



# Framework for developing an **Anti-racist approach**



# Introduction

This framework is a response to the 'Barriers' report which was based on the testimony of over 1000 Black teachers about the impact of racism in their workplaces. To address some of the concerns arising from that report, I discussed with the NEU Executive the need to help teachers develop anti-racist approaches in schools and workplaces. After further consultation and a pilot phase, this framework is now ready to help ensure all schools and colleges are just and inclusive for children, young people and staff.

The Black school/college population is growing in number and breadth and the continuing discussions of inequalities have centred around disproportionate exclusions and the so-called 'attainment gap'. However, debates have tended to treat these issues as if they were stand-alone issues, without a broader structural and power analysis of race and racism and their effects on children and young people. There are many aspects of race that impact education, for example in recruitment, retention and progression of Black staff; an ethnocentric curriculum; racial hate crime - which has doubled since the Brexit vote in 2016; racial harassment and discrimination against staff and pupils; and funding cuts. Thousands of students are excluded every year because of racist behaviour.

For me this framework could not come soon enough given the way in which the Covid-19 pandemic has affected Black communities; the rise of racist attacks in and out of schools and colleges and the political environment (globally and nationally) that is emboldening an anti-immigrant, blame foreigners populist narrative. I know most teachers absolutely want to ensure that education is free from any form of discrimination or bullying but many need support to do this. I hope every school or college will find this framework helpful in the quest for racism-free education.

**Daniel Kebede**  
Vice President NEU

# Getting started

## Why do we need an explicit anti-racist approach?

- Race and racism are not well understood – ‘race’ is a social construct, but race is mistakenly and widely used to denote difference.
- Racism is very real and yet often we deny it affects us, our behaviours or our school/college – whereas it affects every single student.
- The majority of the people around the globe are not white and yet ideas about white superiority are still deeply influential and prevalent.
- Black teachers and staff face a range of discriminations, including in recruitment, career and pay progression rates and also in relation to issues such as appraisal and job evaluations.
- There is a growing ‘blame the foreigners’ narrative for strains on schools and colleges, (and the NHS and all public services), which if unchecked will lead to increasing racism.

## Why do we need an anti-racist approach within education?

- Schools can change pupils’ lives which is why it is important that all schools have an inclusive and supportive approach.
- We face a growth in intolerance and racism, despite anti-racist legislation and agreements such as the International Declaration of Human Rights, all around the world and within the UK.
- Young people’s ideas about race must be explored and discussed within educational contexts – if not within education, where?
- Education is a crucial place where we can challenge the ‘normalisation’ of many forms of racism, including Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism.
- Training and other interventions will not be effective unless there is a culture of open discussions about race and racism, where staff and young people are acknowledged as key to developing solutions.

# Making the positive case for promoting race equality through education

This framework has been designed to help you explore ideas around race equality and plan how to tackle racism with children, young people and staff.

## It offers discussion starters in your workplace to help:

- Empower Black staff and pupils to explore and express what matters to them.
- Support young people's right to speak out and engage as active citizens with the issues around racism that they care about.
- Challenge racial inequalities and oppressive racial norms and assumptions.

## Key points to think about with colleagues:

- Often, we do not immediately recognise racial inequalities, or understand institutional racism because incidents are not necessarily overt or recognised as part of a pattern.
- The aim should be to explore the patterns of racism and not use a deficit model (such as 'close the gap') where solutions are targeted at changing the individual student or group.
- Black staff and pupils are not homogenous groups. All staff and pupils have identities which are unique to them. These identities include our ethnicity, but also our gender, sex, sexuality, disability, class and religion or belief. There are also differences in the way that different groups of Black staff or pupils are treated.
- The responsibility and expectation of challenging racism should not fall to Black staff or pupils, but they have a unique perspective and have particular understanding and expertise about exclusionary practices and policies. Their viewpoints and experiences should be considered closely.

# Barriers and myths

**This framework is designed to help you create spaces for peer reflection and school/college self-evaluation**

It is not easy to improve anti-racist practice or to develop and embed an anti-racist approach to education without talking through some of the myths about racism and the assumptions that are barriers to equitable practice.

