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RACE EQUALITY MATTERS AIMING HIGH IN WILTSHIRE

Important: The information provided in these bulletins is cumulative, and often statutory. We would therefore advise you to keep them filed for easy reference. See below for full details on downloading back issues.
Please display on Staff notice board.

In May this year, the County Council held an important debate on 'The State of Wiltshire'. One of the goals that came out of that debate was the commitment to '*Engage and educate all learners in a vibrant learning society and strive to ensure that every school is excellent and inclusive*' (WCC, 2004).

This statement is timely in its coincidence with a recently published report by the DfES entitled *Aiming High: Understanding the Educational Needs of Minority Ethnic Pupils in Mainly White Schools* (DfES, 2004).

This timely coincidence is interwoven with the facts that:

- The demographic 'state of Wiltshire' is in fact 'Mainly White'
- The County Council clearly recognises the need for inclusivity within our 'vibrant learning society'
- The DfES has given special recognition to the needs of minority ethnic pupils in an environment where their

presence may represent less than 5 per cent of a county's population (in Wiltshire approx. 1.6 per cent)

- Wiltshire was a contributor, both from empirical data and through publications, to the DfES *Aiming High* report

What does *Aiming High* mean for Wiltshire's Schools?

First and foremost, because the minority ethnic population of Wiltshire's schools is so small and scattered, **any strategy aimed at improving the attainment and achievement of these children will rely heavily on the gathering and analysis of data.**

To give an idea of what this 'scattered diversity' looks like, at the present time the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) is supporting a total of 525 children whose first language is other than English, and within that number of pupils, a total of 55 different languages is represented. In addition to this, there are minority ethnic children who do not need language support, often from African, African-Caribbean, dual

heritage or Traveller backgrounds. Some of these children may need support in other ways - as a black educator has recently commented, 'The crisis in educational achievement among young black men continues to baffle educators and politicians...' (Sewell, 2004) demonstrating that disaffection may seriously encroach upon their educational experience.

Ethnic Monitoring and the need for accurate data...

In order to be able to address the particular issues raised in the *Aiming High* document; in other words, to begin to '*Understand(ing) the Educational Needs of Minority Ethnic Pupils in Mainly White Schools*', we cannot even get off the starting blocks without reliable data. The DfES Standards Site has this to say on the collecting and using of data on minority ethnic pupils:

We want every pupil in every school to be able to thrive in a learning environment that is fair and where there are high expectations for every child to succeed. Effective use of data will help to ensure that disparity of attainment is actively tackled and that pupils can meet their full potential. **Effective policies are undermined by lack of data. This has recently been vividly described as "no data no strategy."** (DfES, 2004).

Many of you reading this will immediately be aware of the difficulties inherent in obtaining data on the ethnic background of pupils. It can be an extremely sensitive area, and one that is often accompanied by attitudes that such requests are somehow an invasion of privacy (and it is true that such categorisations are closely bound up with issues of identity that can be very personal to an individual or a family). More worrying is the reluctance to accurately represent one's ethnic identity because of feelings related to the belief that in a mainly white area, it is better to 'blend in' and keep a low profile in order to avoid what are felt to be some of the more discriminatory elements in identifying oneself as an ethnic minority.

However, the accurate gathering of this data is a crucial precursor to the real reason behind the need for such information; the capacity to monitor the progress, attainment, attendance and exclusions of our minority ethnic pupils in order to develop sound strategies for their academic and pastoral support. In addition, and not least in importance in gathering this data, is the fact that EMAS funding structures are in future to rely on a per capita formula. This will be based upon the available data on the number of minority ethnic pupils in the county who are from nationally under-achieving groups, together with the number of pupils who have a first language known or

believed to be other than English.

It is therefore of great importance that the ethnic background data form is completed accurately on all pupils, in order to ensure that EMAS is not stretched in responding to more requests for assistance than have been allocated funding. It is also of great importance that a child's First Language is accurately recorded. From PLASC guidance, this is described as *'the language to which the child was initially exposed during early development.'* This is *regardless* of how fluent in English the child may subsequently have become (for further guidance, please refer to PLASC website detailed below).

