

The political and policy responses to migration related diversity in Britain's education system.

A European Approach to Multicultural Citizenship: Legal Political and Educational Challenges

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Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, URC Ethnicity and Citizenship,
University of Bristol, United Kingdom.

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1. Introduction

This report examines the ways in which migration related diversity in Britain has given rise to educational challenges; how these have been addressed in the past and how the responses to present challenges may be indicative of a broader approach to minority cultural differences. Throughout this report, each of these concerns are related to our earlier findings, presented in the D1 and D2 reports, as well as the overall EMILIE project aims. At the Athens meeting it was established that one way of exploring the impact of migration related diversity in education is to focus upon examples of ‘difference’ specific education as inclusion - not separatism - that have assumed the greatest prominence in each respective national frame. In particular, it was agreed that these should focus upon those cases or mobilisations that have been/are concerned with the promotion or recognition of minority differences with a view to pluralizing or ‘broadening’ the national culture. In the UK these have included

- i. contestations over the educational priorities and agendas that have emerged in *mainstream* mixed schooling, including any *institutional* accommodations that have or have not catered for the specificity of ethnic minority children; and
- ii. the mobilisations for *religiously or culturally specific* schools within the publicly funded sector.

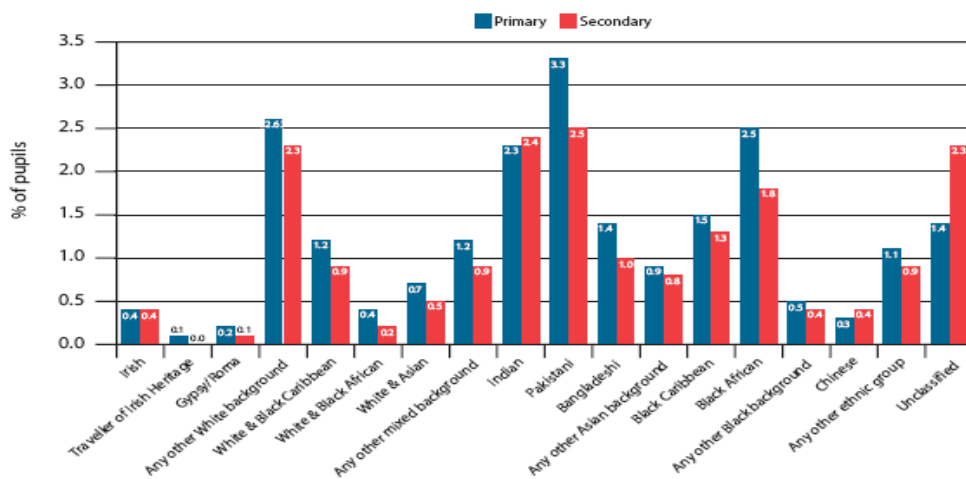
With this in mind **section two** contextualises the current educational challenges of the schooling of ethnic minority children in the debates between advocates of anti-racist education and multicultural education, their specific political imperatives and their policy implications. It notes how this praxis was effected by a centralising government that introduced a compulsory national school curriculum which accounted for the majority of what would be taught in schools; embedding the use of national school league tables as a measure of a school’s success and strengthening the role of ‘parental choice’. **Section three** then considers the recent policy shift toward Citizenship Education, specifically its provenance, imperatives and to what extent it is a rejection or incorporation of what has preceded it. In **section four** we move to the issue of religiously or culturally specific schools within the publicly funded sector. We particularly focus upon the motivation for these mobilisations; the debates they

have been party to, along with the extent of state accommodation or non-accommodation of this claims-making. **Section five** concludes on whether the earlier findings set out in the UK D1 and D2 reports are supported in the current public policy discourse and praxis responding to the challenges of migration related diversity in education.

1.1. Preliminary background

This paper draws upon qualitative interview data collected from key stakeholders, including educators and practitioners, advocates and experts, policy makers and policy advisers (listed in appendix I), and intertwines this data with the other case study material. Before detailing this, reference to basic descriptive statistics inform us that in England, the percentage of ethnic minority pupils in state-sector schooling¹ makes up 20.6% of all children aged 4-11yrs (in *primary* education), and 16.8% of children aged 11-16yrs (in *secondary* schools). As figure 1 identifies, at the primary level, the largest ethnic minority group is Pakistani which accounts for 3.3% of pupils, followed by White Other pupils (2.6%) and Black African pupils (2.5%). At secondary school level the largest ethnic minority pupils are Pakistani (2.5%), followed by Indian (2.4%) and White Other (2.3%).

Fig. 1. The ethnic minority composition of Primary and Secondary school pupils²



¹ State sector schooling refers to *all* schools that receive state funding. This includes schools who receive funding channelled through their Local Education Authority (LEA), as well as those who opt out and maybe Voluntary Aided (VA) or receive Academy Status, but *excludes* wholly private and independent schools.

² Data from DfES (2006) research report paper: *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils aged 5-16*. London: HMSO.

With respect to geographical dispersion, the greatest proportion of Britain's ethnic minority pupils are concentrated in England with 4 percent of the school aged population of the North East and nearly three quarters of the school aged population of Inner London (of whom 17 percent are Black African; 12 percent Black Caribbean; 11 percent Bangladeshi; 9 percent Any other White background; 8 percent Mixed Heritage background) defined as ethnic minorities. The variation by Local Education Authority (LEA) is shown in figure 2, illustrating that the school aged ethnic minority population ranges from 1.5 percent of East Riding of Yorkshire LEA to 84% of Hackney LEA in London. Unsurprisingly, London has a very high proportion of Britain's ethnic minority pupils with 44 percent of all ethnic minority ethnic pupils attending schools in either an Inner or Outer London LEA.

Within this, however, if we examine the religious profiles of these groups we find that of all groups Muslim children are disproportionately present throughout the education system. Comprising nearly 5% (588,000) of the school population from the entire Muslim population of 3% (1.8 million) (Halstead, 2005, p. 104; Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2005), there is a striking contrast between the number of Muslim children and the number of Jewish children of school age (50,000)—who represent 0.4% of the school population (combining primary and secondary). Reflecting the particularly youthful national demographic of British-Muslims, where 33.8% are 0–15 years old and 18.2% are 16–24 years old (Scott, Pearce, & Goldblatt, 2001), in some LEAs this translates into a significant Muslim presence amongst school districts and wards. This is partially the result of concentrated settlement patterns by first-generation migrant workers (often intensified by the “white flight” to the suburbs, cf. Ratcliffe, 1996) which, in cities such as Bradford, means that roughly 33% of total school population is of predominantly Muslim ethnic minority origin (OFSTED/Audit Commission, 2002). As a result, “a significant number of inner city schools in Bradford almost exclusively serve the Muslim population” (Halstead, 2005: 110) — a pattern not uncommon in other cities home to significant post-war minority ethnic settlement.

During the course of the development of this considerable migration related diversity, educators, policy-makers and broader communities have sometimes favoured diverging, indeed competing, strategies, and two of the most prominent approaches might be cast together as anti-racist and multicultural education.

2. Anti-Racist and multicultural education

Anti-Racist education is premised upon the view that education should confront and challenge prevailing societal attitudes and practices marked by racial dynamics (Mullard, 1985). This is, it is argued, because racial biases will exist amongst all students, teachers and institutional practices, so that racism is not just a problem that ethnic minorities should have to address alone (Tronya, 1987).

Throughout the 1980s this view was buttressed by evidence showing that children with African-Caribbean backgrounds were failing to achieve basic qualifications that were necessary for employment, let alone the social mobility aspired by their parents (Stone, 1981). This was particularly the case with African-Caribbean boys who were increasingly found to be in conflict with teachers, or unemployed, and/or disproportionately present in the criminal justice system (Coard, 1971). Indeed such was the concern generated by these patterns of educational failure, and related indices of social disadvantage and exclusion, that it led some African-Caribbean parents and broader communities in the 1970s to establish supplementary (Saturday) schools for their children (Modood and May, 2001).

Anti-racist education sought to redress these tendencies by promoting a positive image of 'black' people through such means as the teaching of 'black' history, promotion of 'black' role models, explicit recognition of the continuing existence of racism in society, and a greater awareness and sensitivity amongst educators of racial issues. What this ultimately comprised, then, was a political education that highlighted the processes and effects of racism within society, along with other forms of discrimination, and its implications for all students (Modood and May, 2001).

