupils, it reported that only a third of councils currently have data on the numbers and performance of minority ethnic pupils with SEN. It states:
To ensure that children and young people from minority ethnic communities are not over or under-represented and to ensure that their particular needs, eg language, are being met, this information should be gathered and analysed. (3.16)

The report concludes by recommending that:

Councils should collect information on the numbers of pupils from ethnic minorities assessed as having SEN to help ensure that they are identified effectively and that their needs are subsequently met. (Recommendation 4)

This development is a welcome start towards recognition of ‘ethnicity’ in SEN policy and practice in Scotland. Nevertheless, there are a number of questions that remain concerning the role of agencies, other than Councils (e.g., Scottish Executive, HMIE, Health, Social Care), in complying with recent legal obligations (Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000). Some of these issues concerning the negative impact of structural, institutional and cultural barriers in the design and delivery of services on minority ethnic children with SEN and their families are discussed below.

2.11 The impact of race on institutional practice in SEN

The current invisibility of race equality has resulted in a failure to acknowledge a number of institutional barriers in service provision that have implications for the quality of education provided for minority ethnic disabled pupils in Scottish schools. There is evidence that indicates that:

- There is no national policy, ethnic monitoring or research data on the assessment, placement and performance of minority ethnic pupils in SEN provision, despite the recommendations of the CRE (1996) report in Scotland and ongoing controversy about the performance of minority ethnic pupils in schools in England.

- There is little acknowledgement of other systemic barriers in the design and delivery of statutory and voluntary sector services, including the severe shortage of black professionals in the workforce, lack of translation services, colour-blind curriculum, all of which could be seen to contribute to racial inequality in the experiences of minority ethnic pupils with SEN (Ahmad et al, 1998; Curnyn et al, 1991; Usmani, 1999).

- The views of minority ethnic disabled children have received little attention (Patel, 2002).

- Parents of disabled children are severely under-represented in making decisions about their children, had little knowledge of assessment procedures and complained
that professionals had low expectations of them (Chamba et al, 1999; Emerson and Azmi, 1997; Flynn, 2002).

2.12 Researching the experience of disabled children

The decision to include a consideration of the experiences of minority ethnic disabled pupils raised even more complex issues because of well-documented methodological dilemmas that abound in disability research, even before confronting the compounding effects of issues of race and ethnicity. As was mentioned earlier, we found well documented evidence that indicates that white disabled children experience high levels of social control and discrimination in schooling because of environmental, structural and attitudinal barriers to their participation in mainstream education. Whereas minority ethnic disabled young people are likely to share many of the experiences of discrimination encountered by their white disabled peers, they have also been found to carry a double pathology of race and disability by their teachers (Allan, 1999). Patel’s (2002) recent small study is a good starting point for exploring minority ethnic disabled children’s experiences of their daily lives. To what extent was it going to be possible, within the remit of the MEPESS research project, to explore the complex issues that surround the discourses on race equality and disability and how might mainstream disability research influence this task?

In their report of a seminal study of the lives of disabled children, Watson et al (2001) have argued that much research into disabled childhood has frequently excluded the voices of the young people themselves as research has focused on the perspectives of parents, professionals and other adults. They developed a conceptual and methodological approach which was highly productive in giving disabled children a ‘voice’ in articulating their perspectives within the broader discourses of rights, inclusion and citizenship. We have greatly benefited from their research and list some of the key features in their findings which are of interest to a study which aims to understand the experiences of a social group who are known to experience social exclusion.

Watson et al report that:

- The categorisation of children as disabled also formed part of the adult world which bounded children’s experiences. Such labelling often involved disability as a dominant status, where other differences or similarities remained muted or unattended to, and everything related to a child being explained by their impairment.

- The children themselves were more ambivalent about the use of the category of ‘disabled’ both in relation to themselves and to others, suggesting their perspectives were based on experience and context.

- Their understanding of the importance of variables such as gender, ethnicity, impairment, social class and locality on these young people’s capacity to be independent social actors was again drawn from detailed analyses of their experiences.
and cultures. However, they also state that the issue of ethnicity was often overlooked by providers of services. Interestingly, they were able to highlight the way gender and ethnicity were ignored in most services for disabled children, as impairment operated as a dominant status. For example, in one area, a service for children with Downs syndrome was part of a school on an estate with a history of racial violence, which meant that black and Asian families were reluctant to send their children there.

- While the majority of disabled children were male, most workers in special education were female. This suggests a lack of role models for boys to emulate.

- Disabled children are capable of identifying good practice. Our data suggests that where children encounter disablist practices in schools, they should be encouraged to put forward their own solutions to their problems. If given space, they are capable of empowering themselves where they encounter teachers and other adult helpers, provided these adults reflectively question their own practice.

- A key strategy they identify is for teachers and others to be flexible in their response to children for whom disability is only one aspect of their lives. The children themselves recognise that they are different, but, as they make clear, this difference only becomes relevant at certain times and in particular contexts.

One of their conclusions is of particular interest. They argue that, at the core of the disability dilemma was a tension between the ways in which difference was constructed and reinforced alongside an imperative to assimilate. On the one hand, children were constantly reminded that they were essentially different from their non-disabled peers, whilst on the other, they were compelled to adopt the behaviour, the ways of speaking, the ways of walking which most closely approximated that of non-disabled children. Whereas the MEPESS study of minority ethnic pupils does not permit such an in-depth analysis as that conducted by Watson et al, there may be commonalities in terms of the forms of social exclusion experienced by both disabled children and their minority ethnic peers.

2.13 Conclusions

While the literature review was underway it became clear that Scotland was embarking on the change in public culture that is required if a society that is so ‘mainly white’ is to begin to grasp the nettle of what is actually being experienced by minority ethnic pupils in their daily lives, in school and in relations with their classmates and friends. The baseline data from both the new National Census and the School Census is invaluable as a guide towards what is happening down at grassroots level. Both Censuses have confirmed that Scotland’s ethnic profile remains distinctive, the minority ethnic population remains small, even though it is growing, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the population as a whole. The number of schools that are ‘totally white’, rather than ‘mainly white’, is diminishing all the time. There can be few teachers in
Scotland who do not now face the challenge of adapting to the needs of pupils who are visible in their difference, and therefore in their vulnerability to racism.

‘Needs, not numbers’ is the principle that has been developed in research as realisation has grown of how many schools in England, as well as Scotland, are still ‘mainly white’. Scotland’s ethnic profile may be distinctive, but it is not unique. There are important lessons to be learned from studies that have been carried out in situations similar to our own. All Scotland’s teachers and all Scotland’s pupils need to acquire the skills of living in a society that is diversifying, especially, if at any time they hope to progress in their careers, and move into situations where they adapt to an ethnic profile that differs from what they have known until now. Even moving from one Scottish city to another brings about change in the ethnic landscape of pupils and their families, and of teachers and their families.

Research studies are essential if the experiences of pupils and schools are to be captured, if the impact of new policies and procedures is to be monitored and reviewed and if pupils and teachers are to engage in learning and teaching within a context of good practice and mutual understanding. Schools can, and should be, islands of safety and security within which pupils learn the principles of racial justice and ethnic diversity. Schools can become such islands if key knowledge and insight are disseminated.
CHAPTER THREE: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT DATA

3.1 Educational attainment data

3.1.1 The aim of this aspect of the MEPESS project was to explore patterns of educational achievement shown by minority ethnic and other pupils in the schools covered by this research. However, the general context concerning the collection and holding of assessment data by schools and authorities in Scotland was instrumental in determining the quality and quantity of data received. In the event, for reasons which are detailed in this section, the statements which can be made about educational attainment are, if anything, more about the context in which the data was collected than they are about the pupils themselves. As a result, this section is mainly about methodological and practical issues surrounding the availability of attainment data with ethnicity as a variable.

3.1.2 For many schools, the practice of routinely collecting data on educational attainment and forwarding the results to the authority for central storage and interrogation is a new one. Also, it is not one which all teachers have embraced enthusiastically since there is some unease about the use to which such data might be put. However, there is growing acceptance by the teaching profession that the practice will become established and that there are strong professional arguments in its favour. The position therefore, is currently changing, not only over time but also over place. Since circumstances vary from one authority to another, they will be considered separately.

3.2 Data made available to MEPESS

3.2.1 Authority A

Authority A is currently developing its practice in this area and in time intends to use a dedicated system to develop a central database but at present the material available is not in a state suitable for research use. A handful of primary schools are putting pupil-level 5–14 data (i.e. A to F levels) on to Phoenix but the data quality is variable at the moment. At secondary level, pupil-level data has been entered into Phoenix for Standard and Higher Grades but these do not have a field for ethnic background. The MidYis tests from Durham University are also used by this authority and these results will be stored along with a field for ethnic background, though it is not compulsory for parents to fill this in.

Towards the end of May 2002, the authority indicated that it did not feel that it would be appropriate to pass on the data to MEPESS. The reasons were: (1) because of the very small numbers of pupils involved any results would be inconclusive and (2) even without providing names directly, any mention of different ethnic groups in the analysis may enable individual identification of pupils. The authority subsequently indicated that it did not wish MEPESS to make direct approaches to schools to seek pupil level data.
further final approach, Authority A agreed to supply data for the two secondary schools concerned but at the time of submitting this report, no data had been received. Consequently no assessment data is available from Authority A for the current research.

3.2.2 Authority B

Over recent years, Authority B has been participating in a Collaborative Research Programme with a Scottish university. One of the strands of this programme has been the evaluation of the Early Intervention Programme for numeracy and literacy in Primary 1 and also the analysis of reading and mathematics test data collected by the Council in Secondary 1 and Secondary 2.

As one of the independent variables included in these analyses was ethnic background, there already exists a base of research evidence on the effect of ethnicity on both the statics and dynamics of educational attainment (i.e. whether minority ethnic pupils score higher or lower and whether their scores change more or less over time than majority ethnic pupils). As the Authority funded this research, it has ownership of both the findings and the report as well as the original data on which they were based. However, the Authority when approached did not give its permission either for the data to be used, or the findings to be quoted for present purposes. A final approach from SEED to the Director of Education was made but did not lead to any change in this position. Consequently, no assessment data is available from Authority B for the current research.

3.2.3 Authority C

Like Authority A, Authority C is in the process of developing mechanisms for holding a central database of pupil achievement and from session 2002–3, this will be done using a dedicated system. At the moment there is no central database of pupil-level attainment in SQA examinations in secondary schools. At primary level however Authority C was able to supply a spreadsheet of 5–14 levels in reading, writing and mathematics accorded to each of the 832 pupils from P1 to P7 in the three primary schools concerned (Schools A, B and C). In addition, the file contained each pupil’s gender, ethnic origin and home language. Consequently 5–14 assessment data from three primary schools was received, but no data from secondary schools is available from Authority C for the current research.

3.2.4 Authority D

Using a dedicated management information system, Authority D has central access to pupil-level 5–14 data (i.e. A to F levels). The Authority was able to supply a spreadsheet of 5-14 levels in reading, writing and mathematics accorded to each of the 1,197 pupils from P1 to P7 in the three primary schools concerned (Schools D, E and F). In addition, the file contained each pupil’s gender, ethnic origin and home language.
At secondary level, the authority was able to supply a spreadsheet containing the same fields as for the primary schools for 757 pupils in S1 and S2 in the two secondary schools concerned (Schools G and H). In addition, the file contained records for 268 pupils in S4. Of these records, 124 contained the number of standard grades taken, and the grade achieved in each as well as each pupil’s gender, ethnic origin and home language. Consequently, assessment data from three primary and two secondary schools is available from Authority D for the current research.

3.3 Data presentation

This section is confined to a factual presentation of the data received and comments on its nature. Evaluation and discussion of the data is included in section 3.5.

3.3.1 Ethnicity and home language

Table 3a presents a complete listing of all the ethnicities and languages recorded in the six primary schools in the data from Authority C and Authority D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian – other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black African</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1521</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black – other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – other</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – UK</td>
<td>1429</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>Memon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Mirpuri</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2029</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2029</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3a – Ethnicities and languages in the Authority C and Authority D primary schools included in this research

Table 3b presents a complete listing of all the ethnicities and languages recorded in the two secondary schools in the data from Authority D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian – other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black – African</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black – other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – other</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – UK</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1025</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1025</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3b – Ethnicities and languages in the Authority C and Authority D secondary schools included in this research

3.3.2 5–14 levels

The 5–14 curriculum covers the expected spectrum of pupil attainment from the start of primary education to the end of the second year of secondary education. Achievement is measured by the level which the pupil has reached. There are six levels ranging from A, the lowest level, to F, the highest. There is also a code U which indicates that the pupil has not yet been assessed as having reached level A. Attainment is measured in a number of curriculum areas but for present purposes, only three of these, Reading, Writing and Mathematics, are relevant.

Table 3c conveys the completeness of the data. The first column gives the number of pupils in each of the six primary and two secondary schools for which data was received. The remaining columns give the number of valid fields for each school for Reading, Writing and Mathematics. The figures in brackets give the number of valid fields (i.e. as a percentage of the figure in the first column).
Table 3c – Data completion rates by school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>332 (73.1)</td>
<td>271 (60.0)</td>
<td>334 (73.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>114 (56.2)</td>
<td>113 (55.7)</td>
<td>113 (55.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>136 (77.3)</td>
<td>82 (46.5)</td>
<td>113 (64.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>207 (76.4)</td>
<td>207 (76.4)</td>
<td>207 (76.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>441 (79.7)</td>
<td>441 (79.7)</td>
<td>441 (79.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School F</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>254 (68.1)</td>
<td>239 (64.1)</td>
<td>250 (67.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools G/H</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>711 (93.9)</td>
<td>711 (93.9)</td>
<td>711 (93.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, these completeness figures are difficult to interpret. In particular, there is (for some of the data at least) a theoretical distinction between code ‘U’ (meaning ‘not yet at level A’) and ‘missing data’ (meaning that the pupil could be at level A or beyond but a result is not available).

No data for 5–14 levels in Reading, Writing or Mathematics were available for P1 or P2 in School A, School B or School C or for P3 in School C and no 5–14 levels for Writing were available in P3 for School A. In the case of P1 pupils, there is unlikely to be any distinction between ‘U’ and ‘missing data’ since pupils may well not have been assessed so early in their school careers. Beyond that however the distinction may be important. It is unlikely for instance that no P3 pupil in School C has achieved level A in any area. More likely is that either it is the school’s policy not to administer 5–14 tests until P4 or that for some reason the entire batch of assessments had not been forwarded to the authority. Even more marked, one P7 pupil in School A was recorded as being at Level C in Writing and Mathematics but had no recorded Level for Reading. One P7 pupil in School C was recorded as being at Level D in Reading but had no recorded level for Writing or Mathematics. These are very unlikely to be a genuine Unclassified so they were treated as missing values and excluded from the analysis.

Generally speaking, in what follows, missing values were excluded if they covered the attainment in a given area (e.g. Reading) for a whole year group in a particular school or, if they differed by more than two levels from another attainment recorded for the same child.

The following attempt was made to investigate whether missing data rates varied between minority ethnic pupils and others. It was assumed that for pupils in P4 and above, missing values denote unknown level of attainment as opposed to ‘known to be not yet at level A’. This will not be true in all cases but is probably true for most cases and it does enable the comparison to be made. Table 3d gives the missing data rates, with numbers of pupils in brackets, for pupils whose home language was given as English and those whose home language was other than English.
Clearly the missing data rates are substantially higher for those pupils whose home language is not English. It is possible that part of the explanation for this is that the assumption described above is incorrect and that the difference reflects the fact that more of the non-English group are not yet at Level A. It seems very unlikely however that this explains the whole of what are substantial differences between the groups. It is not possible to comment further at this stage on why this might have arisen but it is worth noting that one implication is to complicate even further the comparison of the different pupil groups since there appears to have been different degrees of data selection amongst them.

In order to facilitate the processing and presentation of the data, the 5–14 levels were numerically coded as follows: U = 0; A = 1; B = 2; C = 3; D = 4; E = 5; F = 6. Table 3e gives the mean value of this variable, taken over all pupils, for each area of attainment, along with its standard deviation (in brackets) and the approximate number of cases on which each mean is based.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th></th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th></th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>0.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>0.21 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.63 (0.00)</td>
<td>126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>0.81 (0.40)</td>
<td>0.76 (0.43)</td>
<td>0.88 (0.32)</td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>1.43 (0.78)</td>
<td>1.36 (0.71)</td>
<td>1.31 (0.64)</td>
<td>243</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>2.02 (0.75)</td>
<td>2.01 (0.77)</td>
<td>1.80 (0.55)</td>
<td>264</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>2.85 (1.04)</td>
<td>2.54 (0.96)</td>
<td>2.62 (0.74)</td>
<td>266</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>3.23 (1.27)</td>
<td>2.84 (1.17)</td>
<td>3.02 (1.05)</td>
<td>257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>3.71 (1.39)</td>
<td>3.27 (1.39)</td>
<td>3.66 (1.29)</td>
<td>351</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>4.29 (1.21)</td>
<td>4.32 (1.12)</td>
<td>4.12 (1.35)</td>
<td>360</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3e – Mean 5–14 levels by year and curriculum area

Data about the cultural/ethnic background of pupils was contained in two fields relating respectively to ‘Ethnic Origin’ and ‘Home Language’. For the former, Authority C and Authority D used different systems of categorisation and technical difficulties were encountered in transferring the Authority C data to a common file format carrying the data from both authorities.
It was decided therefore to use home language as the dependent variable as the coding systems used by the two authorities were easily reconcilable. This had the obvious consequence that minority ethnic pupils whose home language is English were not differentiated from majority ethnic pupils. Considerable collapsing of categories was necessary in order to maintain reasonable cell sizes. For present purposes, four categories were used: (1) English; (2) South Asian (including Punjabi, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Urdu, Mirpuri and Memon); (3) Arabic; and (4) any other language or language unknown.

Table 3f gives the mean 5–14 level for each year from P2/3 to S2 of pupils in each of these four categories for Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Only cases where there are at least ten pupils in a cell have been included. The total number of Arabic-speaking children was 35 but no year included as many as ten of them and so the category does not feature in Table 3f.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>S Asian</td>
<td>Other/Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>0.23 (96)</td>
<td>0.20 (15)</td>
<td>0.07 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>0.85 (167)</td>
<td>0.69 (26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>1.51 (191)</td>
<td>1.22 (27)</td>
<td>1.17 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>2.05 (213)</td>
<td>1.97 (29)</td>
<td>2.15 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>2.98 (212)</td>
<td>2.84 (32)</td>
<td>2.06 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>3.47 (204)</td>
<td>2.78 (23)</td>
<td>1.79 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>4.04 (240)</td>
<td>3.45 (84)</td>
<td>1.52 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>4.38 (270)</td>
<td>3.96 (70)</td>
<td>4.30 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>S Asian</td>
<td>Other/Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>0.77 (111)</td>
<td>0.80 (20)</td>
<td>1.00 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>1.43 (170)</td>
<td>1.12 (25)</td>
<td>2.09 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>2.08 (189)</td>
<td>1.72 (29)</td>
<td>2.06 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>2.62 (211)</td>
<td>2.84 (32)</td>
<td>1.76 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>2.95 (196)</td>
<td>2.73 (22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>3.56 (240)</td>
<td>3.13 (84)</td>
<td>1.19 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>4.39 (270)</td>
<td>4.11 (70)</td>
<td>4.20 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>S Asian</td>
<td>Other/Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>0.74 (96)</td>
<td>0.13 (15)</td>
<td>0.46 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>0.91 (167)</td>
<td>0.88 (26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>1.35 (191)</td>
<td>1.07 (27)</td>
<td>1.12 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>1.81 (211)</td>
<td>1.86 (29)</td>
<td>1.91 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>2.66 (204)</td>
<td>2.78 (32)</td>
<td>2.54 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>3.12 (195)</td>
<td>2.86 (22)</td>
<td>2.36 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>3.97 (240)</td>
<td>3.40 (84)</td>
<td>1.78 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>4.14 (270)</td>
<td>4.07 (70)</td>
<td>3.95 (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3f – Mean 5–14 levels by curriculum area, year and language group

In theory, Table 3f should allow the identification of any differences in the rates at which pupils in the three groups progress through the 5–14 levels. In fact, this will only be possible to the extent that the groups in the various years are comparable with each other. This is probably a reasonable proposition for the ‘English’ language group, partly because of its size and partly because of its comparative homogeneity. It is less reasonable for the ‘South Asian’ language group, partly because of its much smaller size and partly because some pooling of linguistic and cultural backgrounds has already been necessary. For the same reasons, and even more so, it is not reasonable for the ‘Other/unknown’ language group. Indeed in this case there is marked evidence of a lack of comparability. In Reading for example, the means for S1 and S2 respectively are 1.52 and 4.30. It is unlikely that the S2 group would have had a mean of 1.52 if they had been measured a year earlier. A much more likely explanation is that the groups are not comparable.

3.3.3 Standard Grade

Regarding the completeness of the data, of the 268 S4 records for Schools G and H, the number of Standard Grades taken was available for 258 or 96.3% while the actual Standard Grade passes obtained, and hence the grade point average (GPA), was available for 124 (46.3%).

In Table 3g, the first row gives the mean number of Standard Grades taken by pupils in three language groups. The second and third rows give the GPA and the number of Standard Grades taken in those cases where the GPA was known.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>S. Asian</th>
<th>Other/unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Grades taken (all pupils)</td>
<td>7.81 (182)</td>
<td>8.19 (59)</td>
<td>8.24 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>3.13 (73)</td>
<td>3.53 (43)</td>
<td>3.07 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Grades taken (GPA known)</td>
<td>7.84 (73)</td>
<td>8.16 (43)</td>
<td>7.50 (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3g – Standard Grade summary figures by language group

It can be seen that overall the groups whose first language was not English took slightly more Standard Grades than those whose first language was English. The South Asian group attained slightly lower grades (indicated by a higher mean value since grade 1 is the highest level of attainment) but neither they nor the ‘Other/unknown’ group is
3.4 Discussion

3.4.1 Given the imperfect quality and coverage of the data on which they are based, it is perhaps not wholly surprising that the figures presented above tell us little about the difference between minority ethnic and majority ethnic pupils in the eight schools in Authority D and Authority C to which they refer.

3.4.2 Specifically, there are two reasons for this. The first is that 5–14 levels are not primarily designed for the purpose to which they are being put here. The present research ideally needs standardised assessment measures taken at constant intervals (i.e. all pupils assessed at the same time) to provide the most accurate measure possible of pupil attainment at each testing point. In contrast, 5–14 levels are confirmatory indicators that pupils have reached specified levels. They are not good measures of the time at which the level was reached and they are not measures at all of the extent, if any, by which the level had been exceeded at the time of the testing.

3.4.3 The second reason is that, while they are pupil-level (which is what is required here) as opposed to school-level measures, they are not longitudinal. A table corresponding to Table 3f above could be constructed from longitudinal data by following a cohort of students through the years from P2 to S2 to examine whether differences between minority ethnic and majority ethnic pupils change over time (e.g. whether there was any evidence of a ‘catching-up’ effect). This would be a much more sensitive test of the existence of any such changes.

3.4.4 As it is, Table 3f reflects not only any such changes which may be taking place but also year-to-year differences in the overall educational attainment of the pupils. Given the small size of the non-English language groups, even after collapsing the linguistic categories, it is likely that the year-to-year differences are substantial and in fact may well be greater than the longitudinal effects which are the focus of interest.

3.4.5 This likelihood is reinforced by the uneven progression of the mean 5–14 level of the non-English language groups in Table 3f. The size of the English language group is sufficient to give it some stability and the mean 5–14 level increases fairly smoothly from P2 to S2. In the case of the minority groups, however, there are several occasions where the 5–14 mean actually falls from one year to the year senior to it. It is highly unlikely that this would happen if the same pupils had been tracked over time.
3.4.6 A third feature of the data reported here which reduces its sensitivity as a measure of the educational effects of minority status is that, even to achieve the cell sizes reported, it has been necessary to pool linguistic categories which conflate cultural differences that might be important for the purposes of this research. The only category that was large enough to produce cell sizes of over ten in each year was the South Asian group and even this consisted of languages from a range of cultural and social traditions which might impact differently on the educational experiences of pupils.

3.4.7 The ‘Other/unknown’ group pooled languages from French via Turkish to Mandarin. It is not certain that these pupils have much in common socially or culturally other than that their first language is not English. When it is considered further that the available data does not take account of the length of time each pupil has been resident in Britain or the pupil’s fluency in English, it will be appreciated that the database of educational attainment is well short of that needed to take account of the multiplicity of social and cultural influences which could be relevant to educational experience.

3.4.8 For the future, it appears to be the case that centralised holding of pupil-level data by authorities is becoming more widespread at the present time and it is likely that over the next two or three years the evidential base relating to pupil attainment will develop in both the proportion of pupils covered and the detail held about each one.

3.4.9 If additionally, the data is held in such a form as to permit the extraction of pupil-level longitudinal statistics, it could have real potential as a source of information about the relative progress of different pupil groups. This potential would be further realised if the use of standardised tests, currently being adopted or at least considered by a number of education authorities in Scotland, becomes accepted practice, at least amongst the four authorities which have featured in the present research. However, such an eventuality depends on a range of professional, political and technical developments, the investigation of which lies outside the scope of the present research.

3.5 Conclusions

3.5.1 One of the aims of this study was to make valid and reliable statements about the educational achievements of minority ethnic pupils. These statements may have been made either absolutely, in relation to 5–14 or other attainment benchmarks, or relatively as compared to their majority ethnic peers. The quantity, quality and representativeness of the data which was made available to the project was not sufficient to enable any reliable statements of any type to be made.

3.5.2 The paucity, in 2001–2, of the required database may reflect the state of development of the procedures and practices of schools and authorities as regards collecting, collating and
using pupil-level attainment data. However, the professional analysis and application of such data can bring considerable benefits to both authorities and teachers in terms of monitoring patterns of pupil performance and the effectiveness of the school. The position regarding data availability may well change over the next few years in response to increasing appreciation of these benefits and greater familiarity with the technology of data storage and transfer.

3.5.3 Specifically, the requirements of the RR(A)A2000 may provide a further spur to the building of accurate and comprehensive methods of storing and using pupil-level attainment data. Recognition of the rights and responsibilities which the spirit of the Act places on all parties to the educational process should provide an incentive for teachers and local authority staff to accept ownership of this development and to identify the part they can play in it. It is likely however, that the achievement of this will require further staff development for both schools and authorities.

3.6 **Recommendation**

1. Consideration to be given to providing staff development to key school staff about the purpose and importance of ethnic monitoring. Each authority should consider this in relation to the accurate provision of data to the Scottish Executive.
CHAPTER FOUR: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF TEACHERS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 A postal questionnaire survey was undertaken to elicit the views of Scottish teachers with regard to the experiences of minority ethnic pupils’ experience of schools. The sample was stratified across the three school sectors of primary, secondary and special, as well as across the four Scottish authorities in the study.

4.1.2 Differently coloured questionnaires were used to identify the school sector whilst the authorities were identified by placement of an appropriate letter (A, D, E or G) in the top right hand corner of the first page.

4.1.3 It was stressed to those completing the questionnaire that neither individual schools nor individual teachers would be identified in the survey. Each participating school was sent a set of questionnaires to distribute to its teaching staff with a covering letter and briefing paper explaining the background. In order to encourage a good response, all questionnaires could be returned in an individual self-addressed envelope (SAE). There was a reasonable amount of space around the open-ended questions for teachers’ comment and respondents were encouraged to continue any answers on a separate sheet if they wished.

The survey was to some degree a staggered one due to the drawn-out process of identifying which schools would take part but the returns were at their peak during the spring of 2002.

4.2 Survey returns

4.2.1 A total of 247 completed questionnaires were returned from the 1,055 questionnaires sent to the 24 schools. This represents a response rate of 23%. There were 12 nil returns. Several headteachers commented during the school interviews that pressure of work might have prevented a higher response. One school explicitly mentioned that they had allocated a slice of teaching time for their staff to complete the survey. Another school returned a single questionnaire on behalf of all its staff, stating that their staff had completed the questionnaire jointly as part of a staff meeting.

As returns were made anonymous to maintain confidentiality, it is not possible to tell if a particular school returned more forms than others.
4.2.2 Throughout this chapter, except when otherwise stated, the analysis of the 247 returns are presented as percentages. Where column totals are provided in tables these normally total 100 except when affected by rounding up or down.

The four authorities in which the Study was conducted accounted for survey responses in the following proportions: Authority A 25%; Authority B 27%; Authority C 19%; Authority D 29%.

4.2.3 In sector terms 58% of returns were from secondary schools, 30% from primaries and 12% from special schools.

4.3 Analysis of questionnaire responses

Subsections 4.3.1–15 report upon the responses made to questionnaires issued to schools.

4.3.1 Question 1: Does your school operate a policy for multicultural/anti-racist education?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, developed by the school</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, developed by the local authority</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, both school and authority</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4a

When asked if their school operated a policy for multicultural/anti-racist education (MCARE), over 70% of respondents indicated that they did. 35% indicated that the policy had been developed by the school itself (Table 4a).

26% of all respondents indicated the policy had been developed by the local authority and a further 10% that it had been a joint initiative with the school.

When questioned further regarding the nature of school policies in place, 15% of total respondents indicated that they were aware of a stand-alone policy on MCARE for their school, but this does not quite concur with the documentary evidence obtained. The majority of school documentation submitted did not indicate that many schools had separate MCARE policies nor were the MCARE aspects clear within many policies received. The documentation supplied by the schools revealed that in the majority of cases, MCARE was subsumed under broader aspects of policy such as inclusion, equal opportunities, anti-bullying and school ethos. Questionnaire responses do not therefore appear to concur with the documentary evidence. The most likely explanation is that a
significant number of the respondents came from a selected number of schools, most of which either had explicit sections on MCARE within their generic equality or inclusion policies or had stand-alone policies.

4.3.2 Question 2: *If you answered ‘yes’ to Question 1, how familiar are you with the policy?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have not read the policy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have read the policy but have had no cause to use it</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have read the policy and have used it occasionally</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have read the policy and use it regularly</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4b

While 71% of total respondents indicated that a school or local authority policy was in place (Question 1), 30% indicated they had read the policy but had no cause to use it, while an equivalent number had used it either occasionally or regularly.

The respondents who were aware of MCARE policies provided examples of how they had used the policy. The range included using the policy to put in place provision for translation of school letters, facilitating the expression of minority ethnic viewpoints in discussions, ensuring the logging of racial incidents and developing ways to encourage minority ethnic parents to become active in the school community.

The numbers who had neither read the policy nor had cause to use it was high – 45%, as was the ‘no reply’ category at 25%. The question to consider here is whether non-usage or lack of knowledge of a MCARE policy translates into a lack of consideration for MCARE issues in learning and teaching practice. This would clearly have an impact on the school experiences of all pupils in the classroom, most specifically, that of minority ethnic pupils.

4.3.3 Question 3: *Please tick boxes to indicate from which of these groups you have minority ethnic pupils in your class(es).*

Results in descending order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4c  Distribution of Minority Ethnic Pupils in Respondents’ Classrooms

Though relatively large proportions of teachers have encountered minority ethnic pupils, the frequency with which they did so has not been ascertained. Forty different nationalities were cited under the category ‘other’, and these are listed in Appendix 3.

4.3.4 Question 4(a): *Do you consider that ethnic minority pupils have different learning needs?*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4d

77% of respondents indicated that they believed minority ethnic pupils had different learning needs and most teachers indicated that they took account of these learning needs, as indicated below.

4.3.5 Question 4(b): *If you answered ‘yes’ to Question 4, can you give examples of ways in which you take account of the learning needs of minority ethnic pupils in each of the following areas: classroom practice, curriculum, assessment, pupil support, home-school links?*

Of the 77% of respondents indicating that they believed minority ethnic pupils had different learning needs and indicated that they took these differences into account in the key areas listed:

66% (51% of all respondents) cited *classroom practice* methods such as:

- adapting worksheets to allow for language difficulty and diversity
- use of black and North African presenters in French language videos
- talking more slowly, making language simpler and more direct, using an interpreter
- greater use of visual aids, pictures and symbols
60% (46% of all respondents) cited curriculum approaches, offering examples such as:

- trying to avoid an exclusively ‘western’ focus in the curriculum
- using ‘multicultural’ texts, e.g. the diary of Anne Frank
- reviewing aspects of the curriculum such as sex education
- promoting community languages in the school

50% (39% of all respondents) cited approaches to assessment such as:

- allowing bilingual pupils to sit SQA language exams ahead of schedule
- being aware of potential cultural and linguistic biases in assessment tools and procedures

62% (48% of all respondents) mentioned pupil support activities such as:

- greater use of one-to-one teaching, extra instruction and individually-tailored programmes
- pairing a child with a ‘buddy’ who speaks the same language

48% (37% of all respondents) referred to home-school link measures such as:

- sending letters home in an appropriate community language
- encouraging dual language reading at home and use of the first language in written work
- open-door policies regarding parents
- involving parents in multicultural and linguistic workshops utilizing translators

4.3.6 A selection of quotes from the respondents illustrates contrasting situations, with some teachers getting to grips with the issues and others expressing difficulties in managing a host of competing demands:

Our ethnic minority pupils are usually from ‘academic families’ and tend to be quite bright and fairly confident anyway.

A Chinese girl is top of my class, her English is excellent.

I am not trained for this and my whole time is spent trying to get my British pupils to pass their exams.

I suppose I do try harder with youngsters of other race in terms of social inclusion.

Our school is overloaded with pupils who speak no English or speak it very poorly.

A Libyan boy speaks no English but there is nothing for him to do.
A child with no English has been put into my science class. ... I can do nothing for him except to appear kindly disposed.

I asked my class today and they felt it [race] was not an issue. I teach many disadvantaged children from deprived backgrounds and difficult home circumstances.

Notwithstanding some of the concerns and dilemmas in the section above, it is encouraging that some teachers are adapting practice and looking to ensure the curriculum takes into account the diversity within the pupil population. However, it is important that approaches are constantly appraised to ensure that they are consistent with what is identified as positive practice within multicultural and anti-racist education. Again there is a need to assess beyond the boundaries of this study if this practice is universal or remains ‘ad hoc’.

The last quote might reveal that all is well but could equally suggest that harmony (silence) is no indicator of racial justice. The learning point for us is not to become complacent when or because problems do not appear to manifest themselves.

Responses also indicate a continued need for staff development to enhance teacher confidence in working with a diverse range of pupils, and, specifically, in addressing language issues to ensure access to the curriculum. The linkage made by teachers between English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision and pupils’ ethnicity suggests a focus on those minority ethnic pupils whose English language proficiency is at a relatively low level, are seen as causing a problem in the classroom. Enhanced EAL provision is viewed as vital, but so too are the needs of minority ethnic pupils who are ‘native’ to Scotland and fluent in English. The fact that teachers appear to equate questions about ethnicity mainly with EAL issues rather than relating ethnicity to generic race equality issues or issues of identity requires to be addressed.

4.3.7 Question 5: Can you give examples of ways in which you apply anti-racist education in the areas of classroom practice, curricula, assessment, pupil support and home-school links?

The proportions of total teacher respondents indicating where they applied anti-racist approaches were as follows:

65% cited classroom practice as an area in which anti-racist education was applied, offering examples such as:

- never letting any hint of racism go without comment
- encouragement of pride in bilingual and multilingual skills
- creating displays with appropriate themes, such as ‘one planet, one people’
55% referred to curriculum as a site of anti-racist activity in such fields as:

- teaching about the value of difference in pupils’ backgrounds and experience
- participation in multicultural events
- ensuring a place for world sports and hobbies
- class discussions focusing on the sharing of different beliefs, backgrounds and cultures
- visits by police and refugee council personnel
- linking with schools overseas
- avoiding racially offensive material and checking for stereotypes in resources
- the study of relevant topics such as the Holocaust and the life of Martin Luther King Jnr
- visiting mosques and other places of worship

23% referred to assessment but no concrete examples were offered.

