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Research Report (July 2023)

Regional Research into Racist Incidents / Racist- Bullying / Reporting / Non-Reporting in Schools and Recommendations for Practice, Policy, and Research (a small-scale study).

Prepared for: Gwent Safeguarding Board *Education and Race Subgroup*

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Context and background

This small-scale research project aims to explore experiences of racism and racist bullying to gauge and document the reasons why learners in five local authority areas (LAs) are under-reporting or failing to report, incidents of racism or racist incidents that occur within their school environment. We also aim to present ideas on what the LA can do to improve this situation, with a view to building awareness and robust systems for support, interventions and reporting and opportunities to reduce incidents of racism / racist bullying within schools in future. According to ChildLine (2022, online) racist bullying is a type of bullying that specifically relates to being targeted due to 'race, ethnicity or culture'. The Macpherson report (1999, p.28) defines racism as: 'conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin'. And a racist incident as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'. The nature of racist incidents or bullying, relate to age of perpetrator and severity, from racist name-calling or social exclusion to physical violence (Verkuyten and Thijs, 2002 Cremin, 2003).

From carrying out an initial literature sift in this area, we found there is limited research in relation to the understanding of racial/racist bullying / reporting of racist incidents in schools in Wales /UK. Our research pro-actively engaged with young people from global majority (GM) backgrounds and Gypsy/Roma/Traveller backgrounds in Southeast (SE) Wales. Eliciting their views, through a series of focus group conversations and in consultation with their parents and school leaders. This process helped us to gain a better understanding from a racial equality perspective, in relation to incidents of racism, racist bullying and issues around reporting / lack of reporting. The research sample consisted of 10 schools in the SE Wales area, 5 primary schools (learners from year 5 / 6) and 5 secondary school (year 7 – 10). Each participating school suggested and accompanied a range of learners /parents / staff to contribute to a focus group (maximum 6 in the group). Schools were chosen to represent a mix of rural, inner city and faith schools and by school size and catchment area.

Research, data generation / collation took place between March - May 2023 through the span of focus group research conversations. There was a period of union strike action for teachers which impacted on the original research timeline and participation. Data was analysed using a thematic framework, Braun and Clarke (2006). Shah (2013) notes the epistemological resonance in the use of focus group interviews were framed as conversations to explore cultural issues. A constructionist methodology was used, as we were reflecting on and unpicking elements of socially constructed layers of *lived reality* for participants (Garcia et. al., 2015). The research aimed to understand this complex dynamic. The research team were teachers and academics from GM backgrounds, which gives an additional layer of understanding of and empathy with the process. Data collected will be written up as case studies. Case studies are often employed to reflect upon '*complex social situations*' (Van Maanen, 2011) and this sums up the research dynamic here in relation to the '*courageous conversations*' that we had with the participants (Davis, et al., 2021, p.14). Analysis of data was further explored through coding, by using NVivo. We envisage that data will lead to a '*virtual vision map*' which we will present after the final report has been submitted and discussed. Thus, going forward, this will lead to co-constructing and implementing recommendations for professional learning, strategy, and policy reform.

Summary

The research generated six themes as set out below:

Theme 1: <i>Perceived racism / racist incidents and Reporting of Racism / Racist Incidents</i>
Theme 2: <i>Non-Reporting of Racism / Reasons</i>
Theme 3: <i>Learner Wellbeing / Self-esteem</i>
Theme 4: <i>School/ Community Issues</i>
Theme 5: <i>School Ethos / School 'Buy-in'</i>
Theme 6: <i>Adult Perceptions</i>

Key points from the 'participant voice' relevant to the emerging themes:

**These are listed in no specific order*

1. Racism is prevalent in the research participants' lives within their schools and communities in Wales.
2. Issues around the use of 'banter' with racist connotations need to be examined and acted upon in school and community culture.
3. There are pockets of good practice going on in Gwent, with some positive anti-racist practice and thinking.
4. New terminology is needed to replace the term English as Additional Language (EAL). This global intelligence should be framed in a celebratory model moving away from a deficit model. The use of alternatives such as multi-lingual learners should be considered.
5. It is key that schools address hierarchies and associated perceptions, which view some cultural groups in negative ways.
6. The detrimental effects to self-esteem / self-worth from the effects of racism need to be robustly considered. Schools must talk with their learners about their experiences and put systems in place to support Black/ Global Majority (BGM) and Gypsy/Roma/Traveller learners in this area, especially in relation to the new curriculum for Wales and the Cynefin principle. Schools need to work with local people with lived and professional experiences to hold these conversations sensitively.
7. Staff of BGM heritage and especially supply staff, also are subject to micro- aggressions and racism in all its guises overt, covert, systemic and institutional.
8. We need to address 'cultural understanding' in school staff, this may be especially related to Afro hair / hair styles / cultures / approaches in social behaviours and other aspects / the wearing of Hijabs or traditional garments. Whole school anti-racist professional learning is crucial for staff and anti-racist

education for learners on cultural understanding and racism / anti-racist practice explicitly and within curriculum redesign.