It was not applied in education policy, however, until the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), with the support of some Left-wing radicals (including the present Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone), became receptive to its ideas. As Lee Jasper, currently race equality advisor to the London Assembly, confirms: "there was a time when anti-racist policy in schools was very much more developed. When I think of the time that the ILEA was in existence, it pioneered all sorts of work on progressive curriculums [sic] to do with anti-sexism and anti-racism" (Interview with Jasper, 26 July 2007). Indeed, much of what we know as both anti-racist and multicultural education has been enacted at the local education authority level. This is because LEAs are responsible for education within the jurisdiction of county councils and metropolitan boroughs, which includes responsibility for all state schools with the

exception of those that apply and are afforded 'voluntary aided status' (and can therefore opt out) under the terms of the 1944 Education Act (a category of particular relevance to the discussion in section four). As such, because of these and other powers, not least section 11 of the Local Government Act (1966) which afforded local authorities additional funds to support the presence of significant numbers of ethnic minorities requiring language and other access assistance, in many multi-ethnic urban areas LEAs have been able to encourage anti-racist and multicultural initiatives in the face of – and at the cost of – some vociferous opposition.

One of the earliest adoption of multicultural praxis can be found in Birmingham LEA's introduction in 1975 of a new Agreed Syllabus "which required that pupils learn about and learn from the great world faiths present in the city" (Hewer, 2001: 517). Some other LEAs such as Bradford, meanwhile, promoted innovations including the provision of *halal* meat in schools in 1983. Indeed, the guidelines issued by Bradford LEA were, at the time quite radically, based upon the following two planks:

- that all children were entitled to equality of treatment, equality of opportunity and equality of services and should be offered a shared educational experience;
- and that all sections of the city had an equal right to the maintenance of their distinctive identities and loyalties of culture, language, religion and custom, and that so far as was compatible with individual needs, the authority's provision of services should respect the strength and variety of each group's cultural values.

Both of these positions were set out in their LEA policy statement that aimed to prepare all children and young people for life in a multicultural society, "to counter racism and racist attitudes, and the inequalities and discrimination which result from them, to build on and develop the strengths of cultural and linguistic diversity, and to respond sensitively to the special needs of minority groups" (City of Bradford Local Administrative Memorandum No 2/82). Whilst the Bradford LEA recognized the organizational difficulties of achieving these aims, it was convinced that the educational needs of ethnic minority children could be met within a comprehensive education system based upon a common school curriculum.

2.1. Difference and divergence

It is important to emphasise that both anti-racist and multicultural education are diffuse conceptions of educational reform, and to that extent it is difficult to present either one as entirely distinct from the other (Tronya, 1987: 311). Yet it is equally the case that within the context of an elision of political and cultural identities, anti-racist and multicultural education became inherently oppositional educational projects. So where multiculturalism was, somewhat erratically, introduced into multi-ethnic British schools, it was regarded by many anti-racist educators as “an instrument of control and stability rather than one of change” (Mullard, 1985: 50). As Jasper now reflects: “if anything, anti-racists falsely caricatured multiculturalism as a soft option because with any generalised concept there are many ways you can implement it, and yes at its tokenistic level it is meaningless. Where it is imbued with an equality of opportunity and anti-racism at its core, then it’s a force for good.” (Jasper, Interview).

One of the things that anti-racist critics lamented was the supposed lack of politics in multicultural education. More specifically, anti-racists favoured the predication of race-equality in education on an overarching, single, political identity. For example, activist groups such as all London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism (ALTARF) which emerged in the late 1970s, and the publicly funded *Constructions of Anti-racist Education* programmes that developed in the early 1980s through the policies of the ILEA, both sought to distance themselves from ethnic or cultural particularity by embracing the politics of Black solidarity. In this way anti-racist educators viewed their movement as an oppositional pedagogy premised on a political conflict between Black and White interests.

A number of challenges addressed this oppositional pedagogy. Amongst others, Modood (1988) charged anti-racists with ignoring a plurality of ethnic differences and cultural – not only colour – racism, alongside the ways in which ethnic minorities can retain a mode of being not necessarily reducible to racist categorisations. Another challenge arose from the inquiry into the racially motivated murder in 1986 of school boy Ahmed Ullah, at Burnage High School, Manchester. Though broadly sympathetic to the tenets of anti-racism, the official inquiry into the murder, published as the Burnage Report (MacDonald, Bhavnani, Khan, & John, 1989: 402), concluded that the school’s particular anti-racist policy had contributed to the incident because it was doctrinaire and divisive, something the report called “moral” or

“symbolic” anti-racism, in which “white students are all seen as “racist”, whether they are ferret-eyed fascists or committed antiracists.”³

The Burnage Report was one of several documents that are integral to understanding the British approach to migration related diversity in education. Another was prompted by the aforementioned African-Caribbean underachievement (described as a “matter of urgency” in a Government Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration) that led the then Labour government to establish an independent inquiry in 1979 (Verma, 1989).

2.2. The Swann Commission

The Swann Commission emerged from this inquiry and produced an interim publication, the Rampton Report (1981), named after its chair, which drew upon research from six LEAs to highlight the differential performance of “West Indian” children in relation to three other categories (‘Asians’, ‘Whites’, ‘All Other Leavers’). It was significant for highlighting racism as a factor in the poor educational performance of African–Caribbean students, but its conclusions failed to account for the impact of social class, or acknowledge sufficiently variations in educational performance between and within ethnic minority groups. In emphasising teacher racism, however, it caused considerable controversy and under pressure from a newly elected Conservative government its chair resigned. A new chair was appointed and the Swann Commission, as it became known, had its remit expanded to:

- Review the educational needs and attainments of children from ethnic minority groups, taking account as necessary, of factors outside the formal education system relevant to school performance, including influences in early childhood and prospects for school leavers;
- To consider the value of arrangements that would monitor and review the education performance of ethnic minority children, and what these arrangements should be.

³ A different interpretation is offered by Jasper who argues that this was evidence not of “a failure of anti-racism but a consequence of a reactionary backlash from the Conservative government of the advances made under a Labour administration in the topics of race equality. Now, part of that reactionary backlash wasn’t just affecting educational failure, but the twin failure of policing and criminal justice...which resulted in a re-prioritisation of the issues in which anti-racism lost its educational focus” (Jasper, Interview).

In many ways the tension between anti-racist and multicultural education are encapsulated in the various dynamics that this report was subject to. For example, whilst the committee's remit included the educational needs of children from Chinese, Cypriot, Italian, Ukranian and Vietnamise ethnic origins, the report could not escape the political context in which the commission was conceived.

Although it was focused upon issues of diversity related to educational settings, its major contribution was that it saw "the issues of ethnic minority children as closely tied up with the basic character of mainstream education" (Verma, 1989: 3), and therefore an issue for society as a whole - *just as anti-racists had wanted their conceptions of racism to be viewed*. So how did it characterise a multicultural society? As one that "values the diversity within it, whilst united by the cohesive force of *the* common aims, attributes and values which we all share... [leading to] diversity within unity" (Swann Report, 1985: chapter 1 para 6, emphasis added). This balances "on the one hand, the maintenance and the active support of the essential elements of the cultures and lifestyles of all the ethnic groups within it, and, on the other, the acceptance by all groups of a set of shared values distinctive of the society as a whole" (ibid. para 4). More specifically, Swann insisted upon "a framework of commonly held values, practices and procedures" (Swann Report, 1985: chapter 1 para 4) embodying a common political and legal system, and democratic commitments such as that of equality of opportunity.⁴

This was nevertheless a limited multiculturalism, however, since it explicitly precluded state support of linguistic pluralism (in terms of 'mother tongue' teaching) or the expansion of religious schools, seeking instead to make each matters of private concern. Nevertheless, the Swann Report did present more sophisticated and differentiated research findings that avoided a "mono-causal fallacy [and] looked at the interplay of a plurality of factors" (Parekh, Interview). Thus while continuing to recognize the impact of both individual racism and a more pervasive climate of racism, the Swann Report also shifted its emphasis away from overt antiracist strategies toward a form of "inclusive multiculturalism," as signalled by its formal title, *Education for All*. It is somewhat surprising, then, to learn that Sir Bernard Crick, Chair of the Dept of Education and Skills sponsored Commission on

⁴ Which it characterised as: "Equal treatment and protection by the law for members of all groups, together with equality of access to education and employment, equal freedom and opportunity to participate fully in social and political life..., equal freedom of cultural expression and equal freedom of conscience for all" (ibid).

Citizenship Education (discussed in section three below) finds it ‘puzzling’ that “people think it [multiculturalism] is a Government policy. [...] I don’t think anybody advocated multicultural education, I think education was going on in multicultural schools... different groups were there... multicultural education became about the strategies that were needed to teach children with different cultural and sometimes different moral outlooks (Interview with Sir Bernard Crick, 27 June 2007).

This clearly points to different conceptions of multiculturalism, distinguishing between multiculturalism as governmental policy and multiculturalism as lived reality (Meer and Modood, forthcoming). In any case, we can contrast Crick’s analysis with that of Terry Sanderson, President of the National Secular Society (NSS), who is convinced that successive governments have imposed “this multicultural idea of everybody having their own community and then mixing together from them. It didn’t work and they actually became separated with quite strict dividing lines and we’ve still got that now” (Interview, 8 June, 2007).

