CROSS CURRICULAR CONTEXTS, THEMES & DIMENSIONS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Edited by

GAJENDRA K. VERMA AND PETER D. PUMFREY

VOLUME 4

**Also available as a printed book
see title verso for ISBN details**

Cultural Diversity and the Curriculum

Volume 4

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Cross-Curricular Contexts, Themes and Dimensions in Primary Schools

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RoutledgeFalmer
Taylor & Francis Group

LONDON and NEW YORK

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Preface

In 1991, twelve refugee families from Somalia came to England. Under the aegis of Sheffield City Council, they were moved into newly-built houses on The Manor estate. The Manor comprises some 6,000 mainly white working-class citizens. The area is characterized by a range of socio-economic difficulties including unemployment, poverty, lack of resources, housing shortages and crime. The arrival into such a situation of a group of about fifty black immigrants provided a focus for the latent racism endemic in most societies. Shortly after their arrival, harassment of the refugees began. It escalated. The all too familiar catalogue of minority group harassment rapidly accumulated including verbal abuse, broken windows, dogs being set on to children, excrement pushed through letter boxes, stoning and attacks in the streets.

'In an attempt to counter harassment, the council installed panic buttons in Somali homes, linking them to a police station. Community workers now tour The Manor after nightfall, checking that the Somali families are safe. Sheffield police have increased their presence on the estate with ten uniformed constables and a sergeant patrolling each night. In perhaps the toughest move, Sheffield council has begun eviction proceeding against four white families it believes to be behind the harassment' (Furbisher, 1993). One man, charged with threatening behaviour towards a Somali, a charge the accused denies, is reported as having his name added to the list of white families facing eviction. Over 200 people signed a petition demanding that this threat of eviction be withdrawn.

One 25 year old male Somali is reported as saying, 'Some of us walked hundreds of miles across desert to escape. Some died. Now many are asking why they came here. I know many white families here are unemployed. They are frustrated. But they seem to take their frustration out on us. Equally tellingly, another Somali spoke of escaping from one form of hatred only to find another. 'My elder daughter, who is thirteen, complained that I had told her that we were going to a European country where there was no war or attacks. She thought there was a war here which had been kept secret. It was hard to explain that not all people in the UK were like this' (ibid).

In April, 1993, the Somalis staged a 'sit-in' at the Sheffield town hall in order to express their soundly-based fears for life and limb, and to request that they be moved.

Is such a case study merely sensationalism and not indicative of latent racist attitudes and behaviours that can arise in virtually any community where resources are limited and resentments readily aroused? Alternatively, is it symptomatic of the animosity and hostilities that all too readily arise in such circumstances?

In October, 1993, in another part of the country, six teenagers from Thorton Heath were charged with beating to death a refugee from Afghanistan. Sadly, it is all too easy to find examples of racial harassment ranging from name-calling to murder. The Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police has stated that reported incidents of racial harassment represent but the tip of an iceberg.

There are neither quick nor easy answers to addressing the appearance and continuation of such anti-social violence against members of minority ethnic groups. The challenge of developing a socially cohesive multicultural society is one requiring the commitment of all citizens. The earlier that this work begins, the greater the likelihood of creating a more tolerant society. In this challenge facing the country, education represents one avenue whereby cultural diversity can be experienced by pupils and their families as enriching rather than threatening. As secondary schools build on what has gone before, the work of the staff of nursery and primary schools is central to the success of this endeavour.

Education for All was the significant and challenging title of the comprehensive report by the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Minority Ethnic Groups published in 1985. Lord Swann, who chaired that Committee, was the guest of honour of the University of Manchester in 1987 at the inauguration of the Centre for Ethnic Studies in Education (CESE) under the direction of Professor Gajendra K.Verma, based within the University's School of Education. The current series is but one manifestation of the continuing commitment of the CESE, the School of Education and of sixty contributors drawn from organizations across the country, to the ideals of the Swann Report. Fortunately, in developing and implementing the policies and practices demanded if the educational system is to provide an 'Education for All', we are not alone.

> I believe deeply that all men and women should be able to go as far as talent, ambition and effort can take them. There should be no barriers of background, no barriers of religion, no barriers of race. I want…a society that encourages each and every one to fulfil his or her potential to the utmost…let me say here and now that I regard any barrier built on race to be pernicious. (John Major, 1991)

Thus spoke Prime Minister John Major in an address given in September 1991. It reflects the philosophy and principles embodied in both the Swann report and in Section 1 of the Education Reform Act 1988. The views are ones that provide common ground between political, ethnic, religious and other social groups. Without such an agreed aspiration, social cohesion degenerates into

confrontation. Turning comforting political rhetoric into reality in the classroom and community is one of the greatest responsibilities facing the teaching profession. The institutional and individual racism endemic in society must be acknowledged if it is to be alleviated. The school curriculum and the ways in which it is developed, taught and learned represents one of the most promising avenues available to approach this end. As in so many laudable activities, agreement in principle is relatively easy. The devil is in the detail.

This book has two major purposes. The first is to describe and discuss cultural diversity and the curriculum from various curricular perspectives. The second is to consider how the legitimate educational concerns of minority ethnic groups, and those of larger groups, can be constructively addressed within the framework of the National Curriculum and those equally important aspects of the curriculum subsumed under the broader headings of the 'basic' and 'whole' curriculum respectively. To this end, specialists in the key components of the curriculum have considered some of the challenges and describe promising practices in a number of specific subject and cross-curricular fields.