33% offered examples in the pupil support field such as:

- buddy systems
- lunchtime and after-school help groups

26% referred to home-school links and concrete examples cited were:

- encouraging minority ethnic parents to mix with others at social events
- allowing minority ethnic pupils time off to attend relevant cultural and religious events

Respondents provided a range of examples on how they were contributing to the development of anti-racist practice. Some were more pertinent than others for application in schools with well-constructed and resourced strategic approaches to countering racism and promoting race equality. The better examples were those which demonstrated that they were providing opportunities for the discussion of race legislation and of racism as either a topic of study or as a moral issue.

However, there was still some confusion about whether race issues ought to be raised when pupils themselves were not spontaneously discussing the issue. One respondent cited the following as an example of anti-racist practice:

_Avoidance of reference to race unless pupils are happy to volunteer._

It is difficult to interpret what the above quote means. The respondent viewed it as an example of applying anti-racist practice. It could be that the respondent was trying to say that they would not single out minority ethnic pupils to discuss race issues unless the pupils themselves volunteered the information. On the other hand, it could be argued that the avoidance of the issue of racism is not anti-racist. In the absence of clarification from the respondent it is important therefore to note that teachers require more opportunities to
discuss and to learn constructive and effective ways of raising the issue of race equality and racism with pupils.

4.3.8 Question 6(a): Do you see Education for Citizenship as offering potential for the promotion of racial equality?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4e

Just under half saw the potential of Education for Citizenship for promoting racial equality and were able to cite some examples. The small minority of 4% indicated explicitly that they saw no potential and the 43% of ‘don’t knows’ may indicate that many teachers are as yet unfamiliar with this curricular area.

4.3.9 Question 6(b): Do you see Education for Citizenship as offering potential for the prevention of racial discrimination?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4f

A slightly smaller number saw the potential for citizenship education for the prevention of racial discrimination than did for the promotion of racial equality.

The examples offered included such comments as:

*If this did not try to counteract racism it is not citizenship.*
All races are represented on a pupil council.

Education about rights and responsibilities will go far towards promoting racial equality.

A good education will lead to respect and tolerance of other beliefs and values.

Again, views varied as to whether issues of race and racism should be addressed openly, directly and systematically or should be tackled only as they arose. There was also some disagreement about the age level at which race equality matters could best be raised.

Some found the citizenship materials very dry and uninteresting whilst others thought the issues were already tackled within other contexts.

We already have a unit which tries to develop attitudes of respect, tolerance and appreciation of other perspectives.

A fairly high number of respondents could see how Education for Citizenship could assist with the promotion and prevention of racial discrimination. However, there was a range of understandings of how this could occur in practice, for example, from using it as another curricular opportunity to discuss issues of racism and racial discrimination to one that promotes tolerance and respect. This study is not able to assess to what extent current school discourses on respect, tolerance and mutual appreciation tackle issues of race equality. Such discussions could quite easily avoid consideration of racism unless specifically addressed.

4.3.10 Question 7(a): Please indicate the type and frequency of racist incidents which you have dealt with over the last twelve months?
Indications of the type and frequency of racist incidents dealt with over the previous twelve months as indicated in teacher responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1–2 per year</th>
<th>1–2 per month</th>
<th>1–2 per week</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>% Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name-calling, insults and/or racist jokes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist graffiti</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist badges or insignia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaying racist materials</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and non-verbal abuse and threat</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incitement of others to behave in racist manner</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist comments during lessons</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting to recruit for racist groups</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridicule of an individual for cultural differences</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to co-operate with other people because of their colour, ethnicity, language or faith</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written derogatory remarks</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4g

The percentage of non-responses ranged between 6 and 18 per item. To simplify the table above, the respondents who ticked ‘never’ are excluded and the remaining responses added together. The rank order of incidents according to frequency is:
Table 4h

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name-calling, insults, jokes</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridicule</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to cooperate</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written remarks</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incitement</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display of materials</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insignia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most commonly occurring incidents involve the spoken word. The least common incidents were those of organised racism involving incitement, recruitment or the display of insignia and other materials.

Under 5% of the most commonly occurring incidents occur weekly, but more seriously, just over 10% of responses indicated 1–2 physical assaults a year.

4.3.11 Question 7(b): Can you outline where those incidents mainly originated (e.g. pupils, staff, etc.) and who they were aimed at (e.g. other pupils, staff, ethnic minorities in general)?

66% of respondents provided a response. Just under 5% of those responding referred to staff racism.

One teacher reported that more racism originated from one or two ignorant teachers than from pupils. Another teacher indicated that most racist remarks were made by staff in the staffroom.

The following quotes from half a dozen other respondents also indicated their views that, in some cases, teachers were the source of racist remarks or attitudes directed towards minority ethnic pupils and/or their families.

Staff (aimed) at pupils.

Staff (regrettably) towards ethnic minorities.

I find most racist remarks are made by staff in the staff room.

I have heard staff tell racist jokes in the past.
*Comments* (were) made to parent by staff member *(dealt with through staff training)*!

*Comments* by staff indicate prejudices. ... *But in many cases (staff and pupils) the prejudices lie below the surface. This leads to isolation.*

One (staff) member *(promoted/guidance)* referred to pupil as ‘half-caste’. *(Comment made at a departmental meeting; member of HMI inspection team present). Another member of staff said *(within naming distance of a pupil new to English, ‘Does she not understand any English?’* *(I) raised one issue at a departmental meeting *(with)* a member of senior management. ... *(I) raised the other issue with senior management member. Both teachers appeared to be unaware of insensitivity of remarks.*

Others cited anti-English verbal attacks on staff, while others pointed out the graffiti in surrounding streets. There were also incidents between different ethnic and religious groups.

There is a need to continue actively to educate against the usage of racist terminology such as ‘Pakis’ and ‘Chinkies’. The myth that these terms are harmless and part of the Scottish vernacular is debunked in the Scottish Executive campaign *One Scotland. Many Cultures.*

A worrying issue to arise from the respondent comments relates to racist remarks made by staff and the level of ignorance that appears to occur within staff groups, as reflected in comments made in the safety of the staff room. There is a need for employers and initial teacher education providers to be very explicit about the unacceptability of using racist terminology or the making of racist comments by staff.

To what extent are racist comments and innuendo in staff rooms condoned? This may be a case of professional complacency or, at worst, collusion that needs to be addressed.

The issue of racist comments made to staff, in particular, to English members of staff suggests a need to be more explicit about anti-English racism. Anti-English racism is often trivialised, marginalised and then made invisible. Xenophobic comments about the English are often seen as not as grave as comments about Asians, Africans or other visible minorities when in fact they are serious and cause immense hurt and upset.

Other respondents emphasised that racism usually results in exclusion and isolation from peer groups.

4.3.12 Question 7(c): Please outline the strategies used when you have had to deal with racist incidents.
Respondents cited that there were written warnings to staff members but as one respondent poignantly reminds us, ‘a child never forgets when an adult calls him names’, thus reminding us that the damage is done.

Where pupils were concerned only the most trivial incidents (in the eyes of the victim) stayed within the department, almost all incidents were referred to guidance or senior management. In most cases, respondents stated that incidents were recorded in a discrimination log.

Sanctions mentioned included writing a letter of apology, detention, loss of golden time, making pupils produce a report on another culture to be presented to the headteachers.

However, some respondents also cited proactive work designed to build bridges, reduce prejudice and challenge discrimination. Work was put into valuing rather than ridiculing cultural differences and role play was employed as an anti-discriminatory approach. Another respondent reported that their school marked its cultural diversity with a celebration every year promoting different ethnic backgrounds. Yet another suggested that it was important to bring a contemporary understanding to the issue, for example, to explain the rationale of immigration as a much needed development to reverse Scotland’s declining population.

The range of responses would suggest that teachers try to strike a balance between imposing sanctions and employing creative and imaginative solutions to the problem of racist behaviour.

4.3.13 Question 8(a): How satisfied were you with the way in which the incidents were handled?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied Level</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite satisfied</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/no response</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4i
4.3.14 Question 8(b): In your opinion, how satisfied with the handling were those affected by the incidents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4j

The majority of those who responded were happy with how the incidents were handled. There was a slight drop in the figures for the satisfaction of those affected by the incidents.

An example was given of how progress was made after the incident was addressed. At the end of the process, the abuser and victim forged a friendship. Others also commented on involving the children to help seek solutions, while others cited the need to bring in interpreters to assist communications between home and school while seeking a resolution.

Some teachers acknowledged the time and effort put into the handling of such incidents but feared the undermining influence of parental attitudes in the home.

4.3.15 Question 9: Please give details of your formal and informal professional development over the last two years in the area of multicultural/anti-racist education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Development</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% attending formal courses</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(refers to organised courses often by education authority)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% attending informal staff development</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(refers to staff development via peer discussion or self reading)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% indicating further training needed</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4k

Almost half of the respondents had been offered some informal staff development in the previous two years. 48% said some further training was needed.
Provision on offer to date for staff development on race equality included:

- Staff meetings held to discuss introduction of multicultural policy
- Paired teaching to model use of new multicultural resources
- Undertaking M.Ed. modules, e.g. social justice and inclusion
- Closer working relationship with EAL unit
- Training from education department and a local anti-racist project
- Courses on literacy and bilingualism
- In-service training days with asylum support staff
- Updating on relevant developments

4.3.16 Question 10: What further training in the area of race equality do you consider that you need?

Respondents indicated a need for further training in race equality in the following areas:

- Ways of handling serious incidents without the anxiety of being misinterpreted
- Keeping up-to-date with terminology and discourse
- Gaining opportunities to learn community languages

Most respondents wished to have regular staff development to keep up-to-date with terminology and contemporary discourse on racism and race equality.

However, it is important to comment on the respondent who indicated that social inclusion was a more pressing issue. A key consideration relates to the extent to which social inclusion incorporates an analysis of racism and race equality. Failure to achieve this would mean that social inclusion is analysed and developed with non-racialised lenses resulting once again in the needs of minority ethnic people and pupils from lower socio-economic groups becoming invisible under the generic heading of ‘social inclusion’.

4.3.17 Respondent profile

The section on ethnicity is difficult to analyse as the questionnaire asked for self-classification. The majority described themselves as Scottish or British and fewer than half (40%) classified themselves as White. To ensure anonymity and to protect confidentiality there will be no individual labelling of the very few who did describe themselves as from a visible minority ethnic group. Though it is not possible to derive accurate figures from returns, it is assumed that the respondent group matches the teaching profile of Scotland which is predominantly white.

In terms of age, the majority of the sample was over 35, which approximates to the age profile of the 1998 Scottish teaching workforce statistics held by the Scottish Executive. The proportion of males in this sample was just under the equivalent figures for the
Scottish population. In relation to ethnicity, there were, at the time, no nationally held statistics on the teaching force for use in comparisons.

4.4 Conclusions

4.4.1 The survey of 247 teachers in the four Scottish authorities provide an illuminative though not generalisable picture for Scotland, since it is based on an urban-based, non-random sample where selection criteria allowed for access to schools with specific characteristics (see 1.3.1).

4.4.2 70% of respondents indicated that they worked in schools which operated a multicultural and anti-racist education policy and 35% stated that the policy had been developed in the school. However, this does not concur with documentary evidence which did not provide much evidence of multicultural and anti-racist education policies, either stand-alone or merged with generic equal opportunities policies. Only 13% of teachers stated they had read and used a race equality policy regularly. 17% were occasional users, while 45% said they had never read nor made use of such a policy.

4.4.3 Citizenship Education was generally seen as a means of contributing to the prevention of racial discrimination. Quite a number of respondents saw Education for Citizenship as another curricular opportunity to discuss issues of racism and racial discrimination.

4.4.4 Racial incidents manifested themselves in many ways although the most common was the spoken word. The least common were those which entailed organised racism involving incitement, recruitment or display. Racism among colleagues was identified and while only a small minority of respondents cited this, it was forcefully articulated. The issue of anti-English racism was also mentioned in the context of pupil-to-teacher comments.

4.4.5 Professional Development is still needed in the area of race equality with nearly half who responded saying some further training was needed to:

- keep them up-to-date with terminology, contemporary discourses on racism and race equality
- cover ways of handling serious racial incident.
4.5 Recommendations

1. Support for teachers in taking forward MCARE should concentrate on the identification of practical exemplars to support and assist teachers to develop their work in a culturally and ethnically sensitive manner.

2. Curriculum developers, education policy writers and strategists need to revisit current available advice and documentation in order to mainstream race equality.

3. Race equality needs to form part of a school’s annual self evaluation and to be part of reporting back for local authority inspections or HMIE inspections. It is the authority’s responsibility to obtain such data.

4. Opportunities need to be created to allow teachers to discuss ways of raising the issue of race equality and racism with pupils at all levels.

5. There is a need for education authorities as employers to provide information for all staff, teaching and non-teaching, on the unacceptability of racism, including anti-English racism, racism to Gypsy/Travellers and the usage of racist terminology.

6. Staff development opportunities or guidance notes should be distributed on an annual basis to keep staff up-to-date with terminology and contemporary discourses on racism and race equality.

7. Staff development to be provided to all staff, teaching and non-teaching, to raise confidence to handle racial incidents in schools.
CHAPTER FIVE: DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Schools involved in the study were asked to submit documentary material reflecting and illustrating their approach to race equality and diversity. Of the 24 schools which took part, 23 (96%) made contributions. Of these 8 were secondaries, 11 primaries and 4 were special schools.

5.1.2 The documentation received varied widely in quantity, in nature and coverage, and in the degree to which it focused on race equality and diversity issues. At one end of the spectrum, the paperwork submitted demonstrated a comprehensive effort to address the relevant issues across a broad range of school functions; at the other, a copy of the local authority’s race equality policy, accompanied by little evidence of school-based applications was all that was received. In some cases, where a relatively large volume of material was made available, the location of relevant race equality items within it was either unclear or haphazard. In others, an understanding of mainstreaming principles and practice was clearly evident. The latter circumstance did not occur frequently. In a number of instances, schools indicated that they were in the process of reviewing policy and practice with a view to embedding race equality more fully across the range of their activities.

5.1.3 It is worth noting that in a few cases where the study team was aware that race equality policy and practice had been developed significantly, the documentation received did not reflect this situation. Whether this was in any way the result of work pressure, the assumption that the researchers already possessed the relevant information or, for instance, was due to the absence of key staff is unknown. It is also possible that some schools may have been reluctant to submit outdated material. The response of one school, that its limited contribution was due to the senior staff’s view that it had already been ‘over-researched’, may be indicative of the fact that the key task is not to ‘discover’ good practice, but to support and broaden its application across a variety of circumstances.

5.1.4 Whichever limitations applied, the documentary evidence available (which was often difficult to obtain, requiring continual follow-up requests) provided a snapshot of the published perspectives of a range of schools in Scotland where minority ethnic pupils were present and where inclusive outlooks were thought likely to feature in the period 2001–2 (see matching criteria, Chapter 1.3.1).

5.1.5 It is important to consider that although the evidence made available to the study team applied to the period prior to the full implementation of the RR(A)A2000 in Scotland on
30 November 2002, schools became responsible from that date for mainstreaming of local authority race equality policies in such areas as:

- Pupils’ attainment, progress and assessment
- Curriculum, teaching and learning
- Promoting good home-school and school-community relations
- School values
- Pupil behaviour, discipline and exclusion
- Racial harassment and bullying
- School board membership
- Pupil enrolment and attendance
- Pupils’ personal and social development and pastoral care

5.1.6 The results of the documentary analysis demonstrate a wide variety of approaches. The evidence available indicates that, with some notable exceptions, much remains to be done by schools to publish comprehensive outlines of their measures to address race equality as a key element of social inclusion. An attempt is made below to map out the range and depth of attention given to race equality as illustrated by the material received and to draw some provisional conclusions.

5.1.7 In the first instance the documentation is considered on a sector basis. Thematic issues are then discussed and, where appropriate, geographical factors are referred to.

5.2 The secondary sector

5.2.1 In the race equality and/or equal opportunities policy field, some schools submitted discrete school-generated examples. In a few cases, the statements themselves were comprehensive in coverage relating to such areas as aims and values, school organisation, curriculum design and content, home-school relations, bullying, discipline and behaviour and staff development. In these instances, documents also referred to the valuing and support of bilingualism and cultural diversity.
5.2.2 In the best examples of good practice, as reflected in policy documentation, race equality was linked directly to SEED’s national priorities for education on the one hand and explicitly embedded in the school development process on the other.

5.2.3 More commonly, race equality was either encompassed within relatively brief equal opportunities statements, or, in a policy sense received no direct mention, for example,

*In common with all (city) schools, (X High School) has a policy of Equal Opportunities. Equal Opportunities forms an integral part of the school ethos ... By now, the notion of Equal Opportunities is deeply embedded in the everyday running of the school.*

5.2.4 Where race equality (or equal opportunity) policy coverage was limited, the evidence suggested that in some cases general statements of commitment could coincide with a lack of operationalisation, for example, in such areas of school organisation and ethos as bullying, uniform/clothing, language, rights and responsibilities. In a few anti-bullying documents racism, and other equality issues, are given explicit mention as factors to be considered in bullying behaviour. More commonly, race/ethnicity receives mention in the passing, but is not addressed discretely.

5.2.5 Where curricular exemplars were provided, they tended to be sourced mainly from RME and the social subjects/history areas, for instance, the Holocaust, the life of Dr Martin Luther King Jnr, Living in a Plural Society or descriptors of key religious faiths. One item on the sociobiology of race contained crude and outdated categorisations which are wholly inappropriate today.

5.2.6 Where reference was made to bilingual pupils, it tended to be inclusive and supportive, but details of approach and provision were sometimes unclear.

5.2.7 It may be that certain schools saw general statements about achieving and maintaining an inclusive ethos as subsuming within them a commitment to assuming a non-discriminatory environment, specifically in the field of race equality. In others, the minority, the existence of institutional racism was recognised and published position statements gave the impression of a dynamic, developmental rather than an ‘add-on’ approach to equality issues.

*The school recognises the need for action to encourage a positive representation of disability, gender, race, sexuality and social class.*

*... through our personal and social development programme and behaviour policies we seek to ensure a strong anti-racist and non-sexist ethos.*

64
Clearly such a perspective indicates much greater readiness to meet the requirements of the RR(A)A2000 than is the case where race equality remains marginal to the mainstream.

5.3 The primary sector

5.3.1 A significant number of participating primary schools made direct reference to race equality in general statements of aims and some had discrete and comprehensive policies. In some cases, however, documentation on translating policy into practice was less evident.

5.3.2 Where elements of good practice were evidenced in documents submitted they included the following features:

- an understanding, acknowledgement and welcoming of ethnic diversity, specifically relating to good EAL provision
- the need to describe and address examples of racism in practice in relation to behaviour, attitudes, bullying and curriculum content
- the need to declare and develop a commitment to anti-racist practice in partnership with staff, pupils, parents and other community members
- an obligation to understand and apply the law in the various equality areas by embedding its provisions across the range of school functions

At X school we are committed to the promotion and development of equal opportunities ... Our ideals are reflected not only in the ethos of the school, but also in direct teaching, where skills, attitudes and knowledge are developed to help children recognise prejudice and discrimination and the importance of (choosing) to respond appropriately as a member of an ordered, inclusive and multicultural society.

5.3.3 One school provided their multicultural/anti-racist education policy, supported by and articulated through linked policy/practice documents on RME, bullying, environmental studies, discipline, language, home-school relations and development planning. As an institution it is particularly well-prepared to meet the requirements of the RR(A)A2000.

5.3.4 In two schools in one authority, each with significant numbers of Muslim pupils, differing approaches were taken to religious observance. In one, a multi-faith assembly
was employed while the other had separate Christian and Muslim assemblies with some provision made, in the latter, for secular non-participants.

5.3.5 As was the case in all sectors, racial incident and language monitoring tended to follow local authority guidelines.

5.3.6 In a number of cases it seemed that policy-practice has not been updated for some time (for example since local authority reorganisation in 1995-6) and this gave the impression of schools working in isolation or under significant pressure.

5.3.7 Where it was indicated that issues of race equality were addressed ‘informally’ through discussions in PSD and circle time, it was recognised by one headteacher that the school’s approach needed to be more formalised.

5.3.8 A few schools, not all of them in areas of high minority ethnic participation, did realise the need for comprehensive and well-articulated statements and detailed guidelines on race equality; others appeared over-dependent on generalised aims of providing a caring, safe and appropriate environment for an undifferentiated ‘all’.

5.4 The special educational needs sector

5.4.1 The impression given in the documentary evidence available from special schools was that managements are becoming more aware of the issue of race equality but that there remained a considerable task of developing policy and practice.

5.4.2 Where equal opportunity policy documents were in place they tended to be generic or (naturally) focused particularly on disability.

5.4.3 In the two cases where relatively extensive documentation was provided, the main commitments were made in general terms to equal opportunities and to cultural diversity with additional references to anti-racism through the local authority’s policy and stance.

5.4.4 As in other sectors, the mainstreaming of race equality was not clearly evident.

5.4.5 However, in some cases managers indicated their awareness of the need to address race equality issues more fully and this will of course be a requirement under the RR(A)A2000.
5.5 Conclusions

5.5.1 It is fully recognised that documentary evidence provides only a relatively narrow-angled lens through which to view what is taking place in a complex institution like a school. Paper policies and commitments may understate or exaggerate actual practice. With this proviso the following tentative conclusions emerge.

5.5.2 On a continuum from a non-existent to a comprehensive and integrated system of multicultural and anti-racist education, the documentary evidence suggests that a significant proportion of the sample schools are in a position of providing partial and somewhat ad hoc provision in terms of multicultural and anti-racist practice. Certain schools have made significant progress and are continuing their development.

5.5.3 There are schools which have made impressive efforts to mainstream race equality and they deserve to be rewarded and supported. Their example provides a platform of good practice upon which they and others may build and progress towards meeting their duties under the RR(A)A 2000. Some of these schools are situated in areas of relatively high minority ethnic participation but others are not. This demonstrates that the capacity and the incentive to develop and to apply anti-racist perspectives is not dependent on the presence of high levels of minority ethnic people. It is likely that visionary and committed school leadership has been the main driver for developing the school’s work in multicultural and anti-racist education. It is important that this is recognised and appreciated in Scotland where the aim is to achieve inclusive outcomes across the board.

5.6 Recommendations

1. Support needs to be given to develop consciousness and skills amongst teachers and other members of the school community regarding racism and ways of actively combating it.

2. Authorities and schools should identify mechanisms for obtaining feedback of pupil experiences in the areas of equality and fairness (including race equality).

3. Authorities need to work with schools to assist them mainstream race equality and anti-racism across the board rather than as a bolt-on response. Policy and practice development should be monitored.
CHAPTER SIX: TEACHER INTERVIEWS – Issues and findings

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The Swann report (HMSO, 1985) *Education for All* was the first government report to urge all schools, irrespective of ethnic composition, to confront the issue of racism as part of education. Since then, schools and authorities in Scotland have begun to adopt policies and guidelines on developing a multicultural education approach, developed frameworks to record racist incidents, explored strategies for supporting pupils whose first language is not English and, more recently, recognised the need to adopt multi-faith approaches as well as addressing racism as an issue within the curriculum, irrespective of the ethnic diversity of a particular classroom, school or geographical area.

6.1.2 By the early 1990s, a range of supportive frameworks began to emerge to assist teachers to take forward multicultural and anti-racist education (MCARE). The General Teaching Council (GTC) published its first policy in 1994 which was updated in 2001. The document provided advice to teachers on how to embed anti-racism into their practice. Scotland’s largest teaching union, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), also provides advice and support to its members on how to take forward race equality in teaching and learning. By 1999, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education had produced a school self-evaluation audit, *A Route to Equality and Fairness*, which again offered advice on how to address equality issues including race equality. By 2002, the self-evaluation audit, *How Good is Our School* (HGIOS), had been revised to include a specific quality indicator on equality and fairness.

More recently, the Scottish Executive launched a national campaign and website, *One Scotland. Many Cultures*, as well as funding a specific staff development CD-Rom and website for Scottish teachers on anti-racism.

6.2 School ethos and teacher attitudes

6.2.1 Previous research established that the school plays a central role in shaping pupils’ social identities, self-esteem and aspirations for the future (Pavis et al, 2000; Thorne, 1993). School culture and policies, particularly the manner in which the school approaches the implementation of multicultural and anti-racist education initiatives, can help or hinder the social and psychological development of all pupils (Gill et al, 1992; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Burnage, 1989). In particular, teacher’s perceptions of ability, employment potential and family obligations inform the career and pastoral advice pupils are given and so impact on their aspirations and potential (Wright and Solomos, 1993; Wright, 1987; Klein, 1993). Research also showed that pupils from schools where multiculturalism and anti-racism were prioritised were more likely to leave school equipped with the self-confidence and the qualifications to succeed in many spheres of adult life, e.g. in further education, careers and family life (Howarth, 2000). A report by
Ofsted, on *Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils* (1999), found that in schools which did not explicitly challenge stereotyping, low teacher expectations or divisive classroom practices, certain ethnic groups were more likely to leave school with few prospects.

6.3 **Aims and methodological issues**

6.3.1 The interview is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research. Interviews with teachers for this research took the form of semi-structured interviews. This method was selected as the most appropriate as it allowed for the greatest consistency; the interviews were carried out on a one-to-one basis by four members of the research team who followed a basic interview guide. Interviews with 81 members of teaching staff were conducted over a period of three months.

6.3.2 The research team agreed that interviews had to be seen as a ‘follow-up’ to the areas covered by the questionnaire. The interview guide therefore covered three core areas. Firstly, teacher understanding of multicultural and anti-racist education issues, secondly, ways in which teachers embedded MCARE into their work, and finally, teacher’s perceptions of minority ethnic pupils in their class or school.

6.3.3 It was agreed by the research team that the interview would take the form of a *conversation* and provide a great deal of leeway in how the interviewee might wish to respond. The element of *flexibility* within the semi-structured format was considered important as the area of multicultural and anti-racist education was recognised as an area which might be sensitive, new, controversial or ‘political’ for teachers. It was important that interviewees themselves had the space to raise additional or complementary issues which would contribute to the study’s findings. The open-ended discursive nature of the interview process, as the research team found, provided topics for discussion identified by earlier interviewees that were taken up and presented to later interviewees. This often helped to ‘break the ice’ for interviewees (Beadsworth and Keil 1992: 261–2).

6.3.4 All 81 interviews were taped with the interviewees’ permission. The majority of recordings were either fully transcribed, or, descriptive narratives with extensive quotations were produced. This was a highly time-consuming exercise but one which the research team found to be very useful as it allowed for detailed analysis as well as the extraction of verbatim quotes.

6.3.5 There was some concern over high noise levels interfering with the quality of recording as well as the potential for equipment malfunctioning. Furthermore, in some interviews, the interviewee provided useful information once the tape recorder was switched off so that written notes were often taken of final points. Many of the points raised covered
personal experiences of racism or dissatisfaction with the apathy of colleagues. Such adding of unsolicited postscripts is not uncommon and other researchers have commented on how ‘unsolicited accounts’ such as these can often be highly revealing. (Bryman, A 2001; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

6.3.6 All interviews lasted approximately 40–50 minutes (to fit into a ‘free’ period) and took place at the school where the teacher worked. Interviews with senior managers did, on the whole, take longer, some lasting an hour. In each school, a member of the senior management team was interviewed, normally the headteacher, as well as classroom or subject teachers. In addition, each school was asked to nominate others they deemed relevant to this study area for interview. The research team gave a guide as to the types of teachers that might be appropriate to interview though each school had the final say about who was interviewed. On a very few occasions, there were last minute changes as peripatetic teachers, mainly English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers were substituted because of timetable changes. With the exception of a couple of interviewees, all were willing to take part in the research study. The two who were not keen took part either because they were ‘asked to’ by their senior managers or, in the case of one headteacher, because the original permission had been obtained from his predecessor.

6.4 Analysing the methodological approach: strengths and weaknesses

6.4.1 A potential weakness from the data gathered from the teacher interviews surrounds the issue of reliability. How ‘honest’ were the teachers in their responses? How representative were the interviewees given that they were ‘selected’ by the school? The interview was a one-off and it would have been difficult to build trust between interviewer and interviewee in a forty-minute period. Respondents were probably generally aware that race issues were ‘in vogue’ given imminent legislative changes in the shape of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Coupled to this was a recent announcement by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education that they were shortly going to be embarking on a thematic inspection on race equality issues. Did the teachers interviewed give us ‘vocabularies of motives’, telling the interviewers what they might wish to hear? It is not possible to conclude one way or another, however, it is important to be aware of these possibilities. Mills (1940) who first brought to our attention ‘vocabularies of motives’ suggests that rather than concentrate on what is said, we should consider what motives are around that create such talk. The researcher then becomes someone who reflects upon the context of talk as given by the interviewee.

6.4.2 One of the main criticisms of interviews is that what is said in interviews (and questionnaires) is often not necessarily what those interviewed do in practice. (Webb and Stimson, 1976; Gilbert and Mulkay, 1983). Those who favour ethnographic methods have used this argument to problematise the interview method (Becker and Geer, 1957) quoted in Seale (1998: 204). There is therefore no automatic guarantee of the analytic status of the data emerging either in terms of reliability or validity.
6.4.3 The data gained must therefore seen as illuminative rather than presented as generalisable fact. Denzin (1970: 133–138) lists a number of ‘problems’ which he suggests can ‘distort’ interviewees’ responses. These range from the issue of self-presentation for the interviewee in the early stages of the interview, the difficulty of penetrating private worlds of experience, and the volatile, fleeting nature of one-off interviews which can lead interviewees to ‘fabricate tales of self that belie the actual facts’.

6.4.4 However, it would be fair to say that in interviews, as Heritage (1984: 236) puts it, the mistake is to treat the verbal formulations of subjects as an appropriate substitute for the observation of actual behaviour. The analysis of the interviews might have been further strengthened if the researchers had also been able to work over a period of time with the teachers engaging in classroom observation, using diary recordings and other interview fora, such as focus groups, to assess teacher behaviour.

6.5 Profile of interviewees

<table>
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<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<td>Deputes</td>
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<td>13**</td>
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* PT/APT = Principal Teacher/Assistant Principal Teacher  
* EAL/BSS = English as an Additional Language/Bilingual Support Service  
** telephone interview included here

Table 6a – Profile of interviewees
6.6  Themes emerging from the interviews

As with all other interviews conducted for this research, there was a great variety of views and experiences from the individuals concerned which reflect not only the ethos of the individual schools, but also the desire of school staff to provide inclusive education. For many of those interviewed, their personal experience and knowledge of racism was limited. There was a divide between those who had worked in settings with a high multi-ethnic intake and those who had only come across minority ethnic pupils intermittently. Nonetheless, all expressed a tremendous desire to do their best and to enable all pupils, including minority ethnic pupils, to have a successful and enjoyable school experience. Many contributors prefaced their interview with statements along the lines of ‘I am not sure what I can contribute’ or ‘I have not really thought about this’ but actually provided useful points which helped to build a picture. Quotes are inserted throughout to illustrate points made by interviewees. This does preclude identification of teacher designation and/or local authority but in selecting quotes, care has been taken to ensure the quotes derive from teachers at all levels from the range of sectors and authorities covered by this study. Equally, some highly illuminating statements made to the research team have not been quoted as they might identify the contributors.

Key themes that emerged are:

6.6.1 The dichotomy between visibility and invisibility
6.6.2 Putting race equality on the school agenda
6.6.3 Multicultural and anti-racist education
6.6.4 Terminology
6.6.5 Senior management and leadership
6.6.6 Bullying and racism
6.6.7 Working with bilingual learners
6.6.8 The importance of the English as an Additional Language Service (EAL)
6.6.9 The ‘exceptional’ child
6.6.10 Staff development
6.6.11 Working with a multiracial staff group and setting
6.6.12 Multiple deprivation and discrimination
6.6.13 The value of personal experiences
6.6.14 It’s not just about white racism
6.6.15 Home school links

6.6.1 The dichotomy between visibility and invisibility

The question of ‘visibility’ and ‘invisibility’ recurred within teacher responses. Comments about ‘not seeing difference’ came from a range of schools, both those with very small numbers of minority ethnic pupils and those with a higher intake of minority ethnic pupils. Colour and ethnicity have historically been used as divisive categories and, in the eyes of some respondents, should now be ignored in preference of seeing the individual qualities
and traits of each child, regardless of their background. For many, such a colourblind approach fosters inclusiveness.

We see the child, not the disability or colour or religion.  
**Headteacher, Special**

We don’t see the colour of the child, we see the child.  
**Depute Headteacher, Primary**

I don’t really like to rock the boat. We have a good community spirit and positive ethos in this school. We don’t tend to highlight the fact that we have ethnic minorities in school and whether they are green, purple or whatever, they are all our children and we don’t look upon them as different.  
**Depute Headteacher, Secondary**

The following statement was made by a teacher in a secondary school where 20-22% of the pupil population is minority ethnic.

I mean to be honest, I don’t classify children by language or race or religion. I just accept the children as they are and we don’t enquire closely into what nationality, what religion and so on and that’s true of the white population as well ... I think our strength is that we treat them the same ...

**Teacher, Secondary**

This interpretation of ‘being fair’ extends to other aspects of school life.

I don’t think we make any special effort to encourage minority ethnic parents onto the school board because we treat everybody the same.  
**Depute Headteacher, Primary**

However, teachers who ‘treat everyone the same’ may inadvertently be oblivious to differences that are real and impact on minority ethnic people’s lives. Pupil experiences of everyday racism, of being isolated as the only ‘visible’ person in the classroom or of having requirements based on their culture or faith, such as adjustments to the curriculum or classroom seating arrangements, illustrate the rationale for appropriate acknowledgment of difference. A continuing history of social damage would insist that teachers, as educators, require to develop an analytic comprehension of why it is important to ‘see difference’.

Many of the interviewees did recognise the need to be conscious of difference and the benefits of acknowledging the diversity of their work settings.

Of course, you have to see the differences, how else are you going to cater for the different requirements.  
**Teacher, Secondary**
The rich mix of backgrounds of the pupils – we can draw off such backgrounds because we ourselves do not have much experience.

*Teacher, Primary*

One teacher acknowledged how the school’s actions and words had inadvertently had an effect on home culture.

*I asked (the parent) if anything had changed with regard to school and she said the only thing was that I would say is I’m having a real difficulty with my children when it comes to mealtimes because they refuse to eat with their fingers. She explained that this food was all finger food and yet they insist on using cutlery. I had to put my head in my hands and say I know who that is – that’s me, because in the dinner hall I’m constantly going round and saying ‘Use your knife and fork. Can’t eat mince with your fingers’. Indirectly, I had an effect on their culture at home.*

*Headteacher, Primary*

Another spoke of the importance of acknowledging differences and to ensure this was carried forward into learning and teaching practice.

*We have principal teachers’ meetings dedicated to curricular suitability and learning and teaching approaches regularly. Within these meetings, the HT and myself will ask, so what about this approach in relation to this particular group of young people, what about that group of young people.*

*Depute Headteacher, Secondary*

A further question raised by the discussion on visibility and invisibility was how the issues of colour, ethnicity and identity are taken up by minority and majority groups. Interviewing 272 white and visible minority ethnic young people in Glasgow aged 14–22 O’Connor et al (2002) found that white young people were more likely to state that ‘ethnicity does not matter’. In contrast, minority ethnic participants were more likely to talk about their cultural mores or religious practices. In the same vein, teachers in this study who stated they did not ‘see’ the colour or religion were all white, while the very few visible minority ethnic staff interviewed all talked about the importance of acknowledging difference, particularly in relation to faith, language and culture which they saw as intrinsic components of identity formation. Equally, pupils and parents interviewed in this study wanted teachers to be more open and astute about diversity and to recognise the multiplicity they represented.

