



Changing childhoods.
Changing lives.

SEEN.

CHILDREN VISIBLE BY COLOUR



Introduction

Systemic structural inequalities are evidenced all over the UK. From education to health care, outcomes of children and young people are impeded, and racism is evidenced within the very institutions that are there to protect and nurture. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted these disparities even further. There have been calls to action for years across all sections of the UK, with the murder of George Floyd in 2020 sparking international condemnation of the racial injustice and inequality experienced by global Africans and ethnically diverse people alike. The international community took to the streets with slogans such as 'Black Lives Matter', which became the rallying cry of a young generation confronting racism in their time. Similarly, British allies and like-minded activists marched in solidarity against systematic racism and inhumanity.

In the UK, images of placards with slogans of 'Dismantle Systematic Racism'¹ and 'The UK is not innocent' reverberated around the country, casting an introspective eye on Britain's imperial past. The symbols of Britain's inglorious history came under scrutiny; in Bristol the bronze statue of 17th century slave trader Edward Colston was pulled down and thrown into the harbour.² Similarly, the statue of Sir Winston Churchill in Parliament Square was spray painted with the words 'was a racist.'³

Following the protest of June 2020, then Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced 'a new cross governmental commission' into racial inequality, while the PM's official spokesperson stated that PM did not agree with protestors that the UK is a racist country.⁴ In response, then Shadow Justice Secretary David Lammy said a number of reviews had already been carried out and 'Black people aren't playing victim as Boris indicates, they're protesting precisely because the time for review is over and the time for action is now.'⁵

It is within this context that the Kowetha Community Group (a parent led voluntary organisation for families visible by colour in Cornwall) in conjunction with Barnardo's (UK's largest children's charity) asked its members what actions schools had taken to address incidents of racism and inequality since the initial publication of Children Visible by Colour report in 2014. Furthermore, the parents wanted to ascertain what was the collective lived experience of their children living in the wider community of Cornwall.

Aims and objectives

The aim of the updated report is to improve understanding of the experience of dual heritage families in Cornwall, updating and adding to the existing Children Visible by Colour report. The previous report emphasised that Kowetha is based in a large rural county of Cornwall and as such experience an even greater sense of difference, due to the low density of dual heritage or mixed-race people across the region.⁶

The objective was to engage with children and young people of dual heritage and their families, as well as Cornwall Council and their Education Department, to tackle racism in schools and communities through this updated report. Barnardo's intends to utilise this as an opportunity to educate, to tackle racism and to support children and young people who are visible by colour and their families.⁷

Methodology

The methodology was primarily qualitative, involving Kowetha families living in Cornwall and other key stakeholders. To show progression, our sample of participants were mainly aged 5 to 18 and specific to those who had contributed to previous report. The sample also included parents and members new to Kowetha since 2014.

The multi-disciplined research included two face-to-face focus groups in Penzance and Bodmin. The workshop was designed around the theme of identity and began with a storytelling format, making the discussion accessible to all ages. This was followed by a sociological approach through the circle of intimacy, which charted the individual's interactions from the micro family space to the macro community.⁸ This was adapted to enable participants to explore how different relationships in different spaces influenced their self-awareness and self-esteem. The final aspect of the workshop involved arts and crafts as an alternative method of addressing the thoughts and emotions of children and young people.

We also conducted one-to-one interviews to further understand personal experiences of racism and the impact they had on the individuals and families. Quantitative analysis included completing online questionnaires using SurveyMonkey, and online video calls with Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

The research methodology was designed in collaboration with Kowetha parents and a representative of the young people. We worked creatively and flexibly to meet the challenges of time, place, and availability.

The qualitative study involved semi-structured questionnaires for headteachers and other stakeholders to ascertain what policies and procedures, teacher training and resources they have put in place to tackle the issues of race discrimination in Cornwall.

In Brief

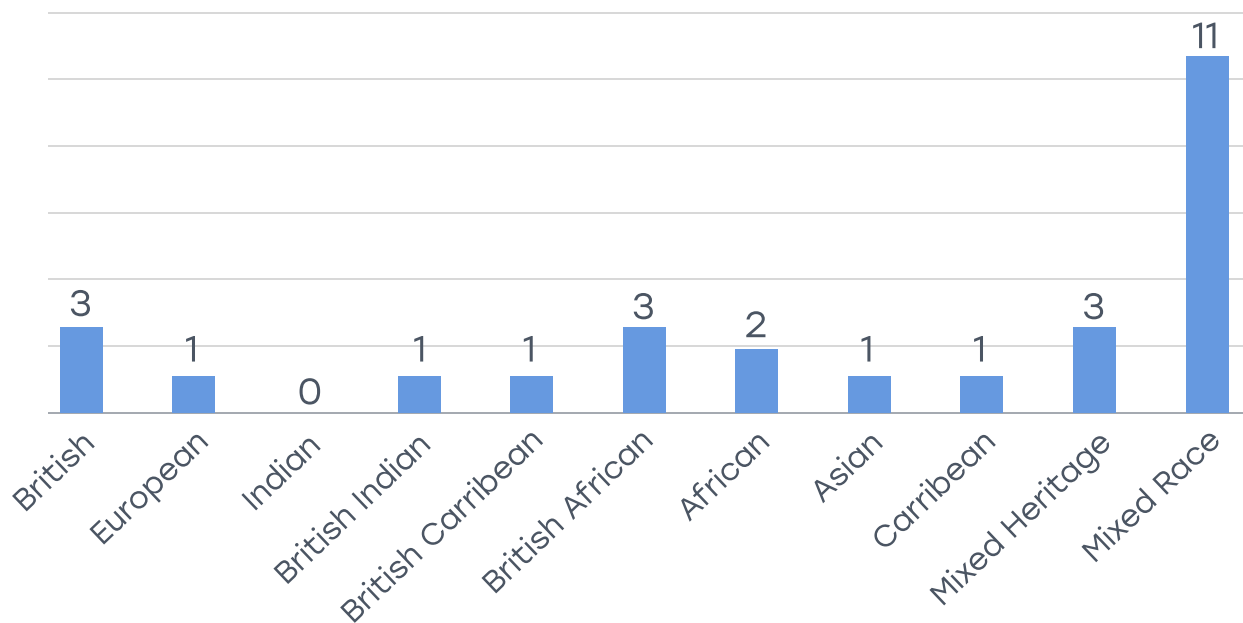
The children and young people spoke openly about their experiences and the impacts, many negative but some positive, on their sense of identity, emotional well-being, and relationships with family, peers, and teachers. Many of their experiences are consistent with their age group and stage of development, but others highlighted how their race or heritage becomes an important factor in their day-to-day interactions within schools and in the community. The children and young people also spoke about the coping strategies they use to manage incidents of racism, prejudice, and stereotyping.

The parents spoke about the emotional trauma and frustration they felt in having to witness the racial trauma their children had to endure. This situation was exacerbated where the parent was ‘white’ and did not know what that felt like because they had never experienced racism themselves. The parents talked about the challenges they faced in addressing incidents of racism or cultural insensitivity in schools and how some schools were proactive in making a stance against any form of racism or inequality while others were either dismissive or assumed it would go away.

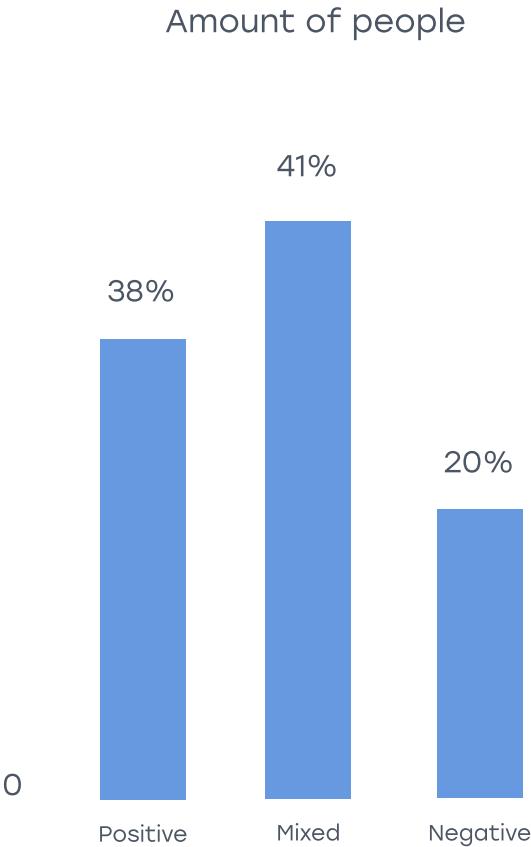
They also informed us that on occasions the onus of sanctioning individuals against racist incidents was ‘passed on’ to them rather than impetus and accountability being that of the staff team and governing body. One of the main coping strategies utilised by the parents was the collective support of Kowetha Community Group in sharing their experiences and how best to achieve racial equality for their children.

