

PE1813/1814/F

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) Submission of 26 November 2020

CRER is a Scottish strategic anti-racist organisation. We work to eliminate racial discrimination and harassment, and promote racial justice across Scotland. CRER have a long-running programme of policy work on education. We jointly produced a guide on tackling racist bullying alongside *Respectme*¹ and have participated in a number of Scottish Government education advisory groups.

CRER believes that effective teaching on empire, colonialism, slavery, migration and the diversity of Scottish society is vital in order to address racial prejudice. This requires effort and investment in both teacher education and tackling racism in schools.

Anti-Racist Education

CRER understand the nature of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) as non-prescriptive, providing teachers with a flexible framework. The Deputy First Minister has stated that the curriculum provides opportunities for students at all stages to learn about all aspects of history, heritage and culture of Scotland, including the slave trade.²

However, our work shows this isn't the lived experience of students. This is further evidenced by this petition and associated correspondence/signatures, alongside the Joseph family's petition with almost 16,000 signatures.³ The Scottish Government's Fairer Futures Panel also called for the curriculum and school system to become more inclusive and supportive of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.⁴

CRER call for the CfE Social Studies benchmarks to be amended to include a specific experiences and outcomes measure: 'I understand Scotland's historical role in empire, colonialism and transatlantic slavery, and the diversity of Scottish society in the past.'⁵

Existing approaches can be patchy. For example, the British history focus of the module Atlantic Slave Trade, 1770–1807 risks limiting perspectives on Scotland's role.⁶ Slavery and abolition have been compulsory themes in England's secondary schools since 2008.⁷

Scotland isn't mono-cultural but the current curriculum can make it appear so. Perspectives outside a white Scottish, Western or Eurocentric viewpoint are regarded as an add-on rather than a core part of everyday learning.

¹ CRER and Respectme, [Addressing Inclusion: Effectively Challenging Racism in Schools](#)

² John Swinney MSP (2020) [Black History in Scotland's Curriculum](#)

³ Madeleine Joseph (2020) <https://www.change.org/p/scottish-government-reparations-in-education-addressing-race-in-scottish-schools>

⁴ Fairer Future Panel (2017) [Creating a Fairer Future: Young people's ideas for race equality](#)

⁵ CRER (2020) [Immediate action for racial equality in Scotland](#)

⁶ Stephen Mullen (2020) [Addressing the Absences in Teaching Scotland's Slavery Past](#)

⁷ Ibid

There is a need for education on historic and contemporary migration to Scotland and the multifaceted contributions of BME people. This needs to go beyond the 'celebrating diversity' agenda, which often relies on stereotypes. Authentic portrayal of minority ethnic identities and histories in the curriculum are necessary to create a learning environment where all students are nurtured, respected and included, as set out in the GIRFEC SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.⁸

Education Staff Development

Central to the provision of anti-racist education is staff development; both continual professional learning and resources. The Scottish Government committed to providing equality and intercultural competency training resources for educators in the Race Equality Framework,⁹ but the impact of this is not yet evident.

Training cannot be a one-off event; an ambitious approach is needed. To embed anti-racism within education, adequate time and resources must be provided for teachers to meaningfully engage. Without this, teacher's competence, confidence and capacity will not improve and therefore curricula changes will be ineffective.

There is also a need for senior leadership in regard to anti-racist education. Investment is needed in high-level staff development seminars for leaders within Education Scotland, the GTCS and Local Authorities, to develop knowledge and capacity to lead and deliver race equality in their areas.¹⁰

Racism and prejudice based bullying

Without action to address racism and prejudice based bullying, anti-racist education efforts will fail. Research has highlighted the widespread existence of both subtle everyday racism and overt racism within schools, impacting pupils and teachers. The EHRiC inquiry clarified the seriousness of racist bullying in Scottish schools, with teachers reporting that bullying based on race is the number one type of prejudice-based bullying.¹¹

Accordingly, CRER campaign for mandatory recording of racist incidents and prejudice based bullying in Scotland's schools, with data to be collected, analysed and published by Scottish Government on an annual basis.

Conclusion

CRER believes the actions set out above are essential to meet the Deputy First Minister's ambition that education will build a society which actively challenges racism, eliminates racial discrimination and advances equality. It is clear that many young people's experiences of schooling across Scotland do not yet live up to this. Urgent action is required both for schools to be a safe, supportive and equal

⁸ Scottish Government, [GIRFEC](#)

⁹ Scottish Government (2016) [Race Equality Framework](#)

¹⁰ Kalliani Lyle (2017) [Addressing Race Equality in Scotland](#)

¹¹ EHRiC (2017) [Prejudice based bullying and harassment of children and young people in schools](#)

environment for minority ethnic students and for anti-racism to become embedded in Scottish education.