The confusion for white people about whether to see or not to see colour, ethnicity and difference is also discussed by others who have researched on race-related themes. Byrne (2000) in researching the views of London white mothers on matters related to child-rearing found that her interviewees were generally anxious not to be seen to be racist and that the simplest way not to appear racist was to avoid talking about race. Byrne described how difficult it was for her interviewees to sustain a discussion on race issues. She also commented on the irrelevance of race issues to white lives. In contrast, interviewees had no problems discussing issues of gender. She concluded that seeing
physical (racialised) differences clearly appeared to be much more contentious and complicated than seeing gender differences. Byrne also suggested that the ability to avoid acknowledging visual racial ‘markers’ is something that white people can do but black people cannot. In her study, all of the white mothers of mixed race children found that their children had relatively complex responses to colour differences.

Given that the Scottish teaching force is overwhelmingly white and appears largely to be as uncomfortable or more on ‘race’ matters as the mothers interviewed by Byrne, there is a need to consider the message they convey to their pupils and the wider school community. Visible minority ethnic pupils walk the tightrope of wishing to have their difference acknowledged in such a way that it values their background but does not single them out for potential abuse or ridicule. However, if their teachers are not confident about taking issues of race, racism and difference forward, how does this assist the child on the tightrope? The teacher’s discomfort or lack of confidence may unintentionally place the onus on the pupils and, judging by the research referred to above, presumably the minority ethnic pupils, to initiate discussions on racial diversity. If the ability or readiness to take on such a task is dependent on the personality of individuals it may be easier for some pupils to assimilate and not be noticed.

There is a need for teachers to be given the opportunity to discuss ways of working within multiethnic, multifaith, multilingual and multicultural classrooms in a manner that is inclusive while explicitly acknowledging diversity. This needs to be done in a manner that is neither tokenistic nor accusatory but is supportive. Equally, teachers who work in predominantly white schools, or in all white schools, must be assisted in placing and maintaining race equality on their agenda in a meaningful way when there is little diversity in situ to draw on.

6.6.2 Putting race equality on the school agenda

In its education chapter, the Race Equality Advisory Forum’s report (REAF, 2001) warned against the practice ‘that race equality issues are not absorbed to the point of invisibility within the generic equality framework or within concepts like mainstreaming or social inclusion’. It is now a requirement of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 that race equality must be addressed explicitly in policy and practice.

However, teacher responses showed that there remains a division, not only between those who recognise visibility and those who prefer not to acknowledge difference, but, furthermore between those who wish to see race issues placed explicitly on the agenda and those who view them as part of a generic human rights or inclusive education approach. The breadth of responses, which also included preference for a ‘common sense’ approach in relation to race and ethnicity issues, rejection of anti-racist policies and the opinion that there was ‘too much emphasis on race issues’, highlights the range of teacher attitudes and sheds light on the random way race equality appears to be pursued across different institutions and by different individuals. This is also supported by documentary evidence.
Most teachers interviewed in this study felt that race equality was best developed as part of an equal opportunities or human rights approach. However, there were divergent views on how this should be done so illustrating the disparity between those who held that anti-racism had to be explicit and the cornerstone of an equal opportunities approach and those who preferred not to think of it in terms of racism or anti-racism but considered it a matter of common human values.

*Equal Opportunities means understanding the nature of anti-racism ... it has to be fundamental to any equal opportunities approach.*

**Headteacher, Primary**

*Basically, we are encouraging youngsters and insisting that they treat one another with appropriate courtesy and respect. It's within that sort of ethos that we would deal with any issues that might be described as racial in any way.*

**Teacher, Special**

In one of the most recent works on the experiences of minority ethnic pupils in mainly white schools conducted in England by Cline et al (2002), teacher confidence was highlighted as an important feature that requires further exploration. Interviewee responses in this study also indicate how varying levels of confidence and ease with race equality matters affect the way teachers conceptualise them, translate their thoughts into practice or are conscious of shortcomings. They also make it clear that pupils’ school experiences are influenced by their teachers’ ability to engage with discussion around social justice.

*There is a real need to move on from ‘passive tolerance’ to ‘positive affirmation’ of difference. There is still a lot of complacency and ignorance about racism and about ethnic minorities ... There has been a regulation of behaviour but I’m not sure about changing attitudes.*

**Teacher, Secondary**

*I’m not convinced that we do actually promote race equality. We are aware of different cultures and we try to meet needs.*

**Teacher, Secondary**

*I personally would feel that raising racism as a social issue in P2 is too young, but that may be more to do with lack of confidence on my part in knowing how to actually raise that with children of P2 level; I’d feel more confident in doing that with children further up the school.*

**Teacher, Primary**

*From a very young age when I was 13 or 14, I joined the Anti-Nazi League and became active in this area. For me, anti-racism is an essential part of education, it’s a core educational aim to achieve a position where people are non-racist, instead they are anti-racist. I think it is more than just accepting and tolerating other cultures. It’s about being unhappy and challenging towards those who display racial intolerance ... I have no problems in discussing these issues with pupils.*

**Teacher, Secondary**
Troyna and Hatcher (1992) found that children tried hard to make sense of the racial aspects of their world. Contributors to this study again differed in their assessment of how minority ethnic young people would feel about open mention and indeed discussion of race issues.

I’m thinking of this particular school here, where say racism took on a high profile in a sort of cloth-eared way – the people who would like it least, I suspect, are the members of racial minorities, because I think, they would feel uncomfortable if the thing was spotlighted.

Teacher, Secondary

It is not my experience that black pupils feel awkward, not in the slightest, not at all, absolutely not at all. And I teach different classes with different make-ups of pupils, some with a larger black make-up and some with a smaller black make-up and I find that is not the case at all. I find if you raise these issues [referring to the learning of the roots of racism and of slavery] the kids are interested and involved and directed in what you are saying, and what you set up in terms of the learning activities.

Teacher, Secondary

Pupils seem to respond more to situations closer to home ... when they saw a documentary about people in here who had faced racial abuse after 11th September, there was quite a lot of anger among the pupils on behalf of those individuals.

Teacher, Secondary

Sometimes staff were overly keen for minority ethnic pupils to be proud of their identity but found the young people wished to ‘blend in’ and to be like their peers.

Where do you come from? ‘Oh! Place X (local area)’ Do you not mean Bangladesh? ‘No no’ You don’t? But what about where your parents came from?

Teacher, Secondary

Some felt that separating multicultural and anti-racist education as distinct strands did not assist inclusion.

If you wish to promote multiculturalism and anti-racism, then come up with a strategy which is not in itself divisive ... inclusion means inclusion for everyone.

Headteacher, Secondary

A dominant theme running through the interviews was that teachers appeared to relate the promotion of race equality to working with minority ethnic pupils. Very few respondents spoke of race equality as relevant to the entire school community, regardless of the ethnic composition of the school, nor did the responses reflect an appreciation of the complex nature of race matters or their place within the learning experiences of all pupils, and, indeed, teachers. Whilst parents interviewed in this study interpreted the
question of how to promote race equality in wide-reaching terms, discussing the way learning about social justice could permeate children’s school and indeed life experience, the initial response from many teachers homed in on the needs of pupils who required EAL support and the difficulties associated with working with an underfunded EAL Service. (This is referred to again in 6.6.8 and 6.6.9) They also spoke of the school’s handling of racist incidents, examples of multicultural work involving the use of artefacts, books or display materials in the classroom, the contribution of minority ethnic parents invited to demonstrate or cook or their contact with and respect for the local minority ethnic communities.

Whilst many teachers made positive reference to the way the diversity of the community had enriched their school and some embraced the opportunity to further inclusion within their work, it must also be noted that to a significant number, the notion of race equality was symptomatic of problems. One respondent, who kept emphasising that she had no problems because the presence of a few minority ethnic pupils did not present an issue to her, illustrates an almost involuntary problematising of ‘race’. The perception that there was ‘no problem here’, which may or may not be accurate in terms of her pupils’ settledness and happiness at school, fails to recognise the significance of race equality in its own right.

A few comments, often made by those most experienced in working with minority ethnic pupils, suggest that it is not simply that teachers lack knowledge but that some actively, and for various reasons, seem to choose not to engage with issues of race equality.

*It’s not to say those teachers don’t care about the children, because they do, but ... they don’t see that it’s their role to take on board the specific needs of those children (referring to bilingual pupils) and to incorporate that into the way they teach and present the curriculum.*

EAL, Teacher

*I think if you’ve got teachers prepared to think then they will become concerned (about issues of equality, fairness, multiculturalism) but many just want to get through the day. It’s not their fault, the authority is asking them to do this and that.*

Teacher, Primary

In Scotland, where currently the majority of schools have few visible minority ethnic pupils, education for equality needs to be understood as an approach that benefits all pupils, parents and staff. If race equality issues continue to be deemed of relevance only in multiracial schools, it is all too easy for teachers to disengage from discussion and development. Unless teachers work hard at placing the issue of race equality and diversity on their practice agenda, the issue is likely to become lost within a crowded curriculum. The effect on pupils would be loss of opportunities to acknowledge and understand diversity. Homogeneity, the current dominant discourse, would continue and minority ethnic young people, particularly where they are isolated, be taught to keep quiet and assimilate.
6.6.3 Multicultural and anti-racist education

The majority of examples given in relation to promotion of race equality were through

- learning about different faiths, festivals, customs and diets
- celebrating faiths and festivals
- encouraging pupils to talk about the countries they had come from
- discussions or presentations about diversity during assemblies
- involvement of minority ethnic parents (invited to demonstrate culture-specific activities, participate and attend meetings with teachers)

Much of the above was offered to the interviewers as conveying a message of mutual tolerance and respect to all pupils in the school. Overall, teachers felt that multiculturalism was enriching for all pupils and were happy to promote it.

Teachers from one school talked about the importance of respecting all faiths equally and their decision not to hold corporate worship within their school. Assemblies were based on themes such as peace and drew on the range of world religions. Parents were consulted with and, the respondents thought, understood the school’s approach. As a result no child from any faith background had ever been withdrawn from religious education. The school’s multi-faith chaplaincy was thought to signal genuine multiculturalism and respect.

A few contributors discussed the ways they raise the issue of racism with young people

- through teaching about the histories of black people and slavery in North America
- through discussing the effects of the Holocaust and its connection to present day forms of racism and xenophobia, particularly in relation to asylum seekers and refugees
- through the use of fiction and stories
- through inviting guest speakers such as the local community police or community organisations working with minority ethnic communities

Teachers used a range of methods to provide space for discussions on racism. One special school primary teacher based the exploration of prejudice with the pupils on the book ‘Iggy’s House’, a story about two families, one black, one white, in America.

One headteacher had an interesting perspective on the notion of embedding of issues throughout the curriculum.

_Every time there’s a new initiative, let’s do it by starting to integrate it across curriculums ... I’m not convinced that that delivers to the kids. It’s better to do a big impact situation to them and deliver it in social education or deliver it in_
religious education. Whereas if you permeate it across the curriculum, I think there is a job to do there but I think you have to have the big impact situation then permeate it across the curriculum, otherwise you can lose it.

Headteacher, Secondary

This notion of an explicit approach is one that is endorsed by education writers like Stephen May who argue that students whose backgrounds are more marginal to the discourses of power particularly need an explicit curriculum. He also argues that students from dominant cultures are taught more effectively with an explicit pedagogy. May (1999: 263) describes the explicit curriculum as a ‘process of lending consciousness, lending language and lending culture for purposes outside the child’s domestic or commonsense purview’. In other words, a curriculum that extends. Therefore a curriculum that is overly generic and disguises issues of racism and anti-racism as ‘inclusion’ or ‘diversity’ is not necessarily extending the pupil beyond their purview.

A few teachers across all sectors and levels were sceptical and cautionary about adopting a purely multicultural approach.

I was involved in something last week in another authority and we were talking about culture. I am not a multiculturalist in the sense that I think a lot of multicultural education is tokenistic. I think there should be a strong element of the cultures in the school pervading the whole curriculum and I say the background, the countries that children come from, but I think it would also be good for all children to know about the Indian subcontinent but also about partition and the context of why people moved.

Headteacher, Primary

The above comment about learning not just about the Indian sub-continent but also about how the sub-continent was divided as a result of colonialism is an example of how it is possible to have a gear shift and to move beyond purely the multicultural to a contextualisation of multiculturalism within an anti-racist framework. May (1999) refers to this as ‘critical multiculturalism’.

Interviews would suggest that the transition from multicultural education to anti-racist education remains a big conceptual hurdle for Scottish education and teachers. The gulf of understanding between those interviewed was great. There were clearly teachers who engaged with multicultural education (often seen as an issue about ‘ethnic minorities’) with well-meaning hopes that giving pupils an opportunity to ‘learn about others’ might foster values of tolerance. However, learning about others tended to remain at the fun, happy level rather than involve any discussion of racism or discrimination. There were also those who wanted to see the ‘feel good’ multiculturalism accompanied by a coherent consideration of ‘race’ in the context of inequity, discrimination and injustice.

Cynicism about multiculturalism is a long-standing and intensely debated topic among those working with race equality issues. May (1999: 252) found in one of his studies that teachers were cynical about ‘the stuff of festivals’, feeling that multiculturalism produced
stereotypes which had as much potential to feed into racism as to alleviate it. He cited teachers who commented that ‘cultural identity in terms of what people wear and eat doesn’t mean anything; it’s not hitting the mark’. For many of the teachers in May’s study, multiculturalism was too often presented as a preservation of a distanced ‘their culture’ rather than something subtle and dynamic shaped by dialogue, a dynamic process of negotiation. The Burnage Report (1989: 345) confirms this view by stating that ‘multiculturalism does not in fact deal with or assist in the understanding of the complexity of people’s lives and histories and does not draw upon the lives and experiences of the students who are being taught’. If multicultural education is going to be dynamic and contemporary, there needs to be dialogue and debate among the whole school community. Failure to open up the discussion would result in a static, and possibly outdated, presentation of culture which in turn would lead to further stereotyping as described above.

6.6.4 Terminology

I get uncomfortable with the word ‘anti-racist’ because I don’t tend to use that in the school ... when you start using emotive words like ‘racist’ and ‘anti-racist’, it evokes all kinds of different impressions on people. So we talk about the egalitarian side of things more than the anti-racist, and I would contextualise that with anti-bullying as well; it’s not a word that I like to use in the school.

Headteacher, Primary

With the exception of the EAL and Bilingual Support Staff, a significant number of teachers expressed varying degrees of unease with terminology around race-related issues. Phrases such as ‘Should I say a mixed marriage?’ and ‘Can I still use the term blackboard?’ reveal the confusion that exists. As illustrated by the above, there was a marked avoidance by some teachers of words such as ‘anti-racism’ or ‘race equality’. Many teachers seemed more comfortable with the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘diversity’. On the whole, teachers were uncertain about the ‘correct’ language to use, finding it difficult to discuss and at times even embarrassing. Their unease may have been exacerbated where they were interviewed by minority ethnic members of the research team.

Multiculturalism or the phrase ‘multicultural education’ were seen as positive but the term ‘anti-racist’ was considered negative by many. Some argued that it emphasised the negative (anti) in contrast to the positive connotations of ‘multicultural’. Some teachers clearly misunderstood certain terms, a few interpreting the term ‘anti-racism’ to mean ‘supporting racism’ and therefore ‘not nice’.

'Multicultural’ sounds a lot more positive than ‘anti-racist’ ... We’re not used to the using the ‘anti’ word ... egalitarian is a bit more acceptable. ‘Anti’ means against ... it is the connotation of the two together, if someone is anti-racist then they are against multiculturalism.

Headteacher, Special
There were other inaccuracies, such as the constant usage of the term ‘ethnic’ to refer to minority ethnic groups. Phrases like ‘my ethnic pupils’ or ‘we deal with ethnic issues by celebrating different faiths’ demonstrate this.

_We have such a large proportion of children who come from an ethnic background._

**Depute Headteacher, Primary**

While the experiences of minority ethnic pupils may not be immediately improved by the correct usage of terms, there is a need for teachers to develop confidence to engage with race equality terminology and to appreciate it as a dynamic, evolving reflection of contemporary discourse rather than an obstacle-strewn path of static and imposed political correctness. If teachers see ‘ethnic’ issues as mainly relating to minority ethnic pupils and do not recognise the ethnicities of white people, then race equality work may continue to be seen as most appropriate for multi-ethnic schools. Equally, failure to engage with, and indeed rejection of terms like ‘anti-racism’ raises concerns about a possible subliminal denial of such issues as part of the learning and teaching process. This is bound to have a detrimental impact on the experiences of minority ethnic pupils, in particular, the negation of experiences of racism as identified in this study and also in other studies (Hampton, 1998; Virdee et al 1999; Cline, 2002).

### 6.6.5 Senior management and leadership

Senior managers who took part in the study expressed commitment to social justice and inclusion. Some were happy to be explicit about race equality but others preferred to discuss it under the generic banners of equality and fairness. All took their leadership roles very seriously and understood the importance of leading from the front on this matter.

_The view I have for my school is that equality is the most important single issue in the school. It underlines everything we do. Whether it is for access to the curriculum, whether it is for minority ethnic issues, gender, class or whatever, we develop good policies about all of these aspects. But there is a danger that people will think we have cracked it. I think therefore it is even more incumbent upon us to keep it dynamic and keep moving forward._

**Depute Headteacher, Secondary**

_It is essential that headteachers take an active interest in the issues. Otherwise how are you going to pass that on to your staff that this is important and that not only lip service gets paid to it?_ **Headteacher, Special**

I think it is absolutely critical. It’s vital to the whole thing in terms of as leader and manager of the school that I am demonstrating my full commitment to social inclusion. That my values are very clearly embedded and that I am supporting the school to ... ensure the rights of every child are met.  **Headteacher, Primary**
As a head, you have an acquired power by your position and the staff do an awful lot of listening to what you say. The head in the main has a key role in shaping the attitude and ethos of the school.  

Headteacher, Secondary

Many talked about the time required to embed these issues in the fabric. In one school, the senior team spoke in terms of ten years to fully ‘institutionalise equality’ into all aspects of their school. Other headteachers used words such as ‘evolve’ to describe the slowness of a process which required a building blocks approach.

Both teachers and parents contributing to this study commented on the importance of leadership in generating a distinct school ethos. Where headteachers took race equality seriously and ensured this was communicated and acted upon across the school community, parents and most teachers gave praise. Equally, however, there was doubt and unhappiness expressed by many parents and some teachers when a headteacher did not take race equality seriously.

In this school, there is quite a lot of feeling on the part of the staff that the assemblies do not reflect the community the school services in terms of faith and issues being discussed ... But where is the layer above the headteacherdom, who tells headteachers they need to take this issue on board seriously ... the school was relatively recently inspected and it wasn’t picked up by the HMI. So who tells the headteacher? 

Teacher, Primary

6.6.6 Bullying and racism

Overall, teachers did not report frequent or systemic occurrences of racist incidents or racist bullying. All the senior managers in particular were keen to point out that they tried to develop a climate within their school where young people were comfortable to report incidences of bullying. Some schools had formed strong relationships with the community police or voluntary sector and strove to tackle racial bullying as part of a multi-agency partnership.

Name-calling was reported by the majority of interviewees as the most frequent form of racist bullying. This concurs with the information gained from questionnaire responses. Time and again teachers stressed their zero tolerance approach to any form of bullying, including racial bullying. However, the absence of incidents was often taken as an indicator that all was well and, furthermore, that the subject of racism or racial bullying should therefore not be highlighted. This ties in closely with the wider reluctance shown by many teachers, and discussed above, to place race equality on the school agenda.

There’s been no incidents within the classroom, the [minority ethnic] children fit in very easily. 

Teacher, Primary

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We do not specifically take a topic entitled racism or race equality, what we do have are units on bullying and bullying units ... it’s all to do with being part of a community and respecting people within the community .... We don’t necessarily raise it in terms of racism, we don’t want to accentuate something that is not giving cause for concern or worry because we see harmony within the class ... and we see that inclusion is working. So if it’s not broken don’t try to fix it.

Depute Headteacher, Secondary

Have not noticed any racist incidents. Anti-racist policy is not required.

Teacher, Secondary

Others thought the issue of racial bullying was not about being racist but an indicator of a general culture of intolerance of differences.

You get two youngsters, fall out with another and one of them’s got red hair, so the person they’ve fallen out with will make some derogatory comment about his red hair and I think sometimes with coloured children something similar might happen – it’s a difficult area but perhaps should be responded to in the same sort of way?

Teacher, Secondary

Yet studies have shown that it is important not to reduce aspects of bullying to generic bullying. Gillborn (1995) describes racist name-calling as insulting not only to the individual, but their family and culture. Small-scale studies indicate that minority ethnic children are especially at risk of bullying. This bullying would appear to start at an early age. Small-scale action research done by three teachers in Central Region in the mid-1990s found attitudes of ‘them and us’ among primary pupils to be prevalent and strong (Donald et al, 1995). A survey of perceptions and experiences of young black and white people in Glasgow (Hampton, 1998) and research on the experiences of refugee children in Scottish schools (Arshad, Closs and Stead, 1999) confirm that young people face racial bullying and name-calling in school.

It is clear from the contributions made by young people to this study that racism and racial incidents happen in school, as well as on the way to or from school. Some of the teacher respondents, particularly the EAL staff, reported that many of their colleagues were unaware of the experiences of minority ethnic young people outside the school gates. On the whole, teachers rated the occurrence of racial incidents as occasional or rare within schools but acknowledged that pupils faced racism in the street. This raises questions over terminology and what constitutes racism, and how prepared teachers generally are to enquire closely into the ongoings within their area of responsibility. Pupils stated that they would seek help from siblings, friends, parents, the police and, within school, the guidance teacher.

Very few [minority ethnic] kids are racially abused in the school but I know they are routinely racially abused [outwith school].

Teacher, Secondary
Some teachers who did acknowledge the occurrence of racism within their school, mentioned techniques for dealing with bullying, ranging from operating a ‘buddy’ system to asking senior pupils to assist raising the issues using games, role play and discussion.

The lack of interaction between young people of different ethnic groups once they leave school was referred to by some respondents as a ‘problem of social separation’. These teachers felt that pupils from different ethnic groups tended to ‘herd together’ for safety, especially after local occurrences of racism within the streets or vicinity of the school. The theme of social separation was also commented on by some of the pupils interviewed who were critical of the tendency for some visible minority ethnic pupils to congregate. Like their teachers who called for closer collaboration with other agencies to ensure opportunities for young people to engage in activities across ethnically defined groupings, these pupils too wanted their schools to do more to break down enclaves.

One of the points that I feel we’ve failed with in many respects is that we have tried to integrate and encouraged them to integrate, but you will see that often in the social areas and in the classroom that they tend to stick to their own ethnic group.

The tendency in terms of grouping is just to let the children sit in their peer groups unless it becomes a problem. 

Teacher, Secondary

One issue to emerge was the at times only implicit assumption made by a number of teachers of racism being connected with social deprivation. This is referred to in more detail in 6.6.12.

Another critical issue was comment from some teachers about racism generated by staff often through comments to other staff within the staffroom or in passing with each other. Teachers who commented on staff ignorance were disturbed at some of their colleagues’ attitudes and wondered how to address this.

Teacher awareness of racism and how it affects the lives of minority ethnic pupils, whether overtly or covertly, needs to be developed if they are to fully appreciate the experiences of those pupils. Some minority ethnic pupils do discuss experiences of racism, others deny the occurrence of racism in order not to draw attention to themselves. Relying on the number of recorded racist incidents as a marker of the presence of racism would be erroneous. It is perhaps more important for schools and teachers to develop ways to communicate with minority ethnic parents and pupils about occurrences of racism. Links could also be developed with minority ethnic organisations working with minority ethnic communities as these organisations would be useful sources of information and guidance for the school. Developing teacher confidence in identifying and discussing issues of race equality will also assist the teacher to develop strategies and techniques to place the issue of racism on the learning and teaching agenda.
6.6.7 Working with bilingual learners

Schools operating in areas with a settled minority ethnic population were likely to have developed years of experience of working with bilingual learners and were able to draw on a network of voluntary sector minority ethnic organisations to assist the settling-in process. Teachers working in such schools, while still dependant on the EAL Service, appeared to have adapted their ways of working to better serve multilingual pupil cohorts.

When you have 33 children in an infant classroom and a child turns up speaking a language no one else does, it can be very difficult socially for the child to have this terrible isolation of having no-one speaking their language in the school at all. Now that doesn’t happen very often, we very quickly link in to other people who will help – we are very fortunate here with the local community and so on, we generally find other people who can speak the language and we do have volunteers who sometimes come in and help to bridge gaps.

Teacher, Primary

However, schools with transient minority ethnic populations often do not have such networks, nor do the teachers have the support necessary to develop the confidence to work with linguistic, faith and cultural diversity. Whilst the support provided by the EAL and bilingual support services was generally praised, their input was generally considered to be too infrequent.

It was lucky that Pupil X in [that class] spoke Mandarin, as a new pupil who came spoke Mandarin [too]. I mean, we would have been really struggling. If they’re not going to come with a basic understanding, we need more help.

Teacher, Primary

Where schools did not have the necessary support mechanisms in place or were unable to access them at short notice, bilingual pupils or their siblings were sometimes called upon to interpret for their parents and teachers. Whilst the schools’ determination to maintain contact with parents is indeed laudable, it is necessary to examine how appropriate such a measure is given considerations of confidentiality and privacy, and how external and neutral interpreting services might be accessed more effectively. In one case, the teacher shared how her school, in a unit for children with profound and complex difficulties, worked with a young bilingual pupil from a minority ethnic background whose ability to relay educational information to his mother was received with much enthusiasm by all concerned. If such positive experiences could become catalysts for further improvement and engagement with the needs of parents, it would render this child’s achievement even more revelatory.

We have one boy who is locked in his body ... he is probably the brightest child we have in this school, and he obviously translates ... he is using a talker (electronic equipment). He can communicate with his eyes and he will make noises, very, very good at communicating, and we know that he is going
from English into his own language. We bought this translator last year and he actually translated all the reports for mum. It was wonderful for us because we knew that Mum was understanding because she was asking questions she had never asked before. So the parent meetings started to take a different dimension altogether. Mum said it was wonderful to have something (a report) that she understood completely. **Assistant Headteacher, Special**

Many respondents were critical of the way their colleagues favoured monolingualism or were inconsistent in their attitudes towards different languages, calling for teachers to re-assess long-held convictions and take on the concept of bilingualism as an asset. As it stands, staff attitudes appear to remain assimilationist, devalue bilingualism and relegate EAL to the ‘additional support’ category.

*I think the SE have been very good about supporting the Gaelic language. It seems to me, there’s an element of racism in this, in education authorities and higher up that it’s good to support the Gaelic language because it’s our native language, but they don’t seem to see the same arguments hold for community languages Punjabi and Urdu and Arabic and Chinese. They can see why we must keep up the Gaelic but they don’t seem to see the tie-up with the other languages.*  
**Bilingual Support Teacher**

*But the teachers are hard to convince, only the infant staff have been on bilingual training. Language is part of the culture but teachers want to tell parents to speak English to the children.*  
**Headteacher, Primary**

*Our main objective is to get the children to speak English ... well we do take into account their backgrounds but what we’re trying to do is get the children to speak English and that is the only direction that we’re working in.*  
**Teacher, Primary**

Several senior managers wished to see more bilingual teachers employed so that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds could be given the confidence to speak their mother-tongue in class, and there was concern about the potential loss of home language, both with regard to identity and general language acquisition. Similarly, the lack of bilingual and minority ethnic educational psychologists in Scotland was noted, and interviewees raised the need for greater input at nursery levels to enable minority ethnic children to experience and enjoy pre-school education.

*They refuse to speak [their] home language. They do not realise it is a whole part of themselves, they could lose their language and culture. Mother tongue deficit leads to language deficit in English as well.*  
**Depute Headteacher, Primary**

*The little ones are very upset, crying, being left. In groups, they are very quiet, withdrawn or can be aggressive. In time, they get used to the routine.*  
**Bilingual Teacher**
Some teachers felt minority ethnic parents often preferred their children to speak only English. Arshad and Diniz (1999: 881) noted this phenomenon arising from the 1970s when minority ethnic parents eager for their children to achieve in their ‘adopted’ country often listened, in good faith, to teachers whom they credited with knowing best. Prioritisation of English thus meant refraining from speaking their mother-tongue to their children at home.

There has been a considerable amount of research into the assessment of bilingual learners. The need for dual language assessments is put forward as the fairest way to fully assess the attainment of bilingual pupils (Jones, 1997; Mitchell, 1987). Gravelle (1990) warned that formal testing in L2 (second language) does not assist bilingual pupils or pupils whose first language is not English to fully express their understanding the way they could in their home language. Shan (1990) points out that monolinguals are not confident about assessing bilinguals. This ties in with concerns expressed by teachers interviewed in this study, EAL teachers in particular spoke of the inequalities of testing a bilingual speaker or a speaker with little English only in their second language.

We have issues of equality here that if a child, for instance, comes into Primary 1 speaking only Arabic and his numeracy or literacy is tested by somebody who has got no knowledge of his language and his culture, is unfair, because the child could have a numeracy system, for instance, that’s perfectly in place but that’s not revealed in the course of testing him in English.

EAL Teacher

6.6.8 The importance of the English as an Additional Language Service

A clear thread emerging from the interviews was the invaluable help offered by the various English as an Additional Language (EAL) or Bilingual Support services in the four authorities. The central role of the EAL services as support for classroom teachers and school managers was obvious. EAL staff were relied upon to draw up appropriate learning plans for pupils whose first language was not English. Equally, they were seen as a source of information and training for existing staff in accessing interpreting and translation services, adapting teaching styles and language and curriculum presentation to acknowledge linguistic diversity in a classroom. EAL staff were also depended upon to ‘break the ice’ and act as a link with minority ethnic parents and communities.

However, a sizeable number of teachers and senior school staff were acutely aware of the inadequacy of provision from bilingual support or EAL services. Others wanted the EAL provision to be much more class-based as too much was occurring outwith classrooms and, in the view of one contributor, the current funding system did not always assist schools. Monitoring, too, was acknowledged by a few to be important.

The EAL staff should have joint responsibility for the class.

Headteacher, Primary
Our allocation for bilingual pupils support is assigned in August ... however, because of the nature of the children coming here, at different times of the year, the intake exceeds the allocation. **Deputy Headteacher, Primary**

Records are kept on all pupils, including the language profiles that are used to assess the precise support that is required for pupils who do not speak English as their first language. **Teacher, Secondary**

Some EAL and learning support staff interviewed spoke warmly of their relationships with colleagues and of the range of experiences they encountered.

We enjoy our work and appreciate being respected by the other teachers and school management. Teamwork has been developed in order to provide for the learning of pupils. In this school, we praise the record-keeping and monitoring achieved in the school, allowing high achievers and low achievers to be monitored and supported, especially in the first two years. **EAL Teacher**

*I am allowed by the previous headteacher to sit in on assemblies and I was very thankful for that because it gave me a much broader view of the work that’s going on right across the board.* **EAL Teacher**

Yet the views from other EAL staff were less rosy. Some staff felt unsupported, lonely and vulnerable. EAL and bilingual staff were heavily dependent on their relationships with individual schools and members of staff and thought that whilst there was collegiate working within some schools, in others, EAL staff were treated as second-class.

Staff meetings, many long meetings ... *I should be in on these. There is no support for children, it is all about teacher convenience. Timetables here are set like stone. I am very frustrated that people here aren’t seeing that. I am taken away from my work to cover in the classroom, this is not on except in emergencies. My work is not respected, we are seen as people who work with the bottom group.* **EAL Teacher**

*There’s no value attached to my job. The role of the bilingual teacher is tokenistic.* **Bilingual Teacher**

6.6.9 The ‘exceptional’ child

The personality of a child appears to play a significant part in his/her relationships with teachers and other pupils. A happy, clever child who speaks English is seen positively by teachers. Many teachers were keen to accentuate the positive characteristics and working relationship they had with minority ethnic pupils or their parents. Pupils and parents were often described in glowing terms.

*She has a happy disposition anyway.*
X is a very bright boy, very impressive and although they lived in Y all their lives, his English is perfect.

Her dad’s English is very good. He’s a student here.

The question that arose here was to what extent did minority ethnic pupils have to become ‘exceptional’ in order to be liked and to fit in? Klein (1993: 129) asserted that pupils whose ethnicity, culture or class least resembled those of their teachers were vulnerable to teacher expectations and attitudes. She stated that what most affected pupils’ learning was the way their teacher interacted with them in the classroom.

It seems therefore that a child perceived as ‘coping’ or ‘achieving’ is more likely to receive a positive message from the teacher. How would cultural differences affect such perceptions? Klein provided an example of a pupil of Caribbean origin with downcast eyes and a lowered head being regarded by the teacher as ‘insolent’ and berated accordingly. Klein suggested that had this teacher realised that the posture that had incensed her would have denoted deference and response in the child’s home culture, she might have reacted differently.

Similarly, observational work conducted in multiracial schools (Wright, 1987; Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Gillborn, 1998) concluded that visible minority ethnic and white pupils experienced schooling differently. African-Caribbean pupils were typically stereotyped as having poor behaviour and attracted greater criticism from teachers. In contrast, Asian pupils, often perceived as not understanding or speaking English, were generally excluded from class discussions. In addition, teachers often spoke to Asian pupils in basic telegraphic language and when this strategy failed to get any response, they would quickly lose patience and then ignore them (Wright, 1992). Teachers often expressed open irritation or frustration when they believed that the Asian children’s poor English language skills interfered with their teaching. Among the negative responses to Asian children expressed by teachers were open disapproval of their customs and traditions, often considered to pose problems for classroom management. Such disapproval added to the negative experiences of school for some of these children. Such examples also tended to counteract the positive attempts by teachers to address multicultural issues and led to an ambivalence from minority ethnic pupils on curriculum topics or school celebrations focusing on multicultural issues.

Clearly much of the above material was gained through observational methods. It would not be possible to draw any such conclusions or comments from teacher interviews in this study. However, the impact of teacher attitudes and expectations on the range of visible minority ethnic pupils requires to be raised for consideration. This is particularly important in Scotland where the teaching workforce is almost exclusively white and from majority ethnic groupings.
6.6.10 Staff development

A significant number of teachers indicated a need and desire for more staff development and spoke of the need to ‘educate the educators’ and some believed that the development of good ethos on racial issues was not as systematic as it might be. Teachers wanted practical support for mainstreaming race equality issues as well as authority-wide courses to provide teaching on the concepts of anti-racism.

"I think it definitely needs some kind of a link person who has a perspective on race issues and can help teachers say ‘right, let’s have a look at this side as well, let’s not forget about this … we could incorporate that little discussion in there and that could be worked in’ but I think it needs to be highlighted. It shouldn’t just be down to individuals who feel that that’s an issue. I think we have to know that it’s an issue that has to be addressed. So it could be worked into lesson plans by senior management."

Teacher, Primary

"If there are people who have experience of teaching anti-racism in school … and are good at it ... I would like to attend courses run by them or see them at their own establishment and observe their practice or have them come to you and share their expertise with you. These kind of things would be really helpful."

Headteacher, Primary

Many members of staff still felt reluctant and uneasy about speaking openly on racial matters. Commenting on the school’s staff, one headteacher noted that ‘as long as the kids come in and they’re happy, then that’s enough’. Others remarked that although on the surface the ethos was welcoming, it was essentially rather patronising as well as disingenuous.

"There is still a lot of ignorance around about for instance, the fact Sikhs and Muslims have different faiths and different languages."

EAL Teacher

"I can see the other side, staff attitudes, conversations and stereotyping. Parents and pupils can be oblivious. Such attitudes will have an impact on minority ethnic and bilingual pupils."

Teacher, Primary

The disclosure that staff do not necessarily endorse or abide by the drive for good practice implemented in many schools reveals alarming levels of ignorance and either thoughtlessness or malice. It also ties in with the ‘canteen culture’ of the police force criticised in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (Macpherson, 1999). In the same way, several interviewees remarked upon the culture of the staffroom and contributors cited examples of overt and covert racism which took place there.