Each contributor in each of the four volumes comments under three headings on that aspect of the curriculum in which the contributor has specialist experience and expertise, in relation to cultural diversity. The headings used by all contributors are identified as 'Context', 'Challenges' and 'Responses'. The views expressed, the analyses of contexts, the identification of challenges and the suggestions for responses represent the considered opinions of the individual contributors.

This is the final volume in a series of four books. All four volumes are concerned with cultural diversity and the curriculum. Volumes 1 and 2 focus on secondary schools. Volumes 3 and 4 consider parallel curricular issues from a primary schools' perspective.

Volumes 1 and 3 address the implications of the National Curriculum foundation subjects and religious education in relation to cultural diversity at the secondary and primary-school levels, respectively. Volumes 2 and 4 consider the implications of cross-curricular themes in relation to cultural diversity at the secondary and primary-school levels respectively.

The Education Reform Act 1988 and the phasing in of its curricular requirements over the past six years has presented many challenges to the teaching profession (NCC, 1992). Six years after the passing of the Education Reform Act 1988, much remains undecided concerning the structure, content, pedagogy and assessment of many components of the school curriculum. The chaos created by numerous ill-considered and hastily implemented changes, followed by even more changes to changes, has detracted considerably from the effective delivery of the 'entitlement curriculum' that had been promised by the ERA (Barber and Graham, 1992).

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) based in York and the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) located in London were both established as a consequence of the Education Reform Act 1988. The setting up

of two separate organizations to develop, respectively, the curricular content and the assessment procedures required to implement the National Curriculum, was criticized from the very start by a considerable body of professional opinion as a recipe for confusion.

By 1993 the problems arising had reached such a magnitude that they could not be ignored. This led to the decision that both organizations would be integrated under the aegis of a new body called the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA). Sir Ron Dearing, Chair of the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC), had successfully managed a relatively trouble-free merging of the previously separate universities and polytechnics funding councils. He accepted the invitation extended by the Secretary of State for Education to undertake a review of the curriculum and its assessment, and to direct SCAA.

Consultation with the teachers charged with the delivery of the curriculum is at the core of Dearing's strategy. At a meeting with heads and teachers from the West Midlands held in May 1993, he is reported as saying:

> I have one master and that is the future of our children and their life chances in the next century, not the Secretary of State nor the many interest groups, but the young people. I care, as you care, very much about them. (Sir Ron Dearing, 1993)

They (teachers) are saying 'We are so committed to covering the National Curriculum that there is no time to respond to the other things.' It is freedom to respond that they want.

A summary of the actions proposed to meet the serious criticisms of the National Curriculum, entitled *The National Curriculum and its Assessment,* was published in September 1993. It was advertised as 'The school report that every teacher should read' (NCC/SEAC, 1993). Will the proposed reductions in the current administrative curricular burdens on teachers and schools provide the profession with freedom to consider the implications of cultural diversity and the whole curriculum in their daily work more effectively than hithertofore? A subsequent joint letter from HM Chief Inspector of Schools, England, HM Chief Inspector of Schools, Wales and the Chairman of the School Curriculum and Assessment Agency is all schools in England and Wales reinforced this point (Sutherland, James and Dearing, 1993). The final version of the Dearing Report appeared in December, 1993 (SCAA, 1993).

Education for All and equality of educational opportunity within an entitlement curriculum are rallying calls that have an appealing simplicity in an age of sound-bites and slogans. Even a cursory consideration rapidly demonstrates that all three involve controversial and complex educational, ethical, moral, legal and financial issues. In our increasingly multicultural and multiethnic community, mutual recognition and acceptance by individuals and groups of the rights and

responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy underpins the social cohesion on which our well-being is largely dependent.

The multicultural nature of the population and of schools will develop. Demographic data presented in Volume 3, Chapter 2 and in Chapter 2 of this volume, confirm this point and provide indications of the nature and extent of the demographic changes that are likely to take place in the future. These demographic changes, and their educational implications, must be considered if the state educational system is to respond adequately and equitably.

We deliberately ventured into the controversial field of cultural diversity and the curriculum whilst the 'rules of the curricular game' in state schools, initiated under the Education Reform Act 1988, are still being negotiated in relation to certain aspects of the curriculum. We do so because of the importance with which we view the increasing ethnic diversity of the school population and of the country. Janus-faced, that ethnic diversity represents both problems and opportunities for all parties involved. To deny either would be a disservice to the pupils and the communities that the educational system exists to serve. It would also limit the chances that an education meeting the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988 would ever be provided.

It has been argued that cross-curricular elements, of which an extensive number can be listed, make a major contribution to the personal and social education of pupils. Such elements 'are ingredients which tie together the broad education of the individual and augment what comes from the basic curriculum' (NCC, 1990, p. 2). The NCC has distinguished three aspects of cross-curricular elements: dimensions; skills; and themes. Dimensions include a commitment to the provison of *equal opportunities* for all pupils, coupled with recognition that 'preparation for life in a multicultural society is relevant to all pupils' and should permeate the entire curriculum (ibid., p. 2). Thus cultural diversity, gender and special educational needs are identified by the NCC as three key considerations. There are others. Because of their salience, we have selected four further dimensions of particular importance in a multicultural school, society and world. There are also many cross-curricular skills. These include:

- communication skills (receptive and expressive aspects of language);
- numeracy skills;
- study skills;
- problem-solving skills;
- personal and social skills; and
- information technology skills.

Cross-curricular themes refer to five major facets of any curriculum that are considered by the NCC to be essential parts of the whole curriculum.

