

ilea

Inner London Education Authority

# **Race, Sex and Class**

## **4. Anti-Racist Statement and Guidelines**



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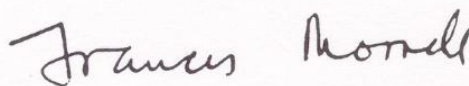
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## PREFACE

If we are to offer a good education to all the young people, irrespective of ethnic origin, in our schools and colleges, it is of fundamental importance that racism should be eliminated from the education environment.

The anti-racist statement will, we hope, be displayed publicly in all ILEA institutions. The accompanying guidelines, prepared by the Authority's Multi-Ethnic Inspectorate, advise our institutions how best to organise themselves according to anti-racist principles.



Leader, ILEA  
August 1983

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## I ANTI-RACIST STATEMENT

1 The Inner London Education Authority is committed to achieving equality in education and employment in the Inner London education service. This means the development of an education service from which racism, sexism and class discrimination and prejudice have been eliminated so that the Authority can respond fully to the needs of our multi-ethnic society. This paper is concerned with one of the three major obstacles to achieving equality – Racism.

Many reports, official and unofficial have indicated clearly the extent and effects of racism in education. The chief victims are black people i.e. Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities. Other ethnic minorities are also subjected to racial prejudice and discrimination. However, it is in the interests of all our employees, students and pupils that we actively seek to eliminate racism in all our institutions and in all branches of the service.

There is, rightly, among the black communities and other ethnic minorities, an implacable opposition and resistance to racism. This is a powerful and positive factor in British society. Another force is also available to the service. This is the strong tradition in British society, of opposition to injustice in whatever shape or form. All employees of ILEA and users of the Authority's service are uniquely placed, if only they would seize their opportunity, to educate generations of young people free of racism and prejudice.

2 It is necessary that all those who serve the Authority or benefit in any way from its services, understand what is meant by the concept of racism.

In structural terms, racism is represented mainly by the formula: racism = power + prejudice and discrimination. Accordingly power and resources in the education service, as in other institutions of our society, are in the hands of white people. It is essential to understand that dimension of the power relations between black and white people because of the part it plays in sustaining inequality at the national as well as at the international level. Other explanations of the concept are necessary if we are to get a total picture of what the phenomenon represents.

Racist ideology, surrounding attitudes, values and beliefs, is based on the assumption that black people are inferior to white people. Embedded deeply in the procedures and practices of our institutions are many such notions. Some individuals and groups within the service may act in a prejudiced and discriminatory way, deliberately or because of such unexamined beliefs.

Given that we live and work in a society where racist practices and attitudes permeate the whole system, there are several ways in which we can be racist:

- (a) We can be openly hostile to ethnic minorities on grounds of race or colour.
- (b) We can claim to see no difference between white people and black people or other ethnic minorities, and thus deny

the significance of racism as a factor in sustaining inequality between black and white people in our education service.

(c) Even those of us who have made every effort to rid ourselves of racism may fail to see how deep seated racist attitudes which have been prevalent in our society for so long affect our treatment of ethnic minorities.

(d) We may fail to see how decisions we make, however fair and valid according to the traditions of our system, affect ethnic minorities adversely because of the basic inequality in our society.

The most significant manifestation of racism is the absence of black people and other ethnic minorities from positions of power and decision making in our service. Every institution and branch of the service must take active steps to redress this imbalance and to ensure that the perspective of black people influences policy-making directly.

Racial discrimination represents the other most obvious manifestation of racism. One form of this is overt, ie. deliberate with intent, and blatant. It includes such practices as personal abuse, graffiti, provocative behaviour and, more seriously, racist attacks by one group on members of another.

Other forms of discrimination are less easy to perceive but are by no means less important. They include procedures employed within the education service, in its administration as well as in its institutions, which however well intentioned or rooted in custom have the effect of reducing the opportunities open to members of ethnic minority groups. These procedures need to be re-examined and altered to take into account the Authority's priorities. Similarly there are deep-seated attitudes which affect adversely members of ethnic minority groups. These attitudes need to be identified, brought to the surface and openly challenged.