"The school where I was before where there were just 1–2 [minority ethnic] families I was horrified by what I saw and heard. The staff comments were horrible – talking about bad smells, mocking. There was a bad atmosphere"
and the majority completely blanked me. Here I am part of a team, part of a group, not an alien.  

Bilingual Teacher

Interviewer: I noticed you were sitting alone in the staff room, is this usual?

Teacher: There’s ... [name of teacher]) she sits here. I would sit beside anybody but I don’t think anyone ever comes and sits beside me.  

Bilingual Teacher

While the teacher in the above statement did not explicitly vocalise that this was due to racism, these types of comments, of being excluded, are often features of covert racism. Covert racism is often not tangible and qualifiable but can be felt.

Comments about the need for staff development and the changing of attitudes were not confined to qualified professionals but were made about the lack of progress within teacher education courses, specifically in the area of teacher competency in working within multilingual classrooms. However, one minority ethnic teacher felt that staff development did not necessarily improve practice. She did not even feel it was an issue of ignorance but simply the absence of any desire to change in order to benefit a more diverse range of pupils.

It is driving me mad that the more recent group of teachers do not see the importance of my role or [that] of the bilingual teacher.  

EAL Teacher

Teacher training is not productive in raising achievement of bilingual children. The teachers do not understand whatever the policy line is and what they say privately goes completely against the principles of bilingualism.  

EAL Teacher

6.6.11 Working with a multiracial staff group and setting

One of the interesting aspects of this study has been the focus on the experiences of minority ethnic pupils with little mention of the lack of diversity among Scotland’s teachers. When schools are referred to as ‘mainly white’ it is generally interpreted as not having an ethnically diverse pupil population. Very few teachers in this study commented on the lack of diversity within the teaching force. The failure of an all white staff group to query what constitutes the ‘norm’ and the impact on young minority ethnic people of such a norm require to be highlighted. Some of this has already been discussed in 6.6.10.

Some teachers commented on the desirability and impact of having a multiracial staff team and the very few visible minority ethnic teachers or EAL/bilingual support teachers interviewed stressed how their pride in their own identity helped to shape their practice.

Well, yes, if you look at the Eid thing, for example, I suppose what we would have done in the past is a token reference to Eid. We teach Islam as a world
faith in primary seven, but when we thought about it we would say happy Eid to the children and that would be it really. And over the last few years we’ve worked quite hard and particularly because we’re now fortunate enough to have Muslim teachers, to make that festival come alive for the children who are Muslim and to make sure that we’re expecting our other faith groups to celebrate Eid as we are now expecting them to join in with our Christmas things.

Teacher, Primary

When we have minority ethnic teachers (maths, science, home economics and also Urdu) there is noticeable impact in the school. Sadly, some have left without replacement.

Teacher, Secondary

We had one Chinese classroom assistant but she’s also the leader of a Chinese family welfare, she was working with pre-school children … that had an effect on the school and she tried to encourage parents to become interested in the education of their children … organised a number of speakers for them, one of which was myself as the headteacher and from that it blossomed.

Headteacher, Primary

I am proud of my identity. I encourage religious education, especially during Ramadan when we have a room set aside for boys and another for girls. Many of the children keep the fast.

Bilingual Teacher

Quite a few teachers working within fairly large multiracial settings talked of a sense of loss if they were to move to a school which was less diverse and teachers who had moved from schools who had not taken race equality issues seriously to schools who had, also commented on this change.

How am I going to phrase this, if I moved to another school which wasn’t a multicultural school, I would lose something in my teaching. There is definitely enrichment about having the different cultures there and I would find it extremely strange and a sense of loss if I was working in a school that wasn’t multicultural.

Teacher, Secondary

Immediately I feel that there’s a totally different culture at work here. I am very, very impressed with the whole of School X’s approach and awareness to these issues. I think it is thoroughly embedded within the school’s administrative structures, paperwork, calendar. They don’t just focus on festivals … there’s a danger if you constantly focus on festivals pupils won’t want to listen so we use current topics, like the other week the headteacher talked about war and its consequences. It is really about embedding both formally through school procedures, through department procedures, through the curriculum and onto the range of informal activities.

Teacher, Secondary
What is clear is that those who had experience of working within multiracial settings valued that exposure to diversity. This raises the question of how Scotland can create opportunities for teachers, both in training and qualified, to gain experience of working in multiethnic schools and/or in multiethnic staff groups.

The implication for minority ethnic pupils of a teaching workforce that is almost exclusively white has not been fully explored. Pupils interviewed in this study who had come from schools in the London, Birmingham or Leicester areas had noticed the difference and may in some ways be better placed to critique the ability of their schools in promoting MCARE. The wish for more visible minority ethnic teachers was an issue brought up by several pupils who acknowledged their wish for role models or felt they would be better understood by a more multiracial teaching staff. The notion that the presence of minority ethnic teachers promotes opportunities for minority ethnic pupils to develop a positive sense of identity is also one explored by Blair and Bourne (1998: 162). They further suggested that such a presence provided a check on fair practices in relation to race equality in schools.

6.6.12 Multiple deprivation and discrimination

A number of teachers spoke of the multiple discrimination and deprivation that is faced by some minority ethnic pupils. A few women teachers thought of parental attitudes towards Asian girls as being overly restrictive whilst others complained about the sexist attitudes of Asian boys towards female teachers. The sexism of male pupils, and specifically minority ethnic male pupils, towards women teachers is an area that requires further exploration. There are also interconnections between SEN and race equality issues. A poignant example of a child with complex learning difficulties who is also bilingual is discussed in 6.6.7. In other parts of this study, notably in Chapters 7 and 8, there are specific sections on SEN.

The interplay of the different equality and discrimination agendas makes it a complex course for any pupil or teacher to negotiate. There requires to be more discussion of the congruence of equality issues but also comprehension of where the interplay breaks down and fractures. This section discusses the interconnection of race and class, showing two aspects to have emerged from this study. The first is that of teacher perceptions, the second that of the reality of living with the ‘double whammy’ of race and poverty.

Firstly, some teachers appeared to associate the perpetrators of racism to be from areas of social deprivation. These teachers valued minority ethnic pupils, particularly those recently arrived from overseas as being hardworking, diligent pupils from highly motivated homes and lamented the potential influences of local pupils and acclimatisation to local culture.

*If you get someone straight from Bangladesh, generally speaking they don’t*
have this anti-education feeling, which you sometimes get with the local kids.

Classroom Teacher, Secondary
in an area of multiple deprivation

As the ethnicity and culture of one category of students were celebrated and valued, this contrasted with the negation of another category of pupils on grounds of class and socio-economic status. Nuances of this nature, relating racism, particularly overt racism, to class issues, were by no means dominant but they did occur with sufficient frequency to raise a degree of concern. Concern over labelling young people from poorer backgrounds, but also concern that a white, middle-class profession might view racism as most commonly occurring within lower socio-economic groups and thus absolve itself from any responsibility or need for self-examination.

Secondly, teachers from schools with multiple deprivation discussed the implications of raising race equality issues in a school where over 90% of the pupil population were on free school meals and themselves suffering discrimination and poverty. Many of the strategies proposed by multicultural and anti-racist educators do not pay sufficient attention to providing advice for teachers who have to work within complex circumstances. The Burnage Report (1989) highlighted very succinctly the dangers of failing to understand the situation. The murder of Ahmed Ullah, a 13 year-old Bangladeshi pupil in Manchester in 1986, was immediately cited as being motivated by racism on the part of the white boy, Darren Colburn. However, Colburn himself was a victim, a disturbed adolescent prone to bullying and violent behaviour who was labelled by a system that did not understand the stresses and difficulties of his upbringing and home situation. The system failed him and brought about tragic consequences for many.

What Burnage taught the education world was the need to be more sophisticated in any challenges against racism. All pupils needed to be supported and, in the case of race issues, working-class white young people who were themselves denied equality, needed to be supported to understand why racism was being discussed. Anti-racist initiatives in areas of multiple deprivation that focus purely on minority ethnic groups without considering the experiences and feelings of white pupils lead to further polarisation of majority and minority. The Burnage Report concluded that ignoring the needs of white pupils in such circumstances was just as racist as ignoring black pupils. (1989: 379.12)

6.6.13 The value of personal experiences

The benefits of exposure to and familiarity with multi-ethnic communities as a source of learning and developing was recognised by some. The situation of the majority of teachers who do not actually have to acknowledge or address the issue of race equality or racism in their personal lives was captured by one headteacher who was aware of unexplored territories.

I think there is a problem in society as a whole, but it doesn’t touch my life personally. I would welcome staff development or some form of training
because I feel a bit at sea .... because it’s not something I’ve really thought much about before.

**Headteacher, Primary**

Teachers with experience of diversity in their personal lives, either through family ties or because they had lived abroad and had been exposed to different cultural or linguistic settings, also appeared to take a more enthusiastic and positive approach in terms of work with minority ethnic pupils, anti-racist issues and diversity. However, the relatively high number of teachers with personal experience of this kind who contributed to this study, begs the question to what extent they are perceived within their work environments as ‘experts’ or people with a particular interest in minority ethnic issues and thus spokespeople for their school.

**Partnership with parents is really vital in our job. There’s really little point in us doing our bit at school unless we work alongside parents. A lot comes from my own personal experience as I have a child with learning difficulties.**

**Teacher, Special**

... and even if we use the interpreting and translation service for some parents it’s still not enough and there is really nothing to replace face to face contact.

**Teacher, Special School**

_I lived in the Middle East – I love to do Eid al Fitri and Divali is another really popular one. The children love the shadow puppets and the lights._

**Teacher, Special**

6.6.14 **It’s not just about white racism**

A theme, presented by a considerable number of respondents, was that of racism as a worldwide phenomenon, perpetrated not only by majority groups on minorities, but also vice-versa and among different minority groups. A few spoke specifically of anti-English sentiments from colleagues but also from pupils. The statements revealed that many teachers were aware of injustice and intolerance of different types in Scotland, in the UK and internationally.

_When we had that poster – if this man’s a darkie, a chinkie or a Paki then you are racist ... I found it quite interesting because ... a kind of racism that has not been taken account of, I feel, is black on white racism. So I feel that is an aspect that needs to be more honestly talked about, you know both black on white racism and black on black and I don’t feel we’ve even scratched the surface there._

**EAL Teacher**

Also, I don’t know it’s just a white thing, there’s also – I have lived in X [country in Africa] and there was a distinct problem of racism between
Indians and Africans there. So I think it’s a human nature thing and I think it’s got to do with you know, which country you are in. **Teacher, Secondary**

It’s not always the indigenous culture that’s racist to the minority culture and I’ve heard children of various backgrounds being deeply offensive to children who are white. I’ve always felt that that side of racism was swept under the carpet. It was always said ‘that’s a reaction to what people have said to them’

– and it might be, in fact it probably is, but I still felt that it should have been taken more seriously. **Assistant Headteacher**

Sometimes children going to their classes in the local mosque are told this, and this, and this. I can appreciate that is their culture, but sometimes they can turn round and be very intolerant of us. And that’s a them and us, and that’s not right and I don’t like it. Whoever’s teaching the children in the mosque ... could they be encouraged to be a bit wider as far as we’re concerned? **Teacher, Primary**

Clearly connections between issues should be made to allow for empathy and understanding to be generated and the teacher perceptions above illustrate the presence of different notions of discrimination. It is important, however, in discussing racism against visible minority groups not to lose sight of these aspects of the debate as we move on to considering inter-ethnic conflict or black on white racism, which to varying degrees clearly do exist. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that in the British context, where black on white racism does exist at individual and group levels, it is not built into the fabric of organisations as described by the Macpherson Report (1999) as ‘institutional racism’. Teachers need to grasp the complexities of this discourse if they are not to inadvertently marginalise the daily experiences of racism against minority ethnic pupils.

**Institutional racism is 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. It persists because of the failure of the organisation openly and adequately to recognise and address its existence and causes by policy, example and leadership.**  
Macpherson 1999, para 6.34, p. 28

6.6.15 **Home-school links**

Overall, discussion of home-school links was not given high priority by teachers. Although a few teachers/senior managers discussed the contribution of parents to the promotion of race equality in schools, the majority of teachers in the study made no mention of home-school links. Most senior managers interviewed considered their
contact with minority ethnic parents to be good, but, equally, examples of difficulties were given, relating mostly to religious or cultural differences, especially in relation to gender.

Teachers frequently valued the assistance and information provided by parents in faith and cultural matters. They acknowledged that they were not sufficiently well informed and would find it difficult to read up on certain subjects. The contribution made by minority ethnic mothers in particular was praised as being invaluable to the school because it lent reality to what might otherwise have been dry subjects. Some described a sense of joy and wonder in the school when parents, pupils and school worked together on multicultural events and celebrations.

The prominence of the involvement of mothers is also borne out in Chapter 8, where 32 (84%) out of 38 parents interviewed were mothers. Mothers were more likely to participate during school hours than fathers who presumably were at work during the day. On the other hand, some schools spoke about never seeing the mother and of having to communicate via the father despite the fact that caring responsibilities appeared to lie with the former. Teachers were often dissatisfied with this, asserting that they would prefer to speak directly with the mother as the principal carer.

Teachers from schools that were active in trying to attract minority ethnic parents to become more involved found their efforts worked. One school held open afternoons for parents, translated letters to help bring parents in onto the School Board and ran first language workshops about the school and curriculum with parental support.

Another opened up a channel of communication with parents from a particular faith group in response to parental concerns and needs. Having learnt that it was getting difficult for parents to return home to celebrate a faith festival because of costs, the school decided to explicitly celebrate these events for all young people. This gesture resulted in improved home-school links and an appreciation by the parents of that faith group for the school’s flexibility and interest.

In general, however, the teachers interviewed applied the ‘we treat them all the same’ message to the parents too and did not see a need to make specific targeted efforts to bring parents onto school boards or Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs).

*I think we could do more to encourage parents to come in to a meeting and have an opportunity to talk about the requirements of their cultures, so that the youngsters don’t miss out on that experience.*  

*Teacher, Secondary*

Teachers found they were ill-equipped to deal with values clashes, particularly where these appeared to breach their reading of equity or human rights. However, difficult and tense situations arose not only from ideological differences but also from practical matters. The issue of lengthy absences, often for travel to the Indian sub-continent, for
some minority ethnic pupils was remarked upon unhappily by some senior managers. Fear of ‘getting it wrong’ stopped teachers from feeling sufficiently confident to openly discuss race-related issues.

At the moment I have an issue with a Palestinian parent who is coming up with a lot of anti-Semitic stuff ... at the moment his homeland is being bombed, he’s talking to his daughter about this who is in the middle of a block of education on Judaism, and who is 7 years-old and saying all Jews are disgusting people.  

Headteacher, Primary

There is no short cut or easy answer to the dilemmas and constraints that can arise from working in a diverse society with diverse issues. Teachers do however need the space to explore and discuss these issues in a supportive yet challenging environment if they are to develop effective multicultural and anti-racist practice.

6.7 Conclusions

6.7.1 All teachers interviewed expressed a wish to support all pupils, including minority ethnic pupils. In particular, teachers felt they had worked hard over the years to develop a positive and inclusive school ethos, a zero-tolerance approach to bullying (including racial bullying) and had looked at ways of embedding a multicultural approach in their work.

6.7.2 Teachers in ethnically diverse schools felt they were assisted in their work by the composition of the school, and thought that predominantly white schools would have to make a much greater effort to promote an inclusive message. When asked how this could be achieved they cited the tools of multiculturalism as described in 6.6.3.

6.7.3 Teachers were not unanimous on how to teach minority ethnic pupils fairly. Some felt the best way to achieve this was not to single out aspects of a child, such as their ethnicity or colour, but rather to concentrate on the personality and abilities of each child. Others disagreed and felt that to fully meet the needs of minority ethnic pupils, it was important to be conscious of all aspects of the child, that is, their ethnicity, language, culture, faith, gender, class etc.

6.7.4 White teachers were more likely to not ‘see’ difference in terms of colour, religion or ethnicity, while the very few minority ethnic staff interviewed all talked about the importance of affirming diversity, particularly in relation to faith, language and culture, which they saw as part of identity formation.

6.7.5 Teachers were divided about how to place race equality issues on the agenda. There were
those who saw placing the issue openly on the teaching agenda as uncomfortable for minority ethnic young people. Others had found that this was not the case and that young people wanted to grapple with such contemporary issues of identity. Some teachers felt that if racism was not evident, it was best not to place it on the agenda as this might precipitate it.

6.7.6 Teacher confidence varied on race equality issues. Teachers with less confidence had a greater degree of anxiety about placing race equality issues firmly on the learning and teaching agenda. Personal experiences appeared to play a role, as those who had lived and worked abroad, done international teacher exchanges, had links with minority ethnic communities or had experienced discrimination towards their families or themselves, were more likely to be passionate and confident about recognising and valuing diversity and opposing discrimination.

6.7.7 With the exception of EAL and Bilingual Support staff, the majority of other teachers were tentative about race-related terminology. Teachers preferred to use positive terms such as ‘multiculturalism’, ‘inclusion’ and ‘diversity’ rather than terms like ‘anti-racism’ which was perceived to have negative connotations. Teachers were concerned about ‘getting it wrong’ and some thought it would be useful to develop their knowledge about changing terminology and be kept up-to-date about theoretical debate in relation to race equality and education.

6.7.8 The majority of teachers interviewed appeared to relate the promotion of race equality to mean working with minority ethnic pupils. Race equality was often spoken of in terms of how well the school was supporting bilingual pupils through interaction with the EAL service, the school’s strong zero tolerance stance on racist incidents and its promotion of multiculturalism through the celebration of faiths and festivals. Fewer teachers focused on how they used the curriculum to take forward anti-racist issues or what the benefits of race equality work would be for majority ethnic pupils or for themselves and their colleagues as teachers.

6.7.9 Without exception, all senior managers interviewed understood the importance of leading from the front on equality and fairness and took this responsibility seriously. Many spoke of the time it would take to fully embed these values into all aspects of the work of the school. Some acknowledged that despite all the policies and their own explicit backing, it was about winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of all staff and that this was an incremental and slow process.

6.7.10 Some teachers spoke of their concern about their colleagues’ lack of understanding of and interest in multicultural and anti-racist issues. In particular, they spoke of the culture of the staffroom where racism was often displayed covertly, through comments and
innuendo and, in a few instances, overtly and blatantly. They found some staff attitudes to be more racist than those of pupils.

6.7.11 Overall, teachers did not report frequent or systematic occurrences of racist bullying or incidents. A minority of teachers and senior managers spoke of a multi-agency partnership approach to tackling racism and racial bullying by developing their links with the community police and voluntary sector agencies.

6.7.12 The absence of racist incidents was often taken to be an indicator that all was well. Quite a few teachers felt that where that was the case, there was no real need to highlight issues of racism or racial bullying, ‘if it’s not broken, don’t try and fix it.’

6.7.13 While all teachers interviewed saw racial bullying as a serious matter, they were not unanimous in how to address such bullying. The majority would acknowledge the racial aspects and address the matter accordingly, but a small minority felt racial bullying was no different to any other sort of bullying. It was not about racism but about a generic culture of intolerance of difference.

6.7.14 Most teachers felt racist incidents in schools were rare and were more concerned about the racism encountered by pupils either in the street or in society in general. Some commented on the effect of parental values which might be racist and how such values impact on the pupil in school.

6.7.15 Some teachers were concerned about the ‘social separation’ that still exists between young people of different ethnic groups once they leave school. They felt that schools should work more closely with community agencies to develop collaborative activities, for example, sporting activities.

6.7.16 The interplay of race and poverty was seen by some teachers as having insufficient attention. Teachers felt that there was not enough done to consider strategies for delivering multicultural and anti-racist education in schools where the majority of ethnic minority pupils lived in poverty and were themselves discriminated against.

6.7.17 A minority opinion from teachers seemed to equate racism with social deprivation. Racism was seen to be occurring in areas of multiple deprivation and a consequence of poverty. This makes the incorrect assumption that racism is most rife within lower socio-economic groups. It also falsely labels young people from areas of social deprivation as being contributors to racism. The racism of the middle-classes and other professional groupings was not discussed other than by those teachers who complained of racism.
among colleagues.

6.7.18 Teachers were very concerned about the lack of support for children whose first language is not English. Teachers and senior managers stated that they felt their authority’s EAL services were not adequately funded to cover the needs of schools in supporting bilingual learners. In particular, concerns were expressed that EAL services should be better funded to provide support from nursery level and that first language assessment should be offered as routine. The lack of opportunity for first language assessment was seen by quite a few teachers as being discriminatory. The majority of those interviewed wanted to see more bilingual workers/teachers appointed across all levels, that is, from in-class support to cross-cutting posts as in the educational psychological services.

6.7.19 Many interviewed were extremely appreciative of the high quality work delivered by their EAL or Bilingual Support services. The central role of these services for schools should not be under-estimated.

6.7.20 However, some interviewees did see staff attitudes towards bilingualism as a barrier to ensuring that bilingual learners were properly treated and not merely assimilated or viewed as ‘an additional support need’. EAL teachers in particular talked about their varied experiences of schools, with some schools developing a strong collaborative and team-teaching approach while others perceived EAL staff as second-class citizens who ‘work with the bottom group’.

6.7.21 Many teachers were keen to accentuate the positive characteristics of minority ethnic pupils. It is clear that the minority ethnic pupil who is an ‘achieving’ and ‘exceptional’ child, especially if s/he does not have language needs, is appreciated by staff. The question that needs to be asked is how will the ‘ordinary’ or ‘misbehaving’ minority ethnic pupil, who may not be a fluent bilingual learner but has little English, be perceived, as an asset or a classroom management problem?

6.7.22 In relation to staff development, teachers wanted practical help on how to take forward multicultural and anti-racist issues within the classroom. They would value advice on how to mainstream race equality issues into their practice.

6.7.23 The role of teacher education institutions was also commented on by a significant number of teachers. In particular, teachers were critical about the lack of progress made in teacher education establishments to prepare new teachers for working with bilingual pupils.

6.7.24 Teachers who had worked in multiracial staff teams and settings all commented on the
benefits of having done so and felt they could not now move to schools where diversity was not the norm. Many teachers wanted to see the Scottish teaching workforce become more diverse and multilingual and felt that such a workforce would bring diversity issues ‘alive’ for pupils.

6.7.25 Teachers acknowledged the complexities of dealing with a range of equality issues. Teachers were less aware of thinking about multiple discrimination and how it might affect pupils, for example, the pupil who is from a minority ethnic group but also facing poverty or the minority ethnic pupil with SEN.

6.7.26 Gender issues arose in several different ways. Firstly, some women teachers interviewed commented on the sexism they had to face from some minority ethnic male pupils. They commented on the difficulty of raising these issues because some of the pupils’ behaviour was being attributed to faith and cultural practices. Teachers did not wish to discuss this for fear of being accused of being racist.

Gender issues were also discussed in relation to home-school links. Teachers appreciated minority ethnic parents who came into schools to help. As mothers appeared to be more available during the days, the participating role tended to fall to them. In these instances, teachers regretted that fathers were less visible.

However, teachers also spoke of their concern in some situation where mothers were not present and all the school’s dealings were with the father. This was attributed to language but also cultural issues. Teachers wanted more contact with mothers whom they knew to have the main caring responsibilities for the children.

6.7.27 Overall, few teachers and senior managers discussed the contribution of parents in any depth. The few who did, valued the assistance and information provided by parents, particularly in faith and cultural matters. The issue of home-school links was not given high priority in the majority of interviews.

6.7.28 Interviews showed that there was a lot of goodwill in the profession to do the best for all pupils. However, the words of one headteacher probably summed up for many teachers how they feel about race equality issues.

I think there is a problem in society as a whole, but it doesn’t touch my life personally. I would welcome staff development or some form of training because I feel a bit at sea ... because it’s not something I’ve really thought much about before.
6.8. Recommendations

1. Staff development sessions should in future prioritise three aspects:
   
i) the provision of theoretical grounding on race equality issues as related to education as well as unpacking race-related terminology
   
ii) the provision of practical help on how to embed race equality issues into learning and teaching in multiethnic as well as in predominantly white schools
   
iii) the provision of practical help on how to work more effectively in multilingual classrooms and in particular with pupils with little or no English

2. The provision of EAL across the country needs to be evaluated. It is recommended that the Scottish Executive Education Department generates a dialogue with COSLA on how best to take forward the funding of EAL provision across the country. Priority should be given to consideration of how schools with isolated bilingual learners can be supported.

3. Authorities should give a clear message to all schools that the promotion of race equality is for all pupils. There is a need to move away from associating race equality issues solely with the recording of racist incidents or support for bilingual pupils. Race equality has to be understood as good, critical educational practice that forms part of all aspects of education.

4. Education for citizenship programmes should ensure race equality issues are explicitly discussed and avoid dilution of issues under generic headings of ‘inclusion’ and ‘diversity’.

5. Schools need to consider improving their home-school liaison with minority ethnic parents.

6. Authorities should assist schools to develop and sustain links with organisations working with minority ethnic communities or with race equality issues. In particular, schools should be developing multiagency work with other professional groupings and community groups in the area of tackling racial bullying but also in developing cross-cultural collaborative events.

7. Those who deliver and develop race equality work in school education should identify strategies for discussing equality in areas of multiple deprivation. Consideration should also be given to the interface of race and poverty and how these affect the experiences of minority ethnic pupils who are facing multiple discrimination.

8. More work needs to be done to consider the impact of multiple discrimination in various constellations such as gender and race, race and poverty, race and disability. In particular, there is a need to consider how teachers can be supported to work confidently and competently with the range of equality issues within an anti-discriminatory and human rights context.
CHAPTER SEVEN: PUPIL PERSPECTIVES – Issues and findings

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The 2001 Census and the 2002 Scottish Schools Census were discussed in Chapter 2, but it is worth reminding ourselves that, across Scotland, three in every hundred pupils are of minority ethnic background, with higher proportions in primary and special schools. Moreover, the minority ethnic school population is diverse in two ways: first, there is always more than one minority ethnic group in each of the main Scottish cities; second, the balance between groups varies, between cities, and especially between schools. Although the Census data does not, as yet, allow us to study the situation in individual schools and localities, we know that the proportion of minority ethnic pupils and groups is markedly different, there are a few schools where minority ethnic pupils are concentrated, and others where they are ‘the only ones’. The dominance of the ‘mainly white’ experience is so significant that it is critically important for the voices of minority ethnic pupils to be heard. How else can teachers know what they make of their social contexts and the impact of institutional policies? Their aspirations for the future are matters of importance, not just for their individual life chances, but also for racial harmony and economic advancement in Scotland.

7.1.2 This chapter reports the results of an investigation which explored the views of minority ethnic pupils in Scottish schools, giving them an opportunity to compare experiences with each other and to be taken seriously. Given the rhetoric of ‘social inclusion’ in current political discourses of government and institutions, like schools, it is appropriate to reflect on the extent to which young people’s perspectives are evidenced in policy formulation, such as the educational reforms, which affect them directly. Are they ‘included’ or are they merely informed after the event?

7.2 The importance of listening to the voices of minority ethnic pupils

7.2.1 The literature that is available is dominated by studies of young people’s lives. For example, their performance in schools (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000), gender effects in employment (Mirza, 1992), the effects of institutional racism on the exclusion of black boys (Bourne et al, 1994) and the experiences of young Asian children (Bhatti, 1999). These reports are written by adult researchers about young people. What is noticeable is the paucity of material that is owned by young people, that gives prominence to their voices and in which ‘they speak for themselves’. A similar point is made by Watson et al (1999) in relation to disabled children.

7.2.2 One of the single most important issues to emerge from current research of minority ethnic young people is the gap between what they experience and perceive, and what is known and understood by most of the professionals who have authority over them and
who influence the environment in which they live and study. Hampton (1998) successfully captured this gap between the real life experiences of young Glaswegians who spoke about the everyday racism that they encounter and the indifference and inaction demonstrated by their teachers and the police in particular. O’Connor et al’s preliminary reports (2002) describe real differences in ethnic identity between minority ethnic and white young people. Cline et al’s recent study (2002) of the experiences of minority ethnic pupils in mainly white schools in England found that many minority ethnic pupils ‘play white’, while many teachers minimise the significance and the value of cultural and ethnic diversity.

7.2.3 Such a gap in teachers’ understanding and experience of racial discrimination prevents them from responding to what is happening to their pupils. Undoubtedly there are problems in the way of free-flowing dialogue in daily school events, particularly between isolated minority ethnic pupils and teachers who are seen to be in positions of power. But, if that understanding and communication does not exist, then teachers will remain unresponsive to minority ethnic children for whom racism is a dominant force, though not the sole aspect, of their daily lives in Scottish society.

7.2.4 The decision to include a consideration of the experiences of minority ethnic disabled pupils raised even more complex issues because of well-documented methodological dilemmas that abound in disability research, even before confronting the compounding effects of issues of race and ethnicity. As was mentioned earlier, we found well documented evidence that indicates that white disabled children experience high levels of social control and discrimination in schooling because of environmental, structural and attitudinal barriers to their participation in mainstream education. Whereas minority ethnic disabled young people are likely to share many of the experiences of discrimination encountered by their white disabled peers, they have also been found to carry a double pathology of race and disability by their teachers (Allan, 1999). Patel’s recent small study (2002) is a good starting point for exploring minority ethnic disabled children’s experiences of their daily lives. To what extent was it going to be possible, within the remit of this piece of research, to explore the complex issues that surround the discourses on race equality and disability and how might mainstream disability research influence this task?

7.2.5 In their report of a seminal study of the lives of disabled children, Watson et al (2001) have argued that much research into disabled childhood has frequently excluded the voices of the young people themselves as research has focused on the perspectives of parents, professionals and other adults. They developed a conceptual and methodological approach which was highly productive in giving disabled children a ‘voice’ in articulating their perspectives within the broader discourses of rights, inclusion and citizenship. We have greatly benefited from their research and list some of the key features in their findings which are of interest to a study which aims to understand the experiences of another social group who are known to experience social exclusion.
7.2.6 Watson et al report that:

- The categorisation of children as disabled also formed part of the adult world which bounded children’s experiences. Such labelling often involved disability as a dominant status, where other differences or similarities remained muted or unattended to, and everything related to a child being explained by their impairment.

- The children themselves were more ambivalent about the use of the category of ‘disabled’, both in relation to themselves and to others, suggesting their perspectives were based on experience and context.

- Their understanding of the importance of variables such as gender, ethnicity, impairment, social class and locality on these young people’s capacity to be independent social actors was again drawn from detailed analyses of their experiences and cultures. However, they also state that issues of ethnicity were often overlooked by providers of services. Interestingly, they were able to highlight the way gender and ethnicity were ignored in most services for disabled children as impairment operated as a dominant status. For example, in one area, a service for children with Downs syndrome was part of a school on an estate with a history of racial violence, which meant that black and Asian families were reluctant to send their children there.

- While the majority of disabled children were male, most workers in special education were female. This suggests that there is a lack of role models for boys to emulate.

- Disabled children are capable of identifying good practice. Our data suggests that where children encounter disablist practices in schools, they should be encouraged to put forward their own solutions to their problems. If given space, they are capable of empowering themselves where they encounter teachers and other adult helpers, provided these adults reflexively question their own practice.

- A key strategy they identify is for teachers and others to be flexible in their response to children for whom disability is only one aspect of their lives. The children themselves recognise that they are different, but, as they make clear, this difference only becomes relevant at certain times and in particular contexts.

7.2.7 One of their conclusions is of particular interest. They argue that, at the core of the disability dilemma, was a tension between the ways in which difference was constructed and reinforced alongside an imperative to assimilate. On the one hand, children were constantly reminded that they were essentially different from their non-disabled peers, whilst on the other, they were compelled to adopt the behaviour, the ways of speaking, the ways of walking which most closely approximated that of non-disabled children.
Whereas this study of minority ethnic disabled pupils does not permit such an in-depth analysis as that conducted by Watson et al, there may be commonalities in terms of the forms of social exclusion experienced by both disabled children and their minority ethnic peers. To what extent was it going to be possible, within the remit of this research project, to explore the complex issues that surround the discourses on race equality and SEN? How might the researchers create opportunities to allow young minority ethnic pupils in general a voice in sharing their experiences and what methodological issues does this raise for the design of the study?

### 7.3 Aims and methodological issues

7.3.1 Researchers face a number of methodological dilemmas about how to communicate the essence of what young people say and feel without further disempowering them. It was certainly an issue for this team of researchers who asked young people to give up their ‘free’ time to come to talk about the impact of race, ethnicity, cultural and religious diversity against a background of racial tensions in global events. Throughout the conduct of the research, a conscious attempt was made to live up to the principles in the SABRE Code (2001) which states that the research:

*Values and addresses the diversity within the black & minority ethnic population and recognises the inter-connections with colour, age, gender, disability, sexuality, culture, class, language, belief, context and other socially defined characteristics.*

*Acknowledges the ‘power-relations’ inherent in social research processes, e.g., between ‘white’ and ‘black’, ‘researchers’ and ‘researched’, and families and communities.*

7.3.2 As this research study was intended to be a rapid ‘first trawl’ across minority ethnic groups in four Scottish authorities, it was not possible to contemplate ethnographic research of the kind developed with such effect by Troyna and Hatcher (1992). Instead, the focus group research method was chosen as it offered maximum possibility for engaging with minority ethnic young people in exploring the problematic issues at the heart of this study. Hampton (1998) was particularly successful in eliciting the active interest of the young people in her study by using this approach. Additionally, as group meetings with young people were to be held outside the normal environment of school, it was envisaged that the participants would have a genuine space to speak freely, without their teachers or parents being present, or of individual schools being identified. By being a member of a focus group, individuals would have more opportunity to share experiences and analyses with their contemporaries than they would in the solitude of an interview. The only exception we made was in the case of the disabled students who were
interviewed individually. In all cases, great care was to be given to ensure anonymity of participants as many were likely to be the ‘only one’ or ‘one of just a few’ in their schools and neighbourhoods.

7.3.3 Several key issues were considered in advance when designing the enquiry and ground rules were established to guide all the researchers involved in fieldwork:

- No attempt would be made to access young people through the schools which were involved in any component of the research study.
- If free-flowing commentary were to be developed, then pupils and schools should remain anonymous. Indeed, offers by schools to arrange interviews with their own pupils were to be declined.
- Minority ethnic community groups in the four authorities would be asked to identify pupils willing to participate.
- Pupils (and parents and teachers) were to remain anonymous so their statements would not be cross-checked for proof of what they were saying.
- Group facilitators would be student teachers who, as visible minority ethnic people, had had personal experience of being pupils in mainly white schools.
- As much as possible of the flow of discussion would be captured by means of tape-recorder and transcription as well as note-taking.
- Detailed briefing notes were prepared for managing the conduct of the focus groups meetings so that maximum coverage of the topics was assured, in line with the aims of the project.
- Notes were taken at the time and verbatim transcriptions made from cassette tape-recordings of each group.

7.3.4 Exhaustive efforts were made to ensure the highest ethical standards in researching young people’s lives. Letters explaining the study were sent in advance to the parents of the pupils nominated for the focus groups. All the groups were to be facilitated by the student teachers, or other members of the team, who had been cleared by the Scottish Criminal Record Office (Disclosure Scotland). The facilitators would work in pairs, female with male, and always with at least one of the minority ethnic members of the team. All focus groups would take place in safe places that were known to the participants and readily accessible by public transport. We would try to limit each group in size to ten participants.
7.3.5 Within the resources available, it was only possible to attempt a small-scale enquiry of minority ethnic disabled children’s lives in a way that is relevant to them, acknowledges that they are ‘experts’ on their own lives and are capable of speaking for themselves. It was decided that individual interviews would be attempted with a small sample of disabled young people. Access would be negotiated in partnership with MELDI.