Volume 4 is in three Parts. The first, Part 1, comprises two chapters written to establish the importance to all schools and all pupils, of the context of, challenges to and responses to, cultural diversity in relation to a range of cross-

curricular issues. Chapter 1 comprises a consideration of the nature and extent of cultural diversity and its cross-curricular implications. The second chapter summarizes and discusses the cross-curricular elements in more detail and provides demographic information on ethnic diversity based on the latest census information. These two chapters set the scene for subsequent contributions. Part 2 comprises chapters on each of the five major cross-curricular themes specified in the publications of the National Curriculum Council. Thus, Chapters 3 to 7 are concerned with:

- education for economic and industrial awareness;
- careers education and guidance;
- health education;
- education for citizenship; and
- environmental education.

In addition to these important cross-curricular themes, we have identified a further seven cross-curricular dimensions that merit attention. These are presented in Part 3 as Chapters 8 to 14.

- personal and social education;
- gender issues;
- multicultural dimension in the primary National Curriculum;
- children with special educational needs;
- the European dimension;
- information technology; and
- initial teacher education and ethnic diversity.

As in the previous three volumes, our contributors are drawn from various cultural, ethnic and professional backgrounds. Consequently, their respective philosophical and theoretical stances vary. To have sought only individuals operating from a single agreed ideological, philosophical, or theoretical position concerning the nature and curricular implications of cultural diversity in the primary school, would have implied that the editors considered such a position existed and was the most tenable.

Irrespective of the authors' respective ideological, philosophical and theoretical positions, all are clearly concerned with ensuring that the National Curriculum is effectively delivered in our multicultural society. The claim that good practice can help to drive out poor theory, has something to commend it. A belief in the importance of the curricular implications and practices deriving from cultural diversity unites our contributors.

This volume completes the task on which we set out two years ago. It is not the end of our involvement! We acknowledge with appreciation the generous help given to us by our fellow contributors and by the many organizations that have also assisted in providing information, advice and comment. The

dissemination and discussion of the ideas contained within the series, their application, development and evaluation within our educational institutions, are eagerly anticipated. Providing *Education for All* is a challenge to which we must rise.

Peter D.Pumfrey and Gajendra K.Verma

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List of Abbreviations

AIMER	Access to Information on Multicultural Education Resources
AIMS	Art and Design in a Multicultural Society
AMA	Association of Metropolitan Authorities
APU	Assessment of Performance Unit
ARE	Anti-Racist Education
AREAI	Association of Religious Education Advisers and Inspectors
ARTEN	Anti-Racist Teacher Education Network
AT	Attainment Targets
ATEM	Association of Ethnic Minority Teachers
BCPE	British Council for Physical Education
BGIN	Black Governors' Information Network
BTEC	Business and Technical Education Council
CARM	Campaign Against Racism in the Media
CATE	Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
CCW	Curriculum Council for Wales
CDT	Craft, Design and Technology
CESIE	Centre for Ethnic Studies In Education
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPSA	Curriculum and Parental Support Assistant
CPVE	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
CTA	Caribbean Teachers Association
DES	Department of Education and Science
EBP	Education Business Partnership
EMAG	Ethnic Minority Advisory Groups

ENCORE	European Network for Conflict Resolution in Education
ESRC	Economic and Social Science Research Council
ERA	Education Reform Act 1988
E2L	English as a second language
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESG	Education Support Grant
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GEST	Grants for Educational Support and Training
GRIST	Grant Related In-service Training
HEFC	Higher Education Funding Council
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
INSET	In-service Education for Teachers
IRR	Institute for Race Relations
IT	Information Technology
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
KS	Key Stages (of the National Curriculum)
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
MCE	Multi-Cultural Education
MFLWG	Modern Foreign Languages Working Group
NAHT	National Association of Head Teachers
NAME	National Anti-Racist Movement in Education
NAREC	National Association of Racial Equality Councils
NASA	Northern Association of Section 11 Authorities
NC	National Curriculum
NCCL	National Council for Civil Liberties
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NCDP	National Curriculum Development Plan
NCMT	National Council for the Mother Tongue
NERIS	National Educational Resources Information Service
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NSC	National Science Curriculum
NSG	Non-Statutory Guidance
OPCS	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

PC	Profile Components
PoS	Programme of Study
PSE	Personal and Social Education
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RE	Religious Education
RI	Religious Instruction
RoA	Records of Achievement
RT	Runnymede Trust
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
SAIL	Staged Assessments in Literacy
SAT	Standard Assessment Task
SCAA	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SEAC	School Examinations and Assessment Council
SCIP	School Curriculum Industry Partnership
SCDC	School Curriculum Development Committee
SoA	Statements of Attainment
SSD	Social Services Department
TGAT	Task Group on Assessment and Testing
TVE	Technical and Vocational Education
WGR	Working Group Report

Part 1

*Educational Equality and Cultural Pluralism
in Primary Education: Cross-curricular
Perspectives*

Chapter 1
Cultural Diversity in Primary Schools: Its Nature, Extent and Cross-curricular Implications

Gajendra K.Verma

Context

The papers in the present volume focus on issues related to cross-curricular dimensions, skills and themes. The authors of these papers have analysed the issues from the point of view of cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics of primary schools. It is clear from their analyses that, unless the debate about shared values and different values in society is explicitly acknowledged and resolved, the concept of cultural diversity remains rhetorical and ineffective in the delivery of the curriculum. Many of the pedagogic issues related to plurality in the educational system are still unclear, although the contributors to the present series show that progress has been, and can be made.