3 It follows that every aspect of the Authority's work, every branch and every institution must be examined with the clear objective of eradicating racist practices and assumptions. The responsibility for developing and implementing the Authority's anti-racist policies must rest with every employee in every institution and every branch of the Authority's administration. It is for every institution and branch of the Authority therefore, to develop a coherent action programme for the elimination of racist practices.

The ILEA has a straightforward legal obligation to eliminate racial discrimination. That is to say, the Authority and everyone who works within it is obliged to comply with the provisions of Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976. That section places a duty on every local Authority to:

- (a) eliminate racial discrimination
- (b) promote equality of opportunity, and good relations, between persons of different racial groups.

The educational duty is equally important. Following its initial Multi-Ethnic Policy Statement in November, 1977, the Authority has consulted widely with community groups, teachers and Heads and is currently taking new initiatives designed to eliminate racism from the education service.

4 In giving expression to its commitment to combat racism the Authority asks:

- (a) that all educational establishments, through their staff and governing or managing bodies and in association with the committees they serve, prepare and publicise carefully thought-out statements of their position. This must be seen as part of the Authority's legal and educational commitment.
- (b) that annual reports for governing bodies, as part of the regular process of keeping schools, colleges and other establishments under review, should incorporate information on what action has been taken on curriculum, staffing and organisation to meet the needs of a multi-ethnic society.
- (c) that all administrative and other branches of the Education Service should re-examine their procedures to ensure that, however unintentionally, they do not have the effect of discriminating against members of minority ethnic groups.

The Authority itself is committed to eliminating racism and to take such action as it properly can to remedy its effects. Its success in doing so will depend upon the determination of every individual within the education service to ensure that appropriate action is taken. In issuing this statement, the Authority reaffirms its own commitment to promote equality of opportunity, and good relations, between persons of all racial groups.

## II ANTI-RACIST GUIDELINES FOR ILEA ESTABLISHMENTS

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of racism is a complex one and requires careful examination and analysis. Unless this is done in a consistent systematic way, a great deal of misunderstanding can arise because of the emotional responses which often underlie the positions taken up by individuals and groups whenever this issue is discussed.

Essential to defining racism in our institutions is the perspective and understanding of the black communities, i.e., the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities who are the chief victims of racism and have developed ways of resisting it. Other forms of racism which affect such white minority groups as the Irish, and anti-semitism, also require vigorous analysis so that they can properly be eliminated.

The following factors are crucial to our analysis of racism:

- (1) Structural factors – Racism is best defined in terms of the economic and power relations in our society. Power is in the hands of white people and our institutions operate in such a way as to place ethnic minorities at a disadvantage. Any anti-racist programme needs to address itself to the issue of this unfair distribution of power.

- (2) Political factors – political power and ideas have been used to divide ethnic minorities from the white communities through the operation of such measures as the Nationality Act and the Immigration Laws. In political reporting and electioneering some politicians and reporters have also used ethnic minorities as the scapegoat for political inequalities such as unemployment, housing and education.
- (3) Ideological factors – Much of racism is sustained by the values, attitudes and prejudices which characterise black people, their cultures, languages and lifestyles, as inferior to those of white people.
- (4) Historical factors – the special character of the colonial and neo-colonial relationship between Britain and some of the third world countries of origin of the ethnic minorities, is crucial in defining racism.
- (5) Cultural factors – it is also important to look at the consequences of racism at the cultural level. Therefore it is necessary to consider the all-pervasive nature of racism, how it affects all interpretations of human behaviour, literature, the arts, habits, conventions, etc.
- (6) Other factors – the system of knowledge, the curriculum, media, books and learning resources that have been developed in this country present negative stereotypical and distorted images of black people and other ethnic minorities.