7.4 Profile of focus group and case study participants

7.4.1 In all, 96 pupils participated in 11 focus groups in the four authorities. They were accessed through community routes, not through the schools themselves. There is therefore no ‘matching’ of schools with pupils, on the contrary good representation of young people from all the visible minority ethnic groups (including those who are most frequently overlooked in studies to date) was ensured. Out of the total who participated in the focus groups, 50 were female, 46 were male, 23 were African, 17 Chinese, 3 Bangladeshi, 10 Indian, 20 Pakistani. There were 10 ‘Others’, 2 Asian, 2 British, 1 European, 4 Malaysian, and one each from South Africa, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan and Vietnam. In every focus group the participants were from different schools, at no time did the study focus on the schools that had been pulled into the research net via teachers. Though it was hoped that there would be no more than 10 per focus group, focus groups ranged in size from 3–14 participants. However, most groups were organised to ensure that the ages of focus group participants were fairly close. Groups were organised for 11–14 and 15–18 year olds.

7.4.2 Five families of disabled children were contacted. After meeting the young people concerned, Q was identified as a potential candidate for a case-study. He was enthusiastic to participate in the research study. Q is a 19 year-old male, born in Scotland of Pakistani ethnic background. Q was suggested by the staff of MELDI as someone who was a ‘product of the Scottish school system’ and keen to share his views. The interview, which lasted an hour, took place in Q’s home. Members of his family were present, though not in the same room after the start of the interview. The interviewer and MELDI development worker are members of Scotland’s minority ethnic community.

7.5 Emerging themes from the focus groups and case study

7.5.1 The success of the focus group approach was soon evident as the young people responded positively and engaged in lively discussion of the key issues. It soon became clear that at the start of each meeting, sufficient time needed to be given to introductions and explanations before the participants were satisfied that they understood the purpose of the exercise and were confident to speak freely. Time was also required for interaction among the young people themselves as they talked to each other about the issues that most interested them.
7.5.2 The transcribed material from the focus group meetings and interviews was critically analysed in order to identity major themes that would be of relevance to policy and practice in schools. This was achieved in spite of the fact that the speed and intensity of participant debate was sometimes more than could be captured minute by minute by our recording equipment. The capacity of the facilitators to keep up with debate was stretched to the limit. The ‘noise’ of several participants talking at once, comparing notes, often in local youth dialects that were unfamiliar to the group facilitators, means that there are gaps in the transcripts. The pace and intensity of discussion created the dilemma for facilitators of going with the flow or intervening in order to cross-check detail and challenge what were sometimes strong statements.

7.5.3 The research team was determined to preserve the richness of what young people had said by privileging their own words in this report. It was argued that this was justified because this was the first study to investigate the perspectives of minority ethnic pupils in Scottish education, something of which participants were aware, and which led them to ask about the benefits that could result from their efforts. Also important is the prospect that the voices of the young people could provide a powerful staff development resource for the professionals who have the authority and power to bring about the changes that are needed.

7.5.4 At the heart of this discussion is the question of whether young minority ethnic pupils in this study felt that they are valued and accepted members of an inclusive education system in Scotland. How did they perceive themselves, the schools that they attended, their experience as learners and their futures? What did they make of the national debate about social inclusion and inclusive education? The sections below consider comments that conveyed understandings and perceptions of social inclusion, ethnic diversity and race equality in minority ethnic pupils’ experience of schooling. The analyses from the focus group meetings are presented and discussed under the following themes.

7.6 Experience of social exclusion in Scottish schools and wider society
7.6.1 Schools are racially inclusive communities
7.6.2 Racist incidents
7.6.3 Ethnic identity
7.6.4 Bilingualism
7.6.5 Faith
7.7 Developing social inclusion in schools
7.7.1 Having a positive school ethos
7.7.2 Having good teachers
7.7.3 Pupils’ suggestions for improving school practice
7.8 Citizenship and anti-racism

7.5.5 The interview with Q, a young disabled man, is reported as a single case-study (7.9). It should not be regarded as conclusive evidence of the state of SEN practice in Scottish
schools but as an opportunity to learn from the insights of a minority ethnic disabled young man who has received the whole of his schooling in Scotland. Q speaks enthusiastically about his experiences of school and college and his aspirations for the future.

7.6 Experience of social exclusion in Scottish schools and wider society

7.6.1 Schools as racially inclusive communities

From the outset, it became clear that pupils were eager to compare notes about their developing identities, their experiences of schooling and their lives outside school. For many of the participants, the notion of an ‘inclusive school’ seemed remote and they continually questioned whether there were schools that were successful in doing this through knowing, understanding and valuing the different heritage languages spoken at home or the faiths and traditions within which different minority ethnic young people live.

Only a few pupils lived in areas where there was a large majority of minority ethnic (mainly Asian) pupils. They were mostly ‘the only ones’ of their ethnic group in the school, or among just a few visible minority pupils. They were conscious of being perceived as ‘outsiders’, even though they may have been born in Scotland. They felt that colour, country of origin, language and religious background were determining factors in whether they were accepted as belonging. Though they preferred otherwise, they seemed resigned to the fact that the schools that they attended were overwhelmingly white, in staff composition and school ethos. They were conscious of the institutionalised barriers to racial equality that existed in the education system and remarked on the invisibility of minority ethnic teachers as potential role models.

*I think it would be nice to have teachers who are more mixed.*

*You know, who look more like us.*

*Well, it would be the same as us then.*

*It would be more comfortable.*

*They might understand you better.*

*If we had Chinese teachers and you don’t understand something, you could ask that teacher and he or she will explain to you, help people with English … I’ve got some cousin friends in first year and they just bunk off, picked on by people [who] make fun of them. It would be different if we had some Chinese teachers. They don’t talk to the teachers, they don’t like to ask the teachers for help.*
Where there were minority ethnic teachers, the way in which these members of staff were treated by some white colleagues and pupils did not go unnoticed.

We have got one teacher, she comes to people who don’t know how to speak English, she does Urdu and languages like that. The teacher, all the boys make fun of her and annoy her and don’t let her pass, just because she’s Asian and wears Asian clothes. Once, in French, she was trying to go past, all the boys were annoying her and pulling her scarf because she wears a scarf as well. And they didn’t let her go past and she talked to the teacher about it and Miss X goes ‘It’s nothing to do with me, go to someone else’, and she just ignored her. She was standing there. It’s only one Asian teacher, we’ve never had an Asian teacher before.

Here was an instance of an Urdu-speaking teacher who, in the views of pupils, had been grossly humiliated and unsupported by her colleague. Was this an instance of racism or a tired colleague who didn’t have the energy to intervene? What is perhaps significant is that the incident had been noted by the pupils concerned and led a number of the participants in this discussion to question whether they would be prepared to pay such a price if they were ever to become teachers.

7.6.2 Racist incidents

All the participants, without exception, had experienced everyday racism and wanted to talk at length about what they had experienced or witnessed, of how they found friendship as well as racial prejudice, support as well as alienation in their daily lives. The team promised the young people anonymity and therefore we are unable to record in this study some of the most harrowing examples of racism we heard. To do so would run the risk of identifying the individual. The majority of young people recounted experiences of racist incidents, name-calling, harassment and bullying in social relationships in their neighbourhoods, in the city centres, while travelling to and from school and other environments.

What constitutes a ‘racist incident’ continues to be disputed and a range of interpretations were present in the discussions. It is useful to recall the definition offered in the Macpherson Report (1999) which states that ‘a racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’. How then might the following examples be rated by those who have authority over the young people who have voiced these complaints below?

The bus driver – sometimes I get name-called on my way to and from school in the buses.

Just small things like you can’t go anywhere without somebody making a comment or looking at you. Example was when my friends said, ‘That’s the
worst school you could ever go to, ‘cos it’s all black’. I was surprised, I was shocked that they say that to me.

There’s a couple of kids that live in our area and one, she’s always coming up and she asked if she could, like, come into our house and play with our little sister. And my mum said ‘No’, and she said ‘Why?’ and she started asking questions. My mum asked to see her mum, and she said ‘No. Because you’re black and my mum doesn’t want to speak to you.’ So it was kind of like ‘Well. We don’t know what to say.’ My mum just broke away and said ‘We have to go back now.’ She’s only a small girl, so she wouldn’t understand what’s really behind the words.

Because she’s Chinese. She gets picked on quite a lot. They say quite a few things about her. It’s bad, but not that bad, we deal with it ourselves and move on. Name-calling. Or if you’re passing through corridors, standing in your way, pretending they haven’t seen you coming.

These are examples that were seen as ‘not the worst’ and quite common in the daily lives of young people and all had found ways of dealing with such incidents. But the most difficult situations that they found were the ones in which teachers displayed racist attitudes, especially when it appeared unintentional.

I used to have a teacher always referred to me as ‘Mohammedan’.

We watched a video and some guy made a comment that black people don’t like to be called ‘niggers’ but they refer to themselves as ‘niggers’ when in a group and talked about my ancestors. I was called ‘negro’ by my music teacher, but I don’t think she meant it in the context. I don’t actually know if she knows she’s not supposed to say that word, but she didn’t mean it. I figured that if I did bring it up, then she’d probably get into more trouble. She was quite elderly. Most older people don’t know what to say. Young people do know not to say certain words.

In my old school they showed what happened to someone who got racially bullied and the result of it. And it was quite horrible to watch because they had gone completely crazy and were scared to go to the bathroom by themselves because it had been that bad. So they taught us not to bully or be racist to anyone because it is quite horrible. When they show these sort of things, everyone gives me short glances and it’s like ‘What are you looking at? This has nothing to do with me. It’s just because of my skin colour.’ I thought there would be a couple of glances but I didn’t think there would be as many glances as there was. But it was quite embarrassing because I was the only coloured person in my class. I don’t think she quite realised, because the class would be here and she would be there. The teacher sat at the front, if she sat at the back or in the middle so she could see everyone, it would have been better. Now I would tell the teachers this time. I would tell them ‘Please could you speak to
the class because they keep giving me short glances when an anti-racial video comes on and it’s quite embarrassing. So could you please?’

My least favourite subject is PE because the teachers whenever I play basketball, the teacher gives me priority over everyone else because of my colour. I don’t find that helpful because it’s not a challenge for me any more because she likes doing the stuff for me. She pushed me ahead of the other kids without knowing it. It’s just a kind of reflex or something, so if I was to bring it up and say ‘By the way, I think you’re treating me different from everybody else’, then I don’t think she’d take it very well. Word gets around and all the teachers start being strange. All the teachers talk. Like if someone’s been doing well, then they all start discussing the person. Or if someone’s been doing badly, send a letter home, they start discussing what’s been happening in class and all that.

It was geography and we were studying third world development and the second the teacher said ‘Third world, including Africa’ everyone was just, like, slowly looking straight at me and I just felt kind of awkward ‘cos I didn’t know what was going on. And then I realised what she had said. She was making a poster and had the devil and an angel and she had this white girl with fruit and a black family from Africa, so people think of it as hell.

The ease with which individual participants could relate examples of everyday harassment among their peers within the focus groups could mask the pain they felt. In some instances, during these discussions, individuals displayed their hurt, humiliation and anger, especially when they recounted how teachers had failed them. The dilemma that they faced as visible minority ethnic pupils seemed clear to some who expressed the view that they either were expected to come to terms with the fact that they will experience prejudice and discrimination among their classmates, and learn the skills of defusing the situation, turning it around, or they must move into acceptance, fit in and tolerate the intolerable. In other words, they were expected not to be ‘so sensitive’, to ‘carry chips on their shoulders’ and to just ‘get on with life’. It would be entirely inaccurate to conclude that these young people remain passive in colluding with the unacceptable behaviour that is perpetrated by members of the general public or those in authority over them. On the contrary, they were keen to compare notes on dealing with situations outside and to come forward with their own solutions to such problems.

More serious, and difficult to resolve, is the problem of teachers who ‘pick them out’ from among their peers. On many occasions, participants tried to sort things out for themselves.

There was one person, we were watching a video, about meditation, and everyone started doing meditation and this girl, she thought they were all making fun of her and she was about to go to guidance and everyone told her it was a joke and it was nothing serious.
I once stood up to someone because I couldn’t take it any more. There was this boy, he used to get chewing gum and I used to have this huge Afro. So the problem was, I used to walk and he would go and throw it in my hair and then he’d go ‘Oh look. A plane has crashed in your head.’ And I was like ‘There’s no need and that.’ And then I was just walking away and he goes ‘You fucking Paki’ or something like that. So then I go ‘I came to this country, I came here to work and I’m not going back because of poofs like you’ and then I just walked away. He stopped annoying me after that. Most of the time you have to deal yourself. If you go to a teacher, the teacher talks to the person – the person hates you more. They think you’re weak because you go to the teacher.

Asked whether they would ask their teachers for support, they seemed ambivalent about the advisability of doing so. The role that teachers play in dealing with racist incidents is discussed later.

7.6.3 Ethnic identity

According to participants, it appears that their teachers and peers alike either lack the confidence or knowledge to engage positively with diverse ethnic communities.

*I think they feel uncomfortable, like they don’t know what to say on certain things, like do they call me black, or do they call me coloured. Like they don’t know how to refer to me. My first day there, I was then the only black person in the school and they were saying ’No, she’s not black.’*

*They don’t know – even my close friends – don’t really know where I actually come from, or when I came here or anything. It’s as if they don’t want to know.*

Lack of understanding gave rise to stereotypes about cultural origins and community groupings. A number of participants expressed annoyance where teachers or peers made stereotypical assumptions about their identities on the basis of their colour, country of origin and ‘visibility’.

*There’s an African boy in first year and everyone thinks I am his big brother.*

*There was an older girl at school and everyone was like ’Your cousin. You two know each other.’ She’s not my sister.*

7.6.4 Bilingualism

A large proportion of participants lived in communities in which various heritage languages were used in daily cultural life. Those who described themselves as ‘bilingual’ felt that there was no real value given to their bilingualism. On the contrary, they were made to feel ‘exotic’, asked in front of the whole class to ‘say a few words in your
language’. It was extremely rare to find a pupil who was being supported in studying their home language for examination. Indeed, many resented the fact that they were required to learn French when they would rather give the time to studying their own home language. This was especially so if, as a result, it meant that they were required to study their language in supplementary classes after school or at weekends.

Like the foreign language, we didn’t have any choice in that at all. Why not put Chinese?

7.6.5 Faith

Generally, there was concern that faiths, other than Christianity, were not given much coverage, though schools that had a mixed intake were seen as far more successful in addressing world religions represented in Scotland.

We learn about different festivals like Eid and Chinese New Year, but we do not celebrate it.

There should be Eid parties. There’s all discos but no Asians go to the disco.

Most people in the school know roughly when the Chinese New Year is.

We don’t have any cultural activities. They try to mention Chinese New Year and stuff, but they don’t like to do anything about it. There’s so few of us, no point in celebration.

Participants were aware that one consequence of a school’s failure to recognise religious diversity is that they, and their families, are put in difficult positions. For instance, if the school will not give ‘official’ time out for festivals then the parents may collude in pupils ‘being sick’.

I don’t think it’s fair that we should celebrate Easter and Christmas and not ours.

Divali – you don’t get days off. You just don’t go to school.

For Eid, I asked my chemistry teacher if I could take the day off. But she said ‘No.’ Everyone knew it was Eid on the Thursday, but my chemistry teacher just told me ‘Come in and celebrate Eid in school.’

If you say you’re ill, it makes life a lot easier. I think I’m the only Muslim person in my whole school. On Eid day, nobody knew about Eid.

You can phone in and your parents tell them that you’re ill.
Some complained of the dependence that teachers placed on minority ethnic pupils to improvise if religious festivals were to be celebrated.

*It’s Eid coming up, but I wouldn’t want publicity that much. I felt like I was being put on the spot, in the spotlight and everyone is looking at you.*

*See the Eid show, it is obviously planned by an Asian.*

### 7.7 Developing social inclusion in schools

The purpose here was to explore how, in the view of the pupils, schools should be developing in order to include ‘all’ pupils, that is, those of every language, faith and ethnic group.

#### 7.7.1 Positive school ethos

A number of pupils did not share the views expressed by other respondents about the existence of racism and felt that this depended on whether the school had a good ethos and recognised the diversity of pupils.

*There’s not really that much racism, you get the cool people and the weird people. In our class, it’s like the people who make a fool of themselves, the people who are really smart and clever and people in the middle like me, so I don’t know whether to make a fool of myself, and then it breaks into smaller little gangs, they think they’re really tough.*

*In my class there’s three coloured people, so it’s OK. My friends don’t really mind, I’m quite lucky in my class, nobody’s really racist. There are a few people doing bullying without knowing it, but nothing serious. They think it’s a joke, but then they don’t think about the reaction of the other person.*

*We do watch videos in our school, but I think our school’s really multicultural. I wouldn’t say there is much racism at all. I’m the only Indian person in my year, and nothing like that happened to me.*

*Everyone in our school does mix. I like the atmosphere when everyone is mixed, girls, guys, when everyone is mixed and everyone has got their own opinion and everyone is speaking to each other.*

One participant, praising his school’s efforts to recognise diversity, spoke about feeling free to choose.

*In our school we have this thing called Diverse City. Every year we have this performance at night and it’s multicultural, with performances from around the*
world. We have Chinese dance, Indian dance, and I’m doing it next year. I’m
doing bagpipes. I think I’m the only black [bagpipe] player.

Another spoke approvingly of the school making an effort, even when they got it wrong
in the first instance.

*They have Chinese names on the wall, like teachers’ names. But they didn’t
know it was upside down, they stuck the name upside down. Then they put it
the right way round. It’s nice to know they want to get involved with us and put
labels for new people coming to the school, who don’t even know where to find
the principal’s office.*

*I train for the school football team, that helps … Makes you belong – you got
friends, part of a group.*

Others spoke about divisions, even gangs, and about the need to learn how to find your
way through the groupings that formed.

*Our school is socially divided. There’s cool and there’s cool, you’re either in
or you’re out and the people just do not care. If you’re in the cool people,
you’re classic stereotype, you don’t listen to anyone, they really don’t care,
they think they can control anyone, throwing chewing gum in their mouth when
they know the teacher is watching, sticking their feet up on the table.*

*There’s just gangs. The first day you go to school, you decide the group of
people you’re going to hang out with.*

Some were critical of the tendency for visible minority pupils to stay together. They
wanted the schools to do more to bring pupils out of their enclaves.

*A lot of the Chinese people, Indians, Pakistanis, they all hang round in
groups, like a lot of people don’t mix, they all stay with people of their own
nationality whether in or out of school and I would encourage the teachers to
encourage those people to mix with other different types of people in the year.
I think that is one way of building up racism, by staying in a group of people
of your own nationality. It starts stereotyping and stuff like that. Get them to
sit beside different people in classes. Have group discussion in class, you can
maybe pair them up and mix cultures, so they would talk, find out their
personality and they will want to be friends with them. I think it all starts in
the classroom and then it will continue out of school.*

*You won’t ever see an Asian guy speaking to an Asian girl like he speaks to a
white person. You’ll never see that.*
There was also recognition that if they could handle some situations with skill, they could reduce the problems.

*If you don’t drink alcohol, you’re not cool. I tell them straight ‘I don’t do that and they shift away but then they come back. They are nice generally.*

But some problems just cannot be solved because the essential provision is not made.

*Every Saturday all the young Muslims aged about 12–25 all come together to play football.*

*Muslim girls can’t do that much here. Like swimming, girls can’t do that, Muslim girls can’t go into a mixed swimming pool. There’s nothing for the girls, there used to be something.*

7.7.2 **Having good teachers**

Most of the participants were eager to succeed in their studies, to gain qualifications that would allow them to embark on a career and to overcome the racism they expected to encounter in the labour market. So, the quality of teaching mattered greatly to them. Their discussions revealed a remarkable consensus about how they could recognise a good teacher, someone who not only knew their subject well but who could also keep order in the class and hold their respect.

*The second we walk in the room, if you’re a new teacher, we can tell what you’re like. If you start shouting and everything, people will hate you instantly. If you’re fairly strict but start joking around, then they’ll like you. But if you’re soft and start all ‘Hi’ and really act nice, then we’ll rip it out of you.*

*You can tell by the teacher, he can be right strict to the guys, if they don’t work and don’t listen to him, he takes action. He’s culturally aware as well, he knows many languages.*

Two participants in particular spoke with wisdom about the problem that younger teachers face.

*You find that older teachers, who have been there for ten or fifteen years, they know how to keep the class quiet. And they say ‘Be quiet or you get a row’, if they’re taking over a different class and don’t even teach the subject, they still have control of the pupils. Some of the newer ones, it’s not so easy for them. I suppose it’s coming with experience.*

*What she was saying is true because my school is full of young teachers who just come over on training courses and they stay about three years. They don’t know how to control pupils.*
In the later stages of discussion, after participants had compared notes on difficult situations, sometimes caused by teachers who meant well but did not understand the implications of what they were doing or by teachers who were just not good teachers, an obvious question to ask was whether they thought they could identify ‘bad’ teachers.

*They pick on you and ignore you.*

*Like the art teachers, they kind of stay together and they don’t really mix with others and they talk behind each others’ backs and sometimes they’ll mention something about another teacher, like they don’t teach well. If you’re open with the art teachers, they’ll give you advice, but then they’ll laugh at you, they’ll go to another teacher and tell them what you’ve been saying.*

*Not everybody’s born to be a teacher. It’s like some of the teachers I have are just like they’re not teachers. They can’t teach people, they can learn things themselves but you’re not fit to teach people. It’s so annoying for the pupils ‘cos they’re going to end up with bad reports and look like they’re really dense, but they’re not. It’s because they’ve had a bad teacher.*

If participants could achieve such clarity about good and bad practice in teaching then did they ever feel that they were dealing with teachers who were actually ‘racist’? What criteria did they use when making such a judgement? In the focus groups, they revealed that they would consider a teacher ‘racist’ if s/he displayed prejudiced discrimination, neglecting or downgrading a pupil for no reason other than their ‘visibility’, picking on one minority group. They did not class all teachers as ‘racist’. In fact they reserved this description for those who stood out as being unfair because of racial prejudice.

*A new geography teacher, she allowed her to observe our class, and she went through everybody and all of a sudden around my desk, she done a wee loop, and then done somebody else and completely ignored me. And I needed help, and I put my hand up. And then she does the same with my sister as well. She ignores her, she doesn’t help her, she shouts at her for not talking, she shouts at her for not adding her comments and stuff like that. And, in her report, all the teachers gave her good marks, but just that teacher, dropped her right down. And everybody was fine in the class, it was just her, something wrong with her.*

*She didn’t judge me knowingly, she judged me by the colour of my skin. She wanted to give me an average report, which wasn’t fair. Which was racism because I’m not like an average person, I’m me, and individual. She didn’t give it to me on my personality, on how I acted in class, she gave it to me on my skin colour. She wanted to give me an average mark, like the rest of the class, so she gave me an average report which wasn’t fair, because I didn’t do average, I did well. So she cheated me.*

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Our teacher was off, so we got that teacher. There were five Asians in the class, and we were standing outside and he came and started shouting at us, and then the bell rang, so he pushed me and my friend says ‘I’m away’ and he grabbed and pulled him back. And then he took me in the room and he pushed me twice and then he chucked me outside and put all the girls inside and I opened the door and just slammed the door. I got referrals for threatening him and remarks and swearing. Me and another three boys, we changed teacher, we don’t get him any more, so we don’t have any problem. But whenever I walk in the corridor, he looks daggers at me.

So, would they tell their teachers if they were encountering racism? One participant spoke for many when she said, “I’m not sure they would want to know.”

Only guidance teachers emerged from the discussions as a key to problem solving. Many spoke with praise of the warm response they had found when they dared to go to the guidance teacher with a problem. Above all, they welcomed a rapid and skilled response, but it was important also that they were kept informed.

I’ve actually had a bullying problem in the past, and obviously it was a guy, so it made it worse for me. I did go to the guidance teachers for a lot of things, they were approachable but I feel it dragged on for far too long. It dragged on for about six months and it was unnecessary, because he was using racist comments. I mean it was in school and out of school. And my family helped me and the school didn’t really help. It took so many times, and eventually it wasn’t just the name calling. I had shaving cream smeared on me and I went straight to guidance and said ‘Look what he’s done.’ I thought this totally uncalled for, it wasn’t like a bullying case where I provoked it – it wasn’t at all. So I was a bit miffed about that and the school didn’t do anything. It took them so long to get it done, it took them until something physical happened. They could have stopped it the first week it was happening. At the end he was going to get charged by the police for doing that because that was actually physical. Everyone knew and even his friends were just like ‘That is totally wrong. You should not have done that.’ Even his own friends were turning against him.

I never let it ruin my life. He’s so sad, you know, he needs to get a grip. Because if someone gives it to me, I have always been taught to give it back twice as hard. He knew I wasn’t afraid of him. I was just a bit cheesed off that it took 6 months for them to deal with it. They called the police and that scared him off and then because he was being racist to several other Asian girls, they just expelled him. Never Asian guys, because they are older than him and they would just kick the crap out of him. It was always to girls his age and younger than him. I never got told anything. I was kept in the dark all that time and, all of a sudden, I found out that he was expelled. I should definitely have been told that, ‘cos how am I to know if they’re taking me seriously or not if they don’t tell me. If anything else was to happen, I don’t think I would really go to the school. I would deal with it with my family.
7.7.3 Pupil suggestions for improving school practice

Finally, participants were encouraged to make recommendations about how things could be improved:

Teachers should listen to pupils.

It’s not my colour that matters, it’s my personality.

You either like me or you don’t.

It’s not our fault if we are of a different colour or the way we are.

How would you like to be treated like that if you are different race?

Message to bullies. Just leave me alone – what have I done to you?

I want more people of the same background in one class - so that you are not on your own all the time.

Don’t just stand there and cry, tell someone so that they can deal with you.

I think every teacher everywhere in Britain should be equal, because now we are a multicultural society and they should be equal to every single people, to every single community. I think they should reflect on giving us holy days, our equal right.

They should get more white people and black people mixed together in groups – then talk about it properly, get to know each other, get to know a lot of other people. If you bring white people in, we’ll have a better point of view because it’s just like one side.

They need to learn how to deal with people of different ethnic backgrounds. I think we should be involved in, like, teacher training or something. Just to get them, like, in the know about how to deal with different people. Roughly, they should just be educated on people’s backgrounds so that they know where to step and what not to say. What might offend someone if they’re trying to teach someone something.

7.8 Citizenship and anti-racism

Though no specific questions were asked in the focus groups about education for citizenship, one of the issues that teachers taking forward Education for Citizenship should note was the reluctance, or lack of interest of those taking part in the focus groups, to engage in the wider discourses of race equality such as ‘institutional racism’. Young
people appeared to have a crude understanding of race equality or racism where such issues were often related to racial bullying or the learning of different faiths or festivals. The majority, if not all, did not appear to be aware of the social and legal reforms following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the RR(A)A2000. After discussion, some did begin to identify the need for anti-racism to permeate all their school work but these conversations were not readily offered. Young people knew about racism from their own personal experiences but they did not appear to have been assisted to contextualise such experiences. There were one or two young people who were far more vocal but this was due to race equality issues being discussed frequently and openly within their own homes. This study would suggest that all concerned with education policy and practice, HMIE, local authorities, schools and individual teachers should consider how Education for Citizenship can empower all pupils to engage in the global concerns regarding race, racism and antiracism.

7.9 A minority ethnic young disabled person’s experience and aspirations

7.9.1 Case study of Q

Q is a 19 year-old male, born in Scotland of Pakistani ethnic origin. He was nominated by the staff of MELDI as someone who was a ‘product of the Scottish school system’ and keen to share his views. The interview, which was conducted by a minority ethnic researcher, took place in Q’s home. Members of his family were present, though not in the same room after the start of the interview. The discussion lasted an hour during which Q spoke enthusiastically about his experiences of school and college and his aspirations for the future.

Q was enrolled at the same predominantly white mainstream primary school that his older sisters attended and, after leaving high school, “I was sent on a course for ‘Special Needs’ students at a FE college.” Q was dissatisfied with this decision and has since secured the opportunity through MELDI to choose a subject area that he is interested. He is now enrolled on a Computer Studies course at another college. The main impression that came across to the researcher was of a young man who has a clear understanding of his capabilities and social context. Throughout the interview, Q was able to reflect on his years in primary and high school and recounted the instances of ‘isolation’, ‘unfairness’, ‘discrimination’ and racial bullying which he had experienced. Despite the barriers that he has encountered throughout his childhood, Q has maintained a strong desire to learn, the ambition to have a career and to succeed in life. A number of themes emerged from the interview, all of which have relevance for schools.

7.9.2 Identity

When the researcher met him, Q described himself as having ‘learning disabilities’, though he seemed ambivalent about the use of this category.
He was, however, aware that this was how he was seen throughout his time in his mainstream school, though he was unsure whether he had a ‘Record of Needs’.

*I was slow, not catching up with work in class ... always not putting my mind to the work and dreaming.*

Q remembers that he was a premature baby and that the doctors told his mother that he was disabled. He said that his motor and language development were slow, particularly in the first four years, and that he started primary school a year late because his mother did not know what provision was available. She had not received any form of support from any social care agency until recently when she joined MELDI. The past year in his new college and his contact with MELDI had empowered Q to express his views with confidence and he is also actively involved in campaigning for the ‘rights’ of disabled people. He said he wanted to share his views so that other pupils would benefit.

*I would say to them they must ask for all the support that they can. Because if they have got the support in the school they should ask for it. They have the right to have it as well.*

Q was equally ambivalent about his ethnic or racial identity. He remembers that he was “the only coloured boy” in his class and says that as he got older in secondary school he became aware that there are ethnic minorities. He knew from home that he was Pakistani and a Muslim. He thought that the school paid little attention to minority ethnic issues, “as there were a few of us there”. Q did not receive EAL support, an issue which raises a number of questions about the impact that this may have had on his academic performance.

It is difficult to judge which of Q’s multiple identities prevailed in decisions about his educational and social needs, though it would be valuable to ask whether Q’s identity as a disabled child masked attention to his ethnic and cultural needs. Equally important is how young minority ethnic disabled persons construct their own identities and the extent to which schools recognise and support them in this. Minority ethnic disabled children may be more ambivalent about the use of the two categories of ‘disabled’ or ‘minority ethnic’.

7.9.3 Educational success or alienation

It was evident from listening to Q, and his family, that they placed a considerable value on education as a means of improving his life chances. Q had memories of the early years in primary school, which he recalled were ‘happy enough’. It was the later years when he went to the high school which was a period of his life that was not only the most recent, but was also the experience that had the greatest impact on achieving his goals in adult life.

When invited to talk about his experience as a pupil in the schools he had attended, Q
commenced by praising his teachers whom he described as “very kind teachers, polite.” Whilst he said that both schools were helpful, he showed a strong sense of judging whether his secondary school had met his educational aspirations. Reflecting on whether his whole experience of schooling had been a happy one, he said.

Yes it has but not in the way that I would really want it to be a happy experience. I wanted it to be a really happy experience where there would be no bullying … no abuse or anything … happy like with the highest grades.

During the first years of high school, it seems that Q and his parents had been told that he was doing well. It was only much later when he had the hard evidence of examination grades that he begun to realise that matters were not well.

Over the past few years the Scottish Executive has pledged itself to raising standards for all pupils, including those like Q, who may experience barriers of learning. Whether or not his teachers were right in their assessment of Q’s capabilities, he appears to have been left alienated by what he perceives as his lack of success in school and the additional barriers that these have caused in reaching his goals. All mainstream schools in Scotland have received guidance on the provision of learning support and this was something that Q had long experience of throughout his schooling. He felt that his primary school had supported him well and that he was learning in school but he now questioned what had happened in high school.

I found out in my second year that they have a learning support team in the high school and I got well through second year but not enough support which I wanted to … because later on when I found out in my fourth year when my grades came out I didn’t get the good grades that I really wanted to get.

Q continues to regard the lack of learning support as the main reason why he could not stay on to the end of the sixth year of school and that this in turn has had negative effects on his prospects for preparing for a career of his choice.

I had to leave at the end of fifth year. My teacher was saying that I wouldn’t cope with the work … and another thing was that they couldn’t give me all the support that I needed. And I said that I wanted to do the computer kind of courses like IT and computing and administration. They said I couldn’t do it because they didn’t have it at Intermediate level, only as a Higher.

Q’s experience raises a number of questions about the notion of ‘educational success’ as it relates to minority ethnic disabled children with SEN. How do schools give due regard to a pupil’s disabilities as well as issues of culture, ethnic, faith and language? How are pupils like Q actively involved in decisions about setting their educational goals and in evaluating their achievement?
7.9.4 Transition to adult life

Over the course of the past few years, the Scottish Executive has paid particular attention to the issue of transition to post-school provision for young people with SEN. As pupils approach school leaving age, it is recognised that some are at risk of failing to gain equal opportunities to further education or training to gain employment. However, as the experience of Q illustrates, much needs to be done to avoid the sense of disappointment that can be caused by the failure of schools to adequately support and, most of all, listen to young people.

I went to X College for a year and it was a special course for students who had learning disabilities. I left after a year because it wasn’t what I was preferring. I wanted to do computing and office work all the time but they said I had to do all the different courses. And in the summer holiday I did a placement and it didn’t go very well because it wasn’t interesting. I was in the Sick Kids hospital as a porter and I just left. I said I couldn’t stand it anymore. It was boring. So I told them I wanted to drop the course … In the beginning it was my guidance teacher who forced me to do this course. She said you should do this course. It is for your kind of people who have learning disabilities.

I would prefer to have a career in computing. Since I have been at high school I have liked computing and computers and doing typing. I hope to have a career in computing office or office management or some kind of business or something.

7.9.5 Racism

Q was not immune to bullying and racist behaviour from children in both the primary and secondary schools that he attended.

In the third year he started doing it [bullying] again … it got much worse by saying racist jokes about my culture and religion and things … he started bullying me … picking on me every time I came out of class.

Asked how the teachers dealt with such behaviour, Q said.

Yes, they [teachers] did deal with it a few months later … I was scared I did not want to tell them … but when I told the deputy headteacher he just spoke to the student … he just told him off again … he gave him a warning, not anything else … So he was doing it again. After the subject teachers found out that he was bullying me they told the headteacher and the headteacher called him and called his mother and the police at the same time. And he got charged with racial abuse … I was happy it stopped.
7.9.6 **Home-school relations**

Q is the member of a close family. They have offered him strong encouragement and material support. He thought that both his schools had not listened to his mother’s views and recounted a meeting (possibly a Future Needs Assessment) which his parents had attended.

> At the annual meeting, my doctor was there, my psychologist was there and my therapist was there and the learning support teacher was there. And my parents were agreeing with me saying that I wanted to stay on till the sixth year and all my teachers were saying you cannot stay on. My doctor had an argument with them saying why can’t he stay on, he could try it but they didn’t listen.

Asked whether he thought that his parents were treated unfairly because of their ethnic background he answered.

> I am not sure. Sometimes I now think it was but I am not sure.

7.9.7 A single case-study cannot be taken as representing the wider situation in respect of provision for minority ethnic pupils in Scottish schools. Nevertheless, what Q has offered is a rare glimpse of the factors that have shaped his life as a pupil and student and the barriers that continue to impede his life chances and goals. In the absence of research about the lives of minority ethnic disabled children in Scotland and the lack of ethnic monitoring reported by the Auditor General (2003), Q’s experience has much for teachers and policy makers to reflect on.

7.10 **Conclusions**

Listening to pupils has raised a fundamental question. How can mainly white schools become ‘good’ schools for visible minority ethnic pupils, schools in which they feel welcome, secure, valued and ambitious, included with their peers, proud of their diversity, allied with their classmates and teachers in challenging racism?

The onus for change is on white staff who must learn new insights and new skills in handling issues, as and when they arise, because the ethnic profile of Scottish society is changing and minority ethnic communities respond to the local, national and world developments that are impacting on them. Some of the most important learning must be done through listening to the young people who, as visible minorities, experience, observe and comment among themselves, and share with their friends, but who are not often asked by adults to talk in a situation that is structured in ways that allow them full opportunity to report on the issues most important to them.
The main conclusions that can be drawn from the research with the young people are, as follows:

7.10.1 Minority ethnic young pupils are eager to succeed in their lives and education and impatient about any barriers that are put in their way, whether by pupils or teachers. The behaviour of pupils and teachers is what was uppermost in their minds.