9. Non-reporting often occurs. Learners explain they are hesitant to report, as 'they don't want to get friends into trouble' or that they felt there was just 'no point' as nothing happens and that brings more upset for themselves and their family. These were common feelings expressed.
10. We need to unpick how learners report to school staff, who may have perpetuated racist thinking towards them. What are the safe-guarding systems in place for this? There is a culture of under-reporting due to hesitancy / reluctance / fear which continues into adulthood.
11. Our findings point to the need for a standardised consistency of approach for reporting and dealing with incidents, which must be put into place across Gwent - 'a what to do guide on how to report racist incidents and what happens next' would be useful along with a robust flow chart detailing the process for reporting and outcomes / interventions.
12. Parents and wider school community, e.g., governors and adults that work within schools must be able to access training on anti-racist thinking and learning. BGM Parents expressed concerns that social workers or groups that support from outside the school system, also need anti-racist / cultural awareness training.
13. There needs to be an independent mechanism whereby reported racist incidents are looked at by a neutral party. The learners or staff member making the claim should have confidence that the issue will be dealt with confidentially, impartially, and that there will be a resolution.
14. All school policies and visions need to hold anti-racism at the safeguarding, professional learning and curricula cores.
15. There is a lot of work to be done. Learning organisations should consider having an anti-racist steering group to share the review and reform work and to collaborate with community stakeholders and professionals with lived experience.
16. We found inconsistencies across schools in Gwent relating to good practice in handling the reporting of racist incidents and in implementing actions, interventions, and support. The levels of support for learners and adults affected by racism are insufficient and need standardising.
17. Further longitudinal research is needed, as this research project has barely scratched the surface.
18. Wider action is needed across Wales, in the form of statutory consultation and guidance and a national framework for the reporting and handling to be considered collectively across all learning organisations.

Literature Review

Research undertaken by the Runnymede trust found that racism is deeply embedded in schooling, and there is a duty on schools and wider education to 'radically' reimagine and commit to anti-racism (Joseph-Salisbury, 2021, p.2). Our role in this process was to investigate and learn from the 'chalk face', what is being perceived and what is occurring. This conundrum and these issues are not new. Bhavnani (2001) talked about the importance of understanding the context of racism and racist bullying. She suggested that off the shelf EDI training was irrelevant as understanding of the relationships of power, between and within groups, were key in analysing the context of racism (p.117).

When does racial awareness begin in children? We know from research that babies as young as three months old can differentiate between different colour faces (Kelly, et al., 2005) as children grow at pre-school age, they show a preference for play with same race peers (Leman & Lam, 2008; Girouard, Stack & O'Neill-Gilbert, 2011) Sullivan, Wilton and Apfelbaum (2020) suggest that adults delay conversations with children about race, as they underestimate Children's understanding or processing of racial concepts. Donaldson, who was a student of Piaget, found that children can indeed have complex societal issues if it makes 'human sense' (Donaldson, 1978) to them, thus, we need to ensure that issues around race are not seen as 'taboo' or no-go areas for educators.

The role of teachers and educational professionals is key in negating racism or racist thinking in their settings. It is apparent when you consult child development books pitched at educators, there is a dearth of writing around race. A 'colour blind' approach to racial difference (Apfelbaum, Sommers & Norton, 2008; Asika, 2020) is often the default. Denial and avoidance appear to be the stance for dealing with any racial dynamic in our schools and early years settings. Effectively ignoring racial differences when talking to children is a missed opportunity. When children are taught about race in meaningful and constructive ways, they develop insight and empathy towards others. We are fortunate in Wales that our new curriculum for Wales highlights Cynefin (Belonging) for all and that our young people will become 'global citizens of Wales and the World' (Welsh Government, 2022, online) through this remit. By employing such an approach, research tells us that children demonstrate less racial bias (Aboud & Doyle, 1996,) and have a more robust sense of their own identity (Quintana, 1998; Hill, 2006; Alonzo, 2020).

We know that the concept of 'race' is socially constructed. (Smedley & Smedley, 2005, Olusoga, 2016) and biased ideas around race, were historically constructed to enable the process of enslavement and colonisation of Black or Global Majority peoples. (Sanghera, 2021). Therefore, it is essential that educators engage with training on race and the effects of racism, so they are equipped with strategies, both to understand the nuances of racism and to deal with the fall out. Essentially, they need to become racially literate and as Williams suggests (Welsh Government 2021, online) senior leaders in education, must remove barriers to enable practitioners to engage with this priority area which are 'time, resources, competence, knowledge and confidence'. It appears that getting parental support during any process of anti-racist action is also key. Research undertaken by Wu, Sanchez and Perry (2022, p. 1) albeit in the US, (which has a very different racial backdrop to Wales), found that 'White Egalitarian parents were reluctant to talk about race to the children due to three reasons: 1) talking about race will make their White children racist, 2) White children are too young to talk about racism, and 3) race and racism are irrelevant to White children's lives'. These are undoubtedly deep concerns for those parents, who fully subscribe to these perceptions. However, if we unpick these assertions, we know that young children can associate societal status based on race from about three years of age, understanding that White people have more wealth and power in society than BGM people. (Olson, et al., 2012; Mandalaywala, Tai & Rhodes, 2020 and Dukler and Liberman, 2022).