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Approach/Analysis</b>
<b>We don't have many Black pupils, so addressing racism isn't a priority.</b>	All Western media, books and cultures are impacted by racial norms and assumptions of white superiority: every student needs access to opportunities to learn about and understand racism and bigotry, the forms they take, how such beliefs are formed and how to challenge them.
<b>We treat everyone the same and educate about respect for difference.</b>	Respect for difference isn't enough. Currently, society is based on hierarchies about race. Respect is an important value to promote, but anti-racism requires exploration of the history and patterns of power imbalances and discrimination, in age appropriate ways, if we are to change things for the next generation.
<b>We are focused on "closing the gap".</b>	<p>"Closing the gap" is a deficit model based on seeing the group of pupils who are disadvantaged and stereotyped by racism and poverty as the "problem".</p> <p>Very often political debates seek to minimise the impact of racism and even to blame Black communities by discussing them in an oppositional way to white 'working class' children. We need to both challenge the poverty and social hierarchies which harm Black and white working class communities and understand the impact of racism on Black children and families.</p>

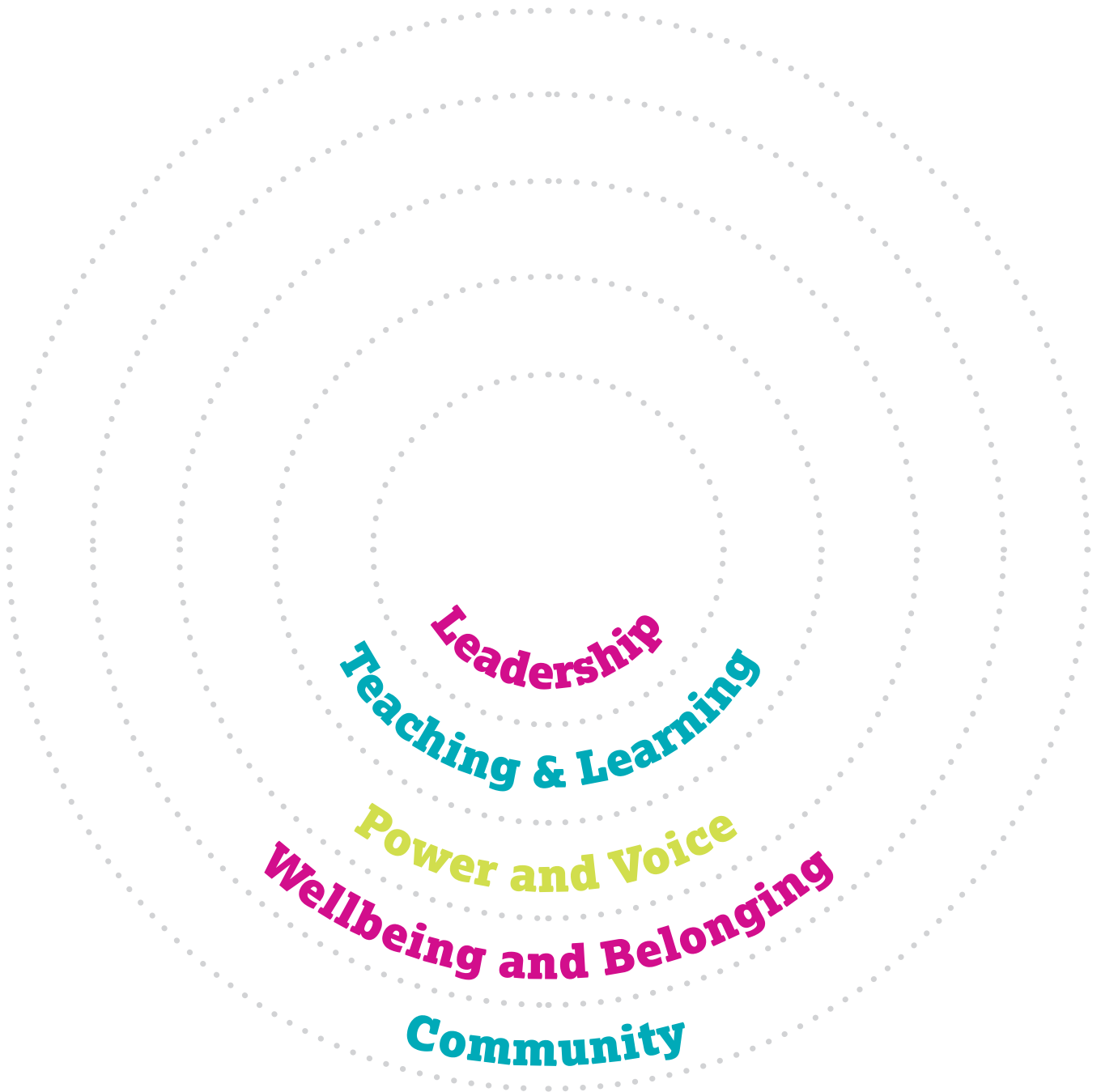
<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Approach/Analysis</b>