7.10.2 Racism, both direct and indirect, is a feature of daily life for minority ethnic pupils. The latter feel that there is a gulf between themselves, who know everyday racism from first hand experience, and their teachers who cannot know, are disbelieving, or unwelcoming about the reality of their lives in school and outside.

7.10.3 There are differences of gender in the experiences of minority ethnic pupils. More girls spoke about constraints on them in secondary school. Their range of choice was often less.

7.10.4 The experience of social exclusion is complex and multifaceted. At the core of the dilemma of the ‘invisibility’ of minority ethnic pupils is a tension between the ways in which ‘ethnic difference’ is constructed and reinforced by teachers and schools alongside an imperative on minority ethnic pupils to assimilate to mainstream Scottish society. On the one hand, they are constantly reminded that they are essentially different from their white peers, whilst on the other, they feel compelled to adopt the social norms, the ways of speaking and belief systems which most closely approximate that of white children. There are striking similarities in the forms of social exclusion and discrimination that are experienced by disabled young people (Watson et al, 1999).

7.10.5 Where young people encounter racist practices in schools they are capable of actively putting forward their own solutions to institutional problems.

7.10.6 The severe under-representation of minority ethnic teachers in schools is a serious impediment to creating ‘Inclusive Schools’ across Scotland.

7.10.7 They distinguished between clumsy discriminatory behaviour that seemed to occur frequently in the classroom and was something they could forgive, less acceptable were incidents, which they interpreted as more blatant displays of racial prejudice, by some teachers against a group, or discriminatory practices in the assessment of their work. These teachers were regarded as ‘racist’.

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7.10.8 There was variation between participants when they discussed their respective schools. Some clearly felt that there was a lot of ‘mixing’ that they valued, others were aware of social divisions and of the different dynamic when there were more minority pupils and some clustered into their own ethnic groups.

7.10.9 Q’s experience raises a number of questions about notions of ‘educational success’ as it relates to minority ethnic disabled children with SEN. How do schools give due regard to a pupil’s disabilities as well as issues of culture, ethnic, faith and language? How are pupils like Q actively involved in decisions about setting their educational goals and in evaluating their achievement?

### 7.11 Recommendations

1. Local authorities and schools should review their policies to ensure the active engagement of minority ethnic pupils in all aspects of school life.

2. The Scottish Executive must take action to increase the recruitment, retention levels and status of minority ethnic teachers if schools are to become more representative of our contemporary diverse society.

3. All pupils should be consulted and given the opportunity to be active in the development and implementation of anti-racist policies.

4. Schools should develop new models of support for giving voice to minority ethnic pupils, particularly those who are in isolated settings. This requires to be done with great sensitivity and consultation with those with experience of anti-racist approaches.

5. Teachers and support staff need ongoing staff development to increase their effectiveness in working with multiracial communities and/or to promote race equality. In particular teachers should be assisted to consider how covert and subtle racism can occur as part of their practice.

6. Greater recognition is required of the educational rights and needs of minority ethnic disabled pupils particularly in the area of recognising cultural, faith and linguistic diversities.

7. Education for Citizenship must explicitly empower young people of all ethnicities to understand and deal with racial discrimination.
CHAPTER EIGHT: FINDINGS FROM PARENT INTERVIEWS

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The widely recognised pedagogic benefits of partnerships between parents and teachers on the one hand and the desire of parents to engage with schools on the other has, at agency level, accelerated the drive for dialogue and consultation between parents and teachers. Although this development has received its share of academic attention (Bastiani, 1997; Munn, 1993; Tomlinson, 1993), in Scotland there remains a dearth of published research focusing on such relations in the context of minority ethnic families. Yet, for minority ethnic parents, the added dimension of ‘race’ compounds the difficulties encountered by many majority ethnic parents in their contact with schools. Refugee perceptions of their children’s education in Scotland were documented by Arshad, Closs and Stead (1999) whose study devoted considerable attention to parental perspectives. Speaking of the increasing levels of parental involvement they argued that, ‘it is important to ensure that all parents, including refugee parents, are able to take part in [...] inclusive community practices which not only assist schools but also support family relationships’.

8.1.2 Given that ‘the research literature into the 1990s suggests that educational professionals still regard ethnic minority parents as posing problems for schools, rather than as assets in the educational process’ (Tomlinson, 1993), it is clear that the voices of minority ethnic parents have not yet been fully heard or taken on board. Parents tend to be their children’s chief educators and children derive an essential sense of themselves and the world from their home surroundings before growing into a larger environment. It is therefore not surprising that families should need and wish to understand schooling as an important shared journey. Where there are significant cultural, religious, social and/or ethnic differences between the home and school settings the imperative to build bridges between them becomes even more understandable. However, establishing such trust is an ongoing process requiring reflection and commitment on both sides. ‘A cultural and political shift is needed through the system in order to gain the confidence and active participation of parents.’ (Arshad and Almeida Diniz, 1999)

8.1.3 The importance of involving parents of children with SEN is stressed in guidance that has been published by the Scottish Executive in The Manual of Good Practice in Special Educational Needs (SOEID, 1999(b)). What evidence is there that minority ethnic parents of disabled children are active partners in the education of their children? The decision to include an explicit focus on race equality in SEN and the extent to which this forms part of the main study is explained in Chapter 1. Section 8.4 reports the findings of a small-scale attempt to explore the views and experiences of minority ethnic parents of disabled children.
8.2 Aims and methodology

8.2.1 Thirty-eight parents of different ethnic backgrounds were interviewed. Focus groups were mostly conducted by two researchers, at least one of whom was of minority ethnic background. Twelve interviews were conducted by telephone. Since the focus of this study was on young people rather than their parents, it was decided not to monitor parental ethnicity. It is acknowledged that an investigation into possible correlations and divergences between parent experiences and ethnicity, either their own or that of their children, might have yielded relevant insights. However, such an approach was not considered to be within the scope of this piece of research and, as such, only pupil ethnicity was monitored.

Of the interviewees, thirty were female, and eight were male. The vast majority of interviewees in this group were parents, only two interviewees participated in their capacity as adult relatives involved in the upbringing of the child. The higher levels of participation by mothers, or female carers, may reflect perceptions of parental and caring responsibilities within families, as well as restricted availability of fathers due to work commitments. However, the interviews yielded no clear gender-specific data and quotes have therefore not been coded to indicate gender.

All parents, with the exception of one mother who accompanied her husband, spoke in English and no parent took up the offer of an official interpreter.

All interviews, bar two, were conducted with only one adult member per household so as to maximise the input from different families.

8.2.2 Community organisations were approached in the first instance for assistance in identifying and recruiting parents and pupils prepared to participate in interviews. Since this route yielded only limited numbers, and progress was slow, alternative approaches were made to individuals in the four authorities who had contacts across the minority ethnic communities in their areas. This significantly accelerated and broadened the identification process and speeded up subsequent arrangements for the interviews. Feedback from community organisations suggested that adults often felt over-researched and reluctant to contribute to further research (although some children and young people reported over-research too).

Parents were not selected according to ethnicity for most of the interviewing phase. However, towards the end of that phase when a picture of the ethnic spread began to emerge, conscious attempts were made to boost the number of interviewees of African and Chinese background who were up to that point under-represented. It should be noted that the ethnicity of the organiser was often, although not exclusively, mirrored in that of the interviewees, possibly indicating that social networks tend to work along ethnic lines.

Parents were mostly invited by letter to participate in an interview after they had consented to their child/ren being interviewed. Whilst the aim was to interview only
parents of young people who had participated in this study, this was not always possible due to difficulties experienced by the organisers in accessing parents.

8.2.3 Venue and timing played a role in getting contributors to come in and participate in focus groups, and in the nature of the discussion group. Dynamics were at times affected by parents drifting in and out of interviews, more pronounced in some meetings than in others.

Spatial limitations affected some focus groups. Rooms which were too small and/or shared with another group or had poor acoustics were found not to be conducive to focused discussion. This also had the effect of rendering some recordings inaudible.

Geographical limitations may have impacted on parent participation but it is impossible to assess the precise limitations imposed by the choice of venue. For some participants, access and travel to the interview location was problematic and it may be that despite the team’s attempts to hold interviews in central, accessible and safe premises, some parents were deterred by the journey. In some cases, parents were concerned for the safety of their children and, therefore, accompanied or drove them, thus attending the parent interviews almost by default.

8.2.4 Interviews were conducted in focus groups with sizes ranging from three to seven and on a one-to-one basis by telephone. Interviews with five parents were conducted individually and face-to-face; all but one of these were parents of children with special educational needs (SEN fieldwork is discussed in 8.4). Focus groups were held with 21 parents in four local authorities, telephone interviews were conducted with nine parents in two authorities. All interviewees were assured of confidentiality and gave permission for interviews to be taped. Recording quality permitting, tapes were subsequently transcribed to assist with analysis.

Telephone interviews and focus groups differed in the way they were conducted. This was attributable to the numbers involved (1:1 as opposed to 1:7), to the absence of a shared spatial experience as opposed to a physical encounter within a defined space, to the absence versus presence of visual and non-verbal clues to encourage, direct or contain discussion on the part of the interviewer, and to expand, digress or hold back on the part of the interviewee. The researchers adopted a semi-structured interview format in which respondents were encouraged to speak of their perceptions with no attempts made on the part of the interviewers to seek objectivity or verify the content of statements. The target content and area of enquiry were unaffected by the format of the interview.

8.2.5 Gaining access to minority ethnic families in general, as well as those of disabled children with SEN, remains an area of major challenge (Flynn, 2002; Patel, 2002). The involvement and co-operation of families was secured through active links with MELDI, an agency that supports minority ethnic disabled people. They were
identified and contacted by MELDI staff, who accompanied the researcher if requested by families. Individual interviews were conducted with a sample of five including Down’s syndrome, autism, physical and learning disabilities and behavioral problems. All the interviews were conducted in English, with language support from an adult within the family as chosen by the family. They were interviewed in their home, by telephone or at the MELDI office. Each meeting lasted 30–60 minutes. It needs to be emphasised that the research that was conducted is a small-scale attempt to explore the views of these families as a basis for more in-depth research in the future.

8.3 Themes emerging from the interviews

A range of themes was identified in the interviews as areas of importance or concern to parents. Human relationships and identity were by far the most consistently and exactingly addressed subjects followed, to a lesser degree, by other school-based matters, although here, too, the focus was principally on the way these impinge on relationships and self-perception. In light of the aim of this study, only race-specific material is taken into consideration. It is worth noting that this coincidentally reflects the issues parents themselves overwhelmingly chose to focus on. The issues will therefore be discussed as listed below, roughly in the order of their apparent significance to the contributors.

8.3.1 Contact between home and school
8.3.2 Relations between teachers and children
8.3.3 Relations between parents and children
8.3.4 Pupil peer relations
8.3.5 Identity and self-perception
8.3.6 Valuing diversity, respect for individuals/communities
8.3.7 Expectation, motivation and achievement
8.3.8 Racist incidents and bullying
8.3.9 School ethos and leadership
8.3.10 Minority ethnic teachers, teacher training and professional development
8.3.11 Curriculum, subjects, resources and activities
8.3.12 Learning support, bilingualism and EAL

[Note: The findings from the interviews with parents of children with SEN are reported in 8.4.]
8.3.1 Contact between home and school

The importance of maintaining good relations between parents and teachers figured large in the interviews. This echoes the findings of other researchers who proposed openness and readiness to engage in genuine dialogue with parents as a key criterion of good practice. ‘The most effective ways of gaining the parents’ support and co-operation was to listen to their concerns, consult them about and give them a voice on important issues ... and most importantly show them respect by acting on their concerns.’ (Blair, 2001). The findings in this study show that parents appreciate open-door policies in schools and give credit to teachers who take the initiative in discussing and consulting with them. Some parents thought they could rely on the school to get in touch in case of a problem and knew they themselves could contact the school at any time. They also felt welcome to participate in school activities. Where parents felt respected as equal partners by the school, they tended to express satisfaction with most aspects of their children’s education.

*The school contacts us when they are worried about something and they’ve left an open door for us to contact them if we want to discuss anything which is being done ... I’m happy, yes.*

However, the onus for initiating discussion appears to lie with parents as schools were largely seen to respond to problems rather than maintain a regular exchange with the families. Schools, including some of the open and generally welcoming ones, were criticised for not taking a leap of imagination and initiating communication. Parents required schools to take on board potential barriers to participation and invest in developing and sustaining partnerships.

*In general the ethnic minorities in [this authority], because of the racism, they feel they are not needed, not wanted, ... not counted for. So they stay away.*

Yet one respondent who straddled the roles of parent and teacher praised the schools’ openness and professed herself ‘baffled and disappointed’ at minority ethnic parents’ ‘great reluctance to come and join in. I would have thought with more and more of our people being educated, becoming professional I thought that maybe we would see a way forward and out of this.’ This raises questions about who feels able to approach and interact with teachers and whether there are any hard criteria or if this is simply a matter of personality. It also underlines differences in perspective between those within and those outside the school gates. Perceptions are important as Blair and Bourne (1998) found in their study looking at parental involvement in multiethnic schools. They found that parents did not always feel that schools communicated clearly. A Community Liaison Officer, interviewed for their study, suggested that ‘teachers did not always realise that they ‘talked down’ to minority ethnic parents and dictated what parents should be doing rather than listening to what parents themselves had to say and valuing their contribution as the primary carers of the child.’

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Speaking of the barriers to communication, some respondents found them insurmountable while others felt able to approach the school anyway. They referred to issues of invisibility, lack of awareness or understanding of their culture on the part of the school, the personalities and attitudes of individual teachers and in some instances, presented their readiness to contact teachers as the result of a difficult process of learning to adjust to the demands of the situation.

The typical scenario where my white wife and the non-white me go and meet so and so ... They don’t see me, they answer to her, like the invisible person with disability or whatever, so that does happen sometimes, but again a lot of it depends on the individual and some people are like that and some people aren’t .... If I have to say things twice to get heard I will say them twice.

I was very timid, I was afraid, I was holding back. And my husband didn’t want to know, said ‘you are the housewife, you are in charge’... It’s just our nature, [but] I’m not sitting back anymore. I wrote them three letters.

As long as schools fail to appreciate the complex factors that make up the history of parents and, specifically, minority ethnic parents marginalisation, and work to overcome it, then progress is likely to be slow. In the absence of clear encouragement, parents feel sidelined, uncomfortable and reluctant to come forward even though they recognise that their participation is important for their children’s confidence and morale.

To bring them in you need to be patient and teach them as well how important the nursery is ... how important to come for the party because if the child looks back to see their parent clapping for them it is important ... every parent should know this responsibility ... lots of barriers ... put me off years ago. You can’t expect me just the next day to come in, you need to do something about it.

For a number of parents, the difficulty in communicating with schools lies in language problems, a lack of understanding of the Scottish school system and culture, and also a wider sense of alienation and external pressures. They commented on the schools’ unhelpfulness and inability to explain, reassure or discuss. Where schools are thought to be unapproachable and fail to consult, parents felt disenfranchised. There was pain and anger at the attitudes of schools and the wider education establishment. The overriding impression to emerge is of parents looking for human exchange and reassurance, not simply from an anonymous teaching body, but from individual teachers willing to communicate something of themselves and see the parent as a person. The more readily available such individual human contact is, the more parents appeared to be ready to trust the institution as a whole.
My children used to come home – tell me a lot of how they had been ill treated by other children but I just couldn’t speak the language and I felt really embarrassed and sometimes feel guilt, and, imagine, I was traumatised to come to this country with my husband, refugees, and I was very scared, and at that time there were lots of other pressures outside, you know, for me to settle in the area was not a good experience as well. So at least if I had [had] this reassurance because my children are the most important thing for me here, [but] I didn’t.

No, no help offered at all ... I wanted to hear how she settled, whether she made friends and my daughter used to come home and tell me the children would not hold her hand because she is strange, she is not dressed the way they dressed, she looks different, and I know that, and I’m waiting for the teacher to say something. I know it’s hard for the teacher to solve these things but at least if she said to me ‘there is a problem here’, I’m trying to do my best.

You don’t know which way to go, you don’t know who would believe you, you don’t know who to talk to ... you don’t know how the child is getting on at school, even though [there are] the reports, even though he comes and says it’s fine, oh maybe I don’t like it or whatever. You really don’t know how to take it.

Parents spoke of unresolved disputes, tokenism and lack of consultation. Interestingly, the latter point appears to contradict the impression gained by the research team that minority ethnic parents feel over-researched and therefore reluctant to participate in studies. However, it may be that the issue for some respondents here is not merely the consultation process but in fact the absence of real results and tangible change.

*I don’t need a parents’ evening, it’s a waste of time, five minutes.*

*If the Scottish Executive could listen to what the parents are saying ... I don’t know whether they ever include the ethnic minority parents, because there’s so many of us already and most of us have educated our children from the time they started the schools here to now they’re finished and in university. And none of us have ever been asked on anything, somebody decides for you, that is what the ethnic minority [parents] want and who is the ethnic minority anyway?*

Parents noted the need to speak up for their children’s education regardless of the consequences, although some saw their input to be of no benefit and indeed believed it to jeopardise their children’s position even further. (This is discussed further in 8.3.2 – Relations between teachers and pupils). Whilst some teachers were portrayed as vindictive, others were thought to feel intimidated into co-operation by assertive and well-informed parents. The impression gained is one of schools feeling threatened by assertive parents on the one hand, and of parents feeling intimidated by non-communicative teachers on the other. One parent, who spoke up for her child, accepted the label of ‘troublemaker’ saying she would ‘not have her child fail because the system
refuses to help her just because of who she is’. Sadly, from this study there was little
evidence of constructive and balanced communication between parents and teachers.
Instead there remain unresolved question of power, responsibility and dialogue in home-
school interaction.

You know the experiences I’ve had I actually don’t have that faith in ‘the
school knows’ ... I’ve had to argue my way through to get things for the
children. So I’m thinking what if I was a mother who couldn’t speak with
authority? And they don’t like it, that’s why I’m saying you then get labelled,
... you’re a difficult parent.

8.3.2 Relations between teachers and pupils

Just as parents attached importance to their relations with teachers, discussions around
teacher-pupil relations centred on the power of the individual teacher to make a positive
or negative impact. Parents appreciated good relations between pupils and teachers, and
conversely held teachers responsible for bad ones, suggesting that their expectation of the
teacher’s role was to develop an empathic, supportive bond with their pupils. Good
teachers were seen to have strong, nurturing relationships with their pupils which could
leave a lasting impression. The human quality of good pupil-teacher rapport is reflected
in Richardson (2002) who, citing the Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska, speaks of ‘the
love and imagination of inspired teachers’. Blair (2001) cites the ability of teachers to
empathise with their pupils as one of the principal conditions for good practice:
‘Listening to students meant actively attempting to understand things from their point of
view.’ Good teachers are credited with having the capacity to keep happy pupils
motivated and turn round negative experiences and attitudes to improve pupil perception
and behaviour.

There were teachers there who could cope with ... situations like that and there
were those who couldn’t. And it was unbelievable how close pupils ... got to
their teachers irrespective of race or anything like that.

Attitude of one teacher can put the child off education for life. And one good
teacher’s ... good attitude can build that child’s future for life.

That particular teacher saw nothing good in him ... she always made it clear –
it was another teacher – or two other teachers who changed that notion, and
then [he] started feeling OK in the school ... having a sense of belonging ...
But for the first teacher, that could have caused big damage.

Equally, however, the harm inflicted by teachers whose relationship with their pupils is
consistently difficult was thought to be considerable and long-lasting. Just as strong,
beneficial relations can have a lasting effect in strengthening and motivating pupils,
tensions between pupils and teachers were thought to generate stress, poor discipline and
disaffection in some pupils. Connections have been made linking unhappiness at school with under-achievement and low confidence, and these are explored further in 8.3.7.

*Usually that leads to the child also misbehaving, and you know doing things, he probably was also antagonising and doing things that he wouldn’t have probably done.*

*She started saying things like [my daughter] is really negative for a five year-old. And some of the language she was using was words like she’s scheming, she’s conniving.*

Some parents saw their children as being misrepresented, misunderstood and labelled, although it was not always clear whether this was attributed to individual members of staff or the school as a whole, or indeed, if this was in any way perceived to be systematic. Presenting systematic inequality, Bhatti (1999) and Gillborn (1998) have shown how pupils can be favoured or marginalised along ethnic and gender lines depending on the composition of the class as a whole. Contributors to this study provided anecdotal evidence of inconsistent teacher assessments suggesting subjectivity and possible personality clashes, and of children being penalised for complaining to or about staff.

*The teacher ... said ‘Mrs X I’ve had a very difficult time trying to write [your daughter’s] report because the report we’ve got for first year does not describe the child I know. But the nursery school report describes the child I know.’*

*And then I thought, no, I’ve had too much confrontation ... if I approach him, I’ll make life difficult [for my child] like I did for my eldest son.*

*If you go and confront the teacher or complain, then your child is labelled as [a] problem child*

Human incompatibility and error do, of course, have to be acknowledged as possible criteria for conflict, but where such imponderables exist, pupil and teacher wellbeing and conduct should, in theory, be safeguarded by a wider institutional framework. When parents are reluctant to involve themselves critically or controversially in school matters for fear of antagonising teachers and creating problems for their children (referred to in 8.3.1 and 8.3.3), that recourse is clearly ineffective. (See also section 8.3.1 on Home-school contact and 8.3.11 on the Importance of leadership on teacher attitude). It may be worth looking at why teacher attitude was seen in individual terms only, rather than also as part of a larger teaching body with a common purpose and ethic.

### 8.3.3 Relations between parents and children

In discussing their children, communication and interaction within the family permeated the agenda, issues around family relations thus surface repeatedly within this chapter on
parent perceptions. However, parents did specifically home in on two aspects of their relationships first, issues arising from their desire to protect their children, either in relation to the school or in terms of wider questions of racism and second, the effects of different life experiences within the family.

In the former, conflict at school was shown to have potential repercussions at home, creating complex stresses between family members as they struggle to respect each other’s wishes, assert their convictions, and protect themselves and each other. Many parents believed their children would trust them and tell them of any problems at school, illustrated by the words of one father who thought ‘nothing serious would be held from [him]’. Mostly, children did not want their parents to take action and this had the potential to cause anxiety for the parents who on the one hand wished to protect their children and on the other did not want to breach their trust.

Where parents overruled their children and acted against their wishes, this tended to lead to conflict within the family. In some cases, children preferred to confide in their siblings or friends (as confirmed in Chapter 6) and only turned to their parents when situations escalated, signalling a desire to deal with problems independently for as long as possible. Parents tended to attribute this to their children’s desire to blend in and avoid the embarrassment of being seen to collude with adults or require adult protection. Research into the perspectives of refugee parents (Arshad, Closs and Stead, 1999) revealed that parents thought that children would not keep them fully informed of difficulties at school out of a desire to protect their feelings. They stated that this ‘made parents feel worried and inadequate in their own ability to protect their children’. No such disclosures were made by parents in this study but it may be that their children’s inclination not to involve parents unnecessarily is driven by a similar impulse. The overwhelming majority of parents related their anecdotes to tensions within school. Only to a very minor extent did they relate it to other kinds of misunderstandings or problems between themselves and their children resulting from failure or mismanagement on the part of school.

She was probably thinking, well, if I tell mum you know it will just blow up and stuff like that. And so after a year she was being physically attacked and then she told me.

I can tell by his face what kind of a day he’s had. And he came home ... he had a long face and at first he wouldn’t say anything, he did have tears in his eyes and then eventually he told me but it was mum, mum don’t say anything, don’t mention this to anybody.

I didn’t know what was wrong with her. [Her] lecturer said she should go and see a study guidance, support ... for IQ test and educational psychologist. And when the report came out, her behaviour was all there. And all these 18 months I was fighting with her because I didn’t know what was going on. If I would have found out what had happened I wouldn’t have [fought] with her.
Since there is no clear indication as to the age groups concerned and children’s survival strategies may be determined by a host of factors, it is impossible to link definitively tendencies to certain types of behaviour to specific developmental stages or distinguish between primary and secondary age children. However, given peer pressure and adolescent psychological development, the need to cope with stresses independently is bound to become more pronounced as young people go through secondary education, and have to rely on support mechanisms outside their family contexts.

Equipping children and young people to deal with racism may create dilemmas between personal principles and the actual circumstances families find themselves in. Parents may feel they have no choice but to articulate their convictions and outlooks to their children in order to prepare them for the world; this contrasts markedly with the views expressed by many teachers that racism should not be made explicit to children. One parent described her situation in terms of having to educate her children to teach other children by setting an example and not reciprocating aggression but understanding the origins of racism. She thought of it as the only the way forward, suggesting that had her children retaliated, they would have made no friends. This is in contrast with parents who believe their children need to stand up for themselves but in doing so find themselves in conflict with their beliefs and moral stance.

We have to prepare our children, it’s our duty, nobody else is going to tell them ... and they will face racism no matter how much Scottish Executive or Tony Blair tries to say ‘Oh we are multicultural country’ ... they will face bullying and we have to equip our children.

I say to my boy ‘Him, ignore them they don’t know any better’. But I shouldn’t be saying this ... why should he ignore somebody who’s ... just to make the peace.

I do say ‘do not be nasty back, understand they are not knowledgeable ... give them another chance and this is how we survive’ ... otherwise by now my children would not have any friends. I don’t let them fight back, I try to calm them down and say ‘listen this is a strong message they’ve been getting, we need to teach them.’

The different life experiences of family members within ethnically mixed families was raised, highlighting issues of identification and shared experience that shape relationships and outlooks. Whilst sympathetic white parents were seen to be unable to go through the same experiences as their minority ethnic children, minority ethnic parents may be perceived as having a different perspective determined by their backgrounds. The fluid dynamics present in all families may thus take on a further dimension as children and parents negotiate their ethnic identities separately and in relation to each other.
If the school’s not dealing with it and [the children are having difficulties]... it doesn’t mean if you have a black child you [as a white parent] are aware of racism ...[She] really wants to help [her child] but she’s helpless. Because the only life she knows is being a white woman.

Yes I think they would be more likely to talk to their [white mother]... She would be [upset or hurt] but maybe they would [expect] me to be more upset, ... just because I’m always on about it ... and they are about getting on with it, kind of thing. I am and I always will be from somewhere else ... but they’re not, they don’t see life in the same way ... I do expect ... a kind of ebb and flow ... at points in their lives. One or the other culture.

That is an issue, like when we’re out together ... then I think they do see themselves as kind of on the other side to myself. And yes, there are some issues around that.

Because I grew up where it was mainly black I probably have a different consciousness [to that of my children].

8.3.4 Pupil peer relations and friendship patterns

Asked about their children’s relationships with their contemporaries, parents concentrated on favourable rather than problematic interaction. Friendships were read as barometers of children’s happiness and settledness in their surroundings. Parental involvement in terms of setting boundaries and guiding children through areas of conflict, linked to cultural considerations by only one respondent, was touched upon, but the emphasis lay in giving children the opportunity to develop in their relationships and conveyed a sense of pride in their children’s success in engaging with their peers and their environment.

I would be careful about allowing her out in the present climate ... And that can cause issues when it comes to things like discos and parties and that kind of thing, but I think the children have recognised that that is the way things are and they accept it.

There may be some restrictions, but not too much because we also want to give them some freedom, to make their choice. We also look at the background of the people that they are trying to be friendly with.

Responses reflect awareness of the influence schools can exert in shaping children’s outlooks and ways of relating. Parents implied mostly that their children associate with white peers and, to a lesser degree, with peers from other ethnic backgrounds. This does not tally with impressions gained from interviews with young people but it may be connected with the ethnic composition of the children’s schools and neighbourhoods. In some cases children were encouraged to maintain friendships with others from their own ethnic or cultural background as parents believed it might support their sense of identity.
Parents were, by and large, positive about and supportive of their children’s friends and also made reference to their own relationships with the friends’ parents. Some parents appeared to stress the friendships with white children in particular and seemed impressed at their children’s ability to relate across the ethnic spectrum.

Lots of friends, some of them actually come over and stay the weekend and others invite my children over to theirs. And their families also communicate with us.

She is a model of learning in terms of total lack of ... discrimination to any person.

There was some suggestion that relationships formed at primary age carry through and enabled minority ethnic children to participate fully. This would support moves to educate for anti-racism at an early age when children are perceived to come with an open mind.

They started primary school here ... made friends easily and they know the system here ... the culture, and ... speak English very well and probably those who came when they were older they found it difficult to settle down, you know, to accept things.

Parents compared their own experiences with those of their children. One parent commented on his daughter’s friendships with her white peers, contrasting it with his own experiences in the 1960s, alliances with people of a similar ethnic background then, and concern now that unspoken hierarchies continue to exist which, if articulated, might actually precipitate problems. Whilst observations of this particular type were not made by many contributors, for some of those who drew parallels with their own history, they possibly reflected a general ambivalence and uncertainty about evolving shifts in race relations and ways of negotiating them, intellectually, psychologically and practically.

My daughter ... [does] not have any Asian friends ... Most of them are white ... in the late 60s when I was ... it was quite the opposite, all the Asians together because they have a common problem .... things are getting better in that aspect ...[but sometimes]... the hierarchy comes [in]. They don’t want to rouse up any feeling that there is a problem.

Maybe 5%, 10% of the school is Asian ... So they are not the only ones in the school who are Asian, so they don’t feel as odd as maybe I would have felt when I was at school.

Parents differed in their assessment of children’s coping mechanisms. Circumstances, experiences and personality shape personal responses and different personalities elicit different reactions. The narratives provided pointed to complex and sophisticated modes of operating of which parents appeared to be aware. One mother recognised her child’s
ability to apparently shrug off conflict but had doubts over the actual psychological impact, another parent admitted to ignorance as to the actual events and developments in his children’s lives. He assumed that racism did occur, albeit not to a major degree, and stemming from thoughtlessness rather than nefarious intent, but expected his children to be acquiring a range of strategies to appropriately deal with racist issues in different situations.

Some children [are] not going to take it if it’s wrong. And ... some ... if something is ... wrong they can just walk away and let it [run off] like water off a duck’s back. And my middle one seems to be able to do that ... In some ways [that is an asset but] I wouldn’t really see it [that way]... you don’t know then what’s simmering underneath.

I’m going to be honest and say I don’t know what happens ... they wouldn’t tell me ... but my own feeling is that it probably doesn’t happen very much. There are bound to be issues which come from perhaps not nasty racist behaviour but perhaps ... insensitivity ... I would like to believe that it is not really a big issue for them, I think they do learn how to deal with it and sometimes that involves speaking out or challenging something or ignoring it and getting on with other stuff.

Variants of personality and circumstance have already been referred to as contributing to outlook and behaviour, but adult attitude is also seen to exert a major influence on children. Teachers taking an anti-racist stance have the potential to create a positive ethos which the children themselves can take forward and enforce. Speaking of her relief at finding her child was no longer isolated at her new school, one parent quoted her daughter who marveled: ‘D’you know, there are people the same colour as me at that school and they speak to me.’

Unfortunately, not all schools appear able to instill an inclusive way of thinking in their pupils even if individual teachers do make an effort. The contrast between schools where anti-racism has been absorbed into the fabric of education and those where it appears to be superficially imposed is illustrated below.

If you get the ethos ... that it is unacceptable ... you can control the racism much better, because there is the peer pressure as well ... one [new] child ... [was] racist and it was the children themselves that were telling that new child ‘look you don’t do that in [this] school.’

The kids pick their own friends and they don’t want to pick [my daughter] ... so she feels really hurt ... so they didn’t make a big fuss but [my daughter] said that ‘oh, my teachers actually pick us, I really enjoyed it today because I have got someone to do drama with.

However, adults were also recognised to have the potential to influence children’s relationships negatively. Where a child had difficulty settling in, and appeared to be excluded by her peers, parents spoke with much emotion of the trouble they encountered in supporting their child in the face of indifference and unhelpfulness on the part of the
school. (Also referred to in 8.3.1, Home-school communication). The impact of adult attitude was also raised in relation to white parents, albeit only by a small number of respondents, who were concerned to see anti-racist education extend beyond the school gates so that any inclusive messages communicated by the schools would be supported at home.

Nobody would play with this child, and it wasn’t the children, it was the parents … because when she went one day to pick him up she heard this mother saying ‘don’t go near that kid.’

8.3.5 Identity and self-perception

Parents seek to instill a positive sense of identity in their children. One mother, who described herself as living in a multicultural society, found her children clear and happy about their ethnic and religious background and supported them in their desire to ‘take the best from both of their worlds’. Parents who expressed confidence in their ability to instill a strong sense of identity in their children appeared to operate in a culturally intact home-context and valued the diversity of their wider environment. They recognised their children’s need to fit in with their surroundings and were encouraging of their desire to straddle two cultures.

I don’t think it is an issue … they are living in what is a multicultural society and they know that they are Asian and … Muslim, and they’re happy about that, and they recognise all the cultural aspects of it but at the same time they also want to be part of the Western culture … and they don’t want one to overtake the other in particular … they want to take the best from both of their worlds and that is what I would really want them to do.

However, by far the larger number of respondents was less explicit about such a dual identity, stressing instead their desire to strengthen their children’s perception of their ethnic background and arguing the need to counterbalance the Eurocentric portrayal of other cultures by wider society and in the school context in particular. Respondents spoke of their own experiences, of their hopes for their children, and of their regret at the perspectives their children were growing up with. Travelling to their home country and exposure to a favourable view of that world was mentioned as a beneficial experience for young people. In the words of one parent, ‘they come back with their backs a bit straighter’. At the same time, such experiences need to be backed up by a positive perspective in school.

My own children go there on holiday and they know how beautiful their country is and how lovely [a] time they spend there [but] … their friends were teasing them about Africa, which is not right. We need a better picture through the education department.
The perspective that is being given from one end sometimes can be damaging because kids then don’t get anything to identify with ... [there are] issues around how the media portray things ... If I happen to be African [and] I haven’t grown up here and I haven’t travelled, my view of Africa will be what I see on telly and what I’m getting from school.

Where parents felt unsupported in their desire to provide a culturally cohesive environment, or undermined in their communication with their children by the messages emanating from school and the media, they worried about their children’s self-image. Concerns ranged widely, from children demonstrating a general lack of interest and disinclination to associate with their home culture, to wishing their colour away and, at the most serious end of the spectrum, inflicting serious physical harm on themselves to that effect.

They’re not interested in watching and I argue with them and say look these are things that [you should] learn because you want to see what is happening in [unclear word or passage] original countries. I think that is another major concern where they are beginning to think because they are here they are nothing to do with whatever has to do with where they originally come from.

Worried, disappointed, very, and I feel sorry for my children: how they’re being educated ... how [others have] been looking down on them, lacking this support, this feeling of happiness in the school, the teachers recognising them, their friends ... one of my daughters [was] saying she wishes she was white ... that is hurting, disappointing for me because I don’t want her to be like that. I want her to be proud of her colour, proud of her culture. The school played a big role in that.

There was acknowledgement of the diminishing impact of the home environment on young people as compared with the sphere of influence exerted by society as a whole, and of the difficulties this creates in terms of fostering a positive sense of identity. The process of exploring notions of self and belonging was approached in different ways with some respondents accepting the fluidity of identity and others conveying unease at their children’s associations. Despite raising the question of the various ways of asserting identity, none of the parents explicitly addressed the issue of young minority ethnic people in the UK extending current boundaries of self-perception and carving out a new identity for themselves, possibly one unrecognisable to their parents. (This links with issues raised in 8.3.4 Pupil peer relations and friendship patterns.)

Sometimes I think some of the children, boys in particular, possibly try to deliberately put on the accent. You know because they feel this maybe gives them a certain identity and maybe that’s what they feel, we’re perceived as this, we’re going to play this out.
[He] comes from a different angle and ... [I believe] everybody is equal ... but again it’s the attitude, the mentality that is coming out that he is learning from his other Asian friends and looking down on the other local [white] people.