Cultural diversity has been a fact of life in the countries of East and West, North and South for many centuries. The implication of this has been the presence within nation states of a number of cultural, ethnic or racial groups. Since the process of migration and the history of different nations vary considerably, the cultural profile of different regions within any particular country also varies. However, contemporary recognition of the value of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and their educational implications are international and more recent (Lynch, Modgil and Modgil, 1992a,b,c,d).

By the nineteenth century, cultural diversity in European countries was already marked in terms of differences in the religious, linguistic and ethnic profiles of their inhabitants. Political and social forces attempted to acculturate divergent and sometimes conquered cultural groups into the dominant culture and language. Even the post-World War I settlement, which made deliberate efforts to create culturally homogeneous nation states, failed to eliminate diversity and, in some cases, it served to accentuate the diversity. In spite of the fact that certain countries tried to integrate their divergent cultural groups within the dominant culture, many European nation states have allowed ethnic minorities to retain their distinctive cultures which often varied significantly from that of the dominant group. Others have signally failed so to do: to wit, the former Yugoslavia.

It must be acknowledged that in any society it is rare to find that the population is homogeneous. Most societies are now demographically pluralistic (particularly since World War II), characterized by the presence of two or more distinct groups of communities which are differentiated in terms of language, religion, ethnic characteristics and/or cultural heritage. In spite of such diversity, many countries have failed to recognize and support the heterogeneity of its citizens. The aim of 'unity in plurality' represents an ideal more readily espoused in rhetoric than worked towards in reality.

Notwithstanding such tendencies towards homogenization, considerable differences in value orientation can still be found between the European countries. Nationalism, for instance, is still much stronger in some countries than in others. Inglehart (1990) found that in 1985 72 per cent of all Greeks said they were 'very proud to be Greek' and 64 per cent of all Spaniards were 'very proud to be Spanish'. This contrasts quite sharply with only 33 per cent of the Portuguese being 'very proud to be Portuguese' and not more than 20 per cent of all (West) Germans saying that they were 'very proud to be German'. One should keep in mind, however, that important differences in outlook also exist within each of these countries. These differences are aspects of continuing socialization processes.

Inglehart also compared religious and moral attitudes in various countries. 53 per cent of the French describe themselves as a 'religious person' as opposed to 84 per cent of the Italians. In the Netherlands 22 per cent of the population thinks 'homosexuality can never be justified', as opposed to 65 per cent in the United States. Also in the Netherlands 11 per cent of the population think that 'a woman needs children in order to be fulfilled'; in France the corresponding percentage is 71. What common values might enable any country work towards 'unity in plurality'?

The end of World War II was a turning point when ethnic minorities throughout the world started asserting their rights. They became conscious of the fact that their identities were being eroded because of assimilationist educational and social policies. This awareness caused them to challenge the disparity between the declared values of democratic societies and the realities of the operation of such policies. In 1994, the slogan of 'ethnic cleansing' used earlier to justify, for example, the wars in the Balkans, highlights an ever-present challenge to coexistence.

Over the last four decades or so the classical concept of a culturally homogeneous society has been challenged more openly. On the one hand there is the process of European integration—politically, socially and economically — which is likely to affect many of the rules and regulations and consequently citizens' daily lives. On the other hand, cultural, religious and linguistic differences between groups have come under scrutiny. At this point it would be appropriate to consider what we mean by 'culture'.

What is 'culture'? Definition of the term 'culture' is both complex and problematic. A common ambiguity inherent in any discussion of culture is the

interchangeable use of other terms when dealing with it, particularly within the educational context. For example, in order to meet the needs of a plural society, educational programmes have adopted certain strategies variously labelled as 'multicultural', 'multiracial', 'intercultural', 'cross-cultural', and 'antiracist' education. Such approaches to teaching have been supported by some and criticized by others. The relationship between cultural diversity and education has become an area of increasing controversy in Britain since the 1960s. It has generated debates and discussions about the nature of society and the functions of schooling. In a culturally diverse society such a debate inevitably involves issues such as value systems, religion, language and ethnic relations.

A review of the literature clearly demonstrates that many writers have not only oversimplified the analysis of the term 'culture' but have often approached it in a stereotypical way (Verma, 1986; Figueroa and Fyfe, 1993). For example, there has often been a tendency to define it primarily in terms of ethnicity, assuming homogeneity in any ethnic community or group. Culture is an evolving, dynamic and ongoing process, and not a static or unidimensional concept. It may be defined as the unique values, symbols, lifestyle, customs and other human-made components that distinguish one social group from another. Such socially determined constructs are themselves amenable to change in a rapidly changing world. It should also be stressed that individuals can belong to more than one social group, and consequently they can develop multiple group affiliations and loyalties.

As Clarke *et al.* (1981) put it:

> A culture includes the 'maps of meaning' which make things intelligible to its members. These 'maps of meaning' are not simply carried around in the head: they are objectivated in the patterns of social organisation and relationship through which the individual becomes a 'social individual'. (Clarke *et al.,* 1981)

From this perspective culture is learned, communicated and shaped through individual attempts to master and participate in the life of the group. Thus, culture is constructed and reconstructed through the process of social interaction.