<b>We take a “Zero Tolerance” approach to unacceptable pupil behaviour.</b>	<p>All behaviour policies must support positive behaviour for learning and support young people to take responsibility for their behaviour. However, there are huge racial disparities in exclusions: and zero tolerance behaviour policies are shown to disproportionately harm and segregate Black pupils, working class pupils and children with SEND.</p> <p>Your behaviour policy should empower you and your colleagues to make professional judgements. Staff must feel supported and part of a team – but behaviour policies must aim to support pupil wellbeing and understand what is causing or triggering challenging behaviour.</p> <p>Adverse childhood experiences (ACE) play a huge part in what contributes to children’s behaviour.</p>
<b>We focus on high standards for everyone to support pupils to achieve well.</b>	<p>High expectations for and of every child have been shown to be transformative and is essential. However, much of the curriculum in school/ college centres on cultural assumptions, which are driven by white and middle-class norms. The hierarchies and patterns of discrimination created and perpetuated by racism can’t be overcome by high expectations alone – they require an explicit and open conversation about British and Global history, the power dynamics within racism, bias and racial hierarchies.</p>
<b>White working-class pupils face the biggest challenges, don’t they?</b>	<p>It is important to recognise that the term “working class” includes Black pupils and that not all working class children (Black or white) face the same barriers. Poverty disproportionately impacts Black children – 45% of whom are trapped in poverty. That white pupils in general are doing worse overall is not accurate. Those facing significant barriers include the 14% of white children on free school meals and certain groups of pupils with SEND.</p>