Of the two positions, Sanderson’s is the least empirically unsustainable, however, because until relatively recently successive national level governments had taken little interest in imposing centralised policies that would either endorse or reject anti-racist or multicultural education. This arguably remained the case until a Conservative administration made radical changes to the autonomy of state schools, previously under the discretionary control of LEAs, with the introduction of the Education Reform Act (ERA) (1988). This Act required every school to adhere to a curriculum that was centrally defined and *compulsorily* prescribed, and enforced the mandatory testing of pupils at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16 years (with the concomitant publication of school league tables as a measure of school performance and success).

A broadly supportive and informative advocacy for its introduction is spelt out by Copson of the BHA when he argues that “though there may have been very good practice in some parts of the country, practice that was better even than the national curriculum that was introduced... there were other places where the national curriculum involved a great levelling up and that’s only to the good” (Copson, Interview). On the other hand, the ERA specifically curtailed the powers of the influential Labour-controlled Inner London LEA which, as figure 2 highlights, is home to a very large proportion of the UK’s ethnic minority school population. According to Jasper, the “imposition of the national curriculum ripped out and reduced that flexibility for teachers to pursue areas in lessons that were considered to

be anti-racist and I think that the Thatcher government made it absolutely clear that this should not be a topic to enjoy any degree of priority within the school environment” (Jasper, Interview). Parekh, meanwhile, displays sympathies for both interpretations when states: “I think the National curriculum made gestures towards multicultural education but I don’t think it fully took on board the basic principle of multiculturalism. [...] Some local authorities were keener on Swann than others, and what the national curriculum did was less well than what some authorities could have done but better than what others were doing...” (Interview, Parekh).

2.3. Legacies and Current Practice

Issue 1: Awareness and practice of anti-racist and multicultural education

With respect to Copson and Jasper’s diverging positions, Dan Lyndon, co-ordinator of the Black History for Schools network, member of Black and Asian School-Teachers Association (BASA), and also current head of history at Compton High School in Fulham, London, provides an instructive testimony in the his account of past and present experiences with anti-racist and multicultural education. Three things in particular stand out. The first is his confirmation of the inconsistent adoption of the types of programs discussed above, and the second is a general awareness of the ‘political’ nature and implications of these programs:

I started with my teacher training in 1992–93. I certainly didn’t get any diversity training or any anti-racism training at all. I don’t remember it being even mentioned. That was a strong indicator that at that time it didn’t seem to be a particularly strong issue. I think if you’d have gone back maybe 6 or 7 years before that, or the early 80’s, late 70’s I would think that was the peak... not least in the Inner London Education Authority, so that was abolished by Thatcher in I think, in 1984, around the time of the GLC [Greater London Council] was abolished. That meant that anti-racism teaching was.... Well, you know, the Tories weren’t that keen on it (Interview with Lyndon, 13 June, 2007).

A third point of interest is a conflation of anti-racist and multicultural education which re-affirms the sense in which both are diffuse conceptions of educational reform i.e. introducing ‘positive’ images of, for example Black scientists, whilst also looking at different cultures from around the globe:

I think in the last 3 or 4 years, in particular, I’ve noticed there’s a much bigger resurgence. I know for example that in Geography here they teach a very kind of mixed geographical experience. I don’t know that much but I know, for example, when they do Black History month, that Geography also do stuff about Africa and the Art department are pretty good at looking at different cultures coming into Art. Science are very good at that, they’ve got a Black woman who runs the Science department. She’s very positive about giving scientific

role models and all of those kind of things. Also English read Caribbean literature, some African literature so I think we do engage with it (Lydon, Interview).

In spite of the conflation, the issue of relevance is the championing of a positive affirmation in curricular content to match or at least reflect the ‘difference’ amongst schooling populations. This is a strategy supported by Copson who stresses the dependent social contingencies that need to be taken into account when trying to achieve a balanced educational environment:

....you’ve got to be aware that the school is not an island, an incubator apart from the rest of society, and that there are going to be events in society, issues in society, matters of public debate, that for reasons of their own cultural identification or background or personal views, opinions or feelings, individual children within your classroom, within your school are going to be troubled by or identify with the victims or identify with the oppressors or whatever. Those issues are going to be brought into the classroom by children and that’s going to have some effect on their educational development. I think the way that schools should compensate for that is they should make room for it in the classroom (Interview, Copson).

If we compare this, for example, with the view of a current legislator, we find that in contrast to Lydon and Copson’s accounts, the current Government Schools Commissioner, former head teacher Sir Bruce Liddington, is not keen to champion past anti-racist and multicultural practice as a present solution to the challenges of migration related diversity in education.

[T]he whole multicultural strand of curriculum...tended to have a mixed impact from my experience. [...]...where they set about ensuring that youngsters who didn’t have English as a first language, or indeed, didn’t have English at all, learned how to speak English quickly in order that they could be successfully assimilated into the mainstream curriculum, I felt they had a very good effect. Where they sought to introduce slide shows, multicultural days, celebration of the difference between children... I didn’t welcome that at all. Gradually, though, that sort of thing dried up and in fact Section 11 funding was abolished probably ten years ago now and the funding to deal with the different challenges that minority ethnic children throw up in schools is part of the mainstream funding, and in my opinion, that’s correct (Interview with Sir Bruce Liddington 15 June, 2007).

It is also important to stress that this does not entail a rejection of ‘difference’ per se. At the same time Liddington stresses the necessity for schools to implement strategies that do not ignore any specific needs based upon background ‘difference’, in a way that will contribute to an educational culture in which the school can comfortably ‘balance’ its own agenda and priorities against the needs of its pupils: “I think that what schools have got to recognise is that they are not isolated from the communities that they serve and that the culture and values of the children who come from different racial groups, need to be acknowledged and welcomed and absorbed into the individual institution” (Interview, Liddington).

Tony Breslin, director of the Citizenship Foundation which promotes citizenship education in schools and other civil society sectors, endorses this necessity to ‘balance’ past anti-racism and multicultural praxis with present educational priorities, without, at the same time, undermining the value of these previous approaches but instead seeking their ‘expansion’ beyond ethnically diverse localities:

One of the issues we can have is that sometimes race equality, diversity and inter-faith matters, are considered to be necessary in those schools, typically, urban schools, where there are strong minority ethnic populations, and that they are thought to matter less in areas where there is an all white population or whatever. It seems to me that schools have a duty to address the reality that whatever the nature of their own locality, that their students will move in a society that is multicultural by any definition I think that the curriculum needs to address the needs of young people, whether or not they find themselves in diverse and multicultural school communities, *who will find themselves in diverse and multicultural communities beyond the school*, so we have to teach about matters of justice, about equality, of opportunity, about race equality, about racism, about a multiplicity of faiths. I do think that we need to address commonalities as well as differences, I do think there may be something in the critique of some past multicultural practice in that we may have emphasised difference rather than commonality (Interview with Tony Breslin, June 15, 2007).

Issue 2: the positive ‘fact’ of diversity

We have elsewhere argued that there is strong evidence to support the view that Britain had embedded a recognition of difference into its own self-image (Meer and Modood, 2007, forthcoming). An obvious question, therefore, is to consider how this is reflected amongst educators and educational advocates. To this end, Dan Lyndon is instructive when he notes that: “I think that when people come to Compton they know that it’s an inner city school, they know it’s a diverse community and that’s part of the package and they very much buy into the fact that we have got this diversity. We do have a lot of support for teachers to work with those students and I’ve never come across anyone, in 7 years saying anything negative about it. It’s definitely seen as a strength of the school” (Lyndon, Interview). Breslin is also of this view that “we are more at ease [with pupil diversity]. I think that a lot of schools, in particularly schools where the intake is diverse and has been diverse over many years, do a lot of work to seek to be culturally sensitive to the needs of their students.”

This includes something illustrated by Samia Earle, a bi-lingual education advocate and teacher trainer, who describes the way in which current practice manages to accommodate linguistic diversity. In her view this is because the focus upon the well being of children is defined broadly enough to take the cultural background and associated linguistic diversity into account:

There is a government paper called Every Child Matters and it really puts the rights of the individual child the centre of every educational enterprise but also curriculum planning which means that all schools have to respond to the needs of their community and this means taking into account children in their own diversity, their own heritage languages. [...] I mean there is real support for EAL [English as an additional language], schools have a budget to make sure that the children are supported in their English but alongside that there's also recognition of their own language, so they are offered courses, or GCSE's and there are lots of schools liaising to make sure that the new key stage 3 framework has actually removed any bars on language learning i.e. you don't have to learn a European language, it could be any language, which means that there are some children who may be getting a national curriculum level education in Urdu (Interview with Samia Earle, 15 June, 2007)

This is certainly not universally welcomed, with Terry Sanderon seeing such language support as the root of conflicting integration agendas: “[Interviewer: *Is their any space for bi-lingual education in schools?*] If you mean learning the native language of people from India or Pakistan, no! I think *that* simply encourages people not to think of themselves as British. It continues to drag them back to their roots which, I'm sure they're very proud of, but they're not living there now. If they're living here, let's get on with it.” Nevertheless, Earle avoids the explicit politics to stress the importance of good planning and practice in the accommodation of children's diversity within the school setting, and the role of individual teachers in taking responsibility for this:

Some schools have been very successful in responding to the needs of their community and...in absorbing and developing the strong ethos and the school. Other schools are having difficulty. It could be staff training, it could be the Head teacher doesn't see it as a priority; it could be they are paying lip service. I would say where the school has got a strong minority within that school but is ignored, you may have tensions (Interview, Earle).