8.3.6 Valuing diversity, respect for individuals/communities

Parents complained about being expected to support schools but finding that this was not reciprocated. Teachers were called upon to be more affirmative of children’s cultures, not merely accept them. In their study of predominantly white schools in England, Cline and his team (2002) found that most teachers ‘saw their school or class as trying to treat all children equally and playing down ethnic and cultural differences’. The failure to differentiate between the notion of ‘same’ and ‘equal’ has also come to light in past research in Scotland and, indeed, in this study during interviews with teachers. Where schools are encouraging, this has a positive impact on the children’s self-perception. It also sends out a clear message to white children.

There was a call for improvement on a number of fronts and for schools to try and counterbalance the negative media influence and to generate a positive self-image in minority ethnic children.

The way the media is presenting Africa ... always starving, always dirty, always needing help ... I want them to be proud of their roots ... and if the media is huge, something we can’t deal with ... at least the school should put [in] something to give [the children] self-esteem, something positive ... the African histories, the Asian histories, full of lots of things.

Valuing diversity to be considered integral to the education system, not a bolt-on.

The school did have an equal opportunities policy and did follow it ... but the issue only comes up when something has happened ... talking about racial issues should be done from the very beginning so that all children know about it and that it’s wrong to segregate. The school dealt with it really well but ... [it] only comes up when something’s gone wrong.

Children to be taught race-equality from an early age on.

It’s not just them, it’s the white children ... as well, so it helps them to understand later on in their lives.

It is the duty of the education department to make sure the view is not slanted ... because if we started there ... as they are growing older it will get much easier, because it’s part of the norm, you know, it’s not ... taking this extra class or going for ... this extra campaign, but within the grain of the education system.
A more balanced approach to be brought to religious education and a less pervasive focus on Christianity.

Partnership between the school and the house. If I’m trying to teach my children about ... the good manners which Islam encourages [there] should be some backup from the school. My children have been fasting now four years ... And I have never had any recognition from the school ... The teacher will mention it in the classroom but it’s never been [applauded] ... If the school tell me to do anything with the children I will do it 100%, but when I tell them something ... nothing [is] done.

I went into one [non-denominational] school ... and there was assembly time and all the Muslim children didn’t attend assembly ... I was kind of gobsmacked to see that all these children were sitting at the side and they weren’t part of it.

This is more an issue for me than my children, but sometimes the monoculturalism comes through religious and moral education, that does kind of bother me, because while the local education authority and even to some extent the school might teach diversity, saying ... we do have representatives from other faiths take assembly ... the school is quite clearly largely Christian ... I feel the lack. I wish that it were richer and more diverse, and that our children and young people were exposed more to a wider breadth of ideas.

Respondents described how a general lack of knowledge of minority cultures, in this instance, exemplified in the choice and interpretation of personal names, may culminate in ridicule and misunderstanding. The focus was on reactions to the naming conventions of different cultures and languages as well as the processes of anglicisation undergone in an attempt to integrate or to deflect and diffuse unwelcome attention. Such readiness to accommodate the perceived demands of some majority groups by adopting English or anglicised names or naming patterns, or opting for short or ‘manageable’ non-English names, may be read either as a sensible and necessary means of adapting to the local environment, or as a form of collusion which perpetuates the cycle of ignorance. The outcome however, remains the same, a chunk of culture is in danger of getting lost, individual and collective identities may be undermined, and the majority population is spared the need to take on board unfamiliar sounds and concepts.

How come your father has got one particular surname, whereas the three children all have three different surnames ... these [patterns] baffle and confuse the teachers ... goes to a certain extent of being ridiculed, you know, saying ‘you’ve got a different father.’

Why should we not just learn to say [the names]? It’s a matter of practice. We should be encouraging them to stick to their original names no matter how difficult to pronounce.
People are quite OK about you having your original name, shortened, but still an Indian name. [An English name]... fits in with society so he’s not getting mocked at school.

The onus to educate the majority and fight for equal opportunities was seen to be on the parents whose principal recourse is to engage with the education institution. Whilst most respondents were unhappy about having to take on this role, none questioned why the ball appears to be in the minority ethnic court and why the struggle for race equality should have to be fought by those most immediately affected rather than be considered relevant for all. Some did raise issues about educating white parents, others mentioned the benefits of anti-racist education and multiculturalism to white children, and another asked why minority ethnic parents should have to justify and fight for what is a legal entitlement.

Why should we have to legitimise ... why do we have to tell you this is needed, why do we have to prove to you our children are coming to learn, [because only] then you are going to give the funding ... We are tax payers, it should be our right like it is of any other.

To stop racism I think we need to educate white parents.

The question of how the majority community perceives the rights of minority ethnic people is illustrated in one contributor’s example of local generosity towards a group of visiting children from Chernobyl, the transition from dispensing charity to recognising rights has yet to be made by a vast section of the majority community. Similarly, this process of adjustment is reflected in one respondents’ assessment of how demographic shifts may change public perception of minority ethnic people from exotic to threatening.

I said ‘but these children [from Chernobyl] aren’t staying’ and they went ‘that’s right’ and I said ‘would you feel as well towards them if you discovered that they were actually going to stay here?’ And there just was a few looks of puzzlement, as if to say...

I would think [that the number of African pupils makes a difference to the school] in that there is a presence ... because you’re different you’re being seen as exotic ... as opposed to the more you get, then it moves to the other side of the scale where you’re a threat.

8.3.7 Expectation, motivation and achievement

Troyna and Siraj-Blatchford (1993) found that school processes located minority ethnic pupils below their abilities or potential and other studies have shown the connection between negative expectations and negative interactions (Connolly, 1998). Parents expressed high expectations of their children and took pride in their social and academic achievements. They encouraged their children to aim high and although no specific levels of attainment or career plans were discussed, it was apparent both that children were
expected to push themselves and work to their full potential and that parents saw themselves as taking an active role in supporting them in their endeavours. Such parental interest in and support for their children’s education is evidenced in work by Dale et al (2002) who found that ‘parents who were aware of the difficulties that their sons and daughters would face in the labour market were often very keen for them to gain qualifications. They emphasised the importance of education in terms of life chances’.

Given the determination of such an outlook and parental readiness to collaborate with schools, it is unsurprising that parents should expect backing from and dialogue with teachers. However, whilst some parents were pleased to receive positive feedback and applauded the school for supporting their children, reservations were also expressed about teachers’ understanding and the degree to which children were being stretched. Clearly parental and teacher assessments do not always coincide, suggesting differing expectations and/or variant interpretations of the children’s progress.

So she finds it interesting because ... the teachers were quite helpful in giving her some [extra] stuff, until she’d catch up with the other children ... which were a year ahead of her.

Certainly I am hoping that my boy will go to a credit class of his choice. So ... then the work would be hard and he should cope with that and he should work harder. Unless they ..put him in other classes. At that stage I would be exploding – and trying to find other ways to argue with them or remove the boy.

The connections between under-achievement, boredom, low self-esteem, disaffection, truancy and alienation have been documented (Blair, 2001). Brah (1992) notes two contrasting reactions by Asian pupils in Leicester, those who reject the education system and those who determine to succeed despite the odds. The parents interviewed in the course of this study frequently drew comparisons with their own experiences of education and found the Scottish education system lacking. They reported boredom and indiscipline, sometimes successfully remedied by raising the academic standards. There is no suggestion of long-term disaffection or serious under-achievement but the assumption is that sustained lack of expectation and challenge would have a corrosive effect on the whole person and long-term repercussions.

The standard of education in my country might be slightly higher than ... in this country ... So, when the children come here and are put in at the same level with the children here, they find the work they are doing ... is like repetition of what they’ve already covered.

[He] was being a bit mischievous in class, he was disturbing other kids ... He said they are giving me too simple things to do, so I phoned the teacher and said can you give him challenging maths, like things that ... make him think. When they tried that he was concentrating ... instead of talking to other children ... Maybe [they underestimated his abilities] because the teachers
have not dealt with children from maybe my country. They wouldn’t know the standard of education there and maybe they just look down upon that kind of culture or country. And then maybe ... the children were not well assessed.

Furthermore, there was concern about policies of containing, rather than educating, pupils and about the impact of inadequate or inappropriate advice. One parent in particular made connections between the danger of schools imparting ill-considered advice and the spiral of disadvantage. She spoke of the lasting damage such approaches could inflict on children as well as communities, outlining how lack of parental awareness and understanding on the one hand and a tendency to prejudge children on the other could potentially undermine the child, negate potential and perpetuate disadvantage. Deliberately or inadvertently, such processes uphold barriers and prevent fluid transition and progress.

The head teacher had just started at that school. And she actually said to me, ‘Look it’s a can of worms because’ ... the kids are coming from a so-called deprived area. Get them through the system with minimum disruption ... it wasn’t even about trying to build up the children to be interested in education, it was more about ‘as long as they’re going through the system that’s all we can do.’

They might even be advised that this one is not going to go very far, after fourth year they’d better leave school ... rather than saying regardless of your background ... we want to bring out the best in you. Part of it is like gate keeping ... They’re trying to slot kids into the places rather than what is in the best interests of that child ... it would especially affect anyone who is disadvantaged, either ... informationwise or educationwise. Or even if you’re coming from a [different] culture ... where there is the expectation that the school knows, I’m sorry for you if you are in this country.

The overall impression gained was of widespread disenchantment with the disinterest shown by teaching staff, the low standards of education and the limited demands made on pupils. Limited expectations were thought to manifest themselves in the lack of stimulation offered to pupils, in inappropriate guidance or unhelpful advice, in the paucity of academic work both at home and in school. Such curtailed ambition was attributed to teachers’ lack of understanding of other education systems and different cultures, poor assessment skills, insensitivity to minority issues, and a general lack of experience in working with diverse groups. It was contradicted, however, by one parent/teacher who acknowledged the numerous factors at work in determining ambition or disaffection amongst all pupils but thought her school would ‘expect as much from the Asian pupils as we expect from the other ones’.
I was a lecturer before I came over here ... to do my doctorate degree ... In the department where I went into, they knew that ... but nobody accepted that. Not until some of my publications arrived in the department and then someone ... said ‘well, you are really qualified’. ...So if it can happen at my level, you can imagine what happens to the children.

The interviews also revealed alarming levels of prejudice and blatant stereotyping which not only cause hurt but also cloud core questions about pupil potential and identity.

They’ve thought she needed special treatment, special food, and I said ‘why would she? She’s [from this city]’ [And the school replied] ‘look at her, you know, she’s dark.’

I was asked if my children had diseases ... ‘because they’re West African and these diseases, you know, like sickle cell anaemia ...’

They didn’t think she was literate and I said ‘why would she not be literate?’ And they said ‘is she yours?’ And I said ‘in as much as I’m her mother, yes.’ ‘Yes, but is she yours or did you adopt her?’ ‘I said ‘she’s mine’ ... and apparently she was doing something differently because different schools have different practices.

One of the teachers actually suggested basketball to her, as a career, and she does biomedical sciences because she’s very scientifically minded ...

Moreover, parents complained that they were under-informed and not sufficiently consulted on matters of their children’s progress. Lack of expectation was thought to be frequently expressed obliquely by teachers, and parents’ difficulties in communicating with them can be traced across this chapter under different headings. Speaking of strategies for raising minority ethnic pupil attainment, Gillborn and Mirza (2000) identify, inter alia, the importance of ‘developing and communicating high expectations accompanied by a clear view that underperformance by any group is unacceptable’.

I wouldn’t say I was quite happy with his attainment at all, the reason being I always attributed to the fact he probably doesn’t work as hard as he should, but I really don’t know, as I said ... there’s nobody really I can speak to.

A few weeks before the exam the computer teacher came and told my daughter ‘You don’t have to sit for computer studies because you won’t get the grades’... There was no conversation between me and the school.

She said ‘Well, I don’t think she can do it’ I said ‘Excuse me, so what are you doing to raise that target? And why ... did you wait for a whole year for me to find out, why didn’t you inform me that the child needed extra support? I could have put something in earlier, months ago ... Why am I told at the year end?’
8.3.8 Racist incidents and bullying

The existence of racism as a consistent aspect of life for minority ethnic children in Scotland is documented in a study of young people in Glasgow. Hampton (1998) found that racism occurs on a daily basis and in a variety of contexts, ‘younger members (of society) were more likely to confront overt forms of racism, mostly at educational institutions and on the street’. They further stated that ‘incidents that were regularly viewed as trivial by those in authority often had disastrous effects on both individual and community relations’. The parent interviews in this study corroborate these findings, revealing disturbing examples of overt and covert racism. More disturbingly, however, they illuminate the depth of minority ethnic resignation and the occasionally serious inadequacy of teacher response. Yet whilst there is a clear understanding of their rights and the school’s duties, the realisation that these do not necessarily confer protection from racism is illustrated by the parent who thought of herself as ‘lucky in that sense ... [only] a little bit of bullying and name calling’ because the school had dealt with it efficiently.

When he just started there he was sort of bullied by others where he would have people sticking cigarettes in his bag and burning his bag and things like that, but those were simple things where you think this is what happens, one could say oh that’s serious but you know those are things – it’s like everyday life for us.

They took him up and chucked him in the urinal ... then they started punching his stomach ... he went up to see the headteacher and he met her on the way and said ‘Ma’am I need to speak to you because I’ve just been beaten up’ and she turned around and said ‘I’m really sorry I’ve got a class waiting on me.’

Parent perceptions of racism in their children’s lives are, on the whole, under-researched, although parents contributing to this study spoke articulately and expansively of their impressions and experiences. Unlike many of the teacher contributors, however, they did not overall identify racist incidents as the principal theme; this suggests that although parents are painfully aware of the presence of racism in their children’s lives, and to some extent even take it for granted, they look beyond the incident to the processes of dealing with, overcoming and countering racism. It is interesting to note that the majority of teachers interviewed about race equality emphasised racial harassment, yet did not rate it as a significant element of minority ethnic pupils’ experiences, preferring instead to generalise and diffuse the concept by talking about bullying, whereas parents who were unambiguous about the impact of racism on their children, and clearly distinguished between racism and bullying, tended to stress wider matters of race equality. Other studies (Kelly, 1989, 1991 and 1994) have shown up the disparity between pupil and teacher perceptions of racism, and this too is borne out by this study (see questionnaire data and pupil interviews). Overall, the reluctance of many practitioners to recognise the pervasiveness and the impact of racism in minority ethnic lives appears to lag significantly behind parent understanding and analysis of the picture.
They equate bullying with racism and that’s wrong, bullying and racism are two different things ... I said ‘it’s not bullying, it’s racism, and that’s far more serious.’

In discussing racism, respondents raised a number of issues. Parents were not demanding special treatment but have a right for their children to be protected by the school. Schools need to take on that responsibility by ensuring anti-racist practice and insisting on positive behaviour, and they need to see it through. They were perceived as demanding and difficult whenever they spoke up to ensure their children’s safety and wellbeing. (More discussion in home-school chapter around parents being labelled as difficult.)

It’s not special treatment ... my kids have to feel safe when they’re in your school ... They started pushing it. ‘You’re asking for the impossible’ ... [but] what I want is my child to come to the school and go away home without being afraid, without being attacked.

Teachers must ensure that victimised children are protected from blame for the incident. There was acknowledgement of the range of factors that come into play in any victimisation process resulting in certain personalities appearing to ‘attract’ unwelcome attention. Whilst it is tempting to ask why certain minority ethnic children are targeted more than others, teachers must be clear about not blaming the victim. (There is also some relevant discussion of this in the section on pupil peer relationships).

Sometimes you can have two black children in the school: one gets it and one doesn’t. So [they assume] we must be doing right somewhere with this one, this one is the problem one. But they don’t know the issues like ... round personality, and stuff like that which might make the people want to do more to one child and not another.

Children who grow up in this country were thought to have fewer problems with racism than children who do not go through the primary system here. This was attributed to the former children’s familiarity with the ‘rules’ and their ability to avert or deal with racism on the one hand and to their peers’ perception of integration and likeness. For one contributor, strong peer relationships, not being singled out and the absence of major racist experiences can all assist children to deal with racial abuse. (See also pupil peer relations).

My older children ... some of them had problems to do with racial harassment ... so I had to go to school at one point. But I think the ones who started primary school here, they get along well and also I think they know how to protect themselves.

They had maybe more comments than they would have expected in the normal – after the September 11 incident – you know when people were just making comments. But again that’s just something that is to be expected, it was a
general atmosphere at the time ... They just ignored it. I think because they have good friends within the school and because they hadn’t really experienced severe racism, or something that would bother them particularly they knew that it would pass ... but it is hurtful at the time.

On the other hand, where parents found the schools anticipating, preventing and recognising racial tensions, rather than merely reacting in the wake of an incident, they took a favourable view of school management. This is supported by Ofsted (1999) looking at the need for proactive as well as reactive measures from teachers and for teachers to initiate openness and discussion. Pupils appeared to be encouraged to report incidents if they felt teachers would be receptive and take action, and some schools were praised for responding effectively to racist incidents. In general, schools were perceived to be disinterested in getting involved with events off the school premises, but those who do extend their influence beyond the school gates to successfully deal with racist incidents were appreciated for their proactive stance.

Whatever they do [outside the school gates] will reflect on the school and [the headteacher] will not have it.

Things like someone was racist on the bus ... and then ... the kids went and reported it. [The headteacher] would then take the child to task and ... called the parents in.

The teachers have made it clear that if there should be any racism there ... they should report it immediately and since we’ve been here, we had a few problems initially but nothing offensive now ... I reported one incident to the headmaster of my primary school child and she dealt with it immediately.

8.3.9 School ethos and leadership

Campbell et al (2001) note that ‘an understanding of ethnic diversity and anti-racism are widely seen as essential components of inclusive schooling. This is true regardless of whether minority ethnic group are a significant part of a school’s population.’ Yet schools across the country range widely in their commitment to anti-racist practice. Historically, the need to promote equal opportunities has been equated with the presence of minority ethnic pupils in the classroom. The reverse of this is, of course, the self-granted dispensation to ignore race issues as being irrelevant where the pupils are all white. Many parents believed that good practice largely continues to reflect demographic patterns. Where schools traditionally have an ethnically diverse pupil intake they were seen as more likely to have the incentive, experience and inclination to embrace social justice issues in general and race equality in particular. Whilst this works in their favour it also has the potential to accelerate minority ethnic intake thus creating ghettos and further polarising communities along ethnic and social lines. Access to good, inclusive schools, therefore, remains a problem for many families who happen to live in the ‘wrong’ catchment area.
It’s not fair on my children if I don’t live in [X] then I don’t get the same treatment. I don’t have the choice.

School X is being used as a dumping ground for black and ethnic minorities. Because most of the parents are students ... the school has this mixture of pupils. But if you decide to live in another part [of town], then you will find that your child will be in a minority seriously and a lot of these schools will not cope with it, they cannot cope with it ... they haven’t been trained to do so. School X has a big experience because they’ve had to cope with it.

Positive leadership was identified as a cornerstone of a positive school ethos by parents. Engaged headteachers have the capacity to foster good practice by being clear about priorities and allocating time, staff and resources in pursuit of social justice. Parents spoke warmly of headteachers whom they perceived as committed to an anti-racist ethos and described how such leadership permeated the whole school, but, equally, held those who tolerated racism responsible for the consequences. In the absence of commitment to social inclusion and appropriate initiative on the part of the headteacher any drive for equality is left to the goodwill of individual teachers. It is difficult to imagine, however, how any teacher could successfully impart a strong and positive message against a background of indifference or indeed hostility from senior management and other colleagues.

I am aware that it happens and there has been some, some very good practice and some bad, I suppose, ranging from ... the staff or the senior staff building ethos or culture of acceptance and some quality if you like right the way through to some senior members of staff believing that there is not a problem, that racism doesn’t happen.

The headteacher of that school is really, really, is a very wonderful lady ... she never tolerated any type of discrimination at all.

We need to train the staff, we need to train the teachers and more or like you know on the top, it’s the head teacher. Because if it comes from the head they follow, if it doesn’t come from the head nobody is going to bother.

She was persecuted mercilessly ... Even the headmaster, the school was put under discipline, it was investigated and he actually had a nervous breakdown ... It was his own fault because he tolerated racism in his school.

Although predominantly white schools, especially, were seen to lack the motivation to pursue race equality and play down differences, viewing them as curricular items rather than values integrated in the whole school ethos, there was praise for those headteachers who firmly located their institutions in a wider social and global context regardless of their ethnic composition.
I asked the head teacher ... do you have any black children in this school? She said no ... [but] these kids are going to grow up in a world that is diverse. So although we don’t have any black children in the school we have to have that education that it is not an all white world. So that’s an example of a forward thinking head teacher.

There is ample evidence that pupils’ experiences are determined by complex factors relating to social class, ethnicity, nationality, faith, gender, location and so on, and it is impossible to anticipate which combination of criteria will be pertinent for any one pupil at any given time. Seen in conjunction with the impossibility to fully regulate the dynamics of individual pupil and teacher relationships, the variation in commitment to an inclusive school ethos across Scotland (documented in Arshad and Diniz, 1999) raises serious concerns about the reliable delivery of equitable education across Scotland.

I just wish that ... the school were able to deliver more on its promises.

8.3.10 Minority ethnic teachers, teacher training and professional development

The largely mono-ethnic composition of staff rooms in Scottish schools was remarked upon, reflecting parental concerns over their children’s self-image as they grow up in a predominantly white environment. Respondents commented on the positive role minority ethnic teachers could play in pupils’ lives and, indeed, acknowledged the difference it could make to them as parents. And although the focus was on the inspirational effect of seeing minority ethnic adults in positions of authority for minority ethnic children and young people, it seems equally important to recognise the significance this may have for majority ethnic pupils, parents and staff.

What’s missing here is the role model, what’s missing here is seeing a black teacher.

I strongly feel that, particularly [in this predominantly white authority], that there should be more ethnic minority workers, parents, other workers in schools where they would break down barriers in all issues, language cultural, everything. I think that would be such a benefit to the children and the parents would be able to approach the school without having this fear behind them.

Minority ethnic teachers were perceived to hold posts supplementary to mainstream teaching, such as EAL and assistant staff, and minority ethnic professionals who qualified outside the UK were thought to face difficulties in having their qualifications recognised in Scotland. Unlike their children, who observed the racist treatment of minority ethnic teachers in their schools (see Chapter 6 on pupils), parents did not, on the whole, dwell on the reality of professional life for minority ethnic staff and only two contributors explicitly addressed issues of status, mainstreaming and promotion.
Bringing in more minority ethnic teachers is an important thing, encouraging and facilitating the way for more teachers, and promoted posts as well, from ethnic minority background so there can be role models for children from that background.

In addition to calling for minority ethnic teaching staff, respondents raised the need to cultivate an atmosphere of consciousness and understanding amongst teachers. In much the same way as parental input relates to human interaction elsewhere in this Chapter, parents here identified the impulse for change only to a lesser extent in the mechanisms and structures which underpin the development of social inclusion. Instead, the focus was on education to engage minds and foster empathy amongst teachers. Reference was made to the support required for those willing, but unable, to translate good intentions into good practice. Largely, parents lamented race issues not being taken seriously and, indeed, denied. Students, newly qualified and experienced teachers alike require expert training to raise awareness, provide information and encourage ongoing enquiry. The imposition of race equality policies and procedures may send out necessary signals, but only equipping staff to scrutinise their own practices and supporting them in developing their thinking is likely to bring about genuine commitment to good practice and enable teachers to communicate this to their pupils.

They have the structures in place, but I don’t know how we could get the headteachers and the teachers ... especially when [there are] issues like racism, bullying and harassment, to get them on the ball ... if something then happens, it’s always quickly on the defence.

I’m not saying that all teachers are really racist or whatever, there are those who really want to see racial equality but they are not aware of how to go about it.

Some of the colleges of education ... include in their courses ... for new teachers ... training or educating about bilingualism and ... inclusion in general and having children from ethnic minorities in their classes ... Giving the opportunity for all teachers to be aware of issues. So they won’t be judging children from names or colours ...

Parents noted defensiveness amongst some schools and staff, a tendency to distance themselves from equality initiatives and rely instead on their own approaches. Where training remains optional, much depends on the culture of the institution, enabling those who operate in an open and engaged environment to further pursue their interests and continue to learn, whilst allowing those reluctant to challenge themselves to opt out and distance themselves even further. Ultimately, the chance to withdraw from training and development means that established patterns are perpetuated. However, one contributor who favoured practical advice rather than discussion, considered that although training was a step in the right direction, attitudes would not easily change. The implication here appears to be that the subject of diversity and social justice is too enormous to tackle, that the need for meaningful reflection is almost too much to expect of teachers.
Many times when we have gone for in-service days and courses, [unclear word or passage] materials taken and nobody is interested in reading them, they are just left or [people are] very indifferent, they say no, that does not exist here, at all. As a teacher myself I face a lot of problems at times, you know, because of either my colour or whatever.

The cultural awareness training wasn’t mandatory ... So I think until and unless something is mandatory you cannot send a message across to all staff. So [those] who came were receptive already ... so therefore it was easy to talk to them but the difficulty lies outside those ... people, I believe, because those who didn’t [attend] lack awareness.

They have refused [the local Racial Equality Councils’] offer of training ... and said they will do it in-house. They haven’t the knowledge, neither the experience to do this sort of training in-house, because they know nothing about racism.

It certainly raises the issue. But I think these kind of things if they are going to go ahead they have to be planned very, very carefully so that all discussions, that take a meaningful, useful, practical ... if we’re having a meeting about disabled pupils, for example, I would rather have somebody coming in giving me practical advice as to what I should be doing as opposed to discussing the issue. And I think this is something we lack.

8.3.11 Curriculum, subjects, resources and activities

Whilst there was some discussion around the limited subject choices available to all pupils, most contributors chose to focus on race, diversity and multiculturalism. Some parents who were satisfied with the multicultural activities at their children’s schools did not raise any concerns about the curriculum and gave credit to the schools for attempting to instill inclusive values in their pupils.

His particular school does quite a lot, they try ... they have even a diversity day every year ... most children participate and all parents are invited, and people from the community are invited and it’s a big thing the whole evening and they perform from different countries and things like that. They do try.

However, a selective multiculturalism, played according to numbers, is also in place. Parents complained of multiculturalism being presented as relevant only to minority ethnic families and therefore frequently practised only when minority ethnic pupils are present. It is seen as optional and more widely taught in primary schools where time and curriculum pressures are thought to be less intense than at secondary level. Although parents did not generally speak in terms of anti-racist education, they appealed for principles of equality and inclusion to permeate all teaching. There was criticism of the
manner in which race issues were approached as discrete items on the teaching agenda and minority ethnic pupils portrayed as requiring special attention.

For me it’s not [about] having a race awareness week but having issues round diversity throughout the curriculum. You know how they are always saying we don’t have time? ... [but] it’s not [about] wanting you to have time ... it’s more: how are you teaching your history, how are you teaching your modern languages, how are teaching your science?... what I have a problem with is the fact that we’ve got to be special, we want to be different, we want to have our own special time; no we don’t, we want to be the mainstream, in there ... so when you’re talking of a white inventor you also talk of a Chinese inventor and an African inventor, because they invented the things, not because of ... who they were.

[A secondary teacher] said we haven’t got enough children ... there is no need. And I said you have more need to address it so that general awareness is raised and ... tolerance.

There was a Muslim staff in the school, while she was there they celebrated Eid. She’s left now ... and I know when I leave ... I think they’ll stop celebrating Diwali as well. But it shouldn’t be – they should carry on celebrating these festivals.

Primary are more receptive ... [the secondary teachers] said ‘we don’t have time for extra activities.’

Persistent stereotyping, lack of critical thought and racism in resources and activities were also cited as examples of bad practice and parents called for the curriculum and resources to be more culturally relevant to their children and more reflective of contemporary society.

My child ... is a beautiful singer ... At the school Christmas concert she was chosen to do reading. I said ‘why isn’t she an angel?’, because all the angels were singers and the headmaster said ‘she doesn’t look like an angel.’

[When the school librarian gave her daughter ‘Little Black Sambo’ the parent asked if she was] aware this book is banned, and she said ‘But it’s not hurting the children.’

They said it was an anti-racist play and it was the most racist thing I’ve seen in ten years and it put this place back in its programme ... they got a lot of money to do it.
They need to have role models, they need to relate to some of the things so they can conceptualise the concepts that are being taught. But if it is something that only reflects the majority culture, I think they will find it very hard to understand.

What I would expect is maybe inclusion of materials to reflect every culture ... the materials are written against different cultures ... [the pupils] find it very difficult because they don’t relate to this.

8.3.12 Learning support, bilingualism and EAL

Despite the close association of EAL and MCARE and the connections drawn by many teachers, parents did not devote much time to discussing bilingualism. However, where the matter was raised, it tended to be in relation to difficulties around communication with and within schools, stereotyping and conflict within families. The misdiagnosis of children’s abilities, equating the need for learning support with linguistic difficulties, was attributed to ignorance and prejudicial assessments and shown to damage both self-perception and relations with others.

I made [sure] that teacher understood that this child needs a learning support because I’m not happy with the way he is progressing in his language. The next week an English as a Second Language teacher was sitting beside my son and he was in second year. And that was a disaster, he was so embarrassed, you can imagine ... and my son was in fits and he came and blamed me ... To make sure [my son] understood ... [the teacher spoke] to him slowly and whatever and [he’s] been in this country since the nursery. So misunderstood, stereotyping, you know, just the name, whatever ... I felt really, really bad ... And if I had the choice I’d take my son from that headmaster and that school.

There was an [Arab] child who was writing the wrong way, they put him in for remedial. He’d just come from Egypt and they put him in for remedial teaching ... [the teacher said] ‘He goes the wrong way!’

Negative teacher attitudes to home languages largely continue to be communicated to parents. Non-European languages are often not valued and families are dissuaded from using them at home. Parents lament the impact this has on their children who, in addition to wishing to blend in, note the low status attached to their home language and seek to distance themselves from it.

My daughter used to speak in Arabic ... she’d start a story half in English half in Arabic ... And I’d been advised by one ... to speak to her [in] English because I’m confusing her, which is rubbish .... when I say yes I have English as a second language but my children have been here long enough, I don’t see English as a second language for them.
They know this child is bilingual, this child speaks two or three languages but teachers never make a time to say OK [and give praise].

They do feel negative toward [our home language] ... the little one, even though I try to speak she will not respond and she will not listen.

8.4 The views of parents of children with SEN

8.4.1 Background

Little explicit recognition of the views of minority ethnic parents of disabled children is present in much of the SEN research that has been funded by the Scottish Executive over the past decade. However, the evidence that is available has reported that such parents were severely under-represented in making decisions about their children, had little knowledge of assessment procedures and complained that professionals had low expectations of them (Ahmad et al, 1998; Chamba et al, 1999; Curnyn et al, 1991; Emerson and Azmi, 1997; Flynn, 2002; Stalker, 2000). Three recent national policy reports have demonstrated a welcome shift in thinking concerning service provision for minority ethnic disabled children and their families (see 2.8.16 in this report). This is most clearly illustrated in the report of the Scottish Parliament Inquiry into SEN, which stated:

Racial equality issues are not given sufficient consideration and black and minority ethnic families are disadvantaged by insufficient information and an inequitable distribution of resources. There is a shortage of bilingual Educational Psychologists and evidence from MELDI indicates that schools are generally not inclusive of children’s culture, background and experiences, or that of their parents. (SP, 2001, Para. 41)

8.4.2 Participation

The parents who agreed to participate said that they wished their story to be heard so that other families would have a better experience in future. These are families who have developed resilience through networking with other minority ethnic families in MELDI and they are also more likely to have the social capital, particularly educational, language and social skills to deal with mainstream professionals and institutions. Despite their own struggles, they are very conscious of the serious marginalisation experienced by other families who are less privileged than themselves. All the participants expressed support for research that was linked directly to improving provision for their children and their families. Although they were very appreciative of the interest and support received from MELDI, they acknowledged that the researchers could not deliver solutions. They also seemed surprised, or less under pressure, to be interviewed by minority ethnic researchers.
Given the small sample involved, these findings cannot be regarded as evidence of the state of SEN provision generally. In the absence of evidence from other sources, such as school inspection reports from HMIE, the views of the parents who took part carry some powerful messages. Analysis of the interview data indicated that this small group of parents shared many of the concerns that were expressed by parents of non-disabled pupils. However, they also had specific issues relating to ethnicity, culture and race equality in SEN provision; their views are summarised below, under four themes.

8.4.3 Awareness of social inclusion and anti-racism discourses

As a group, they showed an awareness of the national discourse on social inclusion in Scotland and of racism as a feature within the education system and society in Scotland. All had experienced the tensions of having to deal with ‘disability’ and ‘ethnicity’ and of being caught between the two. They felt that SEN provision concentrated on ‘disability’, leaving ‘ethnicity’ (culture, language, religion) for the family to deal with. This was a particular issue in special schools, where minority ethnic disabled children were the ‘only one in the school or class’. They thought special schools ignored the cultural and religious needs of their children and only concentrated on the child’s disability.

8.4.4 Home-school links

Active partnership between school and home is particularly important for the education of children who are disabled or are experiencing significant difficulties in learning. Indeed ‘parent-partnership’ is often portrayed as the cornerstone of best practice in the field of SEN. All parents wanted to actively participate in their children’s education and had suggestions for improvement but were rarely asked. They felt that all minorities are treated ‘the same’, as a burden who should feel grateful for services or as troublemakers if they assert their rights.

On the surface they seem to be welcoming but when your child enters the system they are so distant, really, it’s like you as a parent are not part of your child’s education at all. They take the decisions which affect him without consulting you. And when you go and complain and find out why this has been put in place then they are no longer welcoming. They see you as a problem.

When you ask questions about what you want for your child you don’t feel that this is a right thing to have. They make you feel that it is a favour. I think this is deliberate, to make you feel you are a minority and you should accept what you get and be satisfied. It is racism. There is no respect. Many of my friends talk about this as well.
8.4.5 School curriculum, ethos and leadership

All the parents were anxious about their children’s schooling. They wanted them to succeed in learning and to preserve their culture and faith. Parents of children who were in mainstream schools complained about the invisibility and lack of understanding of issues of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, especially Islam, in the curriculum.

*Why don’t they teach her about her religion and why don’t they teach Arabic? She has to do this as extra on Saturday. Why does the school not do this?*

Racist language and bullying is something that all parents spoke about. They worried about the personal safety of their children in and outside schools. None of the parents had knowledge of a school policy on race equality and there was a feeling that these policies are only there “in case there are problems”.

All the parents praised the efforts of individual class teachers but there was less support for headteachers and managers. In one case, relations had clearly broken down between the mother and school and local authority managers, whom she regarded as remote: “they only make the decisions far away and block positive things the teachers are trying to do”.

8.4.6 Access to specialist services

This is an area that drew the most comment. There is continuing dissatisfaction with the nature and accessibility of specialist services. Parents remain unconvinced that the specialist services in health, social work and education, that are meant to cater for their disabled children, are designed to take account of their ethnic, cultural and religious differences. They commented favourably on the work of MELDI and expressed the need for a specialist service/unit specifically dedicated to support minority ethnic parents. Why, they asked, are there very few, if any, teachers, support staff, psychologists etc. from diverse language and ethnic backgrounds?

8.5 Conclusions

8.5.1 Human relationships were at the forefront of parental concerns. Reflections on home-school interactions explored issues of power, responsibility and dialogue. The quality of communication was largely seen to be dependent on the schools’ approachability, awareness of barriers to communication and readiness to initiate discussion and engage with parents as active partners. Similarly, there was recognition of the value and impact of good, supportive relations between teachers and pupils, of children’s friendships and of the potential for damage from disinterested or antagonistic teachers and pupils.