The existence of racial discrimination in this society is well documented as in the P.E.P. reports, acknowledged by the Government in the 1976 Race Relations Act, and in a wealth of evidence from those who suffer from racial discrimination. Valuable experience from developments in schools and colleges shows that it is essential to work from the basis that we have *all* grown up in societies where racism has been a central factor in shaping the ideas and institutional practices of the societies. It has been argued that, given this, we are all in some way racist and must therefore become consciously and rigorously anti-racist, examining ourselves in our individual behaviour as well as the institutional practices we work within. This is a stance supported in these guidelines. It would obviously be ineffective to tackle avowed racists and growing children and young people without an equal concern with our own ideas and practices and the institutional practices of the education service in which we work.

### STARTING POINT

Most of the schools and colleges that have developed policies have found it essential to follow a process which includes all of the following:

- 1 Placing the issue firmly on the school/college agenda and making time for discussion and development.
- 2 Coming to grips with what racism is and its historical context.
- 3 Considering how racism can and does operate in the school/college's particular circumstances.

- 4 Analysing both directly conscious racist behaviour and what the Rampton Interim Report terms 'unconscious racism'.
- 5 Analysing both individual behaviour and the policies and practices of the school/college.
- 6 Analysing the behaviour and practices of individuals and services that impinge on the life of the school/college.
- 7 Drawing upon the advice and experience of others, including other schools/colleges and those with specialist knowledge and experience.

## THE POLICY

Each school or college will finally determine its policy in the light of its own circumstances. However, certain elements are common to all. There will be:

- 1 A clear, unambiguous statement of opposition to any form of racism or racist behaviour.
- 2 A firm expression of all pupils' or students' rights to the best possible education.
- 3 A clear indication of what is not acceptable and the procedures, including sanctions, to deal with any transgressions.
- 4 An explanation of the way in which the school or college intends to develop practices which both tackle racism and create educational opportunities which make for a cohesive society and a local school or college community in which diversity can flourish.
- 5 An outline of the measures by which development will be monitored and evaluated.

## EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Any school or college operates in, and as part of, a society. The last few years have made abundantly clear that there is a tension between traditional values of tolerance and justice and inequalities and injustices being suffered by 'minority' groups. Recent events, particularly inner city disturbances, show that this tension leads to behaviour in our society that really troubles us all. Getting the response right in the education service is no single panacea, but on the other hand no solution will prevail without the involvement of the education service. Indeed, education can give a lead in pointing to the goal of a society free from racism.

We need to be aware of the ways in which society outside the school and college adversely affects education through racism and racial discrimination. Some forms of racism we can deal with directly and must tackle firmly. These will include outsiders harming children or adults on the site, whether physically or by verbal abuse or graffiti; or using the school or college and premises to try to recruit members to racist organisations and to be active in their own schools or colleges.

Racist attitudes may also be inculcated by the influence of the media, or through social contacts. Responses to these influences require longer-term development and will be considered later in this paper.

Most of the offences that fall in the first two categories are offences that are covered either by law or the code of practice of the school or college. It is essential that every institution is aware of the following:-

- (a) Breach of the Peace – Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1936.
- (b) Note on incitement to racial hatred – Race Relations Act 1976.
- (c) Use of school premises – Representation of the People Act 1949.

Procedures need to be laid down and effectively disseminated so that when an incident occurs, it is acted upon quickly by:-

- (a) Taking the appropriate immediate action.
- (b) Informing the police where appropriate.
- (c) Informing the divisional office or FHE or CEC Branch as appropriate.
- (d) Compiling a report of the incident and the action taken.
- (e) Making a decision as to how the fact of the incident should be made known to the school or college population, including the Governing Body, and whether parents and others should be informed.
- (f) Recording incidents so that monitoring of the nature and pattern of incidents can be undertaken.

When such an incident occurs, it will be difficult for a school or college to be certain as to whether it is an isolated incident or not. Also, incidents have occurred when a school or college has not been prepared. It is essential, therefore, that processes (with the assistance of Divisional Offices and FHE or CEC Branch) for sharing information and experience are set up. This will help to ensure that all institutions are properly prepared and warned of trends that are likely to affect them.