Bruce Liddington is keen to rehearse ‘good practice’ examples in this regard with the low number of ‘racial incidents’ in the schooling environment.

The number of racial incidents that take place is tiny compared to the large numbers of children from different cultures and races in our system and I think that's a testament to the fact that the schools themselves are highly competent and highly successful at integrating children from different backgrounds (Interview, Liddington).

To the general acceptance of ethnic diversity as a fact of school life, he adds:

I suppose I go and visit more schools than most people...and my gut feeling is that in most schools, they are more at ease than they were ten years ago because more teachers have had more experience of dealing with children from different backgrounds. [...] ...it would be more unusual for a teacher not to have had children with an EAL, children newly arrived, asylum seekers and so on, somewhere along the line, in their teaching career and I think the more people are familiar with things, the more at ease they are with them. So I would say, yes, I think there would be more schools which are more at ease with the challenges of the diversity agenda than was the case ten years ago (Interview, Liddington).

Issue 3: current challenges

The view that the challenge posed by migration related diversity is now a national – rather than city based or regional challenge – is endorsed by Samia Earle in her analysis of the urgency of present language needs amongst Polish children, and the strategies through which these are being met:

In the last 3 years, we have seen a really huge influx in some areas that are not necessarily cities. They are in a county like Somerset, parts of Portsmouth, Southampton; they're not where you would traditionally think there would be an immigrant population. And of course the resources in these schools are extremely limited and although there is an EAL budget it actually used to be for the odd child. When you are talking about 30 children, it's a massive amount of money that local authorities have to find to support those kids, but also there's an implication for the schools to understand how these Polish children come over and what they've done in their education, what transferable information data you have when you come over, and also to be able to have some GCSE's in Maths, Science, written in Polish. They have to have readers to actually translate the GCSE papers for them, so there are cost implications that are massive here. [...] Schools have to learn very quickly. They are coming up with very innovative solutions. The school in Lincolnshire have actually applied by the British Council, for a Polish Language assistant that is attached to the department to help the Polish children. That's what they are actually doing. An example of many, I would say (Interview, Earle).

It is estimated that between May 2004 and August 2006 nearly 27,000 Polish, Slovakian and Czech children of school age - under 17 yrs - have arrived with registered workers and sought settlement in British Schools. Dan Lyndon also describes the urgency of linguistic requirements arising from pupil diversity in the following terms:

We literally have kids from every part of the globe... 60 different community languages. [...] We have an EAL department which is very strong but we have a big split between our non fluent and our fluent speakers and EAL tends to be focussed on those who come to school with no English. So it's very much about a rapid integration programme and that's very, very effective... it's so crucial because if they are going to get through their GCSE's that their level of fluency that they need for understanding those questions is really vital and I think there is a lot of work that still needs to be done on that... (Interview, Lyndon).

Another contemporary challenge, characterised as such by some interviewees, has less to do with 'new' migrant groups but more to do with the public identity and political claims-making of some established groups, particularly Muslims. It is thus worth noting that at a time when Britain is experiencing some of its most significant inward migration for a generation, the focus is often more upon established groups, and specifically Muslim minorities. Terry Sanderson, president of the National Secular Society (NSS), for example, is keen to juxtapose Muslim minorities with African-Caribbean pupils in making this case. Perhaps ironically, for a radical secularist, he argues that Britain is more comfortable with the latter because of a

‘common Christian background’. He does this by attributing a degree of cultural otherness to Islam, perceived by Sanderson to be reflected in its aggressiveness or publicly confessional nature:

I think that there has been a change in that the emphasis has moved away from the black community onto the Asian community and mainly because of the aggressiveness of some of the young people in the Muslim communities, and that this new found politicising of their new found religion has pushed them right to the top of the agenda. It’s taken the emphasis off the black community who now seem almost benign in comparison because they understand our culture. [...] I mean the way in which some people are actually trying to politicise differences through donning quite radical clothing in schools, for example, that’s all about making a point and intimidating other people into doing the same, and this should have no place in our education system. I mean the case about the girl and the *jibab* in the Luton school goes to show how some people are just using the education system to further their own agendas and ends... (Interview, Sanderson).

The case Sanderson makes reference to is summarised in appendix IV, and the apprehension toward what are perceived to be quite comprehensive requirements amongst Muslims in particular is not unique to Sanderson and, indeed, is also evidenced by Sir Bruce Liddington in his view that “you wouldn’t have the same challenges around school uniform in a Church of England or Roman Catholic school that you might have in the school that has had a significant number of children from a Muslim background”.

To address these different challenges there is an overriding view that Britain should draw upon and learn from past practices in the current approach to migration related challenges, something most clearly set out by Breslin when he states that “whatever we do with recent migrants should be informed by the experience we’ve had... we are not seeking to deal with migration for the first time, so we need to ask, was that practice effective, can we make it better, etc” (Interview). This is most apparent his reiteration of the necessity to ‘balance’ the interests of schools and communities:

I think schools have a duty to two groups; they have a duty to, and in their instrumental interest, as it were, not in just the interest of the students, to nurture the school as a strong community. So that means that, clearly, the needs and the identities of different students need to be met, acknowledged, embraced, celebrated, whatever. I think equally importantly, schools need to be conscious of the community beyond their boundaries and not just the immediate geographical community. (Interview, Breslin)

One ways of addressing these dynamics is evidenced through a recent policy shift toward citizenship education.

3: Citizenship Education in Britain

Citizenship education is a contested idea and set of policies that denote a variety of implications in different contexts (Guttman, 2006). Its formal introduction into British schools is a recent development that was preceded by a process of consultation undertaken by the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and Teaching of Democracy in Schools, which was chaired by Professor Sir Bernard Crick. This late introduction of citizenship education in Britain, particularly when compared with some European countries, is an interesting anomaly. As David Kerr (1999: 204) has put it, “the avoidance of any overt official government direction in schools concerning political socialisation and citizenship education can almost be seen as a national trait”. Whilst this is contradicted by elements of the compulsory adoption of the National Curriculum, the sense that ‘British exceptionalism’ has presented itself as an obstacle is evident in Sir Crick’s view that

We were the last civilised country almost in the world to make citizenship part of the national curriculum. I think we thought we didn’t need it being the mother of all parliaments and a model to the world of parliamentary government; I think those ideas lingered on and long past reality (Interview, Crick).

As the official report preceding the introduction of citizenship education put it, part of the groundswell for its recent emergence is undoubtedly a sense of ‘civic deficit’ epitomised by voter apathy that is “inexcusably bad and should and could be remedied” (QCA, 1998: section 3. paragraph. 10). Crick elaborates on this:

A good indicator, there are a lot of factors behind the indicator, would be low turn out in the 1997 election, the lowest since the war, masked by the size of Labour’s majority. But here contingency also comes in very strongly because Blunkett was quite a powerful 1997 figure who had obviously been determined to get citizenship on the agenda for a number of years and then sent for me in the last week of the old Parliament in 1997 (Interview, Crick).

3.1. Key recommendations

Crick is referring here to the then Education Secretary, who later became Home Secretary, and the Government Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), under the commission chaired by Crick, which made the following key recommendations:

- Citizenship and the teaching of democracy is so important to the future of Britain that there should be a co-ordinated national strategy for the statutory requirement for schools to spend around five per of its curriculum time *across* the four ‘Key Stages’ (Key Stage (KS) 1 includes children aged 5-7 years; KS 2, 7-11 years; KS 3, 11-14 years, and KS 4, 14-16 years).

- Citizenship education includes three interdependent elements comprising social and moral responsibility; community involvement and political literacy – each of which “in habitual interaction constitutes active citizenship”.
- Citizenship education for citizenship requires more than knowledge. Acting and behaving as a citizen also requires the development of skills, values, attitudes and dispositions.
- Teaching about citizenship necessarily involves teaching about controversial issues and this should adhere to guidelines to guard against potential bias and to assist teachers to achieve a fair balance.
- Whilst citizenship education can draw upon and be enhanced by other subjects, it must be distinctive since explicit knowledge of social and political institutions must be achieved.
- The framework for citizenship education should consist of the aim & purpose of citizenship (the rationale and justification); the strands (social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy); essential elements (concepts, values, dispositions, skills, aptitudes, knowledge and understanding) which provide the basis for the learning outcomes; and the learning outcomes themselves.
- Finally, there should be a Standing Commission on Citizenship education appointed by the Department for Education & Skills (DfES) with includes a cross-party membership to monitor its progress and recommend amendments.