8.5.2 Parents spoke of issues arising from their desire to protect their children, either in relation to the school or in terms of wider questions of racism. Conflict at school was shown to
have the potential to create complex stresses between family members. Parents also spoke of the possible tensions between their own ethics on the one hand and the practical need to teach their children survival skills on the other. The different life experiences within families of mixed ethnic backgrounds and their impact on identification, allegiance and perspective were also discussed.

8.5.3 The need to assert identity in the face of the widespread ethnocentricity of the majority society was emphasised. Schools need to look critically at conscious or subconscious messages sent out by staff, at the quality of their resources, at curriculum content and the way it is conveyed and at underlying structures which undermine the quest for equality. Parents called for race equality to permeate education at all levels rather than be considered an optional add-on.

8.5.4 Race equality was not equated with racist incidents. Parents were vocal about their sorrow and condemnation of racism and called on teachers to send out unequivocal messages to the entire school community, both within and outside the school premises. Parents distinguished between bullying and racial harassment and although there was praise for those schools which had worked to fight racism, some parents sadly took racist abuse for granted. Race equality was perceived in broader terms in that parents spoke of the need to foster a positive self-image in children, to create and maintain an inclusive and socially just environment and to challenge deficit and tokenistic models of cultural awareness. There was also a call for equal opportunities to be reconsidered as relevant to all, rather than being solely in the domain of minority ethnic groups, and for schools to be proactive, not reactive.

8.5.5 Examples of strong, affirmative headteachers were given, illustrating the difference committed leadership could make to schools. A positive school ethos, communicated from the top, was thought necessary if the whole school was to take race equality forward. Parents raised the need for all schools, regardless of their ethnic composition, to recognise and value diversity. Teachers were thought to require training to equip them to work appropriately with diverse classes. Increasing the number of minority ethnic teachers was seen to have the potential to send out positive messages to the whole school community and provide role models for minority ethnic pupils. The onus for change and implementation of good practice must not be left with minority ethnic parents but be seen as a common goal of benefit to all.

8.5.6 Parents of children with SEN, who were interviewed in this study, shared many of the concerns of other minority ethnic parents. They expressed a strong desire to ensure that their children are valued for who they are, that they are safe and that they will learn. However, they also remain unconvinced that the specialist services in health, social work and education, that are meant to cater for their disabled children, are designed to take account of their ethnic, cultural and religious differences. Their comments reflect the
same issues that have been reported in the literature referred to earlier ((Ahmad, et al, 1998; Almeida Diniz, 1997; Chamba, et al, 1999; Curnyn et al, 1991; Emerson and Azmi, 1997). It is important to recognise that these were parents who had found an avenue to voice their concerns through their contact with MELDI and that their views may not generally represent those of other families across Scotland. In the absence of in-depth research data, this is the best indication available.

8.6 Recommendations

1. Communication between teachers and parents needs to be prioritised. Trust and human contact must be established as a prerequisite to co-operation. Schools need to consider how they could use the linkworker concept to establish and support such contact.

2. Schools must re-examine how they communicate with parents, particularly minority ethnic parents. Priority needs to be given to ‘listening’ to minority ethnic parents. Schools should understand that they are perceived by parents as holding the ‘power position’ in the home-school relationship.

3. Schools should ensure maximum flexibility in their approaches to parents, including at practical level information on structures, policies, learning and teaching initiatives in a format appropriate to their requirements. Parents require to be made aware of how to access assistance and express grievances, and to be provided with alternative modes should the primary ones fail.

4. Teachers and student teachers should receive high quality training to raise awareness and confidence:
   – to competently address race equality issues;
   – to develop sensitive and imaginative interpersonal skills to support all pupils and parents;
   – to learn how to access information relevant to minority ethnic parents and pupils, such as culturally determined requirements, availability of interpreters, legislation;
   – to successfully deliver a curriculum reflective of diverse contemporary society by using appropriate resources.

5. Providers of teacher education courses together with the General Teaching Council for Scotland, Scottish Executive Education Department, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the teaching unions of Scotland should work with organisations serving the minority ethnic communities to enhance the numbers of minority ethnic teachers in the Scottish teaching profession at all levels.

6. Anti-bullying initiatives should incorporate a strong message regarding racist incidents. Racist incidents require to be monitored and dealt with promptly and effectively. Feedback needs to be sought from the child/person suffering the abuse or reporting the abuse about how effectively the incident was handled. Leaflets about school approaches
to preventing bullying of all kinds (including the explicit naming of some of the varieties of bullying, such as racial, sexual or sectarian bullying) should be written for staff, pupils and parents. Ideally such leaflets are written in partnership with the representatives from the whole school community.

7. Staff development should assist teachers to reconceptualise race equality as encompassing more than the elimination of overt racial incidents and to explore the implications of promoting genuine and far-reaching race equality in terms of their pedagogical conduct and approach.

8. Opportunities need to be provided in the early years and primary schools to assist teachers and nursery workers to work with young children to develop their identity and values in relation to cultures and ethnicities. This work should be done within a framework that understands the history of racism and its contemporary impact.

9. The Scottish Executive, local authorities and schools should monitor the experiences of minority ethnic parents of disabled pupils and look at how they can be actively engaged in the education of their children.

10. HMIE inspections must address the question of how schools support minority ethnic parents of children with SEN.
CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION – Key findings and recommendations

This chapter draws together the key findings from all respondent groups under the research objectives.

9.1 Key factors relating to ethnic diversity which promote or restrict inclusion

9.1.1 Teacher understanding of how best to take forward race equality

All teachers interviewed wanted to do their best to support all pupils, including minority ethnic pupils. In particular, teachers felt they had worked hard over the years to develop a positive and inclusive school ethos. However, teachers were not unanimous on how to teach minority ethnic pupils fairly. Some felt the best way to achieve this was not to single out aspects of a child, such as their ethnicity or colour, but rather to concentrate on the personality and abilities of each child. Others disagreed and felt that to fully meet the needs of minority ethnic pupils, it was important to be conscious of all aspects of the child, that is their ethnicity, language, culture, faith, gender, class etc.

A considerable number of majority ethnic (white) teachers chose actively not to ‘see’ difference in terms of colour, religion or ethnicity, largely because they felt such markers were discriminatory and prevented them from valuing the child as an individual. Yet the very few visible minority ethnic staff interviewed talked about the importance of acknowledging difference, particularly in relation to faith, language and culture, which they saw as part of identity formation. Equally, minority ethnic pupils and parents wanted teachers to be more astute about diversity and to appreciate and acknowledge the spectrum they represented.

At present it would appear that practice relating to ethnic diversity and race-related matters is ad hoc and dependent on how a teacher interprets equality and fairness and understands racial constructs. Byrne (2000) suggests that to ignore racial markers, be that colour or ethnicity, is something white people can do but black people cannot. At the core is a tension between the ways in which difference is constructed, understood and reinforced alongside an imperative to assimilate. On the one hand, some minority ethnic pupils know that their colour, cultural norms, faith or language differ from their white peer groups, while on the other, they are compelled to adopt the behaviour and belief systems which more closely approximate those of white children.

If teachers are unable to work confidently with difference, the differences which are part of children’s identity may well be neglected. Visible minority ethnic pupils themselves recognise that they are different, but, as they made clear, this difference only becomes relevant at certain times and in particular contexts. For example, some of these differences create negative reactions in the form of racial discrimination. Failure by a teacher to see all aspects of a child may therefore have the effect of rendering race-related issues as invisible. Invisibility of difference is a feature of exclusion.
9.1.2 **Teacher confidence on race equality matters**

Teacher confidence varied on race equality issues. However, the words of one headteacher summed up for many teachers how they felt about race equality issues.

* *I think there is a problem in society as a whole, but it doesn’t touch my life personally. I would welcome staff development or some form of training because I feel a bit at sea ... because it’s not something I’ve really thought much about before.*

**Headteacher, Primary**

Teachers with less confidence indicated a greater degree of anxiety about placing race equality issues firmly on the learning and teaching agenda. Those who were more confident drew from personal experiences. Examples cited included experience of life abroad, links with minority ethnic communities or personal experience of discrimination combined with a clear analysis of why social problems such as racism, poverty or discrimination occur. These teachers were more likely to be passionate and confident about recognising and valuing diversity and opposing discrimination.

Teachers who had worked in multiracial staff teams and settings all commented on the benefits of having done so and many felt they could not now move to schools where diversity was not the norm. They thought that they were assisted in their work by the composition of the school, and felt that predominantly white schools would have to make a much greater effort to promote an inclusive message. When asked how this could be achieved, they cited the need for an explicit multicultural and anti-racist education approach.

Teachers were divided about how to place race equality issues on the educational agenda. There were those who saw placing the issue of racism or race equality openly on the teaching agenda as difficult as this might create uncomfortable situations for minority ethnic young people. Some teachers felt that if racism was not evident, it was best not to place it on the agenda as this might in fact give rise to it.

Other teachers found that this was not the case and that young people, including minority ethnic young people, wanted to grapple with contemporary issues of identity, discrimination and inclusion. These teachers felt it was important that schools prepared young people for a diverse society and world equipped with the tools to recognise and challenge racism.

Teacher confidence and understanding of race matters affects whether minority ethnic pupils feel better included or unwittingly excluded.
9.1.3 **The need for a more ethnically diverse teaching workforce**

Many teachers wanted to see the Scottish teaching workforce become more diverse and multilingual as this would bring diversity issues ‘alive’ for pupils. Parents, too, saw an increase in the number of minority ethnic teachers to have the potential to send out positive messages to the whole school community and provide role models for minority ethnic pupils.

Pupils were keen to see more visible minority ethnic teachers and other members of staff employed in schools. Many pupils indicated that they were often ‘the only ones’ of their ethnic group in the school, or among just a few visible minority pupils. Some pupils thought that having more minority ethnic teachers would assist them to feel more comfortable and others felt minority ethnic teachers would better understand minority ethnic pupils as well as being role models.

While this study does not conclude that the lack of an ethnically diverse workforce excludes minority ethnic pupils, it is clear that some teachers and all parents and pupils interviewed wanted a more diverse workforce, believing that such diversity would affect the inclusion of minority ethnic pupils positively.

Their views are in agreement with past research which has shown that with more minority ethnic participation different perspectives are introduced, and that these reframe more traditional perceptions of issues such as citizenship, as well as ensuring that the distinct profiles of different ethnic groups and community cultures become more systematically acknowledged within schools (Gittens, 2000; Blair and Bourne, 1998).

9.1.4 **Multiple identities, multiple discriminations**

Teachers acknowledged the complexities of dealing with a range of equality issues. They were, however, less aware of how multiple discrimination might affect pupils who are, for example, from a minority ethnic group but also face poverty, or the minority ethnic pupil with SEN.

The case study of the pupil Q with a learning disability raises a number of questions about notions of ‘educational success’ as it relates to minority ethnic disabled children with SEN. How do schools give due regard to a pupil’s disabilities as well as issues of culture, ethnicity, faith and language? How are pupils like Q actively involved in decisions about setting their educational goals and in evaluating their achievement?

For visible minority ethnic disabled pupils, an approach with a dominant focus on disability is likely to silence the ethnicity-related aspects of Q’s situation. However, a focus on Q’s ethnicity without addressing issues of disability would leave Q potentially having to be ‘one’ or the ‘other’. In terms of inclusion, how do schools with visible minority ethnic pupils with disabilities work with them in a way that does not force the young person to choose?
Gender issues arose in several different ways. Firstly, some women teachers interviewed commented on the sexism they had to face from some minority ethnic male pupils. They commented on the difficulty of raising these issues because some of the pupils’ behaviour was being attributed to faith and cultural practices. Teachers did not wish to discuss this for fear of being accused of racism.

In terms of inclusion, it is vital that teachers are able to address concerns over sexism as appropriately as they are being expected to address issues of racism. There is a need for more discussion between educators and all communities, majority and minority, about matters of faith and patriarchal cultural mores which require to be challenged in the same way as racist cultural mores.

9.1.5 School links with minority ethnic parents

Overall, few teachers and senior managers discussed the contribution of parents in any depth other than with regard to the assistance and information provided by parents, particularly in faith and cultural matters. The issue of home-school links was not given priority in the majority of teacher interviews, although gender aspects of home-school links were discussed.

Teachers appreciated minority ethnic parents who came into schools to help. As mothers appeared to be more available during the days, the participating role tended to fall to them. Where this was the case, teachers regretted that fathers were less visible.

However, teachers also spoke of their concern in some situations where mothers were not present and all the school’s dealings were with the father. This was attributed to language constraints but also to cultural issues. Teachers wanted more contact with mothers whom they knew to have the main caring responsibilities for their children.

For parents, on the other hand, human relationships were at the forefront of their concerns. Parents wanted more communication and dialogue with their children’s teachers. This was particularly the case for parents whose children were facing multiple issues such as being from a minority ethnic background and having special educational needs. Reflections on home-school interactions explored issues of power, responsibility and dialogue. The quality of communication was largely seen to be dependent on the schools’ approachability, awareness of barriers to communication and readiness to initiate discussion and engage with parents as active partners. Similarly, there was recognition of the value and impact of good, supportive relations between teachers and pupils, of children’s friendships and of the potential for damage from disinterested or antagonistic teachers and pupils.

Parents were also very conscious of having to work hard at home to assert ethnic, cultural and linguistic identities for their children in the face of the widespread ethnocentricity of the society in which they lived. All parents in the focus groups and interviews were vocal about the need for schools to look far more critically at conscious or subconscious
messages sent out by staff on race issues, at the quality of their resources and at curriculum content for promoting diversity.

Young people interviewed did not bring up any clear issues on home-school links.

The question of how minority ethnic parents are included requires attention. Research and educational literature (Tomlinson, 1993; Munn, 1993; Bastiani, 1997) acknowledges that parents are their children’s chief educators and that children derive an essential sense of themselves and the world from their home surroundings before growing into a larger environment. Where there are compound factors such as race and SEN, the importance of involving parents as active partners is even more critical (SOEID, 1999).

It could therefore be argued that the involvement of parents might assist the inclusion of minority ethnic pupils and the absence of such involvement not only decreases pedagogic benefits but serves to alienate the pupil from both home and school.

9.1.6 Racism

Racism, at a personal or an institutional level, impacts on minority ethnic pupils’ sense of being included or excluded. This issue is further developed in 9.3.2 and 9.3.3.

9.2 Experiences of minority ethnic pupils in terms of educational attainment, participation in school activities, personal and social skills

9.2.1 Attainment levels

This study is unable to arrive at valid and reliable statements about the educational achievements of minority ethnic pupils. This is largely due to the weaknesses in the data available to the researchers.

For many schools, the practice of routinely collecting data on educational attainment and forwarding the results to the authority for central storage and interrogation is new. In addition, recording of ethnicity has not been fully understood by schools and has resulted in the provision of incomplete data.

The 5–14 levels are not primarily designed for exploring patterns of educational achievement. To obtain accurate data about minority and majority ethnic pupil achievement, this study would have required standardised assessment measures taken at constant intervals (i.e. all pupils assessed at the same time over an extended period). There is a need to conduct a longitudinal study following a cohort of pupils through the years from P2 to S2 to examine whether differences between minority and majority ethnic pupils change over time as a means of establishing, for instance, whether there is any evidence of a ‘catching-up’ effect.
Data on ethnicity remains incomplete also because it is not compulsory for parents to disclose information of this nature. It is therefore difficult to confidently compare the attainment levels of pupils from varying ethnic backgrounds. A further issue relates to language. Data recordings at authority level do not at present provide details of the length of time each pupil has been resident in Britain or the pupil’s fluency in English. Even where pupils whose first language is not English speak the same language, it is difficult to tell how much they have in common socially or culturally.

Since, historically, and during the period covered by this study, reliable data linking attainment levels to ethnicity has not been available, it is important that a future study focuses on this key area, utilising the monitoring data which should increasingly come on-stream.

For the future, it is essential that authorities provide staff development to key school staff on the purpose and importance of ethnic monitoring. Each authority should consider this in relation to the accurate provision of data to the Scottish Executive.

9.2.2 Participation in school activities, personal and social skills

Minority ethnic young people presented themselves as eager to succeed in their lives and education and impatient about barriers put in their way, whether by other pupils or teachers. They were keen to speak about their friends and their likes and dislikes at school. Minority ethnic young people valued opportunities to interact with other minority ethnic people and for many, such opportunities appeared not to exist. In more ethnically diverse schools they recognised social divisions and dynamics between ethnic groups and mentioned times when young people clustered into their own ethnic groups. They were critical of the tendency for visible minority ethnic pupils to stay together and called on schools to do more to bring pupils out of their enclaves.

Minority ethnic young people stressed the importance of having a supportive peer group, the ethnic make-up of which varied according to their circumstances. The existence of a supportive peer group seemed to make the difference between feeling included or excluded. They often relied on such a network for coping with a range of issues from dealing with racism to feeling confident enough to take part in activities. Young people spoke of the importance of a good school ethos and some indicated that a good ethos and recognition of the diversity of pupils meant less racism. Several praised their school’s efforts to recognise diversity.

Gender also appeared to have an impact on the experiences of minority ethnic young people. Girls especially spoke about constraints participating in social or school activities particularly at secondary level. They commented that the range of choice of activities was often restricted.

Though parents did not refer directly to pupil achievement or participation in those specific terms parents commented on the importance of having strong, affirmative
headteachers if schools were to work towards ensuring racial inclusion. A positive school ethos, communicated from the top, was thought necessary if the whole school was to take race equality forward. Parents raised the need for all schools, regardless of their ethnic composition, to recognise and value diversity. Teachers were thought to require training to equip them to work appropriately with diverse classes. The onus for change and implementation of good practice must not be left with minority ethnic parents but be seen as a common goal and benefit to all.

Teachers on the whole concentrated their contributions in terms of their efforts to address issues of equality and fairness. Where references were made to pupil participation, this was very much in terms of the inclusion of multicultural events so that minority pupils would feel their cultures and faiths were being recognised and acknowledged.

Teachers made many positive comments about minority ethnic pupils, particularly those recently arrived from another country. These pupils were often viewed as ‘respecters’ of education, keen to learn and hardworking. A few teachers spoke of the contribution made by minority ethnic pupils to the diversity of school life and of the enriching experience this represented for all pupils.

However, the majority of comments about minority ethnic pupils focused on meeting the needs of EAL pupils. Teachers felt inadequately prepared for working with pupils who had little or no English. They were concerned that they were not providing relevant and effective support for such pupils to access the curriculum and to ensure that appropriate learning for such pupils was taking place. This discussion is further expanded in 9.3.1.

9.3 Teacher and pupil perceptions of minority ethnic pupils’ educational achievements, experiences and expectations

9.3.1 Teacher perceptions

There was a tendency by teachers to interpret working with minority ethnic pupils as an indicator of their own commitment to race equality. Race equality was also often viewed in terms of a school’s support of bilingual pupils through interaction with the EAL service, its strong stance on tackling racist incidents and its celebration of different faiths and festivals. Few teachers focused on the importance of ensuring a multicultural curriculum, on understanding the impact of racism (personal, cultural and structural) on minority ethnic pupils or on the benefits of race equality work for majority ethnic pupils or for themselves as teachers.

Many teachers were keen to accentuate the positive characteristics of minority ethnic pupils. In particular, teachers were appreciative of minority ethnic pupils who studied hard and some particularly commented on the way the culture and faith of some minority ethnic pupils contributed to the ethos and practice of their school. However, individual personality and abilities appeared to influence the way in which a child was perceived. Bright, pleasant minority ethnic pupils able to speak fluent English or to grasp English as
a second language quickly were positively remarked upon by some interviewees. This raises questions of how teachers value minority ethnic children whose disposition is less positive or resilient, who are academically less able or require more attention.

Teachers also tended to describe minority pupil experiences in terms of the presence or absence of racist incidents. The absence of racist incidents was often taken as an indicator that all was well. The issue of racist incidents is discussed further in 9.3.2. Rarely, if at all, did teachers talk about minority ethnic pupil experiences in terms of what the young people liked or disliked, their friendship patterns or their participation within the life of the school.

9.3.2 Racist incidents in and outwith school

Overall, teachers did not report frequent or systematic racial incidents or bullying. A minority of teachers and senior managers spoke of a multi-agency partnership approach to tackling racism and racial bullying by developing their links with the community police and voluntary sector agencies.

While all teachers interviewed saw racial bullying as a serious matter, they were not unanimous in how to address such bullying. The majority acknowledged any racial aspects and addressed the matter accordingly, but a small minority felt that racial bullying was no different than any other sort of bullying, that it was not about racism but about a generic intolerance of difference. Some teachers were concerned about the ‘social separation’ between young people of different ethnic groups once they leave school. They felt that schools should work more closely with community agencies to develop collaborative activities such as sporting activities.

Most teachers thought racist incidents in school were on the decline, or even rare, and were more concerned about racist incidents encountered by pupils in the street and in society in general. Some commented on the effect of parental values which might be racist and questioned how such values might impact on the pupil in school. Several teachers felt that where there was no evidence of racist incidents in the school there was no real need to highlight issues of racism or racial bullying.

Yet racism, both direct and indirect, was a daily feature for most minority ethnic young people interviewed. Though some were initially hesitant all young people discussed examples of everyday racism. They recounted racist incidents, name-calling, harassment and bullying in social relations, sometimes within the school, but more so in their neighbourhoods, in the city centres, while travelling to and from school, and elsewhere. Overall, young people described a gulf between their teachers and themselves in their experience of racism. Some pupils displayed hurt and anger, especially when recounting how teachers had failed them. All young people were aware of their school’s anti-bullying messages and the need to report such bullying; however, most tended to try and sort things out for themselves. A few were conscious that some of their teachers tried hard to be accessible, yet it appears that most experiences of racism are not reported.
Parents tended to approach the issue of racist incidents differently to teachers and pupils. They wanted to go beyond the incident to an overall approach to tackling racism in its different forms. Parents were very concerned about the tendency of schools to conflate the issue of racism and bullying but saw racial bullying as one aspect of racism.

Parents were also highly appreciative of schools who anticipated, prevented and recognised racial tensions rather than merely reacting to incidents. They attributed the good practice in such schools to senior management leadership. In particular, they appreciated the proactive stance taken by some schools that were prepared to extend their influence beyond the school gates to successfully deal with racist incidents. The majority of schools were, however, perceived as reluctant to get involved with events off the school premises. Since the experience of racism outwith schools can impact on self-esteem and performance levels within schools, these experiences should be of concern to all schools seeking the best achievement and experiences for their pupils.

9.3.3 Staff racism

Five percent of the 163 respondents who spoke about racism within the questionnaire part of this study raised it in relation to staff. The examples given were mainly in the form of comments made by colleagues in staffrooms, although a couple cited staff making racist comments to minority ethnic pupils. One teacher said that, in their experience most of the racist remarks they heard emanated from staff rather than pupils. In the chapter on pupil experiences, pupils refer to staff comments and attitudes. The responses about teacher racism from questionnaires were also supported by some teachers during interviews. Whilst teachers were reluctant to discuss the attitudes of colleagues, some shared concerns about the complacency of certain colleagues on matters of equality, and race equality in particular, and others worried about racist and ignorant views held by colleagues.

Staff racism, in its many possible guises, has so far not been the subject of much research. The findings of this study suggest that this is an area requiring critical and honest attention. Staff who hold negative views of minority ethnic pupils, cultures or ethnic groups are likely to convey their beliefs and values in their interactions with pupils. Too often race equality and school studies focus on the behaviour of pupils rather than staff, but to ensure a genuine culture of respect, the focus has to be on the whole school community.

Staff attitudes have also escaped scrutiny as the focus on racism has targeted society, parents and the social environment. From such a perspective racism is seen as a feature of (white) pupils’ behaviour, poor parental attitudes, the media and other factors, rather than as generated by staff attitudes and institutional practices. The example of the minority of teachers who seemed to equate racism with social deprivation illustrates such preconceptions. Such a notion might lead to the incorrect assumption that racism is more rife within lower socio-economic groups than in others; it might also falsely label young
people from areas of social deprivation as being key contributors to racism. The racism of the middle-classes and other professional groupings was not discussed, other than by those teachers who complained of racism among colleagues.

9.3.4 Pupil perceptions

Many issues are already covered in 9.2.2. Overall, pupils stressed the importance of a good school ethos. The majority of young people interviewed came from areas with few minority ethnic pupils. Most tended to be ‘the only ones’ of their ethnic group in the school or part of a group of just a few visible minority ethnic pupils. They were conscious of being ‘outsiders’ even though they were born in Scotland and felt that colour, nationality, language and religious background were determining factors in whether they were accepted as ‘belonging’.

Young people were aware both of sincerity in teachers’ attempts to be inclusive and of their lack of confidence in engaging positively with diverse minority ethnic communities. A number of young people expressed annoyance with stereotypical assumptions about their identities based on their colour or country of origin.

They also felt that staff lack of understanding and school failure to recognise religious diversity placed them in difficult positions. For instance, if the school did not sanction time out for religious festivals, pupils felt forced to be absent as ‘off sick’.

9.4 Factors which affect minority ethnic pupils’ achievement and attainment

9.4.1 Many of the factors influencing achievement have already been mentioned in the above paragraphs. In particular, these are:

- the understanding of teachers in matters of race equality and racism
- the confidence of teachers in addressing issues of diversity and their ability to respond to individual needs
- improved communication and home-school liaison
- explicit addressing of issues of racial, cultural, linguistic and faith diversity within the curriculum
- an understanding of multiple discrimination issues
- the need for effective ethnic monitoring and analysis of such data

The above concur with findings from other major studies which seek to raise achievement and improve the school experiences for minority ethnic pupils (Blair et al 1998; DfES 2002).
9.5 Impact on minority ethnic pupils of different teaching and learning styles

9.5.1 Overall, teachers appreciated that, in response to ethnic and religious diversity, consideration needed to be given to developing ethnically sensitive approaches in such fields as curriculum content, pupil support, assessment and home-school links. Many teachers tried to avoid an exclusively ‘Western’ focus in the curriculum, used multicultural texts, reappraised their curriculum to take into account multifaith issues, and encouraged the maintenance of the home language. In terms of delivering anti-racist education, some teachers selected topics which had the scope to raise discussions of racism and race equality, addressed issues of racism when they arose, raised pupil awareness of anti-racist legislation, checked materials for racial stereotypes and created opportunities for cross-cultural working by, for instance, visiting different places of worship.

Where teachers indicated that they had developed both multicultural and anti-racist teaching and learning strategies, they emphasised the ethos of respect which they had sought to create and insisted that they tried never to let any hint of racism go without comment.

There was, however, concern by young people that faiths other than Christianity were not given much coverage, though schools that had a mixed intake were seen as more successful in addressing the world religions represented in Scotland. Similarly, some young people felt that their ability to speak more than one language was not sufficiently recognised or valued. Equally, some would have preferred to learn a community language rather than a European language. This was especially the case if they had to study their home language in supplementary classes after school or at weekends.

It is difficult to make any conclusive statements about the impact on minority ethnic pupils of different learning and teaching styles. What it is possible to say is that the consideration of race equality issues on learning and teaching styles is a developing area and that the approach is rather ad hoc with only some teachers and schools giving serious consideration to the issue. Some engage in multicultural education without consideration for anti-racist approaches, others approach race and learning and teaching issues as a problem or deficit.

9.6 Conclusion

While aspects of the study are inconclusive there are some themes that emerge very clearly. Schools in this study demonstrate an inconsistent approach to dealing with matters relating to race equality. In some cases, a whole school approach is apparent, while others who do not embed the pursuit of equality in their work and outlook appear only to react to difficult situations when this becomes unavoidable.

Teacher interviews and questionnaires support this, as some teachers see it as important to blur distinctions and differences between their pupils while others recognise a clear need to make diversity, including racial diversity central to their approach. The
inconsistency also seems related to individual teacher confidence, levels and relevance of training and school leadership. These factors determine the ethos and atmosphere in the school. There are also variations in how best to address issues of race equality in the classroom.

In stark contrast to the teachers, parents seem clear about the need for improved dialogue between school and home and, unlike many teachers, see racism as more than just a form of bullying. It is also clear that parents and pupils would like to see race equality issues addressed at curricular level permeating all aspects of the school rather than as a one-off or bolt-on activity. This is not a view consistent across the teacher sample. Parents and pupils demanded an approach based on justice and fairness.

It is unclear to what extent schools acknowledge minority ethnic pupils as social actors, negotiating complex identities and social relationships within a racialised environment, and as agents of change who can adapt to, challenge and inform the individuals, cultures and institutions which they encounter in school and outside.

There needs to be much more active and open listening to the voices of all pupils. The voices of minority ethnic young people can offer a more nuanced understanding of their lives within a racialised social and institutional context than is otherwise available. It would appear that solutions are possible and if the approach, which demands that teachers too reflect on their practices, is firmly established in schools, then the policies and practices which sustain institutional barriers to race equality can begin to be dismantled.

This study also suggests that there is a need to disentangle the issues of racism from the discourses around ‘ethnicity’. Focusing on ‘ethnicities’ and related differences is essential in order to build an inclusive school. However, such a focus needs to be contextualised within an anti-racist framework that does not marginalise or negate the existence of different forms of racism.

This study found that there were schools that have worked hard to embed race equality and generic equality issues into their ethos and overall approach, and it is vital that their efforts and good practice are shared with other schools. Sadly, from pupil and parent interviews, it would appear that many schools are not prepared or able to meet the differing needs of pupils from minority ethnic communities. However, the advice and support which could redress that failing is readily to hand if schools and training institutions listen to the views of parents and pupils. As many teachers themselves noted, diversity in the school, and sound approaches to justice and fairness in the curriculum and in the management of the classroom is of benefit to all pupils, not just those from minority ethnic groups.

This study was limited in both its scope and scale but nonetheless it has provided some indicators of the position of visible minority ethnic pupils in Scottish schools and some pointers for the way forward.
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**WEBSITE REFERENCES**

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www.meldi.org 27

The above websites were all checked on 10th November 2004.
APPENDIX 1

SABRE

An Ethical Code for Researching ‘Race’, Racism & Anti-racism in Scotland (SABRE, 2001)

The Context

The Scottish Executive has recently stated its commitment to address the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Amongst the various initiatives that it has promoted is one relating to the future of research concerning minority ethnic communities in Scotland. The Scottish Executive Central Research Unit held a conference in March 2000 and subsequently published the report, Researching Ethnic Minorities in Scotland (SECRU, 2000). This highlighted a number of concerns, including the criticism that researchers and funders had failed to acknowledge the existence of institutional racism in mainstream social research. Black researchers present argued that this was in part due to the absence of an ethical code for researching ‘race’ in Scotland, i.e., an explicit acknowledgement of the impact of racism in mainstream conceptual frameworks and research methodologies and how this might be addressed in future. A symposium of black researchers subsequently met and has developed An Ethical Code for Researching ‘Race’, Racism & Anti-racism in Scotland (SABRE, 2001). The code is intended to contribute to the developing discourse on anti-racist research and to promote good practice, in the light of the implementation of the recent Amendment Bill to the Race Relations Act (2000).

Whom is the Code intended for?

The Code is aimed at a wide audience of individuals and organisations who are undertaking or commissioning research that has a focus on:

- ‘Race’, Racism and Anti-racism
- Race-relations, including inter/intra minority ethnic group relations
- The socio-political context of black & minority ethnic communities in Scotland.

Footnote: 1: SABRE is a network of Black researchers within universities, local authorities and the black voluntary sector in Scotland.

PROMOTING ANTI-RACIST RESEARCH

Principles: [Key ethics and concepts underpinning the research purpose, ethos, conduct, application and dissemination].
The Research:

- Is explicit in its commitment to Anti-racism and to promoting Social Inclusion.
- Is empowering and actively includes black & minority ethnic peoples’ perspectives.
- Addresses the complex and problematic nature of concepts of ‘race’, racism and ethnicity.
- Ensures that it does not pathologise, stereotype or is exploitative, particularly of black & minority ethnic people.
- Values and addresses the diversity within the black & minority ethnic population and recognises the inter-connections with colour, age, gender, disability, sexuality, culture, class, language, belief, context and other socially defined characteristics.
- Acknowledges the ‘power-relations’ inherent in social research processes, e.g., between ‘white’ and ‘black’, ‘researchers’ and ‘researched’ and families and communities.
- Ensures that the whole research exercise is underpinned by a commitment to confidentiality.

Methodology: [Key epistemological features influencing the researcher’s aims, design, implementation, analysis, reporting and accountability in anti-racist research].

The Researcher:

- Challenges theoretical assumptions that are rooted in a historical legacy of racism by adopting frameworks that address institutional racism in research.
- Gives due regard, without discrimination, to the diversity within black minority ethnic communities, in terms of colour, age, gender, disability, sexuality, culture, class, language, belief, context and other socially defined characteristics.
- Recognises the limitations in the use of current categories of ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ and employs multiple methodologies to secure full representation and inclusion.
- Does not undervalue or exploit the contribution of black & minority ethnic researchers at all levels of the research.
- Respects the rights of individuals and groups to withhold or withdraw confidential information.
- Makes explicit their respective racial and ethnic origins, principles, ethics and authority and acknowledges the potential impact that this has had.
- Provides a full description of the scope, constraints and procedures for gaining access to black minority ethnic communities, the ethnic categories used and their effects on the results in terms of plausibility, validity, reliability and generalisability.

References:

Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Membership of SABRE:

SABRE is a network of black & minority ethnic researchers within universities, local authorities and the black voluntary sector in Scotland. Current members who developed the Code are: Fernando Almeida Diniz, Rowena Arshad, Alfredo Artiles [USA], Tesfu Gessesse, Kay Hampton, Philomena de Lima, Gina Netto, Daniel Onifade, Geoff Palmer, Vijay Patel, Satnam Singh, Stanley Trent [USA] and Khushi Usmani.

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e.mail: sabre@ukgo.com
website: [www.sabre.ukgo.com](http://www.sabre.ukgo.com)

Copyright: SABRE January 2001
APPENDIX 2a – Ethnicity and Religious Affiliation in Scotland : National and Selected Regional Percentages

Census for Scotland 2001: Scotland’s Six Cities
Extracts from Tables K306 and K307.
Source 2001 Census data supplied by the General Register Office for Scotland.
Crown Copyright

Additional data supplied by the Research Officers of individual cities

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<th>KS06: Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Aberdeen</th>
<th>Dundee</th>
<th>Edinburgh</th>
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<th>Inverness</th>
<th>Stirling</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
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<td>88.22</td>
<td>78.92</td>
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<td>10.86</td>
<td>29.20</td>
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<td>12.80</td>
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<td>6.67</td>
<td>8.66</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>11.54</td>
<td>7.83</td>
<td>6.81</td>
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<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.21</td>
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<td>0.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
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<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.27</td>
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<td>(31)</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<td>0.08</td>
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<td>1.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Another religion</td>
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<td>0.66</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>29.11</td>
<td>36.54</td>
<td>22.70</td>
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<td>27.55</td>
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<td>5.78</td>
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<td>4.86</td>
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<td>145,663</td>
<td>448,624</td>
<td>577,869</td>
<td>66,576</td>
<td>86,212</td>
<td>5,062,011</td>
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## APPENDIX 2b


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scotland School Census 2002</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Special</th>
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<td>Pupils</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
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<td>286,398</td>
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<td>1188</td>
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<td>937</td>
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<table>
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<td>White</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>92.1</td>
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<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(1) Includes Occupational/ Gypsy/ Other Travellers
(2) Data not given
APPENDIX 3

Specified others in response to school questionnaire survey item regarding which groups of minority ethnic pupils in classes

Minority Ethnic Pupils- Other Groups

General Classifications

Asian
Black Scottish
Latin and South American
Mixed

Specific National Groups (alphabetical order)

Afghani
Albanian
Algerian
Australian
Bengali
Chilean
Iranian
Iraqi
Korean
Kurdish
Malaysian
Mexican
Mongolian
Nepalese
Russian
Sierra Leone
Somali
South African
Sri Lankan
Tamil
Thai
Travellers
Turkish
Uzbekistani
Venezuelan
Minority Ethnic Pupils’ Experiences of School in Scotland (MEPESS)