There are many aspects of an individual's identity which develop through the socialization process. This process is influenced by family structures, schooling and experience in the wider society. These forces contribute to the development of an individual's identity which consists of specific behaviours, values, lifestyles, attitudes and world views. Such components of identity may differ and sometimes come into conflict with the mainstream framework or 'norms'. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that many of the conflicts that arise between the school and minority ethnic communities, and many of the cultural disparities that pupils experience, are caused by conflicting values, beliefs and behaviour (Pumfrey and Verma, 1990). Some ethnic and religious groups are socialized in homes and communities in which the sacred is valued more than the secular, and

in which traditional cultural beliefs and religious values are strongly held. The attachments that people develop in this process contribute to the formation of cultural in-groups. The attitudes of the in-group towards the out-groups are formed on the basis of experience. The school plays a mediating role in this process.

In Britain, since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988, the concern which is taking prominence on the Muslim education agenda is the issue of freedom of religion. Muslims are gaining support from some non-Muslim groups and are pressing for the removal of religious inequalities within the educational framework of the Education Act for religious education and collective worship. At a recent conference, organized by the All-Parliamentary Group for Racial Equality and the Runnymede Trust, the issues of religious discrimination and inequality were discussed. In the conference statement which was published it says that 'the multifaith nature of British society must be firmly anchored and reflected in the planning and development of religious education and collective worship, both locally and nationally' (Yaseen, 1993).

Thus, if we take the word 'culture' to denote the meanings and understandings which are learned, shared and evolve in groups, then the educational system should be constructed to create an environment against a background accepting of other cultures, ethnicities, class, gender and communities. The culture of an educational institution should be a reflection of the culture of society. If a society is a plural one, this ought to be reflected in the culture of the educational environment. In this perspective, culture encompasses almost every aspect of human experience—it represents a more or less consistent pattern of thoughts, feelings and actions, and it is structured.

In Britain, 3.06 million people—approximately 1 in 20 of the population — belong to an ethnic minority. This represents 5.5 per cent of the total population. This also means that these people have different ethnic origins to the majority of British people. Since the 1950s, when the number of people coming to live in Britain from former colonies began to increase, debate has continued about how to ensure that they are accorded the same rights, accept the same responsibilities, and have access to the same opportunities as other people in all aspects of life (see Chapter 2 for ethnic analyses based on the latest census).

The educational responses since the 1960s to the presence of ethnic minorities in British schools have been analysed as movements through three overlapping models based, in turn, upon the concepts of assimilation, integration and cultural pluralism. In this process, many educational strategies and models have been adopted to deal with the disadvantaged position of many ethnic-minority groups within the educational system in general and in schools in particular. None of the models seems to have met the challenges that face the educational system, and consequently they have failed to change the ideological perceptions of British society as a whole.

As early as 1977 a Green Paper, *Education in Schools: A Consultative Document* (DES, 1977) stressed that the presence of ethnic-

minority groups in Britain had implications for the education of all children. It suggested that all schools, whatever their ethnic composition, should give their pupils an understanding both of the multiethnic nature of British society and of Britain's place in an interdependent world. The Green Paper further stated that Britain is a multicultural, multiracial society and that the curriculum of schools should reflect the realities of this new Britain. Despite this, many education authorities in areas where there were few minority pupils turned a blind eye to such suggestions and responded by saying that the wider multiethnic society had little relevance to their local teaching practice.

Two years later, in 1979, the government set up an independent inquiry to look into the education of children from ethnic-minority groups. There were two sets of issues which led to the creation of this inquiry. These were the problem of West-Indian underachievement and that of the presence in British schools of Asian children with distinctly different languages and cultures.

The interim report, produced under the chairmanship of Anthony Rampton, appeared in 1981 entitled *West Indian Children in Our Schools* (DES, 1981). This report had as its focus the circumstances and experiences of West-Indian children in Britain and tended to play down those of children from other ethnic-minority groups. In view of the media headlines that the Brixton, Toxteth and Bristol racial disturbances attracted at the time, the emphasis in the Rampton report was not surprising. Soon after the publication of the interim report, Rampton resigned and Lord Swann was appointed as the new Chairman of the Inquiry.

The interim report (DES, 1981) stated that:

> the curriculum in all schools should reflect the fact that Britain is both multiracial and culturally diverse…the intention of multicultural education is simply to provide all children with a balanced education which reflects the nature of our Society…all heads should be prepared to develop a multicultural approach towards the curriculum. (DES, 1981)

Critics have always argued that the ethnocentric nature of much of what is taught in the classrooms has an adverse effect on both ethnic-minority and majority children. This restricts the development of the former's self-concepts and reproduces prejudice.

Over the last twenty years there has also been a growing body of opinion that inappropriate assessment procedures are one of the major factors contributing to the disproportionate numbers of black and other minority children assessed as having learning difficulties and placed in special schools (Tomlinson, 1987). It is ironic that the increased per-capita investment in pupils' education that this represented was largely counterproductive.

The Swann Report moved the main focus of the debate about cultural diversity, multicultural education and equal opportunity from issues concerning the education of specific ethnic-minority children to the issues

concerning the relevant and good education of *all* pupils for a plural society (DES, 1985). It advocates balance, breadth and equity within a pluralist framework. This would both educate the ethnic majority and make schools acceptable areas for personal development and educational achievement for *all* ethnic groups. The Report comments that:

> The fundamental change that is necessary is the recognition that the problem facing the education system is not how to educate children of ethnic minorities, but how to educate all children—Britain is a multiracial and multicultural society and all pupils must be enabled to understand what this means. (DES, 1985, p. 363)

The Report also asserted that many obstacles lay in the path of ethnic-minority pupils and lessened their chances of fulfilling their educational potential. Among those obstacles were ones created by poor interethnic relationships and by the relative failure of schools to prepare all pupils, of whatever origin, for a life in a multiracial society. The Report pointed out that many school practices related to cultural diversity were harmful and that they reinforced cultural stereotypes and discriminatory practices both inside schools and in the wider society. The question of multicultural education is discussed at some length in the Swann Report, which states that:

> We consider that a multiracial society such as ours would function more effectively and harmoniously on the basis of pluralism which enables, expects and encourages members to participate fully in shaping the society as a whole within a framework of commonly accepted values, practices and procedures whilst also allowing and, where necessary, assisting the ethnic minority communities in maintaining their distinct ethnic identities within their common framework. (DES, 1985)

The Report advocates that the education should combine the cultivation of differences between groups with the maintenance of a core of common national values.