Whilst these are wide ranging and in some respects reiterate elements of the Swann Commission and, in Parekh’s view, constitute an “add-on” to the sorts of approach favoured in multicultural education, that there is no explicit reference to anti-racism and multiculturalism. This viewed by some as an indication of citizenship education disengagement from these issues. Indeed Osler and Starky (2001: 293) charge the report with ‘institutional racism’ for demanding that “minorities must learn to respect the laws, codes and conventions as much as the majority” (QCA, 1998: 17-18). This they take as evidence of a “colonial approach...that runs throughout the report” and which “falls into the trap of treating certain ethnicities as ‘Other’ when it discusses cultural diversity’ (Osler and Starky, 292-293.). Elsewhere, Osler (2000: 28) claims that the most positive and inclusive statements about the nature of multicultural society were hastily “tagged on” from the Policy Studies Institute report (Modood *et al*, 1997) at the last minute. This complaint is supported by Lee Jasper, who

characterises Crick's conception of citizenship education as a discontinuation rather than addition to earlier approaches, before also allowing for the possibility that it could give rise to something more inclusive:

I think it's a retreat from the racial equality agenda as far as there's been an imposition, has there not, of a notional sense of British values encapsulated in citizenship education and nobody knows quite what this means and what it looks like in terms of a set of shared values and a notion of British citizenship. [...] And I think what we have now is an attempt to sort of impose a set of British values where no such consensus exists. Though that's not as negative as it sounds because in essence I think there are sets of more widely shared universal values that are not British but would provide a stronger basis for consensus around a number of important codes of behaviour for the UK (Interview, Jasper).

To this Sir Crick offers a pragmatic and political response claiming that his committee

were not willing to give the public the view that the major thrust of citizenship was race relations. We said damn it, it's about the whole population including the majority... pupils should learn, respect and have knowledge of national, regional ethnic and religious differences. We were simply taking a broader view. We thought that...all our nations' children should receive an education that would help them to become active citizens: *all* our nations' children's. We didn't see any need to talk about the special needs at that stage of immigrant children (Interview, Crick).

Whilst the use of terminology i.e. 'immigrant' to denotes ethnic minority, may be one stumbling block for anti-racist critics of Crick, including a dis-emphasis of anti-racism in general, another reason for the divergence between Jasper and Crick might be their different conceptions of national identity and how this relates to citizenship education. Whilst Jasper is concerned by the way in which "the more nationalist conceptions of citizenship are by their very nature driven by ethnicity, residence, blood ties and race [which] are all powerful currents in that discourse" (Jasper, Interview), and the prospect that these might be incorporated into citizenship education, Crick is of the view that "citizenship involves civilising national identity through civic behaviour, activity and tolerance; and the willingness to be active" (Crick, Interview).⁵ Indeed, the practices described by Crick may well be incorporated into the sorts of 'codes of behaviour' alluded to earlier by Jasper. What this does not resolve, however, are other elements of Jasper's complaint that in important ways the current focus upon citizenship education marks a departure from an earlier focus on anti-racism and multiculturalism. To this Crick offers an

⁵ In the report this is presented in the following terms: "A main aim for the whole community should be to find or restore a sense of common citizenship, including a national identity that is secure enough to find a place for the plurality of nations, cultures, ethnic identities and religions long found in the United Kingdom. Citizenship education creates common ground between different ethnic and religious identities" (QCA, 1998: 17).

instructive summary of his vision of the role and purpose of a broader ‘civic culture’ to which he hopes citizenship education will contribute:

I and most of my colleagues saw that where racism existed it was a failure of the civic culture so there wasn’t much sense in showing racism the red card. All that kind of stuff was more likely to excite racists. There’s nothing extremists like more than fighting each other. I felt there was a vacuum that should be filled by civic education that could be filled by racist prejudice but also by anti-racist education that was too narrowly focused on racial prejudice that is extremely hard to eliminate in an argument and is only defeated through the course of time and practice. I would think that anti-racism in the 80’s...or rather the spectre of racism in the 80’s would be one among several factors that made citizenship as a compulsory part of the national curriculum seem important (Interview, Crick).

Perhaps surprisingly, Jasper is not without allies, even amongst advocates of citizenship education, in his concern that coupling citizenship with national identity may risk the coercive imposition of the latter. For example, whilst both Copson and Breslin are very supportive and enthusiastic of the project of citizenship education, each are equally concerned that it might become as a method of inculcating a regressive national identity:

I think one of the reasons why a lot of us in the citizenship community have stayed away from discussion of nationality and identity and that kind of stuff now encapsulated in the so called Britishness debate, is that we have feared that in talking about citizenship of identity we slip from process toward status. However, such is the multiplicity of identities that people now hold, such is the fluidity of societies and of communities, given globalisation and so forth, I think we are now beginning to acknowledge that we actually have to take on that notion of citizenship as identity and belonging, and it plays itself out in terms of patterns around ethnicity and age and the various differentiations and stratifications that exist in our society (Breslin, Interview).

I actually look with a little bit of suspicion on the sort of re crude essence of national identity that seems to be encouraged in the last few years. [...] I don’t like national identity and I don’t think citizenship is necessarily associated with it. We are all citizens of the European Union for a start and I think of myself, in many ways as being a wider citizen of the world (Interview, Copson).

Parekh shares Breslin and Copson concerns over the role and purpose of an imposed, rather than negotiated, national identity. According to Parekh, this potential tendency is indicative of a contemporary over-emphasis upon the unifying elements of educational instruction, elements that are informed by a sense of panic over the integration of Muslims, and elements that are prioritised at the expense of other dynamic possibilities:

...my own feeling is that we seem to have stopped thinking creatively about multicultural society. We seem to have decided consciously or unconsciously that the most important thing now is how to integrate Muslims. So my own feeling is that there is going to be a great deal of emphasis a) on citizenship education b) on moral education, and I think the third thing will be on telling a national story, which means less tolerance for diversity. So ‘bring in Indian history or whatever you want to bring in but for gods sake keeping telling that this is a great country.’ So I think there is a silent, unspoken but increasingly invidious, nationalist bias in

our education coming through. There's an invisible pressure on teachers to tell a common national story, to teach common British values and to emphasize responsibilities of being good citizens. So I see lesser openness to diversity and differences (Parekh, Interview).

4. Faith schools

The issue that really cuts across the development of antiracism, multiculturalism and citizenship education is the desire for state-funded faith based schooling provided under the terms of 'voluntary aided' status. What this means is discussed below, but it is worth noting that anti-racism has often been stridently secularist and implicitly, if not explicitly, ambivalent or opposed to faith-based schooling, and that the multiculturalism of the Swann Report expressly ruled out faith schooling sought by recent religious minorities (but maintained the status quo as per Jewish and Catholic state funded faith based schools), whilst the Crick report did not engage with the issue of faith schooling because it fell outside its remit.

These dismissals and policy oversights are problematic because there are currently over 4,700 state funded Church of England schools; over 2100 Catholic; 35 Jewish and 28 Methodist schools. When these figures are compared to the number of Muslim schools, of which there are only 7, or the single Sikh school or Seventh Day Adventist School, we find that campaigns for faith schooling in the state sector are indicative of "a modern society which is widely perceived as increasingly secular but is paradoxically increasingly multi-faith" (Skinner, 2002: 172). To explore this further, we first need some historical background to better inform the ensuing discussion.

4.1. Voluntary Aided 'Faith' Schools

The notion of Voluntary Aided (VA) faith schools have their roots in the 'dual system' of parallel, but interacting, state and faith based schooling that arose, on the one hand, from the "contributions of parish clerics to village teaching, church foundation grammar schools" throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which established churches as almost "exclusive providers in the early stages of progress towards universal education" (Skinner, 2002: 173). The introduction of the 1944 Education Act thus sought to reach a compromise between the historic contribution of faith groups and their internal differences with the increasing role of the state in education. This was pursued through awarding independent faith schools the option – subject to meeting the appropriate standards and criteria – of becoming 'Voluntary Aided' (VA) or 'Voluntary Controlled' (VC). The former status allows

the provision of denominational religious instruction and acts of worship, as well as the right to appoint teachers on the understanding that the school accept half the cost of any structural or building improvements. In addition, the majority of school administrators could be drawn from the diocesan board of education or religious authority. The latter, meanwhile, incurred no financial responsibilities but the schools would have to surrender all denominational worship, and the majority of administrators would be provided by the LEA.