Experience makes it clear that the existence of a positive multi-ethnic policy and a curriculum which is multi-cultural is essential; this certainly helps the institution to make the right decision in dealing with hostile incidents. At the same time, a school's or college's procedures will need to take into account the age range of pupils or students, the ethnic composition of the school or college population and the climate in the local community.

## WITHIN THE SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

Obviously any anti-racist policy in a school or college must rely on the good example and active involvement of the whole staff.

The staff code is being amended to enable schools, colleges and institutes to deal with cases of racist behaviour by members of staff.

Many of the occurrences outside can be mirrored by actions of pupils and students. This is understandable since the

school or college population live most of their life outside the institution.

The following list of manifestations of racist and discriminatory behaviour or practices is given as a form of check-list. It is important that decisions made on appropriate responses are consistent with the overall position and ethos of the school. It is important too to recognise that an understanding of the cause, the reason or motive for a racist action will have a major bearing on how that action is dealt with.

Actions by pupils or students which are clearly hurtful to others include:

- 1 Physical assault against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity.
- 2 Derogatory name-calling, insults and racist jokes.
- 3 Racist graffiti or any other written insult.
- 4 Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges or insignia.
- 5 Bringing racist material such as leaflets, comics or magazines into the school or college.
- 6 Making threats against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity.
- 7 Racist comment in the course of discussion in lessons.
- 8 Attempts to recruit other pupils and students to racist organisations and groups.

These actions are unacceptable anywhere. No school or college will tolerate them. Depending upon the age and experience of the pupil or student, the actions may be derived from unconscious acceptance of parent or societal attitudes or from firmly held personal attitudes. So the school or college response needs to tackle an incident on four fronts:

- (a) to deal with the perpetrator
- (b) to aid and support the sufferer or sufferers
- (c) to establish the line of responsibility for dealing with the incident.
- (d) to deal with the impact of the incident upon the school or college population.

So, in developing procedures, each institution must question whether the prevailing ethos and climate is positively multi-cultural and therefore actively anti-racist and, if it is not, to set about making it so.

## PROCEDURES

The following procedures outline a full set of measures. In the case of the most serious incidents they need to be followed right the way through. It will be a matter of judgment as how to treat each incident. This does not mean the judgment of one individual but the collective judgment of the school or college:

- 1 In dealing with the perpetrator or perpetrators, this is the range of possible actions:
  - (a) Firmly explaining the wrong done, with or without punishment, in line with the school or college's code and possibly informing parents.

- (b) Sending the perpetrator or perpetrators to the appropriate senior member of staff either to mark the gravity of the incident or to make use of greater experience.
- (c) Using the exclusion or suspension procedures, thus involving the parents and the governing bodies.
- (d) Reporting the matter to the police where it is necessary to bring to bear the processes of law.

2 In dealing with individuals or groups who have suffered in the incident, these are the possible actions:

- (a) Explaining the action taken in 1 above and expressing the attitude of the institution towards such behaviour, allowing the pupils or students to express their own concerns and feelings.
- (b) Writing to, or meeting, the parents to explain the action taken and discussing the matter with them.

3 In dealing with the impact of the incident upon the school or college community as a whole, it will be necessary to consider the following:-

- (a) Is the matter of such importance to call everybody together for an explanation and to tackle the issue by placing it in the context of the school's or college's position and policies? Will this action be helpful?
- (b) Will a less direct emphasis upon the particular issue by using assemblies, other meetings, or a curriculum input be a more helpful approach?
- (c) If there is a danger of distortion through rumour, or of a backlash, should tutors or class teachers explain the matter to their groups or classes?
- (d) Should a letter be sent to all parents explaining the matter?

## THE SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

The issues and the measures outlined to tackle them have so far tended to be focussed upon the ways in which the school or college is affected by racism from the society outside. Much of it might seem a catalogue of defensive positions. It is necessary to consider now a positive and affirmative long-term development.