If we continue in the vein of why it is vital that we eradicate racism from our schools, it is also necessary to ponder over the inequity within society as well as the school playground and venture into not just the moral argument of our anti-racist endeavors but inequities in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of our BGM children and young people. Most educators are aware of the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs, NHS Wales, online) on young children and that these inequalities are factored around health, poverty and mental, physical and sexual abuse. ACEs do not currently include racial trauma or racialised bullying, this

oversight, in relation to the evidence we now have on the effects of racism on young brains and bodies. Racism may affect child development at an almost cellular level, we know that the effects are cumulative (Wallace, Nazroo & Becares, 2016; Priest et al., 2019) and that racial discrimination is as our research has found, a common everyday experience for children and young people from racialised communities. The knock-on effect on health, especially adolescent health, is becoming more well documented and with a growing body of empirical literature. It is apparent that much of the research does, however, examine the effects on social and emotional development, with less literature investigating health outcomes. Currently most of this body of work is from the US, however a growing body of research is now coming from Australia and work with indigenous youngsters. (Priest et al, 2013; Shay, Grace & Woods, 2021).

We also know from research undertaken around the 'biology of adversity' that there are specific effects from racism on health and mental wellbeing (Smith, 2010; Comoz Dias, 2016). Shonkoff, Slopen and Williams, (2021, p.115) discuss the effects of institutional / structural racism, cultural racism and interpersonal discrimination. They conclude that these factors offer compelling evidence for the need to protect young children's developing brains and growing bodies from what they term 'the physiological disruptions of toxic stress that can undermine the building blocks of optimal health and development in early childhood' (2021, p.115) which is caused by exposure to racism. Currently there is little longitudinal research on the effects of racism over lifetimes, however, research is slowly becoming apparent. If children experience racism in their early years and this carries on into adolescence and then adulthood, there are factors of concern, notably the 'exposure to racial discrimination'. We know in adolescence, (from studies in the USA) that this can tip into mental health issues and result in substance misuse or alcohol dependence (Gibbons et al., 2010, Faramand, Arshed & Bradley, 2020). In the UK there is scant mental health support for young black boys in particular. There is a dearth of BGM mental health professionals working in health and social care, young people experiencing racial discrimination or other associated societal problems are reluctant to access support in what Meechan, John, Hanna (2021, p.106) call an 'unapproachable system' Therefore, it is especially pertinent that the effects of racism are negated in early childhood as during this time racial trauma results in 'a sensitive period' for internalisation or embedding of stress related factors of adversity (McEwen and Gianaros, 2010; Shonkoff et al., 2009).

It is apparent following our research in this area, that schools cannot negate the tide of racism in a singular fashion. It is imperative that there is robust buy-in from parents / carers, and the wider school community, in order to undertake a multi-pronged approach to its eradication. Schools cannot do this work alone.

Research Details: approaches

The research was based on consisted of a series of semi-structured interviews (we called research conversations), which were carried out within eleven schools across Gwent. Five Primary schools and five secondary schools. There was one group of adults / LA staff and TAs and one group of parents/adults. The research team consisted of four academic staff from Cardiff Metropolitan University and three teachers. All researchers leading the research conversations were from BGM backgrounds.

Overall we interviewed 78 participants (29 primary children, 27 young people from secondary school, 7 LEA staff 15 parents) during the period from March to May 2023.

Coding of data

Data used was coded as:

Primary schools in Gwent

Name of school (NoS)	P1
(NoS)	P2
(NoS)	P3
(NoS)	P4
(NoS)	P5

Secondary Schools in Gwent

(NoS)	C1
(NoS)	C2
(NoS)	C3
(NoS)	C4
(NoS)	C5

Adults

LA staff	L1
Parents/Adults	Par

Learners were referred to as for example child P5 (child A = P5) or C1 (YP A = C1 / YPB = C2 etc..)

Adults were referred to as LA staff / Parents (Par)/ Adults

Ethical approval:

Ethical approval for this research project was gained through the base university ethics board.

Limitations for Research

It was clear that there were some emotional challenges for learners when sharing sensitive views. Whilst there was support offered during and around participation in the schools, this varied. As a research team we believe that for future research, research options for participants could more robustly consider privacy options for disclosing racist bullying / issues with a standardised support follow-up option in each setting.

The sample was mostly BGM learners – however some learners involved were White. This meant that there was some difference around perceptions and lived experience. A small number of Gypsy/Roma/Traveller experiences came through in this research.

Although we had a fluent Welsh speaking researcher on the team, and Welsh medium schools were included, logistical issues / availability in times suitable for the schools / team meant that within the Welsh medium schools, the conversations took place in English with the support of a Welsh speaking teacher within the research conversations.

One primary school signed up and we set up interviews but pulled out on the day. Another turned up but there were technical issues affecting access to the session.

Some Learners had differing understanding of what constituted racism / racist bullying. There was limited time in the research resources to follow up on the learning within the research conversations, and this would not have been appropriate as researchers due to our impartiality.

The session with parents was held face-to-face in a community location, it was difficult for the researcher to record notes whilst leading the research conversation. In future research, there would be another member of the team taking notes or using a central recording device.