What is most relevant to the discussion in this paper is that although it was not anticipated that other religious groups would one day like to take advantage of the provisions, the relevant clauses of the 1944 Act did not specify *which* denominational groups are to be included in the scheme. Less encouragingly, however, the position that some religious minorities have in the past found themselves in relation to this provision is that new schools are rarely required and built, so that if, for example, Muslim or Sikh schools are to be admitted to the Voluntary Aided category they will of necessity be already in existence. In effect, this means that in the future a state funded religious minority school will already exist either as a local authority ‘public’ school or as a private establishment (Hewer 2001). This has led to a number of campaigns to take over schools with a significant concentration of Muslim pupils already in attendance. The most recent effort has culminated in a campaign by the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) in Scotland to turn a currently Roman Catholic School in Pollockshields (Glasgow), which has an eighty per cent Muslim pupil intake, into a VA Muslim school (for more examples see Hashmi, 2002: 15).

4.2. Current Policy

An important recent inroad into this situation came with the Government White Paper, applying to England only, *Schools: Achieving Success* (2001), in which paragraphs 66-67 provide for the creation of new secondary schools and sets out the responsibilities of the LEAs and the procedures to be followed to this end. The summary booklet for the Bill states in paragraph 2.10 that “we are taking steps to encourage greater innovation in the creation of new schools. In particular, we will take steps to allow greater involvement of external partners in the provision of wholly new schools [Para 2.11 is about setting up city academies] 2.12 Innovation in the provision of new schools will also be extended much more widely. Where a new secondary school is required, the LEA will advertise, so that any interested party can

put forward proposals for a new school. Any promoter, including a community or faith group, an LEA or another public, private or voluntary body can publish proposals. These will be judged on the basis of their educational merits, value for money and the outcome of consultation”. Para 5.30 then sets out the Government position in its fullest, stating that:

Faith schools have a significant history as part of the state education system, and play an important role in its diversity. Over the last four years, we have increased the range of faith schools in the maintained sector, including the first Muslim, Sikh and Greek Orthodox schools. [...] We wish to welcome faith schools, with their distinctive ethos and character, into the maintained sector where there is clear local agreement.⁶

Indeed, some movement was already underway when in 1998, after 18 years of a Conservative administration, Tony Blair’s recently elected Labour government delivered on a promise made in its election manifesto and awarded two Muslim primary schools (Islamia in London and Al- Furqan in Birmingham), soon followed by a Sikh school in 1999, voluntary aided (VA) status. This arrived “fourteen years and five Secretaries of State after the first naive approach” (Hewitt, 1998: 22) and followed a strict inspection process by OFSTED which required these schools to meet the appropriate governmental for independent schools seeking state funding.⁷ As Rajinder Singh Sandhu, head teacher of Guru Nanak, the only state funded Sikh schools, describes:

I think the DfES is changing with the times... in 1999 they didn’t know us and it’s fair to say that the DfES and the civil servants were not keen for the school to go into the [state] system, because they thought it would open the flood gates. [...] They subsequently kept a close eye

⁶ Following 9/11 and, particularly, the London bombings, the governments’ position has been less openly enthusiastic with respect to inviting Muslim communities to seek state support in these matters. The Labour MP Tony Wright, for example, in commenting on the expansion of the faith schooling sector, stated that “[b]efore September 11 it looked like a bad idea, it now looks like a mad idea” (see BBC News, 22/11/2001 available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/1670704.stm>). It is nevertheless the case that since these events some Muslim schools have continued to be awarded or promised state funding, though less numerous than was anticipated.

⁷ Aside from obvious requirements such as the delivery of a good standard of education and the economic feasibility of the school, the criteria for the VA inclusion includes: (i) adoption and delivery of the National Curriculum (ranging from a “thinner” to “thicker” version depending on whether the school is VA or voluntary controlled); (ii) appointment of appropriately qualified staff; (iii) suitable school buildings; (iv) equality of opportunity for both male and female pupils; and (v) consideration of parental demand. All of this, of course, is premised upon the “need” for a school in a given area based upon the number of available pupil spaces. In the past, the availability of school places (and therefore the lack of a “need”) has been cited as the principle reason for—having met all other criteria—refusing some schools to opt into the state system. Nevertheless, the incorporation of religious minority faith schools was given significant impetus by government Green Paper, *Schools: Building on Success* (Department for Education and Employment, 2001), so that the current number of state-funded Muslim faith schools had risen to seven. This includes Al-Hijrah (a secondary school in Birmingham), Feversham College (a secondary school in Bradford), Gatton Primary School (Wandsworth, South London), Tauheedul Islam Girls High School (Blackburn, Lancashire), and The Avenue School (another primary school in Brent, London).

on us over the years, and now as a school we work very closely with their innovation unit, we quite regularly get visitors to the school and really, they couldn't be more supportive... I think faith schools have moved on as well. (Interview with Rajinder Singh Sandhu, 13 June 2007).

At the same time these developments have not been universally welcomed, and objections to the expansion of faith schooling have been made by anti-religious and anti-racist camps alike. Terry Sanderson of the NSS, for example, is convinced that

...we're heading towards catastrophe unless the government change their policy... The more Christian ones they create, the more the clamour becomes for Muslim schools to be created and I think it's a disaster because the only way that we're going to break down barriers between people is to bring them together at a very early age and this government is going in completely the opposite direction to that... (Sanderson, Interview).

In less apocalyptic but equally strident terms, Dan Lyndon of black history for schools voices similar concerns of separatism and in-egalitarianism:

I am worried about the development of faith schools because I think that just encourages separation... Personally, I would never teach in a religious school. Whatever religion, absolutely fundamentally, no. [...] I suppose if you had the idea of...an area where you are prioritising one over the other then that's going to cause conflict and that's going to cause problems. If you come from an egalitarian philosophy then hopefully that should over ride that (Lyndon, Interview).⁸

The most nuanced and historically informed assessment is offered by Tony Breslin of the Citizenship foundation

The starting point of the first generations of faith schools, were very much in much more monocultural societies. Faith schools, it seems to me, offer a lot in terms of ethos and all the rest of it. I just wonder whether non-faith schools can do the same thing and whether we should seek to get them to do that. [...] Part of the debate clearly about faith schools at the moment, is not really about faith schools, it's just the specificity of Muslim Schools, and I think people should be more honest about that. [...] I don't think that because a particular group was granted the right to build a faith school fifty years ago, it is a rationale to grant that to a different group now or another group in fifty years time. I think it's about saying, where is our society at (Breslin, Interview).

Breslin is undoubtedly correct in highlighting the historical dimension of faith schooling against which contemporary arguments concerning parity are often made, as well as the centrality of Muslim mobilisations to these arguments. Yet whilst it may be true to say that Muslim communities have been the most vocal in seeking

⁸ Though this is not a universal view amongst anti-racists, not least because some have, in the past, also endorsed the need for 'black' schooling. To this end Lee Jasper clarifies his position: "What I did advocate is the following: that there are already majority black schools that have majority white teachers and white governors, what I've said is that if you have a school that's 90 or 80 per cent of one ethnicity or another, then its quite proper to expect the teaching staff and governors to reflect that local community. That was my view and I'm still of that view; when majority black churches want to get together and do that they should be able to do so. That doesn't extend to creating an apartheid regime within education but it does extend to creating the choice for minority communities" (Interview, Jasper).

inclusion in the faith schooling sector, to what extent is it true to say that they have premised these mobilisations upon the issue of parity alone and, if they have not, what other factors have been and remain salient? To consider these questions the next section incorporates and reports upon data gathered from Muslim education advocates and educators.

4.3. What are the motivations for Muslim schools?

Idreas Mears, director of the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) describes why his organisation has been at the forefront of promoting Muslim schools:

I think a general point which is very important to get across is that the state schools do not handle the meaning of Muslim identity well for the children. In actual fact, the way that general society looks at Muslims is as an immigrant minority-ethnic-racial-group and how young people are made to look at themselves through the teaching in state schools tells them “you are this marginal group/minority group and have therefore got to integrate with the mainstream”. So there’s a process of marginalisation and that often leads to resentment. But in a Muslim school that identity is built upon being a Muslim *not* an ethnic minority (Interview, 1 April 2006).

Indeed, there are several broader factors informing Muslim mobilisation for the accommodation of faith schools.

4.4. Holistic Education

The first and arguably broadest factor is paralleled by the interest in other religiously informed faith schooling, and stems from the desire to incorporate more faith-based principles into an integrated education system, so that the ‘whole person’ can be educated in an Islamic environment (AMSS, 2004; Hewer, 2001). This would *presuppose* faith rather than treating it as something extraneous to education and external to its major objects (Ashraf, 1990). For example, one of the recommendations to emerge from the First World Conference on Muslim Education states that “education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality through the training of spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses” (cited in AMSS, 2004: 12). Two approaches proposed by the AMSS in their position paper on Muslim schools include the Steiner and Montessori approaches, both of which encourage personal and team responsibility while “the child’s creativity is also given full freedom for expression” (ibid: 19). Hence the objective is to encourage intellectual, spiritual, and moral development within an Islamic ethos and framework. Thus, at *Islamia School* Abdullah Trevathan states that a key curriculum objective is

to prevent sources of Islamic guidance from becoming extrinsic to educational development, “where the sunnah and the Qu’ran...becomes the third person in an encounter”. In his view, children will only properly know, explore and evaluate knowledge presented within an Islamic environment if the children are incorporated into Islam’s interpretative traditions:

There are two types of views of the divinity in theological perspectives: in classical terms one is *tashbih* which is like Allah’s nearness, immersion in our daily life or divine interventions in daily affairs, and the other is *tanzih*: the incomparability or what they call negative theology, the absolute omnipotence, distance from the individual... Now I believe what we’re trying to do in this school is to return to a more *tashbih*... it’s very important that they’re [the pupils] exposed to the classical *ussal al-fiqh*... basically the methodology of applying principles to different situations, rather than taking or transporting rules or regulations out of another time and another place...literally (Interview 6 March, 2006).