The graphic representations depict the responses to questionnaires involving 29 participants. The analysis of positive, mixed and negative are of the authors summation of the responses to the question and not specific answers given, as the question were not formulated to elicit a positive, mixed and negative answer. Nonetheless, we are able to give the reader a general overview of the sentiments and experiences of the participants.

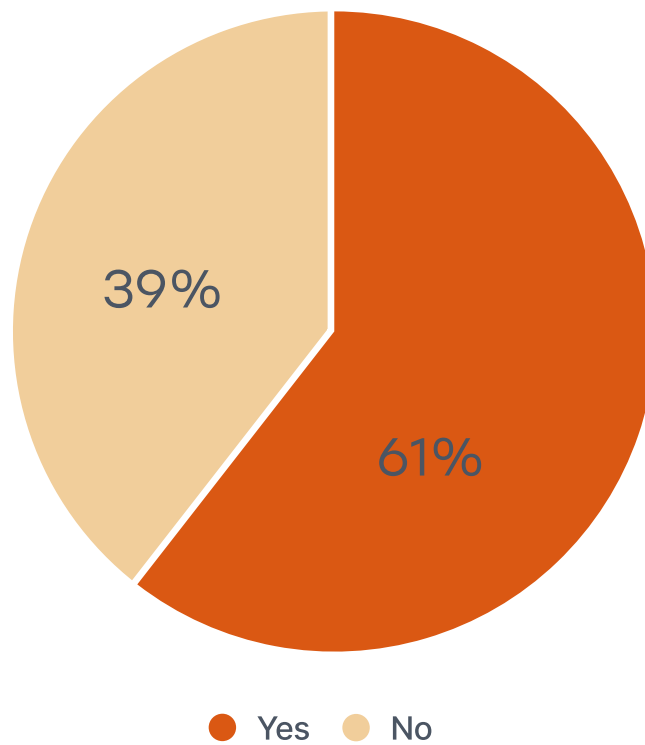
How you identify yourself?



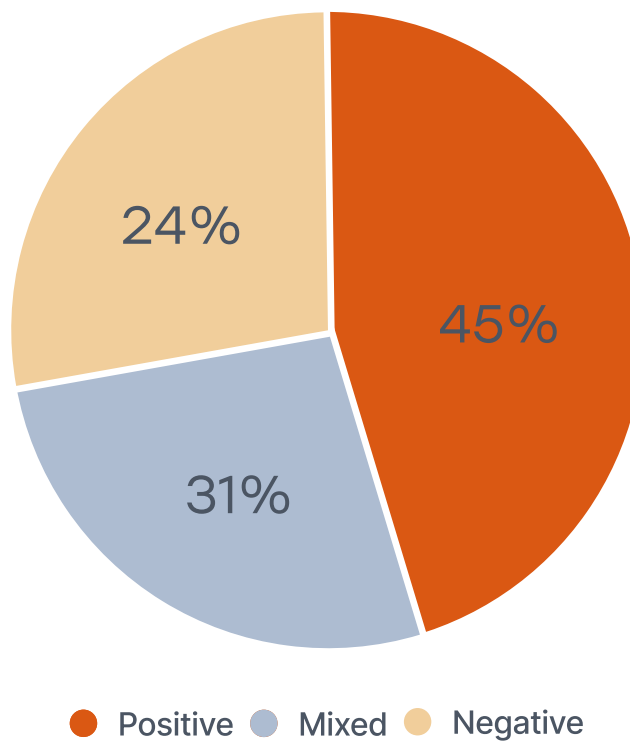
Please describe your experiences of growing up
in and/or living in Cornwall



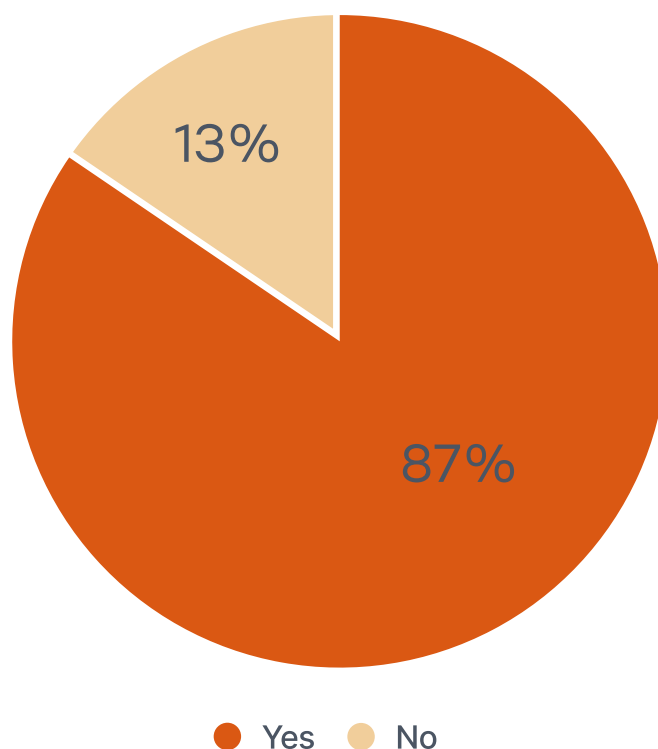
Does race of heritage matter?



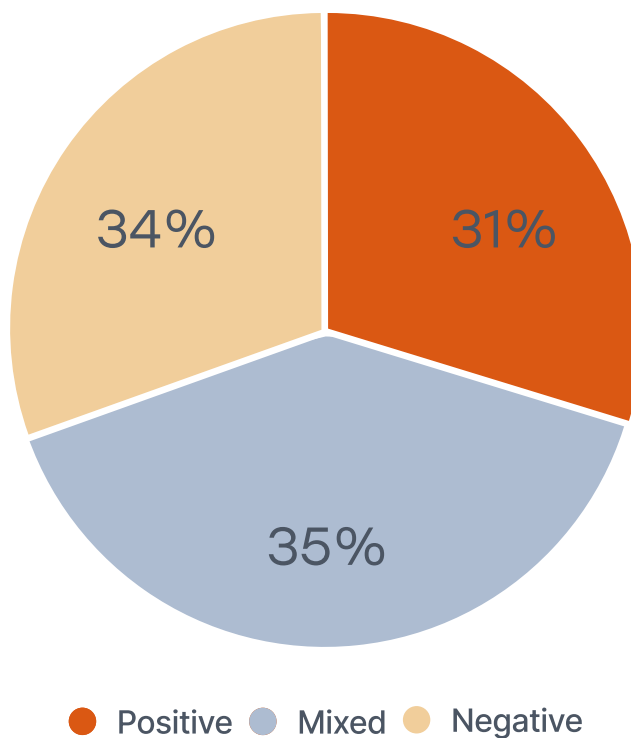
What your experiences of school as a child?



