

GOOD PRACTICE “IN PROMOTING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT RACIAL BACKGROUNDS” in schools, part of the General Duty placed on Scottish Education Authorities (EAs) by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Summary of CERES Report to SEED (2006)

- 1.1** During the first 3 months of 2006, CERES asked Scottish Education Authority (EA) staff, through the *Race Equality Network, to recommend schools in which good practice in “promoting good relations between people of different racial backgrounds” might be taking place. This exercise was undertaken as part of a Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) funded project, the aim of which was to exemplify good practice in meeting this important duty contained in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act [RR(A)A] 2000.
- 1.2** Ten Education Authorities (EAs) submitted names of possible schools and/or associated material.

Overall, though the responses illustrated considerable activity in particular schools and in certain authorities, much of the material submitted was not ideal for exemplifying good practice approaches which could be applied to other schools across the country since either,

- a) they did not specifically address the duty “to promote good relations ...” but rather encouraged “multicultural awareness” (valuable in itself) of a broader kind but not directly linked to improved community relations
- b) or, they were organisationally embedded in some EAs’ and schools’ overall commitment to anti-racist/anti-discriminatory practice within which the “promoting good relations ...” element was a dependent and a disaggregated part.

In such cases, it was evident that the good practice in a range of schools and authorities was notable and worthy of emulation but it tended to occur within a complex, sometimes EA-wide matrix of commitment, consultation, understanding, and resourcing which could not be reduced to discrete good practice exemplars in the type of handbook originally envisaged. Only in relatively few cases did submissions make clear a school’s specific commitment to “promoting good relations ...”

Taking account of the above comments, this report indicates how, in the main, examples of good practice in “promoting good relations between people of different racial backgrounds” form part of an institutional/organisational commitment to challenging discrimination and to promoting inclusion. However it also illustrates some circumstances in which schools have made specific provision for this aspect of the general duty.

* Renamed as Equalities and Diversity Education Network Scotland in December 2006

One EA (East Renfrewshire) provided evidence of its supportive and promotional framework for this area of work. Some of the key elements are listed below:

- The Education Department, as part of the Corporate Equality Unit, reviews and updates its Race Equality action Plan every three years.
- Senior members of staff in each school are designated Equality Co-ordinators and meet once a term with the Head of Service and the Quality Improvement officer responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Act.
- An Equality and Social Justice Group, comprising a Head of Service, three Quality Improvement Officers, a Head Teacher from each sector and the Chair of the Corporate Equality Unit meet bi-monthly to review policy and monitor progress.
- The authority tracking system which monitors the attainment of all pupils is designed to highlight the attainment and monitor the progress of bilingual and black and minority ethnic (BME) learners.
- A Thematic Standards and Quality Review in Race Equality provides evidence of progress and a medium for sharing good practice.
- Over a four year period, every school, including pre-five centres, participates in this review which is led by the Quality Improvement Officer with responsibility for Equality, and a Head Teacher. Each report is based on the premise that promoting race equality is an integral part of the life and work of schools. The team reviews each school's effectiveness in tackling racism and equality and implementing the Act. A report is published and examples of good practice are disseminated to other schools in the authority.

In addition to the corporate support aimed at sustaining a process of continual development and improvement in the field of race equality education, the EA has made specific efforts to encourage schools and pre-five children's centres to "promote good relations ..." in such areas as:

- the acquisition and on-site development of appropriate and up-to-date educational resources, including bilingual materials
- the use of dedicated staff to improve home-school links with black and minority ethnic (BME) families
- the acknowledgement and valuing of additional language capabilities among children, family and community members
- the involvement of pupils/students and families in considering issues of race, diversity and discrimination in school communities
- developing staff expertise and confidence in the fields of equality and diversity

This is not the only EA systematically engaged in "promoting good relations..." though it does appear to be part of a relatively small minority addressing the duty from a self-consciously whole service perspective.

2.1 Within the above EA, one primary school evidencing good practice in "promoting good relations ..." combined rigorous attention to the other general

and specific duties of the RR(A)A, such as staff training and development, data collection and ethnic monitoring, impact assessment and policy/planning, consultation and community participation, with the process of self-evaluation and quality improvement embedded in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education's [HMIE's] core document How Good is Our School (HGIOS).

2.2 As a result, the school's legal duties and its programme for enhancing its capabilities in the race equality field were focussed across the range of key areas for development identified in HGIOS (*the 2002 version)

- The Curriculum
- Attainment
- Learning and Teaching
- Support for Pupils
- School Ethos
- Resources
- Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

2.3 A secondary school cited in the Report (again within the above EA) took a similar systematic approach, while also specifically addressing intercultural/community issues through the medium of drama, publications and discussion forums.