Findings

Theme 1:

- Perceived Racism / Racist Incidents
- Reporting of Racism / Racist incidents

Racism is prevalent in the participant children and adults' lives within their schools and communities in Wales. We heard this clearly from the learners and adults from Black and global majority backgrounds who shared their experiences with us.

It is clear that we need to unpick the use of racist 'banter' and this should not be seen as acceptable in anyway or as one teacher described it –

"The children in year 6 sometimes use 'slang' – [P word]". (Teacher / LA group).

Other learners discussed frequent *'banter around the 'N-pass'* and *'permission from friends for the 'N-pass'*. Sometimes there are comments passed as a joke but child B P4 said: [Racism which occurred towards me] *"was a joke and the intention was not racism"*. Thus, it seems that children themselves, often have a blurred understanding on what constitutes a racist incident. We are aware from undertaking this research that it is a 'mixed bag' as were heard from a member of LA staff:

"However, there are pockets of good practice going on within schools in Gwent". (LA staff, L1)

We were concerned to learn, as support staff told us we need to be aware of racial hierarchies in schools, reporting that their work with EAL (multi-lingual) and Gypsy Roma Traveller learners puts them *"all lumped together into one group – they feel lower than others. It is segregation. It's us and them"*. (LA Staff, L2). Thus, there was a strong feeling and unpicking of ideas around 'EAL' - English as an additional need as a term needs to be revised going forward. New terminology for example, multi-lingual should be seen as a way forward here.

A Young person A in C4 lacked confidence in reporting racist incidents due to prior experience, which also had a knock-on effect to their ongoing self-esteem:

"Because I have a have experience of going to the teacher when I racist slurs were said to me, and nothing happened when these racial slurs were said at me more often, I lacked a bit of confidence to actually go to the teachers and explain my situation".

At C1 All learners agreed on perception of racism as being discriminatory against a person based on their culture or appearance. All learners agreed that racist bullying was picking on someone verbally because of the colour of their skin or based on appearance. Learners at C1 reported that they had experienced no racism in their school or community.

During our conversation with parents, it was clear that they agreed that racism is how people act and behaviour towards each other. Par3 called it:

"Hatred towards culture and race".

Par7 described it as:

"Making fun of traditions, including how people dress".

All parents agreed that jokes are prevalent through the community. All parents also agreed that social media contributes to racist incidents as people have the freedom to post anything. All parents agreed that they had not witnessed any racist incidents at school (Primary 1). All had experienced or are worried about racism in local high schools.

Par4 said: "Social workers have problems with different groups", which led to all parents expressing concerns about organisations that are attached to support education. All parents agreed that outside organisations can discriminate against people.

Theme 2:

• Non-Reporting of Racism / Reasons

We found several reasons that children / young people did not report racist incidents or bullying because. This was often down to 'friendships' - they were afraid 'friends' would get into trouble:

"I was called the N word. But I don't think the child knew what it meant, so I didn't report it. I didn't want to get them into trouble". (Learner A, P1) or

"I Went to tell on them but didn't because don't want to get friends into trouble and ruin relationship". (Learner C, P3)

Or if they did report, there were some blurring of issues during this process:

"The pupil being racist started lying when they were reported" (Learner C, P1).

Other reasons for not reporting:

Learners and adults explained they weren't confident that anything would happen to help them if they reported racism so there was:

'no point' as it just caused "more upset for them and their families". (Learner D, P2) and (LA staff, P3)

"There's a stigma behind reporting it. You're a snitch. You're do too much. It's not that deep. Things like that. And actually, when you actually report and they really don't do anything, you start to believe. It's not that deep. So, then you have that lack of confidence that actually acknowledge what's happening and reported it and actually get some justice out". (Learner A, C4)

During the interview, primary children also recalled past events, thus the research questions, brought up past traumatic memories for them.

"When I was younger, I was young, it was dinner time and the older children (year 4's) were laughing and calling me blackie – I forgot it though because I was little, and I am remembering it now. It's now making me feel sad". (Child C, P1).

LA staff commented:

"When it is a microaggression, young pupils might not have the ability to communicate what has happened to them or why it is racist. Also, how can you report racism 'safely' when a teacher is being racist?". (LA staff, L1 A)

The LA staff raised useful points, around the learners, being 'alone' in this or the fact that schools, 'just don't have the strategies / knowledge to deal with these issues', and therefore, 'they are swept under the carpet', and not spoken about or dismissed as 'not really that'. Which perpetuates the system and causes some learners or adults to refrain from reporting and as L1C points out:

"Dealing with racism isn't an entrenched behaviour in the school system"

Or:

"Pupils/staff feeling like this is something that they are just going to have to deal themselves, within their lives" (L1 B)

However, at comprehensive school C1 all learners had not reported any incident of racism or racist bullying based on their experience. They also said they had not witnessed any incidents of racist bullying within the school. This may have been because the cohort chosen for the interview by the school was predominantly white.

At Primary school 1, several parents told us they had witnessed racist incidents. Par4 believed that their child was excluded from school based on a misdemeanour. Par4 said that none of the other students were excluded but her son from the Roma community was. Par 3 and Par 5 agreed with this and mentioned that teachers did

not support them. They felt they had no one to complain or report the incident to. All parents were worried about their children going to high school in the area.