## **Whole school/college approach for creating an anti-racist perspective**

- Each school/college has a different local context, in terms of community.
- Each school/college will have a different context in terms of your number of Black staff, parents and pupils.

Every student is affected by racism, but the impact and consequences of racism for Black staff and Black pupils can be largely invisible to white staff.

# A whole school approach





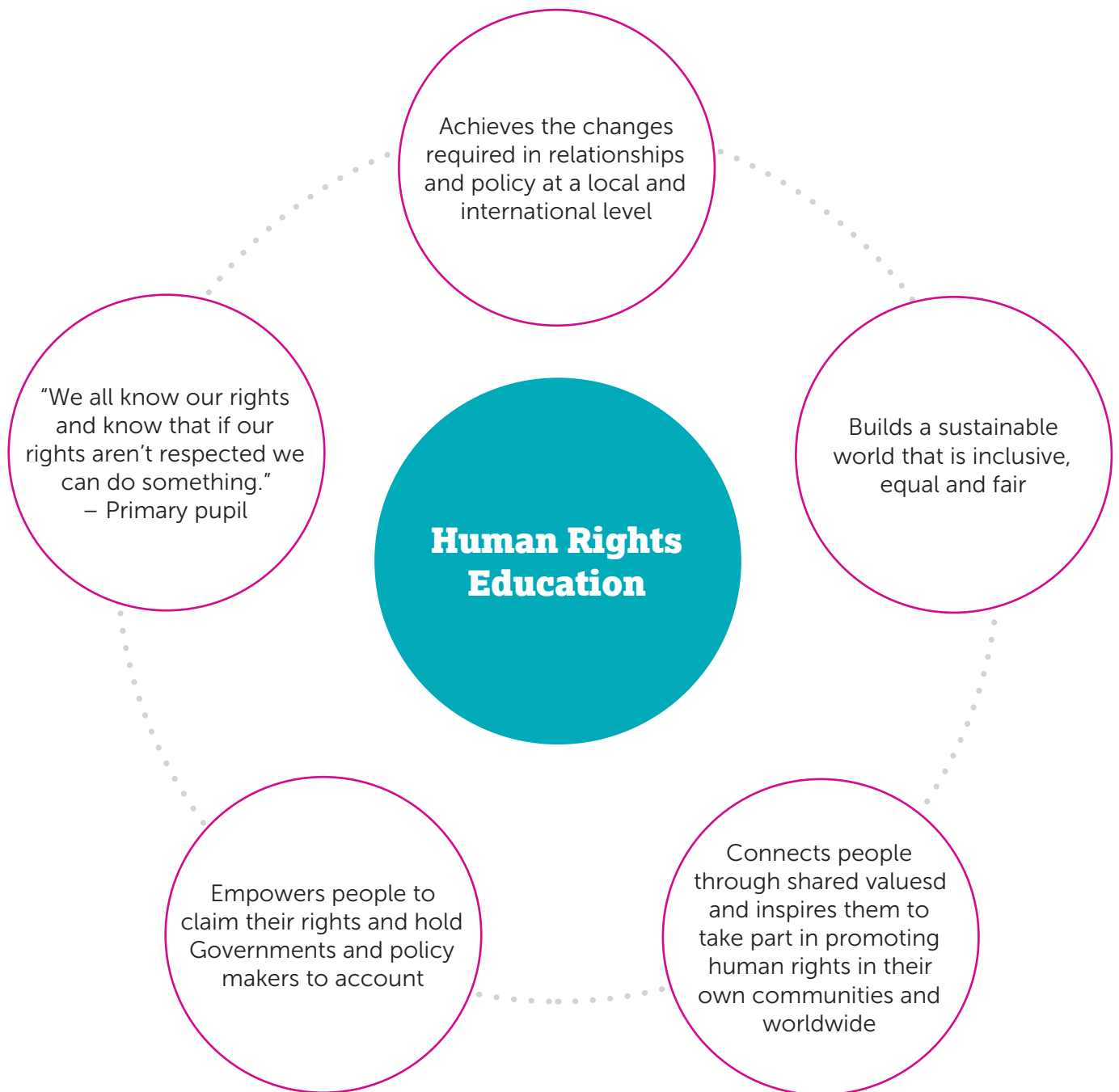
# Anti-Racist Framework

<b>Leadership</b>	Does the leadership model a commitment to anti-racist values and a whole school/college approach to race equality?
<b>Teaching and Learning</b>	Is the curriculum being used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ To challenge race inequality</li><li>■ Achieve cultural inclusion</li><li>■ Respond to the differences in children's lives caused by racism, poverty and discrimination</li></ul>
<b>Power and Voice</b>	Whose voice is heard in your school/college? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Do Black staff feel valued and safe?</li><li>■ Do Black parents feel valued and respected in school/college?</li></ul>
<b>Wellbeing and Belonging</b>	Which pupils feel a sense of belonging? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Is student wellbeing seen as a priority?</li><li>■ What are the links between racism and wellbeing?</li></ul>
<b>Community</b>	What is the local history in your area? How can you use it to discuss protests, struggles or campaigns led by Black communities in your area?

# Theme 1: Leadership

**Work with NEU members in your school/college to establish which are the priorities for your setting.**

		<b>On Track</b>	<b>Focus Here</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>
1	Is there a race equality policy and a clear understanding of racism? How is it being used?			
2	Is there a race equality scheme which has clear focus on eliminating discrimination and creating equality of opportunity? How has it been discussed or used?			
3	Is there a clear and well-understood policy (and implementation) for recording racist incidents, including bullying and language? Are staff clear? Confident? Are incident reports monitored and reviewed for trends and action devised as a result?			
4	Is there a race equality impact assessment of the pay policy and pay progression decisions? Has it been useful?			
5	Are there goals for increasing racial diversity within SLT posts?			
6	Ask members what CPD training they think would be most helpful? Is training on offer that addresses racial equality?			
7	Does the school/college recognise the importance of using teaching and learning to foster an understanding of the multicultural society in which we all live?			
8	How is SLT going to support staff to develop cultural competency in relation to the communities the school/college serves?			
9	Is there a strategy to support pupils at risk of exclusion and to prevent and explore alternatives to exclusions, and is there particular attention to the disproportionality in rules of exclusion for Black pupils, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils?			
10	How can the SLT open up a conversation about race, racism and racist stereotypes and model an openness to exploring an increased focus on anti-racist practice across the institution? What support is needed from SLT? What is already in place and going well?			