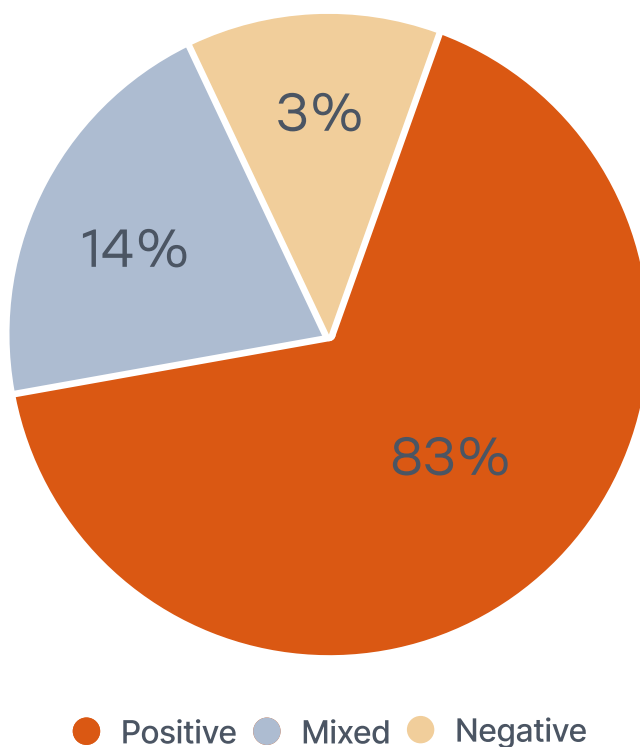
Do you have any experience where you feel that you have been treated differently because of your skin colour?



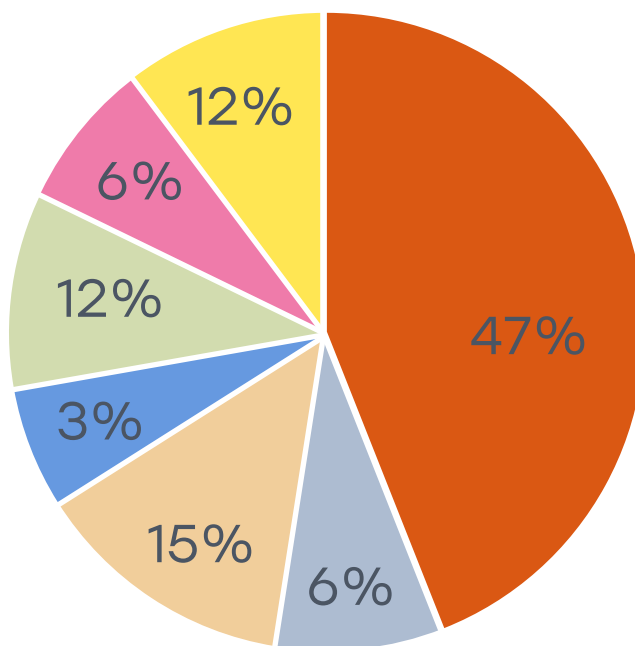
How has the social environment/community impacted on your sense of self while growing up in and/or living in Cornwall?



How has the natural environment impacted on your sense of self while growing up in and/or living in Cornwall?



How has the social environment/community impacted on your sense of self while growing up in and/or living in Cornwall?



● Lack of Diversity
 ● Remote
 ● Lack of understanding culture
 ● Opportunities
 ● Nothing
 ● Weather
 ● Lack of divers shopping

Findings

To protect the anonymity of the individual's gender-neutral pronouns have been used where possible. The main body of the text will consist of quotes and statements written or spoken in completing the questionnaire, group and one-to-one discussions.

The findings from the interview process showed the consensus is that Cornwall tends to be 'a friendly and safe place to live'. With the natural environment being key to a healthy lifestyle.⁹ However, in regard to the research on race and racism, the findings highlight several areas of concern and show that most racial incidents experienced by the children and young people of colour happened in schools - with a higher proportion taking place in secondary education settings.

It is important to state at this point, that according to the *Runnymede Perspective* research in to *Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools* (2020) 'evidence suggests that racism still plagues our society and our schools' ¹⁰ Most common to Cornwall is the aspect of everyday racial microaggressions, and 'normalised racism' and how it influences the thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of the children and young people and their families in Cornwall.



Racial microaggressions suggests that the perpetrator may not be consciously aware of the racist undertone of their words or actions and may or may not have any malicious intent or realise the harmful impact on the recipient.¹¹ Nevertheless, racial microaggressions can leave the individual feeling self-conscious, othered and anxious. This is consistent with the experience of one 14-year-old young person from the group.

” *In primary school, I never thought of my race as even being different to anyone else, and in the earlier years I didn't even really know what racism was. As I reached the last years of primary school, I began to sort of understand what racism was but nothing had ever happened to me (that I noticed) so I didn't really think about it much. But in secondary school things were a lot different and in Year 7, I experienced my first situation with racism. Somebody had called me a p*ki behind my back, and it made me feel really strange and I felt sad and angry but also didn't know how to react to it. Through the years there's [been] more and more occasions ranging from just hearing people use slurs in conversation, to directed slurs towards me.*

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident, as similar conversations were shared throughout the study where incidents of racism were experienced at both primary and secondary levels but to varying degrees, as a 16-year-old wrote on reflection:

” *Being in primary school I had a different time and only had racism on rare occasions nothing major. But secondary school is where I experienced real racism. People would say horrible things about me...and would think it's acceptable.*

Racial incidents, as mentioned above, do occur 'on rare occasions' in the primary setting. This was evident in the experience of an 8 year old in sharing their thoughts about school:

” *I have a few good friends in school, and most of the time I am happy. I love school and I work hard in class and learn a lot.
I remember when I was really young a friend at nursery said to me that I was dirty because I have brown skin.
It's hard to be the only child in a class of mostly white people that looks different.*

The issue of children and young people feeling different or separated at this early stage of their development was not rare, as the parent of a 7 year old reiterated:

” *At first my daughter used to be segregated, by her peers, but ever since I complained, the school has actually corrected that aspect. More sensitisations [sic] should be done in schools especially.*

The prompt action taken by headteachers and staff played a significant role in the cultural and personal development of the child when addressing feelings of not being 'a part of,' and equal. Parents told us that when they reported any racial incident in primary settings, in most parts, inclusive strategies and resources were put in place to ensure such incidents would not occur again. An example of good practice is described by the parent of a 5-year-old child:

” *We live in a community that has been nothing but welcoming to us, and our village has a school and nursery. The nursery already had dolls and toys that represented diversity, and they got books that had characters that looked like her specifically, so she felt seen. Understanding that we're all different is important, especially when teaching acceptance of self and others. And recognising that tolerance should be equal.*

The importance of acceptance and understanding was evident for the emotional well-being and personal development of the participants. As a 17-year-old remarked when reflecting on the difference between their primary and secondary experience:

” You think when you're younger people would be [less] understanding of differences and stuff, but actually not really. Because I think from a young age, people saw me as a black person. They didn't think much about it. So, I felt really accepted by people there. Growing up through to Year 6, everyone knew me, you know.

However, in secondary school, racial incidents becomes more prevalent as racial insults are immersed in the everyday language of some members of the school community. As one 14-year-old student informed us:

” ...so in our school of about 600 pupils, there is probably less than 15 people of colour. In school the main racism incidents are people saying the n-word or other slurs around each other in normal conversation. But occasionally there are situations where slurs are directed to people of colour.

Racist comments made in 'normal conversation', as mentioned above, are what the participants referred to as 'normalised racism'. Based on how they described 'normalised racism', it resonates with the term 'casual racism', which refers to actions rooted in negative stereotypes or prejudices about people based on race, colour, or ethnicity. Examples include jokes, off-handed comments, and exclusion of people from social situations on the basis of race.¹² The following are some examples of the young people's experiences of 'normalised racism.' One 17-year-old student wrote:

” I have had very positive experiences growing up in Cornwall, personally, I have been lucky enough to not encounter as much racism as others. Occasionally, people in school will make a joke, but it is usually incorrect anyway (e.g. they will make a joke about me being black, when I'm not in fact black at all). However, the lack of understanding of racism in Cornwall, can sometimes feel annoying.

A 15-year-old wrote about their experience of 'normalised racism':

” I always felt like I stick out because especially living in a small town in Cornwall there is very little diversity. I experienced lots of subtle racism growing up which only became more prominent as I got older.