With the introduction of the Education Reform Act (ERA) (DES, 1988), discourse on multicultural and antiracist education, equal opportunity, and cultural diversity was somewhat marginalized despite its explicit guiding principles (see p. 13). The educational debate shifted to the National Curriculum which was conceived of as a list of subjects structured by Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study. The topics such as 'Attainment Targets', 'assessment and testing', 'Key Stages' were given statutory force in the ERA, 1988. However, since 1990 the National Curriculum Council (NCC) has begun to produce booklets and papers which have introduced issues such as equal opportunities, cultural diversity, the multicultural nature of our society and so on. An examination of various documents and guidelines clearly shows that there are ambiguities and

often omission of the crucial issues of cultural diversity and the curriculum. One wonders whether the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) which replaced the NCC and SEAC in October 1993, will not make similar mistakes.

The educational experience of ethnic-minority children and adolescents in British schools is affected by a number of factors such as social class, teacher attitudes and expectations against a background of institutional racism. The Swann Report drew attention to one main aspect of institutional racism, namely the Eurocentric/Anglocentric curriculum and the biased assessment procedures, which often bore little relation to the lives and experiences of ethnic-minority pupils (DES, 1985). Similar conclusions have been subsequently reported by Verma (1989), and Tomlinson and Smith (1989) on the basis of extensive research. Studies have also concluded that the educational system has failed to respond adequately to the cultural diversity which is now characteristic of the school population. Minority cultures are all too often undervalued or misunderstood as they are represented in the curriculum.

Ample evidence also exists to show that inequality in educational experiences is a powerful determinant of difference in educational attainment in children (DES, 1985; Barrow, 1988; Tomlinson and Smith, 1989). Social class, ethnicity, gender and disability exert a considerable influence on the life chances of young people. If one accepts its limitations, education remains an important means of social mobility. It contributes towards creating economic and occupational security and acts as a buffer to other forms of social disadvantage. An 'entitlement' curriculum, such as that envisaged by the ERA, represents an important unifying value in a culturally diverse society.

The extent to which a school provides access to the knowledge and experiences children are entitled to, and the consequent improvement in learning that children make, should be the determining factor when judging whether or not a school is effectively offering equality of educational opportunity.

There is evidence to suggest that ethnic-minority communities do accept the importance of a shared framework of educational and societal purposes. Despite this, they find ambiguities and contradictions in the curriculum. The educational system seems to have failed to meet the needs and aspirations of ethnic and cultural minority groups particularly in relation to their identity development.

Challenges

The government has created a state educational system whereby pupils are tested throughout their period of statutory education. The educational content of their courses has been centrally prescribed to an extent unknown in this century. All this has been done in the name of higher standards. Whether these higher standards will be achieved as a result of these changes to the system is more a matter of faith than confident prediction. It may well make for a situation in which personal and societal inequalities will be increased rather than diminished,

unless teachers are made keenly aware of the processes in which they are engaged and for which they are, in part, responsible. An educational system based solely on competitive principles leads rapidly to the differentiation between pupils by relative attainments. 'Pecking orders' of individuals and groups are soon established. Cooperative learning is based on a contrasting conceptualization of the educational process. In an ethnically diverse society, the balance between competition and collaboration is analogous to walking a 'high wire'.

The primary purpose of the National Curriculum has been set out as being to:

- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society;
- prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. (DES, 1988)

It is also authoritatively stated that 'the principle that each pupil should have a broad and balanced curriculum which is also relevant to his or her particular needs is now established in law' (DES, 1988).

On the basis of the above principle it is naively assumed that such 'needs' are known, accepted and identified and that all schools will respond to the educational needs of their pupils appropriately. Schools have been and will be responding to the above objectives in different ways, depending on their resources, priorities and characteristics of the school population.

Some observers are of the opinion that the political, economic and social objectives of the Education Reform Act (ERA) are (a) to raise educational standards for all, (b) to secure better education for all, (c) to ensure that future generations are equipped with knowledge, skills and understanding to further their own personal development as well as to make contribution to society by securing the economic success of the country against its 'competitors'.

Under the 1988 Education Reform Act the 'what' i.e., the content of the subjects is, on the whole, controlled centrally. The 'how' i.e., the process is largely in the hands of teachers. Some critics of the ERA suggest that the underlying assumption of this educational model is that by prescribing the content and linking it with statutory assessment arrangements, educational standards can be raised. There is no evidence so far, that by legislating for access and entitlement, the achievement levels of all can be standardized and also raised. Analyses by various practitioners have raised serious questions about the inbuilt assumptions in the new legislation (see also Volumes 1 to 3 in this series). Access and entitlement for *all* pupils cannot be managed unless there is commitment both on the part of teachers who are responsible for the delivery of the National Curriculum and the pupils (and their families) for whose benefit the educational system is provided.