# Theme 2: Teaching and learning

		<b>On Track</b>	<b>Focus Here</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>
1	Does your setting have a whole school/college approach to using the curriculum proactively to intervene in how racism is produced?			
2	Which subjects currently reflect global influences? Does history include age appropriate lessons on the history of Britain, to include slavery and colonialism? (See box below on Migration and the Hostile Environment for resources)			
3	Which subjects include the positive contributions of Black people through history and in contemporary society?			
4	Has there been any discussion of 'Decolonising Education'? (See box on page 15)			
5	How are teachers and pupils involved in reviewing and evaluating curriculum plans, schemes of work and lesson content with the goal of improving their relevance to multicultural Britain?			
6	How does the approach to teaching and to assessment enable Black pupils to have high expectations? How can you empower Black pupils to feel comfortable about aiming high?			
7	What improvement can be made to CPD to develop and build anti-racist practice? Where are the opportunities to talk and think about the hidden ways that the inequalities of 'race' and ethnicity play out in the classroom and affect children's learning?			
8	How are schemes of work peer reviewed for equalities content?			
9	How could you build in time for colleagues to talk together about the impacts of stereotyping? How is racism experienced differently by boys and girls, or by pupils that might identify as LGBT+?			
10	Could you use the concepts of global citizenship education to empower young people?			

### How can the concept of global citizenship be helpful to engage your students?

Global citizenship education provides a chance for young people to reflect on their roles and responsibilities regarding issues of equality and justice in human development – individually, locally and globally.

This is not an additional subject area but rather an overarching approach to classroom practice that is best embedded across the curriculum (core, extra and hidden) and life of the whole school and its community.

The UNESCO framework for Global Citizenship Education (2018) has 3 dimensions: -

- a) Cognitive: supporting pupils to acquire knowledge, understand and develop critical thinking skills to analyse and assess global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of countries and different populations
- b) Socio-emotional: supporting pupils to have a sense of belonging to a common humanity; sharing values and responsibilities, sharing empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity
- c) Behavioural: supporting pupils to act responsibly for a more peaceful and sustainable world

# Theme 3: Power and voice

**Work with NEU members in your school/college to establish which are the priorities for your setting.**

		<b>On Track</b>	<b>Focus Here</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>
1	What are the priority issues faced by Black staff in your school/college?			
2	Do Black staff feel safe and able to vocalise their experiences and what makes them feel included/excluded within the staff community and whether they feel valued/marginalised?			
3	What are the proactive actions your school/college could take to ask deeper questions about the levels of inclusion and belonging for Black pupils/Black staff members in your workplace?			
4	Do all staff and pupils have equal opportunities to discuss race and ethnicity? Are they actively involved in developing anti-racist mindsets and behaviours?			
5	Are there clear guidelines in place for reporting and dealing with racial discrimination, harassment and racist incidents? Are such guidelines being used?			
6	Is it recognised that individual Black staff members or pupils/parents do not represent and should not be expected to be the voice of all Black people?			
7	How are Black pupils empowered to demonstrate a recognised pride in achievement and self-confidence?			
8	Is Black History Month in October the only part of the year/curriculum where there is a focus on the contributions of Black citizens/communities to British and global history or contemporary society? If so, how can Black perspectives in all subjects be reflected all year round?			

		On Track	Focus Here	Medium Term
9	How does the school/college enable staff and pupils to understand and vocalise how to keep themselves safe from everyday risks such as racist, sexist or homophobic abuse, sexual exploitation or grooming? Do staff and pupils feel safe and confident to report bullying and abuse?			
10	Does the school/college's approach to wellbeing and belonging understand the psychological harms caused to Black pupils from racism and the way racism is internalised?			

### Decolonising Education

#### What does 'decolonising education' mean?

Decolonising is a way of thinking that interrogates how colonisation shapes the way we think, our education system and the curriculum. The legacy and ongoing impact of the ideas that shaped colonisation and the actions of the British empire contributes to contemporary racial inequalities.

Discussions about decolonising education is one essential step to developing anti-racist educational spaces.