A 12-year-old said:

“ *I have loved school however a few people have been very harsh and unkind, however teachers have always helped or tried to help.*

In contrast, the context of a 13-year-old where staff had not taken incidents of racism seriously:

“ *Nobody was really directly racist. You would often hear things that were quite bad, i.e. the 'P' slur used often. Staff overlooked any racial abuse / brushed it off.*

In more direct language, a 13-year-old told us:

“ *You will hear a lot of normalised racism to your culture and others.*

From the one-to-one and group discussions with the young people and their parents, it was evident that over time ‘normalised racism’, although difficult to quantify, ‘chips away at one’s self-confidence’ and can be ‘emotionally draining’. As one parent described the visible change in their child’s persona:

“ *Your voice got silenced, didn't it? Because you stopped putting your hand up in classes. The Head of Year said to me she is a different girl. To the girl that stood up in front of the whole year group in Year 7 with a big booming voice and gave an assembly...you don't hear her so much now.*

Withdrawing, avoidance, and ‘wanting to be invisible’ are ‘coping strategies’ employed by some participants in order ‘not to stand out’ in predominantly white spaces as they already feel ‘visible by colour’. These ‘coping strategies’ are an aspect of hypervigilance as a form of self-defence against potential racist comments, threats, or action.¹³ The following are some brief statements made by the young people of their ‘heightened state of race consciousness’.¹⁴ A 14-year-old student told us:

“ *I am treated differently to my friends and always feel really conspicuous. I don't want to draw to much attention.*

A 17-year-old told us of their mixed experience in secondary school:

” *I had a lot of fun with friends and stuff. It wasn't all bad. I would say it was 50/50. But I would come to school a lot of the days hoping that no one would say anything racist or anything.*

A 14-year-old told us about the psychological effects of racial hypervigilance and how it extends beyond the school into the wider community.

” *But going through racism in school changed how I think out in public. Whenever I walk into a room, I always think to myself how I may be the only person of colour there. Or if [I'm] ever given dirty looks I always resort back to the same thought of 'is it because I'm brown?' And so I think living in Cornwall as a person of colour is not too bad, but it is noticeable in your mind.*

Furthermore, participants did not want to create any potential opportunities where they could be the recipient of a racist comment. They continue:

” *As said before people looking at me or watching me in a certain way out in the community, has certainly developed a mindset that I should be extra respectful out in public, and also an ongoing thought in my head that when they look it could be because they are judging me because of the colour of my skin.*

Similarly, the state of hypervigilance can cause anxiety in public spaces, as was evident from the comments of this 12 year old:

” *And now even sometimes, I'll be looking through a shop and then I'll think what if someone thinks I'm stealing something, you know, I'll be scared that I like accidentally put something in my bag, which has never happened. So, I don't know why I'm so scared sometimes.*

The fear expressed above is symptomatic of hypervigilance where the individual may feel anxious of fulfilling negative racial stereotypes. The 'fear', in this case, is not without justification, as some participants in the survey did say that they had been subject to racial profiling in public spaces.

Racial profiling is used on the basis of suspicion of criminal intent based on stereotypical ideals of one's race, colour, ethnicity, etc., rather than the behaviour of the individual.¹⁵ Due to the sensitive nature of the examples given, the author is unable to share the stories of the young people. Nevertheless, they range from people snatching at their bags when a person of colour draws near, looking nervous or stopping and waiting for the person of colour to go by, being followed around in shops, and being accused of theft with no evidence. The impact of experiencing racial profiling has been summarised best in the words of one 14-year-old participant:

” *It shouldn't matter out in public, as in you shouldn't be profiled because of your race, but it is important to your identity because if you are ever racially offended, the pain goes right back to your heritage and history, and it is something you can never change or hide.*

This sentiment was felt by most of the participant in the survey. The implication, as expressed by the participants, is that schools and the wider community need to do more to challenge their own prejudices and embrace the dynamic nature of their community.

In addition to the racial microaggressions experienced above, the participants told us about their personal journeys of having mixed-race hair. In the 2020 publication *Don't Touch My Hair*, academic, and TV host Emma Dabiri, describes the complex relationship she had with her hair growing up as a mix race child in Ireland. Beyond that she looks at the cultural, historical and political nuances of black and mixed-race hair in society.¹⁶ Many of the young people in the research have had a similar experience to Dabiri and have struggled with their hair texture and the visibility of their natural kinks. The situation is compounded with friends and strangers, in particular, touching their hair without permission, whether out of curiosity, as something unusual, or dehumanising racial undertones of 'petting'.¹⁷ One participant aged 12 told us:

” *So, people obviously did have questions that were genuine, but when I wear my afro out, sometimes I start to feel self-conscious about it. Like, what if someone does this (squeeze/pat hair). Or like, what if they try and say stuff about it because for some reason now that we're in secondary, they think that it's okay to just do this (squeeze/pat hair) that's because they'll get away with it. Because I've had kids literally come up to me and grab my hair thinking, that's okay. I don't know you. Why are you touching me?*

Although this participant did not have an issue with close friends touching their hair, this did not apply to general interaction with other students and the public. The student continues:

” *Like, you wouldn't be comfortable if I had just randomly come up to you and given you a hug. So why are you coming up to me and, like squeezing on my hair? And pulling on my head. That's not cool. I'm not a zoo animal you can poke at. I'm an actual person. So, you know, it's just a very uncomfortable situation.*

Regardless of the intention, the action is generally viewed as an intrusion on personal space and an effrontery to say the least. School policies play an important role in setting the dress code and appearance of their students while at school. In this regard, some participants found some school policies relating to hair or hairstyles are rooted and implemented around European beauty ideals and are unaccommodating to their natural appearance. A 14-year-old participant shared their daily trauma:

” *Definitely, small things like getting ready for school. We all wear the same uniform, but I'm constantly picked out because of my hair. My friends don't understand but I'm constantly getting so much grief about it. Definitely knocked my confidence. I used to wish I had blond straight hair even before I understood... I dislike the small-mindedness. You can't be unique without being judged. No one really understands what I go through. The beauty standard here is 'white' so I don't fit in.*

It is a duty of school leaders to promote an inclusive environment by ensuring their policies are not unlawfully discriminatory.¹⁸ According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) 'Discriminating against pupils in relation to or because of their hair may have a negative effect on pupils' mental health and wellbeing'.¹⁹ The negative effect on mental wellbeing was evident in the testimony of a 15-year-old participant who shared her feelings:

” *It always made me feel slightly unsure of myself. What I was supposed to look like or sound like, what hairstyles I was meant to wear. Having sunny hot summers made me even darker and the humidity made my hair even bigger making me feel more insecure and unsure of myself.*

Race is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and the EHRC state “Hairstyles worn because of cultural, family, and social customs can be part of a pupil’s ethnic origin and therefore fall under the protected characteristic of race.”²⁰ Nonetheless, some children and young people are struggling unnecessarily due to insensitive implementation of discriminatory school uniform policies. The Department for Education (DfE) provides nonstatutory guidance on school uniform. This states ‘A school will need to consider the impact of their policy on pupils who share a protected characteristic.’²¹

Education

Knowing the cultural roots of one’s hair is an important aspect of identity as is knowing one’s nationality and history. For children and young people of African and dual heritage, the teaching of Black History in schools plays an important role in shaping their view of the world and their place in it. Black history as taught in schools has been, in general, based on a Eurocentric narrative. Little is said of the Black presence in Britain and the African and Caribbean contribution (excluding Windrush era) to British society. The participants said that Black history is generally assigned to one month in the year and is limited to African enslavement (circa. 1526 to 1867) and/or the Civil Rights Movement in America (circa. 1954 to 1968). They also said the images of Africans and African Americans tended to be passive or negative, and this does not serve to inspire and empower children and young people of African and dual heritage. Participants in the survey saw the embedding of Black History in the curriculum as a good opportunity to explore the themes around race and racism. A 17-year-old young person wrote:

” *The school curriculum, both secondary and primary, never seemed to highlight how bad racism is, we never had any talks, or classes in the history of racism. I think this is an area the schools could improve in, as some kids probably aren’t aware of why what they say can be so damaging. Although, in this day, classes shouldn’t be necessary for students to not be racist, but perhaps it could be a solution to the racism that still occurs. We briefly learnt about other cultures, in particular other religions, but never in much detail, focussing more on Christianity.*

A 15-year-old participant reiterated:

” *I never learned about much racism or Black history as the curriculum just sort of slid over it. Schools also tend to treat racism the same way they would treat someone acting up silly in a lesson instead of something truly serious and damaging.*

A 14-year-old participant echoed the sentiments above:

” *The school system is really sort of unsuited to teach Black stories or Black history. The teachers seem to shy away from racism. Especially in certain sort of ‘typical Cornish’ places the racism is very evident. Use of the Nword freely around school. Lack of understanding of what racism actually is.*

Having a better understanding of Black history and the origin of the ideologies of race and racism will improve racial literacy for teachers and students alike. Racial literacy ‘is the knowledge, skills, and awareness needed to talk thoughtfully about race and racism, the ability to identify someone being treated unfairly because of their identity and having strategies to counter or cope with racism.’²² Organisations such as The Black Curriculum, who have an ethos to ‘decolonise the curriculum,’ have been set up to support schools to improve racial literacy to enable a better understanding of Black history and to be more inclusive of all histories.²³ Initiatives such as this are designed to support the development of safe spaces for students and teachers to speak openly and honestly about the ideologies, actions, and consequences of race and racism in an open and inclusive way. This is not always the case; participants shared that some discussions on racism in schools had not been framed properly and have left them feeling embarrassed and vulnerable. A 13-year-old participant wrote:

” *No one has really said anything to me that is mean about my skin colour. But when talking about race at school I feel like people are looking at me because I am the only person who is black, and only one other person isn't white in my class.*

A 15-year-old corroborated:

” *...whenever racism would be mentioned people would turn around and look at me.*

A 14-year-old felt the burden of racism in a school assembly addressing a racist incident through the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement in America.

” *I felt really embarrassed because I just knew in that assembly it was just me with my hair and I just thought, everyone sitting behind me would be looking at me and I thought no one else really can sympathize with it because they don't understand. It's just another thing in history but for me it was really important, and I just knew no one else would really understand it.*

Creating a safe and culturally sensitive environment in an empathetic and considerate way ensures the wellbeing and safeguarding of all students and staff taking part in anti-racism discussions.²⁴ Discussions that should progress from the historical narrative to focus on the present day lived experiences of young people of mixed heritage in their schools, making the narratives relevant to the here and now. This will enable the students of colour to feel valued and for the wider school community to relate on a mutual basis.

As well as the missed opportunities of poorly framed school assemblies and class discussions, participants shared their disappointments as to the extent to which schools tackle racism and promote racial equality. An 11-year-old participant informed us of their primary school experience and frustration they felt after being the recipient of several racist incidents:

” *I just gave up and I was like, I need to handle this by myself. And then actually when I did, I got taken out class because apparently I had anger issues and social needs. No, I didn't. I was dealing with racism, and I shouldn't have [to]. And the school, how they tried to deal with it, is just take me out so then I'm not causing a problem. And that made me really angry.*

In summarising their feelings on how the school managed racial incidents, the participant concluded:

” *I think I have more anger towards the school and the teachers. How they've handled it throughout the year.*

The participant also said they felt unsafe in the school environment. The example above, as disheartening as it may be, reflects the sentiments of several of the young people in the study, with the situation being compounded when the recipients of racism were racially discriminated against by staff and treated as the problem. A 16-year-old student informed us:

” *I feel like comments against me are often heard and actively ignored by teachers. I was once sent to my Head of Year’s office for trying to explain cultural appropriation to a girl in my year.*

Another participant shared their experience of injustice following a peaceful protest held by students about new rules to be introduced into schools in Cornwall.²⁵ The 13-year-old participant recalled:

” *When I did this protest, which is like no one was violent or anything, I got excluded for three, four days and [this person], who was being like really, really racist to me [past incidents], got less time and I then had to sit for two hours learning about what it means to protest. But [they] were allowed to just come straight back to school with no like lessons or anything. So [they] just sort of carried on.*

In this case, as the participant informed us, although they spoke to the senior staff member, who acknowledged the injustice of the situation, they did nothing to make amends. As the participant concluded:

” *I’ve been taken off [the school trip] for the protest, but [the person] was allowed on after being really racist to me [previous incidents] and then I got excluded for four days and they only got three. Like, it just wasn’t really very fair. But then [the senior staff] didn’t really say much. They just sort of went, yeah, yeah, I understand and then left.*

In this case, the student said they ‘felt as if this was unfair as the reaction to a peaceful protest was dealt with more seriously than someone who had repeatedly racially bullied me.’²⁶ Teachers are placed in a central position between students, parents, senior leadership, and school policies. Therefore they play a vital role in the experiences and outcomes of students in their classrooms. According to *Runnymede Perspective* research in to *Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools* (2020), it is of particular importance that teachers ‘reflect on the racist views they themselves might hold, and to understand their own complicity in (re)producing racism.’

The report further states ‘racialised teacher expectation can impact upon the sets the pupils are put in, disciplinary procedures and teacher assessment.’²⁷ Racial literacy in this regard will give teaching staff the tools and competency to manage racist incidents in the classroom and to recognise and challenge the institutionalised racism within the staff team and school community.

Throughout our research, the conversations with the children, young people, and parents, it seemed evident that teachers were also reluctant or afraid to act out of concerns of a ‘backlash’ from the community. A 13-year-old student told us:

” *There have been some instances where people have said stuff in the lesson and you can see the teacher pick it up, but they just don't really know how to react. Because it might be like five boys have all said it and none of the [other] pupils are saying anything, so they just sort of leave it.*

In tackling racism and promoting racial equality in schools, it is essential for the staff team to have the support and backing of senior leaders and school governors. But for some parents, this has not been the case. The parent participants spoke candidly about the disparities in interactions they have had with the school’s leadership when trying to support their child following racist incidents. One parent told us how it felt:

” *The Head of Year’s really receptive... so I’ve just started to go straight to [them]. But in terms of the senior leadership, they just don’t want to hear, they don’t want to know. You feel like they’re sort of raising their eyes to heaven going, oh, the racism thing again. Oh, here we go. But we’ve dealt with that, we’ve done an assembly.*

The parent continued:

” *And I’ve got other friends [with children of colour], who’ve had similar experiences in some of the schools in this area. Or just, ‘oh, we don’t have a problem with racism.’ Either that or, or what do you expect. It’s a predominantly white area, so this is what you’re gonna get. It’s almost that the teachers or senior leadership don’t want to try and tackle it because they’re scared of a backlash from other parents.*

Notably, the teachers fear of a ‘backlash’¹¹ from some members of the community is consistent with what parents surmise as one of the reasons the staff team seem to evade responsibility and accountability for implementing sanctions. The onus is often ‘passed on’ to the young person who was the recipient of racism. A parent participant in conversation with their child encapsulates the experiences of several members of the group.

” So, I’ll go to the Head of Year and [they’ll] say, this isn’t right. What do you want to do about it...? But the difficulty is that they’ll quite often put it onto you... They’ll say, what do you want to do about it...? And then you will then say, I don’t want them to get excluded. Because then they’ll know it’s come from me and then it’s going to get even worse for me. So, I felt can you [senior teacher] just take control...

The DfE *Behaviour in schools – Advice for Headteachers and school staff* (2022) recommends all headteachers and senior management develop a school Behaviour Policy to promote and uphold a safe and supportive environment for all students, and ‘the school behaviour policy also must set out the disciplinary sanctions.’²⁸ Therefore, the accountability for deciding on sanctions is not the responsibility of the child and parent but must be clearly laid out in the behaviour policy. Furthermore, the report goes on to say ‘all Headteachers should take the responsibility for implementing measures to secure acceptable standards of behaviour’.²⁹ Moreover, it states ‘all staff should be aware of the measures outlined in the school’s behaviour policy and how they should implement these measures - this is one of the key systems in place in schools which supports safeguarding.’³⁰ Ultimately, schooling goes beyond academic attainment to include the socialisation, wellbeing, and safeguarding of the students in their care.