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) has emphasized through its various publications that the cross-curricular aspects of the curriculum are an integral

part of what is needed to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988. It also stresses that different subjects must not be taught in isolation, but should be planned in such a way as to contribute to pupils' learning as a whole, and it should distinguish between cross-curricular dimensions, skills and themes. In Circular No. 6 there is a striking metaphor for the whole curriculum:

> Attainment targets and programmes of study are the bricks with which the curriculum must be built. Cross-curricular strategies bond these bricks into a cohesive structures (NCC, 1989, par. 19).

Cross-curricular elements comprise two major dimensions, six skills and five themes. Cross-curricular aspects explicitly acknowledge the importance of topic work. This is supposed to integrate various aspects of knowledge, understanding and applications that can also be identified as belonging to specific subject domains comprising the National Curriculum foundation subjects and religious education. Circular No. 6 has classified cross-curricular provision under dimensions, skills and themes as being 'helpful for review and organisation of the curriculum and the planning of the content'.

   The two dimensions, six skills and five cross-curricular themes are outlined in the introduction and discussed more fully in Chapter 2.

   These cross-curricular elements ought to permeate every aspect of the curriculum.

   The National Curriculum defines cross-curricular themes as 'elements that enrich the educational experience of pupils'. The themes can be related to all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Each of these five themes is addressed by specialists in the field of primary education in the present volume. The question often posed by those concerned with the education of *all* children is: 'To what extent are the cross-curricular aspects, and especially those relating to cultural diversity and in general for education for life in a plural society, being addressed in the implementation of the ERA?' If the broad aims of education are to be realized, then cultural diversity must be made creative in school, by weaving together the warp of the interrelated principles of cross-curricular dimensions, skills and themes with the weft of the foundation subjects and religious education.

   The Education Reform Act 1988 says that the curriculum should be 'balanced and broadly based' and should promote 'the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils' and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life'. However, pupils come from varying cultural backgrounds, and the society in which they will live their adult lives will be increasingly multicultural. Hence, it is important, as the ERA requires, for the curriculum to address the issues of cultural diversity. The National Curriculum Council (NCC) has approached these issues from a cross-curricular perspective, and stresses the need for whole-curriculum planning and

for giving adequate attention in particular to such cross-curricular issues as equal opportunities and education for life in a multicultural society.

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) has stressed that the cross-curricular aspects of the curriculum are an integral part of what is needed to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988 (ERA). It also stresses that different subjects must not be taught in isolation, but must be planned so as to contribute to pupils' learning as a whole.

Responses

Given the challenges outlined in the preceding section, the questions arise as to what can be done to achieve the stated objectives of the National Curriculum, and how to ensure that cross-curricular dimensions, skills and themes form part of the whole curriculum? It was assumed that the two major dimensions should permeate every aspect of the curriculum, the six skills be systematically and conscientiously fostered across the whole curriculum and that the five themes should be used to enrich educational experiences of pupils.

The introduction of the National Curriculum, the speed of its implementation and the indecisions and revisions in content specification and assessment procedures have caused much strain and tension, not least among teachers. Within the attendant dysfunctionality, it is easy to lose sight of the broad goals that the National Curriculum sets out to meet. Those goals, as suggested in an earlier volume in this series, are ones which have much to commend them and which would seem to be not only equitable but also common sense (Chapter 3, Volume 2). As a starting point to this section, those goals bear repeating:

- the improvement of the quality of the education offered to *all* children and adolescents in the maintained sector of schooling;
- the achievement of a greater balance in the scope of that education;
- the achievement of greater uniformity/continuity in the education offered in different parts of the country, thus not only creating greater equity generally, but also fairness to those children who have to change schools because their families move home.

Whatever the perceived imperfections surrounding the National Curriculum as it is presently, those goals would seem to be a step in the right direction in terms of the equality of opportunity aspect in a culturally diverse society. Against this, however, one has to set the prescriptive nature of its diktat and the Anglocentric orientation of the content. This, as has also been pointed out in other volumes of this series, has tended to undo some of the laudable, albeit rather piecemeal, efforts to move the traditional curriculum towards one that was more empathetic to cultural diversity.

In 1992 the National Union of Teachers issued guidelines showing schools how to maintain antiracist and multicultural teaching and prevent the National

Curriculum becoming 'nationalistic and Eurocentric'. It sent advice to all schools that teachers should prepare pupils to be 'citizens of the world' and use every opportunity to widen pupils' awareness of the contributions of non-Europeans to the world's store of knowledge, culture and achievement (NUT, 1992). The National Association of Head Teachers has published *Managing Equality* (NAHT, 1992) which provides all headteachers with a code of practice to ensure that overt and covert forms of racial discrimination are recognized and dealt with.

The requirement to incorporate cross-curricular themes into the education received by children and young people in both primary and secondary schools may not include all the skills and areas of sensitization that might be considered desirable in terms of a fair response to cultural diversity in Britain. For example, one might have hoped to see interpersonal relationships more prominently included in the cross-curricular elements. However, as the contributors to this volume show, the cross-curricular elements do not shut the door on issues relating to cultural diversity in our increasingly complex society. These issues cannot be satisfactorily resolved by individual teachers acting alone, although each has an important part to play in the whole process; it is, after all, typically the individual teacher working in his/her classroom. Schools require explicit policies to address the challenges of cultural diversity. Such policies require all teachers to make a joint effort to:

- take a critical stance on the identification of cultural bias, prejudice, sexism, racism and stereotyping whether found in teaching materials or strategies;
- approach all subject matter, whether treating cross-curricular themes or core and foundation subjects, in a way which questions ethnocentrism;
- value teaching which makes an effective response to the aspirations of *all* pupils and which actively seeks to maximize their full potential; and
- seek to keep themselves informed of good professional practice.