This development has to encompass four critical aspects:

- (i) All pupils and students have a right to equality of access to what is best in the educational provision.
- (ii) The curriculum, for the child in pre-school education through to the adult in the college or adult institute, must enable everyone to have a real understanding of the part played by racism through history to contemporary society.
- (iii) The educational provision must take on the work of developing inter-racial understanding and skills for inter-group and cross-cultural relationships.
- (iv) There must be continued vigilance and action to combat racism.

As the school or college develops its own clear set of procedures and measures, it will be necessary to evolve ways of ensuring that the whole population is aware of the position and procedures. (It is important to remember that those at the receiving end of racism, pupils, students and their parents and teachers, will have much to offer in helping to develop good practices.) So, just as it is essential to have a written statement of the position, it is important to work through, talking with individuals and groups, to use assemblies, staff meetings and meetings with parents.

It has been made clear, in earlier statements on racism by the Authority, that a policy on racism is not one that anybody can ignore or opt out of. We all have to be able to make the policy effective in practice. As the NUT Circular 382/81 (ii) stated, 'Only by examining their own attitudes will teachers be properly equipped to combat racialism in schools'. Such an examination can be helped by attending in-service courses; a number of schools are tackling this by organising their own seminars or discussions to increase both individual and group awareness of racism.

## ELEMENTS IN THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

There are a range of elements in the life and work of the school or college which can be positively employed in order to tackle racism and so improve education.

### 1 Ethos and Climate

The overall ethos and climate of the school or college can contribute to the well-being, confidence, security and identity of all pupils or students. The elements that together make up the ethos and climate can give a positive message of a multi-cultural position which is clearly opposed to racism and discrimination, e.g:

- Assemblies and other group meetings should consistently emphasise the multi-cultural nature of society and the school or college, underline the aims of equality, and tackle issues and incidents of racialism.
- The displays on walls throughout the buildings should also have a similar emphasis, drawing explicitly on what is important in different cultures including languages.
- Meetings with parents should acknowledge the multi-cultural ethos and stress equality of access. Again this emphasis enables issues of racism to be raised naturally.

### 2 The content and organisation of the curriculum and resources

Teachers have a great deal of control over the content of what pupils and students learn and the resources that are made available. Through their selection of content and resources they can therefore make a positive contribution.

- Very young children need both an affirmation of the value of people of all colours and cultures and to be helped towards avoidance of stereotypes and misrepresentations which form at a very early age.

- A wide range of content is important but it is essential that pupils develop analytical skills and can engage in an understanding of cross cultural perspectives and values.
- Pupils and students must have opportunities to gain an historical perspective that is free from ethnocentric biases.
- The whole curriculum must be open to all so that no sort of restricted access is given to some pupils because of stereotyped views of ability.

### 3 Teacher knowledge and awareness: styles and methods of teaching

In order to develop the best curriculum content and approaches, teachers need to ensure that they have the knowledge of content and a real awareness of their own position in relation to race and culture. Given this, it is necessary to consider the organisation of the teaching groups and the best methods of interaction. It means working out how information is best given, and when pupils or students need to work individually, to interact in small groups, or to share in a whole class group:

- Time is required for sorting out aims and objectives, and selection of themes and content where appropriate.
- Teachers' wider set of 'reference' points needs to take in both what is common to all people and what is particular to groups and individuals.
- It is vital to build in processes of shared learning between pupils and students.

### 4 Staff relationship with pupils and students: attitudes, expectations and treatment

The relationship between the learner and the teacher can be of very great significance. Racism can certainly affect the attitudes and expectations of both. The onus on the teacher is clear; to show equally high expectations of a pupil or student irrespective of his or her ethnic or cultural allegiance, to value cultural diversity, and to be aware of the factors which promote or undermine a pupil's or student's confidence in the school or college.

- Teachers will need to be well informed of the experience of young people out of school.
- Teachers will need to know what are the really significant cultural strengths and perspectives of the families whose children they teach.
- It is essential for all to become aware of the ways in which it is possible to collude with racism, without being conscious of it, in interaction with pupils and students.