Aiming High: How can we respond in ways that are practical and achievable?

I've been outright in saying that whatever strategies we use to help Black pupils, raises the achievement of the White pupils and of the whole school. That helps to allay fears.

(Patricia Carney [former Head teacher], DfES, 2003)

In the quote above (taken from another guidance document in the *Aiming High* series) 'Black pupils' could equally be substituted with 'all minority ethnic pupils', since this, essentially, is what an inclusive learning society is all about. However, for Wiltshire, as with other rural counties, it is necessary to put this fact in the

context of a mainly white environment.

Last term's *Race Equality Matters* bulletin included a Race Equality Training questionnaire, to which we have received a steady and significant return, and we would like to thank all those schools who took the time to respond. What is most interesting from your response is that the question of 'The particular issues for race equality in a largely white, rural area' was highlighted by a clear margin - 95 per cent of respondents indicating that this would be a useful area in which to receive training. What is now helpful is that the DfES have produced the *Aiming High* report which assists us in beginning to unpack the issues and address the needs of our minority ethnic pupils.

The report can be downloaded from the DfES website (see references below). However, we fully appreciate the pace of life in schools, and the difficulty in sometimes finding the time to both read, and to develop sound strategies from such documents. **The report itself is a Guide to Good Practice, and we would therefore like to offer you the opportunity to participate in one of a repeated series of *Aiming High* training days in Wiltshire, which will endeavour to achieve two main aims. The format of the day will be that of a morning conference/afternoon workshop. The aim of the morning session will be to consider the content and significance of the *Aiming High***

guidance for Wiltshire's schools, and to help delegates become conversant with its ethos. It is anticipated that this morning session will also address a selection of the more highly rated responses to the previously circulated questionnaire. The aim of the afternoon workshops is to provide the opportunity for delegates to consider both the general, and in some cases, the more specific needs of their school in relation to the pastoral and academic support of their minority ethnic pupils, and to discuss and develop the practical application of strategies with their group and workshop leader. The intention is to then provide a plenary session that dedicates adequate time to the sharing of these proposed strategies.

We suggest that your delegate/s will be whoever you consider would be the driving force behind the promotion of this new DfES Guide to Good Practice, and through the training day we will endeavour to equip them with a working knowledge of both the Guide, and with practical and achievable strategies you might employ in your school. We now anticipate that this training will take place *either* in the second half of the Autumn term (2004), *or* in the first half of the Spring term (2005). As we indicated in the questionnaire, we do not expect the cost of this day to exceed £50 per delegate, and

we would hope that it will be less. In order to help us to plan these days carefully, we would be grateful if you could please complete and return the attached slip accompanying the covering letter with this bulletin, indicating your intention to attend one of the training days.

Other News in Brief & Reminders...

Racist Incident Reporting:

The total number of racist incidents reported in schools 2003-2004 has reduced. The figure for 2002-2003 was 319. This year's figure is 269 (189 of these incidents being categorised under 'Derogatory Name Calling'), despite the expectation that this figure would be higher than last year's due to the promotion of recording racist incidents. However, our optimism must be cautious in order to give time for a clear pattern of reduction to establish itself. In the meantime, thank you to *all* schools for being so vigilant, and enabling us to have what the police have labelled 'True Vision' (see reference below to their new campaign to encourage the widespread public reporting of race and hate crime) in our overview of incidents taking place in schools.

Help and Guidance Pre- and Post-Ofsted:

We have more recently been endeavouring to contact some schools pre-Ofsted, in an initiative to increase confidence in the areas

of multicultural and Race Equality inspection. Please do not hesitate to contact us for help and advice in these areas, either pre- or post-Ofsted.

Keep your back copies of Race Equality Matters together!