In this respect, DfE also recommend that the Behaviour Policy should reflect the Safeguarding Policy.³¹ In some instances, following the implementation of sanctions on a pupil who had been racially abusive, there appears to be a dereliction of safeguarding duties regarding the welfare of the victims beyond the school gates. A 13-year-old participant told us that they had to go home at the same time and on the same route as the person who had discriminated against them and had to undergo a public barrage of refuting taunts. An 11-year-old student told us that they were confronted on the way home by a disgruntled parent of a pupil who had been given sanctions for racial slurs. The young people and parents felt this type of incident was a threat to their psychological, emotional, and physical safety.

DfE recommendations on abuse and neglect state ‘All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm.’³² It also states, ‘It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote children’s welfare.’³³

Another potential influence in the neglect of safeguarding duties is the assumption that children visible by colour are expected to be more responsible at their age than their peers. It was commonly said by the participants that the children of colour would be asked to ‘be the bigger person’ and pass off racist taunts as ‘childish banter.’ Being asked to ‘be the bigger person’ or having the expectation that the person of colour should be the more mature child is a form of adultification bias. Adultification bias is founded in racialised discrimination which ‘results in children’s rights being diminished or ignored, with notions of innocence and vulnerability displaced by notions of responsibility and culpability.’³⁴ According to the research paper *Adultification Bias Within Child Protection and Safeguarding* (2022) adultification bias on ‘Black’ children in this case children visible by colour means, ‘this group of children are therefore at a heightened risk of their safeguarding needs being unmet.’³⁵ Furthermore, ‘adultification reduces professional and organisational responsibility to safeguard and protect children, yet increases the responsibilities of children to safeguard themselves.’³⁶ A parent gave an example of a conversation they had with a teacher when their child was racially abused by another pupil. The parent said to the teacher:

” ...you are making my child ‘hug it out’ with someone who's essentially abused him.

The parent continued to explain:

” As a black person, you are always the bigger person. You always have to be [the bigger person]. I don’t want my child to learn that at this point in his life.

The parent concluded:

” You always have to make the other person feel better.

The emotional and psychological impact to the recipient of racism was not addressed in this case, with the focus being placed on the perpetrator. Another parent recalled their personal experience of adultification bias growing up as a 12-year-old person of colour in Cornwall:

” *It's like I am conscious, and this is probably historically from growing up here, I feel like I was treated older than I was. So, with my white friends, I feel like I was maybe treated as like being a bit stronger and a bit older. And I became aware, I feel like I absorbed something in myself and in my body as being a bit of a danger or a threat.*

The parent participant added:

” *There was definitely a treatment of me being stronger than I was emotionally. And my white peers, I feel like, were girls being treated as girls and a bit more sensitivity to them. I would be in the wrong. I would be treated more harshly than other kids that were my mates. And then that becomes an ingrained thing. But then you feel like there is something within you that others are scared of.*

This is a prime example of how adultification bias can negatively shape the lived experience of children visible by colour in Cornwall. Teacher's Continual Professional Development (CPD) should include awareness of adultification bias, of minoritised and marginalised children and families, to improve child protection and safeguarding practices at individual, institution and systematic levels in schools.

Where schools have committed to an anti-racist culture, proactively implementing and reinforcing anti-racism strategies, the participants acknowledged the difference it made to their wellbeing and socialisation. As an 11-year-old participant explained when they reported a racist comment in secondary school:

” *So, then I reported it and straight away, and I'm so surprised, that straight away the school are on it. I'm just like, this is crazy. And then I spoke to my tutor, and they said that shouldn't be happening to you. So, we're gonna do something about it. And I was like, this is nice for once. So yeah, secondary school has been really good in that aspect. There's still racism but there's less of it and I think when there is and when it's been reported it's dealt with.*

Schools should be sensitive to the needs of the different ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds and act accordingly to meet their needs. As evident from the findings of this report, it is important for the schools to understand the short and long-term impact racism has on the identity and self-esteem of the children in their care. Indeed, when schools are supportive to the concerns and suggestions of children visible by colour and their parents, this makes for improved relationships and outcomes. A parent concluded:

” *My son had a positive experience at primary school – up until his final year when there was a racist incident (name calling from one boy). All his friends came to his defence and the Headteacher dealt with the situation really well. Because I had previously given them a copy of the original ‘Children Visible by Colour’ report. So, they had the tools and awareness to deal with the situation.*

The headteachers who contributed to this report acknowledged the need to do better. To take a proactive anti-racist stance rather than a passive non-racist stance. Anti-racist work requires a conscious effort to address racial discrimination and the practical implementation of anti-racist theory. Asking the uncomfortable and challenging questions of the self and the whole school culture. The evidence of this should be felt in the everyday lived experience of the school community. Some headteachers in Cornwall have put forward their challenges and successes of implementing a whole school approach to antracism and discrimination (See Appendices 1 to 4).

Kowetha has played an important role in providing a support network and safe space for children visible by colour and their families to share and find solutions to address their day-to-day experiences. It was evident from the discussions held during the research that many of the issues of racism highlighted in the 2014 report continue in schools now. Since beginning the research for this report, the parents, children and young people have met several times, working collectively to provide solutions to their ever-increasing struggle against racism and discrimination from some members of the school and wider community in Cornwall (Appendix 5). Other strategies include working with specialist such as educationalist and CPD trainer Daniella Gilbert, who works within the schools in Cornwall to bring about systematic change (Appendix 6), and members of SEEN, a Barnardo's initiative to improve outcomes for children and young people of African, Asian and Caribbean heritage.³⁷ For the children visible by colour and their parents, the impact of the work done by Kowetha is immeasurable. This has been succinctly encapsulated in the words of a 17-year-old participant:

” I think this awareness for racism and acting against the racism is brilliant. When I was in secondary school, nothing was ever done about racism, and I doubt many felt comfortable enough to speak up, being the minority. So, thank you for fighting against it, and giving children of colour a community.

And for the people of Cornwall, a parent participant wrote:

” The racism is in ignorance and in your face, but you know where you stand but equally the people [of Cornwall] once they get past race are lovely.

Taking into consideration the experiences and voices of Kowetha parents, children and young people, SEEN have compiled a 'call-to-action' in '3 steps for schools to develop to address the reality of schools as a primary site for racial trauma:'

See



Acknowledge the reality of racism in Cornish schools.



See the racism occurring in your school.



Own the problem by talking about it, describing it, & learning how to use the correct language to process and understand it.

Hear



Create dedicated safe spaces for children, staff & parents to be able safely report any & all incidents of racism.



Agree on the language and terminology that the school will be using to communicate regarding incidents of racism and how to deal with them.



Define the language & concepts (such as inter-generational racial trauma) and ensure the whole school (all staff & students) are educated on these concepts and definitions.

Respond



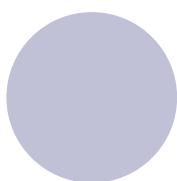
Set out the school's vision for an anti-racist future, set out the school's mission to tackle the existing racism in school, and make sure this is something that governors, local authority, school staff, students, parents & carers are all aware of.



Create a robust & regularly reviewed anti-racist policy, detailing how the school will deal with incidents of racism with varying degrees of severity, and how the school aims to progress along its journey towards anti-racism.



Work with organisations to provide anti-racist CPD for teachers and staff & re-evaluate educational resources & curriculum, identifying opportunities to implement anti-racist learning.



Conclusion

The report highlights the impact racial discrimination has on the education, wellbeing, self-esteem, and the identity of the children visible by colour in Cornwall. In addressing the need to reduce racial incidents in Cornwall schools, the findings reiterate the strategies and recommendations made by Kowetha parents in the previous Children Visible by Colour report 2014 as still valid and applicable to date.³⁹

In accord with SEEN, the updated report recommends that schools review the implementation of their behaviour and safeguarding policies to ensure there is an anti-racism ethos. It also urges a review of the curriculum to ensure representation of diverse historical contributions, narratives and perspectives. Moreover, the report urges the readers to move beyond thinking about racism as a subject but to be actively anti-racist in the development of their school policies and procedures.

The author would like to thank the children, young people, and parents of Kowetha wholeheartedly for their bravery, honesty and strength in speaking their truth of the everyday lives in Cornwall, both positive and negative.

Special acknowledgement to the team at Barnardo's Cymru and South West and SEEN for their support and guidance throughout the process. It is hoped that, with the will and action of the Cornish community, this report will go far towards improving the lived experiences of children, young people and their parent(s)/carer(s) living in Cornwall.