Par 2 said they were followed by security guard at a supermarket. Par 3 and Par 4 have also shared similar experiences. Other parents agreed that this was normal, and they were often followed by security when shopping. Par 4 said there was no point in reporting incidents in the community to the police as 'there is no point'. All parents agreed that reporting to the police had no impact. Par1 also mentioned that due to the language barriers and lack of interpreters within organisations, they were unable to report any issues.

Theme 3:

- **Learner Wellbeing / Self-esteem**

We know from theory / research that racism has a cumulative emotional toll. This is very succinctly set out below:

"You don't understand how bad racism is until you've experience it". (Young person B, C2)

A worrying exchange with a group of children in P4 occurred when Child A said to Child B:

Child A: "someone was racist to you"

Child B: "were they?"

Child A: "they said you couldn't be clever because you were Black".

Child B replied: "I'm not even Black"

It was clear to the researcher, that Child B was from a Black Global Majority (BGM) background, and in this exchange, they were reluctant to even acknowledge their own heritage/skin tone. We believe that this was related to the thought of being the 'victim' of the incident and the complexities on how people define their own selves in descriptions of skin tones.

Young person E in C4 when talking about being made to take part in a restorative meeting:

"Going into that room there was the expectation that I was to forgive that person.... They treat it as if you they called you a petty nickname, not something very racist with history behind it...you're both brought in that room and you're both looked at like nothing has happened and that it's petty as a childish fight. And you have to forgive them. And so, then it put for me, at least, they put me in a position where I felt obliged to forgive them when I was still upset and hurt. And I never had the opportunity to convey that. And instead, I just let it go because I was expected to let it go."

Another example: It was apparent that YPA in C4 was visibly disheartened when recalling:

"You just feel like the fact that we have to now shrug it off when the racial slurs do get said at you. I don't know. In my case it's more of a psychological thing where I feel like; maybe this is normal, because nothing really gets done about it, nothing. There's not really much awareness about it. It's like oh this is just normal. It's just having banter. But the thing is there's implications and there is history behind them, we have to take it more seriously."

Child C in C4 reflected:

"When I was younger and sometimes even now, my dad will remind me and be like [child C name] remember; You're a black girl. You can't act the way other people acting to act a certain way. And I feel like it's also that mentality that then still keeps racism around. It's kind of like I shouldn't have to act differently just because if I do something a white person does, they'll get penalised less harshly than I will".

At C1 none of the learners said they had experience or seen racism or racist bullying in their school or community, they all understood that it would involve 'picking on someone'. However, we did feel that there were some issues, even though they were not pointed out to us as YP4 at C1 said:

"Sometimes friends would say things as a joke that talk about differences, but it is not perceived as racism".

Several learners shared emotive stories of their experiences of racism from a young age, this was difficult and emotional to hear. The empathy and active listening between the learners hearing the stories from each other was palpable. It was clear that some of the white learners were visibly shocked to hear their peers openly share some of the examples discussed.

Theme 4:

- **School / Community Issues**

There was some knowledge amongst the participants that often the issues in the community are rolled out into the school. Examples were given of children being called racial slurs on school buses, whilst passing others walking or waiting on bus stops, others talked about graffiti visible on their journey into school. It was clear that the immediate environment of the community or any issues around racism, filter into the schools.

"Racism is everywhere" (Child D P1)

The community trickles into the school – school is a melting pot (LEA staff D)

In school C4 all Students agreed unanimously that parents were not informed of racist incidents that occur in school

In primary school P3 the class teacher reported that sometimes there would be incidents of racist comments within sport in the community towards both children and adults. Adults also described being subjected to racial slurs as well as more 'subtle' forms of racism and racist perceptions of them within their personal and professional lives.

All parent / guardian participants at Primary 1 agreed that there were few issues of racism. Parents believed that there was a lot of support and interpreters available at the school. The school celebrates the community by organising combined celebrations. However, all parents agreed that racist incidents were regular and 'normal' in the community. Par 2 said some parts of the community were fine but in other parts they would feel unsafe. Par 9 mentioned that in order for community racist incidents to decrease, there needs to be greater community cohesion and working together. Par 7 and Par 8 agreed that sometimes there is racism amongst different groups. They also mentioned that racism is taught / learnt within the home. They felt strongly that parents need to be educated along with the children and for that to be addressed in school policy, vision statements and community provision.

Theme 5:

- **School Ethos / School 'Buy-in'**

At school C1 the school seemed to have support for learners in terms of reporting. All learners knew they could speak to their safeguarding lead. There was also provision for online anonymous or named reporting. The teacher explained that they felt that the school has a lot of support in place for bullying incidents. Whether there was a specific avenue or labelling of 'racist' incidents was unclear and the outcomes for the victims / perpetrators were unclear and inconsistent.

In primary school P4 the class teacher discussed that schools use restorative measures to resolve conflicts. Teacher also expanded on restorative justice. All teachers were trained restorative justice approaches.

The school also participated in a culture day that all learners enjoyed.