### 5 Processes of selection and grouping

In the past ten years, the education system has been criticised for discriminating against certain pupils and students by unfair processes of selection and grouping. This can occur where there are 'nurture groups', banding or

streaming, or withdrawal groups, and in the selection of examination groups in secondary schools:

- (a) It is essential to ensure that no selection of these kinds is affected by conscious or unconscious stereotyping of an ethnic group or black pupils.
- (b) It is also important to match any special provision with a clear and accurate diagnosis of why special provision is thought to be needed.
- (c) As has been stressed earlier, knowledge of pupils and students must be free of any false notions of inherent ability based on ethnic or cultural diversity.

## 6 Sharing knowledge and support

It is clear from the development work in a number of schools and colleges that it is most effective to use the resources of all the staff, pupils/students and others outside the school/college. A whole school/college policy has to be developed, using the skills, experience and expertise of the staff without regard for status in the structure.

- (a) The school or college will need to analyse the contributions that different staff members (teaching and non-teaching) can make.
- (b) It is important to develop means by which staff can support one another.
- (c) A development that is both anti-racist and builds upon cultural diversity will need the particular involvement of those who are most aware of racism, and those who have special knowledge and experience of cultural diversity to contribute.
- (d) The school or college will need to use the best support available outside.

## 7 Relationship of the school or college with parents and members of the communities with an interest in the school or college

A change in the school's or college's policy and practices of this nature would obviously require the involvement of parents and others. This involvement is particularly important since there is such a strong link between experience in society and experience in schools and colleges. More than that, the school or college can look to parents and others for guidance and support in the development.

- (a) The school or college needs to acknowledge clearly and openly that it intends to tackle racism.
- (b) Parents and others in the communities should be canvassed for their support in the development.
- (c) The school or college will then be strengthened in its important role of tackling those who refuse to accept its firm line on racism.

## 8 Dissemination of policies and other developments

It is critical that, as policies and other developments are made, knowledge of these is shared by all who have an interest in the school or college. This will have begun by involving a great number of people in their formulation. It is necessary as well to make them public in a number of ways:

- (a) Positions and policies should be made clear in school brochures and other booklets.

- (b) They should be introduced to the pupils or students in assemblies and other gatherings and referred to as often as necessary.
- (c) They should be discussed with parents, friends of the school and other 'interest' groups.

## 9 In-service training

There will be a number of opportunities for staff to attend courses organised by the Authority or by other organisations. It is important that those attending courses have a real opportunity of bringing back information and strategies for the whole school or college. Equally important is the training that can be set up within the school or college itself.

- (a) Responsibility must be taken for finding out suitable courses and ensuring attendance.
- (b) Expertise within the school or college needs to be harnessed to provide on-site seminars and workshops.
- (c) London-wide and local resources, human and material, need to be used to add to the school or college expertise.

## 10 Monitoring

The developments outlined above are aimed at helping change to take place; positive change that unites people in purpose, eradicates discrimination, increases access and so provides better education. It will be necessary to monitor whether aims are realised and objectives achieved.

- (a) Aims and objectives will need to be continually set out.
- (b) Appropriate methods of monitoring and evaluation, recording achievement as well as registering opinion, will need to be constructed.

## CONCLUSION

As is clear from these guidelines, there is no one blueprint nor a finite set of practices or curriculum content which can be taken on by all. There is rather a set of principles, directions and methods for development. It is these that need to be addressed to all our actions, procedures and to the structures we work within. This is as important in the nursery or infant school reception class where very young children are already beginning to make sense of their world as, say, in the college or the Adult Institute.

The school or college will need to draw upon advice and support from within the authority and from other sources. The Authority's policy is addressed to all parts of the service, so that schools and colleges can expect similar developments throughout the Authority's branches and an increased directness and volume of support.

It has been made clear that we have to harness the combined talents and resources of all our colleagues. But we must make sure that we enter into the development wholeheartedly. We are dealing with the fact of racism; for most of us this is not something of our making. Yet we are all touched by it. We must confront all the possibilities and manifestations of racism, in ourselves, in our actions and in our institutions.