2.4 The evidence provided indicated that both schools, in partnership with their EA included, at the core of their approaches to "promoting good relations ...", a dynamic/developmental element underpinned by continual review and monitoring. The conscious aim was to mainstream race equality. The particular focus on "promoting good relations ..." was exemplified in the schools' combination of an inclusive approach to staff, pupils, parents and community members and the development of strategies, techniques and materials designed to encourage consultation, participation and understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by ethnic diversity and the need to minimise discrimination. Both the authority and the schools seem committed to going beyond the passive acknowledgement of "multiculturalism"; institutionally, they present a vibrant and dynamic approach to diversity which attempts to bring ownership of the educational process to all participant groups.

3.1 One other EA (South Lanarkshire), featured previously in CERES reports on race equality mainstreaming, also takes institutional responsibility for "promoting good relations ..." as a central feature of its support for antiracist activity at school level. It provides each establishment with a comprehensive race equality pack which clarifies gives school management the explicit responsibility for:

- ensuring that all staff are familiar with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- monitoring the frequency and type of racist incidents and arranging appropriate support
- monitoring all policies to ensure that there is no adverse impact on minority ethnic pupils
- ensuring that parents, pupils and staff are familiar with the establishment's race equality position statement
- auditing and developing the curriculum to incorporate aspects of race equality
- incorporating race equality issues into PSE, citizenship and RME programmes
- ensuring that resources promote diversity and portray positive non-stereotypical images of all ethnic and cultural groups
- incorporating race equality awareness training into CPD programmes for staff
- ensuring that account is taken of pupils' linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds when planning courses and undertaking assessment
- ensuring that appropriate support is given for bilingual pupils in accessing the curriculum
- encouraging the participation of and consultation with minority ethnic communities and ensuring that translation and interpreting services are provided as appropriate
- ensuring that English as a Additional Language (EAL) and bilingual teachers are provided with opportunities for consultation with school staff and management

3.2 The EA's aspirations in this field are regularly monitored and reviewed by its own quality assurance (QA) staff; in HMIE's judgement it is one of the best-performing authorities in Scotland, demonstrating that the promotion of equality and diversity is not only compatible with success in other fields – such commitment may enhance overall performance.

3.3 The good practice exemplified in one of the EA's primary schools follows much the same pattern as that outlined above. However particular emphasis is placed on embedding the "promoting of good relations ..." elements in the values of

the school and in the expression of those values. Specific attention is therefore given to:

- employing a range of teaching and learning methods, including the skilled use of differentiated materials and the provision of language support
- promoting positive relationships
- encouraging and enabling home–school communication and partnership
- tackling racial discrimination in the school and (where possible) in the community
- the use of equality coordinators and specialist staff to develop staff capabilities and confidence.

3.4 The good practice EAs and schools cited above offer examples of what may be achieved when decisions are taken at the institutional level “to promote good relations ...”. However those involved know that much remains to be done, especially in an environment where relationships at school and local levels are massively and often negatively influenced by national and international events and trends. “Good Practice” is therefore an ongoing and constantly developing phenomenon, contributed to by EA and school staff, pupils, families and community members.

3.5 The report also gives examples of 2 school-based initiatives taken in EAs outside the Scottish Central Belt, where head teachers and members of staff have, with the support of parents and other community members, successfully developed pupils’ understandings of and links with communities in other parts of Scotland and abroad. The activities undertaken in the schools offer a good example to others, demonstrating that significant progress can be made in enabling rural and semi-rural populations to undertake interesting and stimulating intercultural and anti-discriminatory projects. They also draw attention to the disadvantages of ‘exotic’ multicultural work which may reinforce rather than challenge stereotypes, thereby failing “to promote good relations ...” on a realistic, interactive basis.

4. Conclusion

The exemplars of good practice cited clearly demonstrate that **all** schools may undertake work in this field, irrespective of their geographical and demographic position. Initial contacts, starting points or stimuli tend to lead to more extensive activity which encourages children, staff and community members to become involved in broadening and deepening their perspectives on racial, ethnic and religious diversity.

However, evidence emerging from this project tends to suggest that schools and EAs sometimes encounter difficulties in obtaining funding and support to help

them properly record and disseminate the good practice which they undertake. Further thematic work on how emerging good practice in this vital field might be encouraged would offer recognition to those already involved and encouragement to schools which may be aware of their legal and educational duties but remain inactive in carrying it out.