No discussion amongst the adults was offered around the hidden and everyday curriculum and how this could impact on school culture and deeper learning. However, in one school the learners discussed assemblies and learning which took place around religion, several learners in this group openly asked for more opportunities to learn about different cultures and lived experiences in Wales to their teacher who actively took part in the research conversation.

Theme 6:

- **Adult perceptions**

Adults who were LA staff told us Racism is persistent in our schools, it is a *'dripping tap'* (participant L3)

BGM staff who were on supply also suggested that racism / racist bullying was not confined to learners.

"As a woman who wears a hijab: I often have pupils laughing or name calling. I ignore it – its usual. I'm always wary when I go into a new school. I have never reported it to the head teacher / why would I? (LA staff member L4)

At school C1 the teacher felt that different religions and cultures were still not integrated into all activities. He felt that learners from different culture and religions 'stay in their groups'.

Parents at Primary 1 explained that there were several racist incidents in the community. They raised concerns about racism in high schools coming from students to students and teachers to learners. All who took part in the small group of parent participants, felt that in their experience teachers hold a bias against students of different communities. Par 11 felt that students were discriminated against for how they dress. They mentioned Muslim students covering they legs and students questioning or picking on them for doing so without support or intervention from teachers. Parents from the Roma community felt there was no representation for them in local council or in public services. They felt they could not report incidents of racism to the police as no one would do anything to understand. Par 2 and Par 3 also mentioned that they found it difficult to report incidents due their language barrier. They said if they were angry, they could use google translate, but that this was not always effective and limited what they were able to share from experience.

Positionality within the Research

We believed as a team of researchers from BGM backgrounds, that it was important to share within the research conversations how we felt during this 'emotive' research process. Whilst we were highly aware of bias and of not influencing the participants. We found it frustrating and upsetting, listening to the testimonies of the learner and adult participants.

At school C1, the group was a mix of mostly white learners. The teacher also appeared to be from a white background although this information was not disclosed or discussed. There were two black learners that we felt would have said more if they were given the space. However due to the dynamics of the group, all students mostly agreed. The teacher also did not have any lived experience of racism and seemed to lack empathy and understanding within the interview space which could have made it difficult for the young students to speak openly.

In comparison, in school C2 the white male teacher present, openly engaged during the research conversation with the learners reflecting with the group on his perceptions of his own privilege in not having experienced racism in his life. He described currently being on a 'journey' to learn more about issues around racism and about diversifying his own classroom environment and curriculum. He told the group about a recent DARPL event he had attended.

Learners engaged well within the research overall and were extremely articulate, caring, thoughtful and knowledgeable. School C4 was a frustrating interview for our researcher, as he believed as a teacher himself, that the issues coming from the learners could be so easily solved. It was difficult in some of the short conversations for us to see how frustrated / upset the students were. It was sadly clear though, learners felt surprised and grateful for the occasions when a school had followed up on a racist incident.

We thought that some schools were trying hard to engage with supporting students and in negating racism / racist bullying. Learners were clearly trying to be pro-active in school C5. They mentioned that they had tried several times to get 'things off the ground' and to put systems in place, after speaking with class teachers, but that there but they felt that there had been no 'buy-in' from the senior leadership team.

One researcher pointed out that she was glad that the research had been undertaken on TEAMS as it felt a little more remote. This researcher still has negative associations with her own school days, as she was often singled out or 'othered' during that time. When she was speaking with the children in school P1, a child in year 5 spoke of her experiences of being 'left out' by her white peers and behaviour such as shunning or not speaking with her, this made her really upset as this was exactly her experience. Luckily, she was able to hold herself together, but believed if she had been in the physical room, would have cried at that point. Other researchers explained that leading the research conversations made them feel emotional and tearful during and on reflection afterwards. The researchers feel strongly that the participants of the research should obtain some feedback from this research and some concrete actions going forward. It was especially upsetting when the young participants appealed to us to support them further:

"When are the adults going to sort out racism?" (Child, B, P1)

A researcher, who was a young BGM male schoolteacher, was asked by a group of BGM boys following a school interview, if he could 'give them some advice' outside the interview, on how to navigate within their white school system.

Recommendations for Policy / Strategy

There are number of recommendations drawn from the voices of the research participants. Again, not in any specific order, but the consensus is that this work is ongoing, and that everyone will be at a different stage in their anti-racist journeys as a continuum. The key is to start on the journey and to have consistent approaches across the school and across the LA.