Perhaps surprisingly, given its pragmatic emphasis upon the present, part of this project at *Islamia School* proceeds through an introduction to classical Arabic; presented as a conduit through which this holistic immersion can begin:

We teach classical Qu’ranic Arabic. We think it’s fundamental to the flowering of Muslim culture that the language of its philosophy, the language particularly of its spirituality is taught. And also there are key concepts such that if you’ve got the Arabic you immediately have access to that nuance, that feeling that the word evokes! (ibid).

Islamia School is not alone in this view, for it is common to find the teaching of Qu’ranic Arabic listed on many Muslim School’s curricula and mission statements (IHRC, 2005). This manner of incorporating faith-based principles into an integrated education system, as opposed to a more straightforward approach of teaching scriptures or religious history, for example, is the preferred approach that is advocated by the Association for Muslim Schools (AMS). To this end Idreas Mears describes how a child’s understanding of the interpretative traditions within Islam is akin to wielding a powerful educational ‘tool’ that is simultaneously spiritual and educative:

Muslims are people that bring down a meaning to an event: we’re creatures of meaning, and a Muslim expresses his real meaning by his *evada* because he sees that the ultimate meaning is to be a worshipper of Allah but then bringing that down onto the axis of events changes how you act in the world. So I think the most important for Muslim schools is to give young people that as a tool in their hands that they can pick up and run with (Mears, Interview).

The characterisation of Muslim schools providing Muslim children with something like a ‘launch-pad’ is not advanced naively by the Mears. In a measure of increasing confidence, critical self-evaluation, and institutional networking, the AMS has been at the forefront of creating an inter-faith ‘inspectorate’ to monitor the content and standard of different faith based schooling. This is informed by the recognition that whilst the areas of numeracy and literacy are stringently monitored by OFSTED,

religious instruction is more likely to be left to the school's discretion and so may not always be of an appropriate standard:

The AMS has made an application to the DfES to deliver inspection services for OFSTED inspections of independent Muslim Schools. And we've done it in conjunction with a group of independent Christian schools – the Christian Schools Trust. We've joined together to create the 'faith schools inspectorate' and we will be able to inspect member schools: Christian or Muslim. As well as looking at the areas that are necessary in the OFSTED criteria as to whether a school is providing numeracy and literacy and citizenship skills etc, we will be looking at how the school is delivering the religious ethos, because up until this point we accept that Muslim schools are Muslim schools because they say so. There's no real inspection of that and there can be a whole spectrum of people delivering *nothing* about Islam at all, but instead being a cultural protection zone for children and that's happened for children quite a lot, especially in the early years when the main criteria of a Muslim school wasn't about teaching Islam but the protection of Muslim girls from going into the state system. It was *culturally* driven rather than *Islamically* driven (Mears, Interview).

Once again, Mears is at pains to stress the distinction between school premised upon an ethnic origin conception of Islam, driven by a desire for 'cultural protection zones', and an Islamically driven environment that moves outward to build upon evaluative criteria already established and in place.

4.5. *Separation of sexes*

This criticism that Muslim schools have sometimes served as cultural protection zones is often made through the example of Muslim parents' preferences for single sex schooling (Dawkins, 2007; Grayling, 2006; National Secular Society (NSS), 2006; Bell, 2005; Humanist Philosophers' Group (HPG), 2001). Through an interpretation of Islam which posits that "after puberty boys and girls should be separated" (Hashmi, 2002: 14), there is a genuine concern to develop 'safe' environments for post-pubescent children, and in this regard single-sex schooling undoubtedly appeals (Hewer, 2001). According to Trevathan, however, this need not be an expression of separatism since "in many ways the community want their children to be raised in a safe environment but still aspire to what successful people aspire to in the west" (Interview), namely social mobility through education.

The retention of single sex schools was recommended by the Swann Report (1985) and their increasing non-availability may also be influencing Muslim parents' interest in faith schooling. Hence, this conservatism need not be an example of the sorts of cultural protection zones feared by Mears. This is a view shared by Akhmed Hussain of *Al-Hijrah school*, a school which maintains separate teaching rooms "to ensure that they [pupils] are more focused on their studies.... it is primarily about their learning". Thus, for example, the Muslim Parents Association (MPA) formed in 1974

on this single issue, and continues to support the creation of a number of independent single-sex Muslim schools with separate teaching rooms in secondary schooling (cf Haw, 1998). In addition to *Al-Hijrah*, the creation of the high-flying *Feversham College* in Bradford exemplifies this approach, which is paralleled in some Catholic faith schooling (Halstead, 1991). This is not a policy desired for primary schooling, however, and is contradicted by some existing co-educational Muslim schools that employ mixed teaching classes. So whilst the demand for single sex schooling is neither universally sought by Muslims nor is unproblematic, dismissing it as simply patriarchal can suggest that it is without precedent amongst other groups and specific to Muslims, and denies the possibility that valid pedagogical arguments might support it (Keaton, 1999).

4.6. Specialist Training

A third factor informing the Muslim interest in faith schooling is the current lack of specialist training in the Islamic religious sciences in conjunction with general education, so that young people might “be educated to serve their communities as potential religious leaders” (Hewer, 2001: 518). This includes the desire to have more British trained theologians who can discuss theological issues with a contemporary resonance to the lived experiences of being Muslim in Britain. The immediacy of this requirement is illustrated with the example of unsuitable religious instructors, including non-British Imams that are unfamiliar with the particular contexts and experiential lives of Muslims in Britain:

The problem is that there's a vacuum here because the mosques just aren't set up to deal with the problems of modern people. If you import an Imam from Egypt or from Pakistan and somebody comes to them with a problem which is within a modern European context, it would often be things that the Imams would have never encountered in their lives and so have no means - or the wrong means - of dealing with it (Trevathan, Interview).

Tahir Alam sketches out some of the dynamics informing the considerations and balances that schools must take into account when off-setting the desire for ‘home-grown’ religious instructors, with broader and more wide-ranging programmes of education:

There are schools that do actually give more curriculum time to more traditional sciences, you call it theology but I would call it traditional sciences to do with *Sunnah* and *Hadith* and those sorts of subjects. So there are schools that do specialise in this but they also do English, Maths and Science...they just don't allocate as much time to these subjects as they would if the school was funded by the state. So there you have the flexibility as an independent institution so, currently, all those that are state funded couldn't have the luxury of being able to do that. I think schools would say that yes they would like more time but there's not

enough time to deliver the national curriculum, which is a requirement, as well as devoting adequate time to really focus properly on some of the traditional sciences and subjects as well. So there's a trade-off I suppose, and a debate about the balance in each school (Alam, Interview).

At the same time, Alam is not alone amongst advocates and co-ordinators of Muslim Schooling in Britain who point to an inevitable limitation in the scope to incorporate, into the state sector, schools which do deliver a greater proportion of theological education and training, in order to attend to the aspiration for establishments that can offer specialist training. This willingness or hesitation to become co-opted into the state sector is returned to below with a more detailed consideration of the factors informing or dissuading successful independent Muslim schools from seeking voluntary aided status.

4.7. Ethnocentric curricula

Fourthly, in order to impart more accurate knowledge of Islamic civilisations; literature; languages and arts (both past and present), there is a desire to see more aspects of Islamic culture embedded within the teaching and ethos of school curricula that are otherwise normatively couched within a Christian-European tradition. As it stands, however, and as Alam recognises, there appears to be scope in existing conventions to address some of these concerns:

The national curriculum does lend itself to a reasonable degree of flexibility, and you can read it objectively when you're teaching geography, history or so on, and you can be fairly inclusive, barring resource issues. There's a lot of material available to teach the national curriculum from a certain sort of perspective if you like, so if you wanted to be more inclusive of the Islamic perspective whilst delivering the national curriculum, there is a pretty decent scope for that (Alam, Interview).