Questionnaire reply from Chris Chislett, Headteacher, Penpol Primary School.

1. What changes have you made to your school with children and adults of colour in mind?

We have created a diversity and inclusion taskforce – initially a race and diversity taskforce – consisting of children, parents, staff and governors. This has been responsible for a range of actions from reviewing and enhancing behaviour policy to better reflect the harmful impact of racism to organising a ‘free to be me’ day.

We made a conscious decision to open a conversation which we knew would be uncomfortable for some, engaging with the process of becoming comfortable being uncomfortable. We created a designated page on our website, sharing useful videos and resources to aid the conversation at home and school. Identifying that many people, staff included, were nervous about talking about race and identity, we also created a glossary here which provides some of the language needed to hold open, safe and impactful conversations at home and at school. <https://www.penpolschool.co.uk/diversity-and-inclusion/>

We have conducted a full curriculum review, with a particular focus upon representation. We supported this with training from Bennie Kara which was fantastic.

We created a bookshelf in the staffroom with a range of great books around race and diversity, encouraging staff to take them home, read and discuss them.

We have engaged in a range of local groups working to counter racism in Cornwall. I am currently a director for the Rice and Peas CiC and, as a part of this, we hosted a cultural fusion workshop drawing together 6 other schools.

2. What prompted you to make these changes?

A few years ago, we would have proudly and naively declared that no racism existed in Penpol. Following some instances of racially offensive language, we resolved to explore deeper and recognised that many of our students, staff and families lacked the language needed to hold safe and confident conversations about race and identity. The view of many was that ‘we don’t see colour’. Whilst race is a social construct, racism is very real and, in denying the existence of language and experiences linked to race and identity, we were both hiding racist incidents from view and leaving too much room for a collective ignorance to lead to harmful statements.

3. What impact do you think these changes made?

Children embraced the conversation and feel proudly emboldened in taking an anti-racist stance. This has been a productive and largely positive journey for staff and families also. The former are now far more comfortable to talk about race and identity in class, drawing from a much more representative range of people in their teaching. Parents and carers too have largely embraced the journey and, where there has been resistance, we have been ready to hold impactful and progressive conversations. Our taskforce has been instrumental in embedding these continued changes and we will continue to drive further development, holding us to account in all that we do.

A number of people of colour in our parent community have spoken very positively about the work and about how this contrasts with their own experiences of school. For some parents, the opportunity to work with children and to bring their experiences to the table has been particularly powerful. For example, one parent, a regular member of our taskforce, led a powerful conversation with children about her Scottish surname and how this was inherited from her enslaved ancestor's 'owner'.

4. What challenges have you faced?

There has been limited criticism from a small number of parents, particularly where their children have been involved in using racially offensive language. Generally, these have been resolved through open and positive debate. Occasionally, this has led to families seeing this as an example of 'woke' culture. Happily, as the work has continued over the past few years, we are seeing much less of this resistance and it is becoming a readily expected part of how school works.

5. What advice would you give to other schools to help them support children of colour in Cornwall?

Reach out for support and bring the conversation to the table. Be prepared for some challenges and embrace the opportunity to lead the narrative in the community.

Questionnaire reply from Bill Coleman, Headteacher, St Erth Primary School

Over the last few years we have taken considerable steps to ensure St Erth School is an inclusive and welcoming school. Previous culture amongst pupils was not always welcoming and understanding to everyone's needs and differences. A sense of defensiveness and not openness existed, resulting in some feeling marginalised. Challenging this to create a more relaxed and open culture amongst children and adults in school has been crucial. This is for the benefit of all, but in particular, minority groups within the school. To that end we have:

- Conducted a thorough review of all anti-bullying procedures.
- Developed more open and diverse spaces for pupils to enjoy, reducing conflict and increasing well-being.
- Conducted a review of school values and ethos, involving pupils, staff and parents, to reset expectations and make clear the culture we wanted to create. This involved creating a new set of school values and a new school badge.
- Created roles for children in the school which ensured they had equal agency and felt fairly treated. Head Boy and Girl were removed in favour of a range of year 6 jobs and house captains are rotated so all children get the opportunity whilst at St Erth.
- Developed a detailed timetable for assemblies, including events such as Black History Month, International Peace Day, World Mental Health Day, Anti-bullying Week, Anti-slavery Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, LGBT History Month, Dyslexia awareness, International Women's Day and many others. The timetable also recognises important religious festivals and celebrations from different religions. Every assembly links to the school's values and fundamental British values building an inclusive and open culture.
- Staff meetings have been dedicated to ensuring that representation in our curriculum is diverse and inclusive. Staff consider minority groups and protected characteristics when planning lessons and choose images, books, artists, role models, historical figures and subjects that are diverse and inclusive.
- The school's reading spine has been planned to provide children with a diet of reading which also represents diversity and inclusivity. However, this is an on-going process and an audit of this is planned for 2023/24 to ensure we are meeting the targets we have set for ourselves.

1. What prompted you to make these changes?

It is beholden upon us as a school to ensure we create a culture where everyone is welcome and diversity is celebrated. Amongst some year groups in the school a clear hierarchy had developed. This led to unhealthy relationships that were based on superiority in either popularity or physical prowess; as a result children fell out and at times picked upon fellow pupil differences when upset with each other. As a result there were recorded incidents, and accusations, of racial bullying on several occasions.

2. What impact do you think these changes made?

School has become a more welcoming and calm environment. Pupils feel their needs are met as individuals and are taught to care for each other as part of the school community. Behaviour and attitudes are excellent, and this is reflected in external monitoring of the school's progress within our academy trust and beyond. Pupil voice demonstrates that children feel safe, happy and listened to. They report that bullying is rare and when it occurs it is dealt with swiftly and fairly, they trust adults to help with this. Parent surveys for 3 years consecutively report that more than 90% agree with the statements, 'My child is happy at school; Bullying is not an issue at this school, when it occurs it is dealt with effectively; I would recommend this school to another parent.'

3. What challenges have you faced?

Changing culture is not a quick process. Each step needed to be planned and embedded over time to ensure it was having the impact planned. Ensuring that the school's values reflected a culture already developing was essential, this enabled ownership of the new system through consultation with pupils and parents. For staff, being in a school where there were accusations and incidents of racial bullying was a difficult and upsetting time, finding the resolve and self- reflection required to move forward was at times a challenge. Making diversity part of curriculum development is an on-going challenge and asking ourselves if we are doing enough will be one which we will continue to face.

4. What advice would you give to other schools to help them support children of colour in Cornwall?

The changes that we made were planned in response to a culture that had emerged in a single year group, however the changes we made have been for the benefit of all pupils, which is I believe key. It is not an area which I would ever say we have finished working on and recognising this is important. New challenges will emerge and test what progress we have made.

Questionnaire reply from Chris Parham, Head of School, St Issey School

1. What changes have you made to your school with children and adults of colour in mind?

- We have changed our long term plans to include yearly social topic: Indigenous Australians, Windrush, US Black History, South Africa Apartheid and Native America.
- Our reading spine and shared reading texts include books from different cultures around the world.

2. What prompted you to make these changes?

This all spanned from a class discussion about George Floyd and the riots in the US and UK and we realised that we were not covering social topics sufficiently given most of our children are not people of colour.

3. What impact do you think these changes made?

- Staff knowledge has increased and confidence to tackle hard subjects has also increased.
- Children feel more comfortable to discuss worldly topics and areas outside of their lived experience.
- Valuable cross curricular links are made.
- Children's oracy skills have improved.
- It has provided a context for children understand the world around them and make historical and geographical links with culture and society.
- Other schools in MAT have adopted our planning.

4. What challenges have you faced?

- This isn't our lived experience so we've had to contact various people of colour/ support groups to validate and adapt our planning to ensure it is sensitive and accurate.
- Finding resources, people and experiences in Cornwall that was appropriate was difficult.
- We had some backlash from a minority of parents who wrote to their MP and complained to OFSTED.

5. What advice would you give to other schools to help them support children of colour in Cornwall?

- Contact Black Voices Cornwall, who were encouraging and supportive.
- Feel free to contact us for ideas.