1. Empathy and allyship were mooted as a key driver in this work all LA staff and all school staff need to engage with anti-racist and racial literacy professional learning through organisations such as the national professional learning offer from Welsh Government via DARPL.
2. Teachers and LA staff told us that pastoral work is vital within this racial dynamic. Funded cuts to support staff are apparent in many schools – this does not help pastoral work or race equity work, as time and commitment is needed to listen, educate and resolve. Schools need support and guidance on developing their strategic equality plans and prioritising resources for this essential work.
3. The term English as an additional language (EAL) – must be updated. Multi-lingual would be an alternative as this term celebrates learners linguistic capabilities and global intelligence rather than using a ‘deficit’ model of ‘English as an additional language’.
4. Racism and racism/racist bullying is cumulative. Its effects are lifelong. It impacts on both the mental and physical health of our young people. We strongly recommend that racism and racial/racist bullying should be categorised as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE).
5. Individually appropriate, sustained support (counselling) should be resourced for children affected by racism. School policies and visions need to hold anti-racism at its safeguarding core.
6. The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is the most accepted human rights agreement in the World. Human Rights no 2. under this is that children and young people must be protected against discrimination as this is their human right. We need to ensure that LAs and schools not only adheres to this requirement but actively places it at the heart of all national, regional and individual school policies and procedures with racism considered explicitly within the definition of discrimination.
7. As one of the child research participants so eloquently put it:
“The community of the world [with regard to racism in schools] has to know what is happening in the World.... not just in the school world”. (Child, B, P1)
8. There must be a clear process/criterion for reporting and for dealing with racism / racist bullying, one that goes beyond just a single school (council/area/country wide approach). Schools must appoint a designated person to report racism to.
9. Anti-racism needs to be included into curriculum, and an element of co-creation with students. Diverse, authentic representation when planning for all four purposes and areas of learning and experience needs to be supported and challenged through professional learning through Wales-wide community engagement.
10. LA and School staff are not competent, confident or consistent in dealing with racist incidents. Standardised professional learning is needed across the board. The urgent need for LA staff, senior leadership team and governor development and buy-in is crucial.

11. It is clear from our findings, that all schools must be actively aware of and be looking at how to implement the Welsh Government (WG) anti-racist action plan (ARWAP) and the WG anti-racist Wales ambitions for 2030.
12. All school staff should be aware of the recommendations in 'Communities, Contributions and Cynefin: Black Asian Minority Ethnicities in the New Curriculum for Wales' Report 2021, published by Welsh Government.
13. All school staff should School staff should be directed to Welsh Government DARPL (DARPL.org) materials and learning opportunities for consultation, challenge and support. Professional learning should be undertaken and audited by SLT on a whole-school basis. This is not just an activity for interested / lead or pro-active staff. This needs to be a whole school safeguarding approach.
14. Any racism / racist bullying seen, heard or reported should be mandatorily informed to parents / guardians for perpetrators and for the recipient with follow-up on outcomes and interventions.
15. Response to racist incidents needs to be consistent and graduated with set levels of consequence and education across schools, the region and nationally.
16. A clear, confidential and standardised reporting system must be in place within schools and across the regions.
17. Learning organisations and schools should consider establishing an anti-racist steering group in own context to share the review and reform work and to collaborate with parents, community stakeholders, community outreach organisations and professionals with lived experience.
18. There should be clear opportunities for students to learn about other cultures throughout the entire duration of school life across all areas of learning.
19. Learner and staff upskilling/awareness/professional learning about defining, reporting and acting on hate crime is necessary.
20. The funding LA should publish / share the findings and recommendations of this report for consideration across other LAs and schools.

Recommendations for Practice

What do LA / Schools need to do going forward? Anti- racist practice must be whole school. It must be embedded into everyday policy and practice. There must be a whole school ethos of non-acceptance for any racist issues including ‘banter’. Consistency is key when dealing with racism / racist bullying. All staff need to know what to do to report / channels of command. There must be robust and sensitive ways to record and report.

1. Clear and transparent systems for reporting of racist incidents / bullying must be integral to school policy / procedures. **Schools must have a zero tolerance of racism / racist bullying of all kinds including ‘banter’.** Any system must also ‘square the circle’ i.e., reported incidents should have a clear timeline of action, which sees a concrete resolution for the recipient of racism and interventions put in place for the perpetrator of racism.
2. Workshops to make pupils more aware of other cultures should be delivered by people with “personal experience” (Child B, P5).
3. Child A in C4 said *“History is taught negatively, only history is slave trade, all cultures to be included in a positive way “And I feel like there has to be a change in the way history is taught for all cultures to be included in a positive manner”.*
4. Child B in C5 talking about the curriculum and why it should change – *“it also introduces, ethnic minorities or black people {to young people}, as you have a bad history, you face racism and that's all there is to you... it's like we were made for oppression”.*
5. Schools need to consider that adults (teachers, support staff etc) working in their schools may also suffer from racism / racial bullying. There needs to be open space to proactively explore this issue.
6. The use of ‘edu-key’ was suggested as a useful means to record racist bullying / racist incidents. Explore systems to be used effectively in schools and across the region.
7. There is a need to work on transition from yr6 – yr7. Learning needs start in the early years in primary schools. We know that young children start to form [negative] ideas around race when they are very young. Interventions must that start early on i.e., in primary schools when students are still developing / understanding society and racial aspects.
8. The use of a digital worry box, jam board, to write learners are feeling was mooted as useful.
9. Better partnerships with parents - Parental engagement and buy- in is essential. The consensus was that schools can’t do this work alone and need the support of professionals with lived experience and with consideration of multi-lingualism.
10. Educating the community and parents seems to be effective and necessary. Community learning opportunities need to be explored and enabled. We agreed with one of the young people who said: **“Pupils repeated things after listening to their parents”.** (YP1, C2).
11. Professional learning and guidance are needed for all staff/professionals in LA, schools and regional consortia to make sure they use the right language and ensure they feel comfortable about challenging and dealing with racism (LA staff, L1)
12. An in-school newsletter (to parents) including anti-racism information is necessary along with developments of policies and codes of conducts.