Whilst this maybe so, it remains the case that the sorts of materials currently adopted in the teaching of Islam are often unsatisfactory. For example, Douglass and Shaikh's (2004) study found that throughout commonly used textbooks, Islam is rarely portrayed in the ways its adherents understand, but more through the ethnocentric perspectives of editors who frame their commentary for textbook adoption committee audiences. Common examples of the sorts of inaccuracies that follow from this tendency include the portrayal of the prophet Muhammad as the 'inventor' of Islam rather than a messenger or prophet, as well as an artificial separation of Islam from other monotheistic faiths. This has led Ameli *et al* (2005: 26) to argue that "it is difficult to escape the conclusion that textbooks deliberately downplay or exclude connections between Islam and Abraham in order to maintain neat partitions among the symbols,

beliefs and major figures. This complaint feeds into the broader charge that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) have only “tinkered with the largely ethnocentric curricula, leaving Muslim children feeling alienated and with damaged self-esteem” (Ansari, 2002: 22).

4.8. Low educational attainment

Finally, there is the concern over the lower educational attainment of Bangladeshi and Pakistani boys in particular, and the belief that greater accommodation of religious and cultural difference will help address this low achievement and prevent further marginalisation.

There is a gap between British Muslims and other groups that underscores the urgency of the need for target-based policies to address these problems if we’re going to ensure that Muslims don’t become an underclass in society... underachievement in education will have a knock on effect for employment and so on (Inayat Bunglawala, Interview, 21 May, 2006).

According to ONS (2004) data, nearly 50 per cent of men and women of Bangladeshi ethnic origin and 27 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women of Pakistani ethnic origin hold no academic qualifications (see also Haque (2002). Educational outcomes amongst young Muslims in relation to this general ethnic breakdown are similarly concerning. According to some sources, in 2000 only 30 per cent of young males with Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic origin achieved five GCSEs⁹ at grades A*-C, compared with 50 per cent of the national population as a whole. Within this, however, data from the National Literacy Trust (2004) highlights how in Birmingham (home to around 125,000 Muslims - the largest concentration of a Muslim population outside London) Muslim girls have been outperforming Muslim boys with 50 per cent of girls of Pakistani origin (compared with 33 per cent of boys) and 58 per cent of girls of Bangladeshi origin (compared with 43 per cent of boys) achieving five GCSEs at grades A*-C or more.

According to Halstead (2005: 136), these figures indicate a “sense of alienation and disaffection felt by many young male Muslims at school”, an assertion given empirical support in a study undertaken by the IQRA Trust (see Pye, Lee and Bhabra (2000), and was also raised in the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (CMEB) (2000: 152) which recommended that the government implement targets to decrease the number of school exclusions currently experienced by some Muslim

⁹ The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is the standard qualification for students enrolled in compulsory schooling until the age of 16 years.

groups. Whilst it is accepted that parental education and social class play an important role in shaping these educational outcomes, Halstead (2005: 137) lists a host of other relevant issues: “religious discrimination; Islamophobia; the lack of Muslim role models in schools; low expectations on the part of teachers; time spent in mosque schools; the lack of recognition of the British Muslim identity of the student.” According to Alam, Muslim schools sensitive to these experiences can help elevate educational outcomes:

On the whole the Muslim schools are performing pretty well; they’re better than their like for like in state sector... In terms of the focus they provide for their children, and the dedication, and quite often many of the teachers in these schools are not even qualified teachers, yet their students get better results than people who are qualified! You do get examples where Muslim schools in the independent sector perform badly, but they’re resource issues really, to do with under-funding and not really anything else... shoe string budgets and you can’t really do anything on those. Barring those sorts of schools, and there are a few around, the vast majority of schools in fact – if you take into account the student budgets that they operate on – what they do is in fact quite remarkable (Alam, Interview).

The academic achievements of Muslim schools Alam is pointing to include the examples of 100 per cent of G.C.S.E entrants from *Al-Furqan Community College* (Birmingham), *Leicester Islamic Academy*, *Madani School* (Tower Hamlets), *Tayyibah School* (Hackney), and *Brondesbury College* (Brent) achieving five or more passes at grades A*-C; along with *Feversham College* (Bradford) achieving 53 per cent of such passes, higher than the national average (and well above the Bradford average). It is also evident in the successes of *Islamia School* coming first (or third, depending on the measure used) in a district of fifty-one schools examined at the key stage two level (ibid).

4.9. Form and structure of schools

Where religious minorities have opted out of the state-sector, the desire for more holistic schooling has resulted into the creation of institutions that have been established in various homes, places of worship or community centres by groups of concerned parents and community leaders.¹⁰ The example of Guru Nanak School in Hayes, Middlesex, is instructive here, as Raminder Singh Sandhu, its head teacher, describes the early stages of its creation:

¹⁰ Tahir Alam is not exceptional in recounting his story of involvement: “I got involved in education sometime ago just to help local schools to maybe improve their standards and provide some kind of rigour and challenge in relation to performance... that’s why I got involved locally and then tried to get these issues on the agenda elsewhere through my involvement with the MCB”.

It first opened in January 1993 as an Independent School. The trust which runs the school purchased this land from the Diocese of Westminster and bought it for 1.2 million, when all other Catholic schools had closed down. Because the trust did not have a track record in education in this country, forty trust members put up their houses as collateral. So if the school had failed they would have lost their houses! Forty of them! But they didn't do that... [...] The mortgage at that time was £30,000 a month because of the rates. Plus you're running a school. I mean it was a really hard times. Literally you would come in, in the morning and see if you could get through the day it would be wonderful. (Interview, 13 June, 2007).

The vast majority of non-state funded faith schools have low fees and are located in poor quality buildings which, unsurprisingly, lack many of the basic facilities common to state schools (Walford, 2003). The main reason for this is financial insecurity. Since they rely upon community support and are seldom purpose built, they may open and close depending upon the resources and stability afforded by the local communities themselves. As Sandhu's above comment illustrates, every school is a microcosm of the society around it which means that despite being private institutions they are better thought of as "community-based schools" since they rarely operate commercially¹¹. This is reiterated in his description of how the school's staff coped during periods of economic hardship, stating that "in the early days a lot of our staff were not paid for up to 2 or 3 months at a time. They didn't get any salary. And this is staff from all different religions, because they shared the vision and then round about 1996, 1997 the school turned the corner" (Interview, Sandhu).

5. Conclusions

Anti-racist and multicultural educational concerns, while sometimes amounting to an internally contested debate, have had a continuing impact on educational policy and discourse. This is most evident in the view that educators should be proactive in ensuring that ethnic minorities are not disadvantaged by ethnic and racial 'difference', and that one way of ensuring this is to promote and recognise the positive benefits of diversity. Moreover, the challenges posed by migration related diversity in education are more frequently discussed in terms national concerns, where in the past they may

¹¹ A fascinating illustration of the community focus involves pastoral advice to pupil's parents: "One of the things we've realised frequently is that first of all we're not just a school - we're much more. In many ways we're educating parents as much as we're educating children and frequently we get a request for an appointment to see me and they'll insist that it's something personal, and then they'll come in and they won't be parents or prospective parent, but a married couple having relationship problems. So myself and Sheikh Ahmed who is the imam here would - if we could - give some marriage counselling. And we will do that if the parents are of our children because it's part of our responsibility to the children as educators." (Interview, Trevathan).

have been more regionally focused in issues relating to local education authorities. To some extent this was precipitated by the introduction of the Education Reform Act (ERA) (1988) which curbed the operation of anti-racist and multicultural education but also incorporated some of their concerns. This ambiguous relationship between the imposition of a prescribed unity alongside the recognition of difference and diversity continues to be apparent in the recent introduction and mandatory teaching of citizenship education as a core national curriculum requirement.

Running alongside the issues that have arisen within mainstream education, religious minorities are increasingly seeking an expansion of schools with a religious ethos in the state maintained faith sector. On the one hand this marks a continuation of the settlement achieved under the terms of the 1944 Education Act, whilst on the other hand the mobilisations for Muslim schooling in particular is not solely premised upon the issue of parity, but also upon the recognition of Muslim particularity in the pluralizing the type of faith schooling in the voluntary aided sector.

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Appendix I - List of Interviewees

- Tahir Alam, trustee of Al-Hijrah secondary school, director of the teacher training wing of the Al-Hijrah Trust, and chair of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) education committee.
- Tony Breslin, chief executive of the Citizenship Foundation.
- Sir Bernard Crick, chair of the curriculum and qualifications authority report on Citizenship Education.
- Andrew Copson, education and public affairs spokesperson, British Humanist Association (BHA).

- Samia Earle, bi-lingual education advocate and teacher trainer from the Community Languages Network.
- Lee Jasper, anti-racist activist and race-equality advisor to the London Mayor.
- Dan Lyndon, Head of History at Compton Secondary School, director of Black history for Schools and member of the member of Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA).
- Sir Bruce Liddington, Government Schools Commissioner.
- Idreas Mears, Director of the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS)
- Lord Professor Bhikhu Parekh, advisor on the commissioner on the Rampton report and advisor to the Swann Commission.
- Terry Sanderson, president of the National Secular Society (NSS).
- Mr. Sandhu, Headteacher of The Guru Nanak Sikh Secondary School in Hayes, Middlesex.
- Abdullah Trevathan, Headteacher of Islamia Primary School.