Cross-curricular themes are not merely about the transmission of particular skills, and knowledge and understanding. They also have a *value* content; their inclusion is a tacit recognition that the themes are an important 'cement' to the main body content of the National Curriculum. They are included because they are held to be of value to the individual to help equip him/her for life in the modern world, while at the same time being of benefit to society as a whole. Health education, for example, may be of help to the individual in physical terms such as the avoidance of food-poisoning or seeking prompt treatment of an infection through increasing *individual* levels of awareness. Cross-curricular themes have a *social* benefit, whether to follow the logic of the instanced example, in terms of society being healthier or of fewer working days lost, and so forth.

Examples taken from the primary-school cross-curricular themes will serve to illustrate how cultural diversity issues can permeate such themes.

In *'Economic and Industrial Understanding'* there are many opportunities to raise issues relating to equality of opportunity, both in terms of race and gender

(Chapter 3). This could occur in discussion of what children may have seen when on an industrial visit or watching videos treating this topic. The key approach would appear to be in the quality of the illustrations put forward by the teacher in linking children's direct experiences and those arising out of the stimulus material. This theme is well-suited to tackle issues of social justice, race and culture. It is not just the links *per se,* but making children aware of the economic and industrial factors in their lives which shape their communities and their presents and futures.

In the case of *'Careers Education and Guidance'*, it is easy perhaps to fall into the temptation that coverage of such a theme in the primary school is premature. Yet, the early years in school are when children begin to form attitudes about the *value* of particular occupations in terms of their own self-worth and that of others (Chapter 4). Those perceptions are built on what the child picks up from home and neighbourhood, the media, and from the school, both formally through the classroom process, and informally through peer-group interaction. This is therefore a critical phase and teachers need to take particular care in classroom and individual interactions. They need to respond *positively* to early articulations of career aspirations and to try to avoid the often unconscious negative stereotyping about job status. Such discussion also lends itself to drawing attention to the breaking down of the traditional attitude barriers about employment avenues that have been given impetus by the equal-opportunities movement. There are important educational implications for race and gender and for children's perceptions of themselves and others. Careers' education should be presented in such a way as to prepare children for their future in a multiracial society. Appropriate role models are of the essence. Similarly, *'Health Education'*, and *'Education for Citizenship and Environmental Education'* provide illustrations of the possibilities and pitfalls in terms of cultural-diversity treatment.

The complexities of issues surrounding *'Health Education'* make it a delicate theme to treat, not merely from a cultural point of view. There is the inherent danger of over-emphasizing *differences* between one group and another with the risk of adverse stereotypes becoming formed in the minds of children. This is a potential pitfall that can arise out of unguarded or ingenuous remarks or illustrations that may undo progress made elsewhere in sensitizing children to cultural diversity. Health education requires a holistic approach, in that it is a whole-school concern for the whole person and not just the physical aspect (Chapter 5).

'Education for Citizenship' with its implicit emphasis on individual rights and responsibilities in a democratic society is an important theme in terms of cultural diversity. It is at the heart of all interpersonal contact at the social, cultural and political levels. Fortunately, there is some practical guidance available on the development of material which achieves the combination of precision in assessing progress and ensuring that the curriculum motivates children, increases

their self-esteem and engages them as active partners in their own education (Chapter 6).

'Environmental Education' is not just about the way in which we treat the planet, it also has implications for the way in which we treat other people. Children and adults must learn to be mindful of the needs and well-being of others now and in the future when seeking solutions to their own immediate environmental problems. It is possible to link environmental education with other cross-curricular themes, ensuring that understanding and awareness contribute to the whole curriculum (Chapter 7).

Given the value-bearing nature of cross-curricular elements and their situation at the nexus of the individual/social matrix, there is every justification for ensuring that the ways in which these are presented make a virtue of cultural diversity while challenging prejudice in all its forms including racism, sexism and ethnocentrism in particular. Children at the primary stage may not be ready for tackling these full on, but it is important that we *start* the process. The evidence of the effects for good or ill of education in the early years and their influence on subsequent attitude formation and behaviours is inescapable.

As far as the translation of theory and policy into practice goes, there are signs that some local education authorities are making efforts to combine the demands of the Education Reform Act (ERA) with policies and practices which promote equality. A good example of this is the 'theme-book series' which has been published by Manchester City Council Education Department (1991). The loose-leaf binders, which make up the series cover the cross-curricular themes, skills and dimensions, offer a range of hints and suggestions to help teachers with the planning and delivery of them (see Chapter 2 for details). Given the overloaded curriculum in schools, teachers need to decide how to fit cross-curricular themes into a crowded timetable. Teachers must not be concerned with factual knowledge only, but with attitudes, understanding, analytical, personal and social skills.

We must aim to find ways to help young people to become comfortable with diversity and to accept it as a normal part of existence and not as exotic and novel. If, in the primary school, we can start our youngsters out on the path towards treating diversity as part of the cultural norm, we will have made a significant step in the right direction. The differences in various values and beliefs are what make individuals and groups stand apart from others. Were there not such differentiating characteristics, there might well be nothing to distinguish and, therefore, nothing to perceive. The challenge of 'unity in plurality' has been identified as being at the centre of the ERA. The cross-curricular elements in general and the dimensions and themes in particular provide many opportunities to develop the social cohesion essential to all citizens.

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