Questionnaire reply from Rae Preston, Athena Swan Charter Manager/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor (Cornwall), University of Exeter

There have been several initiatives at the University of Exeter, Cornwall in recent years which have been implemented with the aim of ensuring equitable access, experience and outcomes for students and staff of colour. These include:

- Launch of the joint Falmouth and Exeter Speak Out informal reporting tool, shared between the University of Exeter and Falmouth University, to provide a quick and easy route to seek support following experiences of discrimination, including racism, antisemitism and islamophobia.
- Launch of the Cornwall Anti-racism Forum, a regular online and informal conversation space for staff and postgraduates to listen, learn and discuss anti-racism topics. Discussions to date have focused on racial trauma and mental health; hate crime and hate incidents; rural racism and learning from relevant national, regional and sector reports.
- A culturally appropriate counselling service for students in partnership with Nilaari, a Black, Asian and minority ethnic-led charity based in Bristol. This is in addition to working with local facilitators in Cornwall to run regular in-person peer support sessions for students of colour.
- A suite of Black History Month resources created by the Widening Participation team and accessible for local teachers and schools to use all year round. Please email subjectoutreach@exeter.ac.uk for further information or access to any of the resources.
- A student-led 'Decolonising the Curriculum' departmental review in 2020/21, producing a report offering recommendations for the University and a framework for others looking to undertake a similar project in their own subject area.
- A new dedicated Muslim prayer space in the centre of campus.

1. What prompted you to make these changes?

In April 2020, we invited staff and students to complete a survey as part of our Race Equality Charter application, an accreditation framework for higher education institutions. Survey findings, alongside quantitative data analysis, helped us to better understand our context and how racial inequality has an impact on staff and student experience at the University. The application process also illustrated how racial inequality impacts on recruitment and retention, particularly in the context of our campus location in Cornwall, an area with comparably less visible ethnic diversity than elsewhere in the UK. Alongside the University's growth in access and participation activity and international student numbers, it became imperative to involve all staff, students and the wider community in our response to tackling racial inequality.

2. What impact do you think these changes made?

While we still have a lot more work to do, assessment of the above initiatives indicates:

- Increased trust in reporting, demonstrated through a high number of reports received through informal reporting routes.
- Improved inclusivity within teaching and curricula design, culminating in the development of the Transformative Education Framework.
- Enhanced confidence within the university community and senior leadership in conversations about race.
- The value of in-person and online spaces to create community and a sense of belonging.
- The importance of valuing collaboration and encouraging student-led initiatives and innovation.

3. What challenges have you faced?

Internally, it has taken time to build meaningful trust and engagement and to ensure that initiatives are implemented in a respectful and supportive way. It has also been a challenge to sustain initiatives throughout staff and student turnover, which has highlighted the importance of creating frameworks and resources which can be shared and built upon. This guards against a perception that change has to start from scratch, which damages trust and makes work vulnerable to tokenism or reactive impulses.

Externally, it has been challenging to find a shared language to build a foundation for effective partnership working, due to differing organisational priorities and perspectives. Partnership working is key due to our rural context and need to build critical mass and momentum behind change initiatives to achieve impact. We continue to work with partners to develop this language.

4. What advice would you give to other educational institution to help them support children of colour in Cornwall?

- Be brave, be courageous and don't be afraid to be explicit about your values.
- Be open and transparent, value everyone's engagement and experience and make sure to involve everyone, at all levels of the organisation, as well as students, families, and the wider community.
- Keep going and keep yourself accountable through a time-specific action plan, constantly taking time to monitor and evaluate progress.
- Follow this plan to avoid changes being perceived as tokenistic, reactive or disconnected from your community.

Findings and recommendations from Kowetha's Dealing with Racism seminar, October 12th 2023

Key points:

- We need schools/clubs to take racist incidents more seriously and open up spaces to have conversations about difficult issues.²
- We need racial literacy training for school staff – teachers need to understand the impact of racist incidents on the child.³
- We need to empower and coach children of colour – which includes making it easier for kids to report abuse – by equipping them to be able to do so.
- We can mobilise the support of external groups such as Barnardo's SEEN project and Cornwall Council.

Preventative measures – as next steps, we would like schools to:

- Hold school specific focus groups (including ex- and current students) to help school leaders to understand current reality of what it is like to be a person of colour in their school – make recommendations on individual school – train students anti-racism and cascade on to younger pupils. The focus group could then be part of an evaluation feedback loop.
- Review the curriculum and work towards one that is anti-racist, decolonised and reflective of all histories.
- Equip with anti-racist training for children/teachers/parents through continuous professional development in school, in the context of racism as a trauma.
- Hosts seminars on the subject of empowerment and identity for young people with a focus on a positive, anti-deficit model (supported and perhaps led by Kowetha/ Barnardo's) define their own anti-racist practice & policy.

² <https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/talking-about-race-with-young-people/>

³ <https://theblackcurriculum.com/blog/blog-post-title-three-dxgps>

Questionnaire reply from Danelle Gilbert, classteacher and Equality Diversity Trust Specialist, St Columb Minor Academy

1. What changes have you made to your school with children and adults of colour in mind?

In our ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment, we have implemented several key initiatives with children and adults of colour in mind. The work around racial issues are complex and interconnected with broader societal structures and therefore has needed a tailored solutions bespoke to our locality and cohort - one that continues to address the unique challenges faced by individuals and communities. To begin, we have conducted comprehensive assessments of our current practices, policies and curriculum to develop areas of improvement and aligning them with our moral and legal duties. We conducted crucial conversations amongst staff, students and parents about race, equity and inclusions, which has informed our training. Through our training led by a leading psychologist, we were able to equip our educators with the tools and knowledge needed to implement culturally responsive teaching practices as well as unpick any unconscious biases. Careful and well-thoughtout resources have been created to decolonise the curriculum and better represent our diverse pupils. To tackle racial incident and promote restorative racial justice, we have developed a framework that focuses on healing, repairing harm and fosters reconciliation.

2. What prompted you to make these changes?

We had a heightened awareness and sensitivity to racism in our school due to low-to-moderate levels of racial incidences occurring. We wanted to be proactive rather than reactive, so we decided to make a long-term commitment to becoming an anti-racist school. Our Trust is very supportive of the work we do and is disseminating our good practice across 21 of our schools. The work we do is also being outsourced to local secondary schools in the aim to better our anti-racist provision for all pupils.

3. What impact do you think these changes made?

We are on the journey to becoming a racially competent community of schools. This has and will continue to have a profound and multi-faceted impact on our educational institution, its pupils, staff and the broader community. We can already identify several significant positive outcomes: For example, pupils feel more included through the equitable learning environments we have created. Recent feedback indicated that pupils feel seen, celebrated and have an improved sense of belonging. This has significantly impacted individuals and their families. Staff now feel more equipped to deal with racial incidents and can follow the correct channels in the escalation process. Learning is more culturally enriched. We are now seeing a broader range of educational experiences and adapted resources that better represent the diverse world around us. It has become a golden thread in all we do rather than a bolt-on or a tick-box exercise. There has been a reduction in racial discrimination and prejudice, although it is not **YET** completely dissipated.

4. What challenges have you faced?

Any educator will attest to challenges being part of learning and growing. We have not been the exception to this as we continue to become racially competent in all our actions, attitudes and mindsets. For some of us, it has been an exciting and much needed leap into racially literate schools whereas for others, it has been like turning a tanker in the ocean – slow and steady. We have found that once pupils, staff and parents alike are invested to make change, usually through relationship, then they better engage. Sustaining momentum has also been a challenge, especially as initiative and curriculum reforms change. Appointing a cultural empowerment champion has been monumental in driving positive change forward. Finally, measuring academic impact and progress can initially present as a challenge in the short term but will become evident long term.

5. What advice would you give to other schools to help them support children of colour in Cornwall?

As you can see there is already some great work happening within schools in Cornwall – network with as many specialists and organisations to help support you and your educational institute become racial competent. It is not a ‘onesize fits all’ model but rather a tailored approach designed to fit your educational institute and its stakeholders.

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