This is now the fourth edition of *Race Equality Matters*. We headed up our last bulletin with the advice that **'The information provided in these bulletins is cumulative, and often statutory. We would therefore advise you to keep them filed for easy reference.'** As you will see from the header on this edition, our advice is still the same! To download back copies from www.wiltshire.gov.uk

- Click on 'Wisenet' in orange headed 'Related links' box
- Click on 'Administration'
- Login name 'edadmin' / Password 'learn99'
- Click on 'Schools' Admin Information'
- Click on 'Pupil Support'
- Click on 'Equal Opportunities'
- Click on 'Ethnic Issues'

We will inform you if this route changes for any reason.

Policy Reminder:

In our Autumn 2003 edition of *Race Equality Matters*, we asked schools to send in their Race Equality Policies to EMAS, where they would be kept electronically and could be referred to and/or updated at any time. We have now received a total of 80 policies (this figure includes 9 secondary

schools). Thank you to all those schools that have sent in their policies – however, we still have 178 to go! Please email your policy to: **maggiedorsman@wiltshire.gov.uk**, marking your email **RE Policy**. If for any reason you must send it as a hard copy, please post to EMAS, East Wing at County Hall, marking it for the attention of Pam Carroll.

And Finally - Some Resource Information:

Skin Tone Coloured Crayons...

*...a full range of **all skin tone colours** is essential* for children from visible minority ethnic backgrounds for art and portrait work in the classroom. Order them from the consortium (featured as 'multicultural Crayons/Markers/Oil Pastels') on: <http://webcat.theconsortium.co.uk/Consortiummainlive/Templates/Consortium/mainscreen.asp>

Early Years...

...respond with enthusiasm to the use of 'Persona Dolls' to explore many issues, including those raised by ethnic identity. EMAS have just taken delivery of a full set of multi-ethnic Persona Dolls. If this is the first time you have heard of them, find out more on: <http://www.blss.portsmouth.sch.uk/earlyyears/eypdolls.shtml>, or contact EMAS for more information.

India Week...

...is taking place between 12th – 16th July at the *British Empire & Commonwealth Museum* in Bristol. Activities suitable for KS 1, 2 & 3 are available, and a possible subsidy may be applied for. For further details contact Liz Boyce, education administrator, on: 0117 925 4983 / education.admin@empiremuseum.co.uk

Aspects of Hindu Culture...

... including dress, cookery, faith and festivals can be explored with Demi Ladwa. You can contact Demi on: 01980 622436 / demiladwa@hotmail.com

Aspects of Chinese Culture...

...including Chinese writing, games, stories, art and craft can be explored with Aileen Chen. You can contact Aileen on: 01985 845003 / chineseworkshops@hotmail.com

The Marlborough Brandt Group...

...which continues to be a source of inspiration for promoting the global dimension of the citizenship curriculum is moving office. Their new phone number is: 01672 861116. Following the great success of their Global Fair in Devizes in March, it looks as if this day is set to be repeated in 2005. As an offshoot of the event, a resource leaflet is currently being prepared to inform schools of the various groups and individuals who are available to help you to

promote the Global dimension of citizenship in your school.

Respect for all: the QCA website...

...aimed at 'valuing diversity and challenging racism through the curriculum' is a valuable place to look for ideas both across the curriculum, and for all Key Stages. Take a look on: http://www.qca.org.uk/ages3-14/inclusion/301_6065.html

And for Key Stages 3 & 4...

... *Trial and Error* is a CD-ROM developed by Stella Dadzie (author of *Toolkit for Tackling Racism*) with funding from the DfES. Its aim is to be 'a resource for classroom teachers who want to develop young people's awareness, key skills and knowledge of racism, identity and diversity issues at Key Stages 3 & 4.' If you have not received a copy already, it is free to secondary schools, and is available by calling: 0845 602 2260. You can also order by visiting the website on: <http://www.front-line-training.co.uk/trialanderror>, which is well worth a visit in any case.

Finally, a very useful website...

...containing standard letters for schools to send to parents in a range of over 30 different languages (*Welcome, Trips and Visits, Absence* etc etc), can be found at: <http://www.dgteaz.org.uk/resources/letters.htm>

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