13. Anti-racism education should be included within school curricula involving an element of co-creation with learners.
14. Recruitment processes should include consideration of anti-racist practice from interview discussions / tasks and professional learning for new staff and student teachers. Supply teaching providers should be asked about anti-racist professional learning / auditing.
15. Continuous whole school professional learning such as DARPL (DARPL.org) outlined by Welsh Government in the national professional learning offer need to be undertaken by all staff working in education.
16. Regional Safeguarding Board to review and report on the number and outcomes of racist incidents in schools in the LA on a termly basis.
17. Sustained anti-racist education and anti-hate-crime education for learners is essential throughout learners' school journeys. This should be ongoing in teaching and learning and not a tick box. This should include the teaching of authentic histories and local community engagement with BGM groups. All schools need to draw on the recommendations in 'Communities, Contributions and Cynefin: Black Asian Minority Ethnicities in the New Curriculum for Wales' Report 2021.
18. The Safeguarding Board and the research team to hold a co-learning event involving the research participants of this report to share and discuss the emerging findings and recommendations of this report.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. We commend the funding of this research by Gwent Safeguarding Board Education and Race Subgroup 2022-23. However, we truly believe that this research project has barely scratched the surface of this issue deep rooted locally, nationally, and globally. Further funding and longitudinal research are needed to explore these issues in more detail.
2. Regionality might play a part in this research. South Wales is more diverse than other areas of Wales. Thus, it is important that this research is replicated across Wales. Also, in relation to Welsh Government Anti-racist action plan thinking (2030).
3. The research team and Gwent Safeguarding Board to liaise with Children's Commissioner's Office in Wales about the current ongoing research to consolidate findings into national recommendations, national guidelines, policy reform and collective actions for equity, parity and sustainable step-change.

Glossary of Terms

ACEs - Adverse childhood experiences.

BGM - People with Black and Global Majority heritage.

Anti-racist practice – the practice of being actively anti-racist as opposed to non-racist or complicit.

Global Majority – ‘Global Majority is a collective term that first and foremost speaks to and encourages those so-called to think of themselves as belonging to the global majority. It refers to people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as ‘ethnic minorities’. Globally, these groups currently represent approximately eighty per cent (80%) of the world’s population making them the global majority now’. (Campbell Stephens, 2020, online)

Racism – holding views which equate to the discrimination and negative treatment of others based on race.

Racial / Racist Bullying – experiences of repeated offensive behaviour verbally, physically, or subtly because of skin colour, cultural, traditional or religious background or ethnicity or perceived ethnicity.

Racial Literacy – Being literate regarding the issues of racism / race.

Racial Trauma – The cumulative effects of ongoing racism, which are life-long and affect physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

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Appendices

FOCUS Group Questions

Title of Project: *Gwent Safeguarding - Regional Research into Racist Incidents / Racist-Bullying in Schools and Recommendations for Practice, Policy and Research*

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The focus group conversations will be semi-structured to allow for flexibility and sensitivity.

Questions for learners, parents and practitioners:

- How would you describe what racism is?
- How would you describe what racist-bullying is?
- Please will you tell us about racism in your school and in your community?
- Please will you tell us about your experiences of racist bullying in school and in your local community?
- Have you reported a racist incident?
- Do you know someone in school you could talk to about racism or racist-bullying?
- What was your experience of reporting? And what happened after you reported it?
- If you did not report an incident, why didn't you?
- How do you think processes for reporting could be better?
- What do you think could happen in school to improve the culture of racism to move to anti-racism?
- What do you think could be done to prevent racist bullying?
- What do you think could happen in the community to move the culture of racism to being anti-racist?
- What do you think could be done in the community to prevent racist incidents or racist-bullying?
- Is there anything else you'd like to talk with us about?
- The learners – will also be invited to express their thoughts / feelings quietly on paper during the sessions if they choose to, with coloured pens and pencils available during the sessions.

Additional questions/prompts for parents/practitioners:

- What has happened when racist incidents or racist bullying have been reported to you?
- Why do you think that is?
- What else do you think could be done to prevent racist incidents and Racist Bullying to improve the experiences of children and young people?

- What are your ideas to make schools and communities more accountable for these improvements?
- Is there anything else you'd like to say or ask?

Please note from here down, these are the question adaptations discussed from the wider work. Researchers can add any of these additional prompts in if needed to extend the conversation.

Additional prompts - Teachers/LA staff	Additional prompts - parents / adults
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you had any experience of dealing with racism or racist bullying in your school? 2. Did you report it? If yes, what happened. If not, why not? What did you do? 3. What worked well about how you and/or the school responded and what could be better? 4. Do you feel confident in responding to racism or racist bullying? What would help? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you had any experiences of racism or racist bullying in your school? 2. Did you report it? If yes, what was the response, If not, why not? What did you do? 3. In your experience, how did the school respond to the racism or racist bullying? 4. What was good / difficult about how the school responded, or what could be better?

DATA Set – available on request for the research funders (within ethical constraints).