Understanding the context for today's immigration debates is impossible without understanding that large numbers of people who came to the UK didn't actually come as migrants; they came from colonies and former colonies as citizens.

A representative and relevant education system should reflect Black children's histories, achievements, culture and politics. All children deserve to see themselves reflected in their books, schools and communities and to achieve this we must re-think both curriculum and assessment .

# Theme 4: Wellbeing and belonging

**Work with NEU members in your school/college to establish which are the priorities for your school/college.**

		<b>On Track</b>	<b>Focus Here</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>
1	Does the school/college recognise that supporting emotional needs and development of pupils is vital for both wellbeing and learning outcomes?			
2	What is the pattern within exclusions and off-rolling? The rates of exclusion of Black pupils, especially Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, and looked after pupils needs explicit discussion and evaluation.			
3	Does the SLT monitor exclusions by ethnicity and analyse trends with governors?			
4	Are there ways the voices of pupils who are excluded/suspended to be heard to contribute to improvements in policy and practice?			
5	How is the school/college supporting children and young people to explore the issues around racism that they experience, and to understand their rights?			
6	What is being done to enable pupils to feel safe to express their cultural identities? Do pupils feel like insiders or outsiders? How would you know?			
7	Do pupils feel safe, aspirational and accepted for who they are?			
8	Would staff and pupils report a sense of place and belonging in your school/college? How could you find out more? (Please see the box on page 17)			



		On Track	Focus Here	Medium Term
9	Is your behaviour policy flexible and focused on supporting young people to take responsibility by understanding their individual context? Do staff feel supported and know how to access support for individual pupils who are struggling?			
10	Do you feel that information about pupils' individual vulnerabilities is shared appropriately so that teachers' judgements are informed by relevant information about that child/family?			

### NEU Research on Place and Belonging

#### A sense of place and belonging: a transformative whole school/college approach

- Is this school/college a place where everybody feels like they belong? If not, what are we going to do about it?
- What approaches on wellbeing and belonging could help you look at the challenges pupils face in their local context and identify new possibilities?
- Using the powerful concept of 'agency' – think about and identify what agency means for teachers and young people.
- Develop a model of evaluation that puts belonging at the heart of school/college life.
- Find case studies and research about how to build a sense of agency, place and belonging at [www.theartofpossibilities.org.uk](http://www.theartofpossibilities.org.uk).

# Theme 5: Community and culture

**Work with NEU members in your school/college to establish which are the priorities for your school/college.**

		<b>On Track</b>	<b>Focus Here</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>
1	How can you draw on community resources, Black parents or local campaigns to plan action to respond to racism in the community?			
2	Which local museums and cultural or religious centres are close? How can you incorporate teaching from the history of Black struggle in your area? Which Black activists or Black Trade Unionists who fought against racism can you teach about?			
3	How does your school/college demonstrate understanding of the cultures and religions in your community? Do you celebrate festivals and special days?			
4	Are there clear guidelines in your school/college for parents to report instances of racism, racial harassment or victimisation? Are parents confident to report concerns?			
5	How are parents enabled to feel this is a safe environment in which to share their concerns and that the setting is inclusive and welcoming for their child/ren?			
6	How does the school/college keep up to date with patterns of racism in the community and act to work on contemporary issues which will be affecting pupils?			
7	Does the school/college take a measured and intentionally proportionate approach to the Prevent duty? Are Muslim pupils, or those perceived to be Muslim, feeling alienated, profiled or "under surveillance"? If so, what steps can you take to change this?			
8	How can the school/college support refugees and challenge the increasingly negative stigmatisation and stereotyping of refugee children and families?			

		<b>On Track</b>	<b>Focus Here</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>
9	How could you celebrate the positive history of migration in your local area?			
10	How are children and parents given clear, affirmative and consistent messages about the benefits of bilingualism, which aim to eliminate misconceptions about bilingualism as a 'problem'?			

## Migration and ‘the hostile environment’

Many pupils will hear the misconception that Britain was once exclusively white. Some adults believe that racial and cultural homogeneity in their part of Britain has been disrupted by migration. In fact, there has always been racial and cultural diversity throughout Britain’s history. The UK does not have a ‘white’ or monocultural history. This is not a country unsettled by migration, it is a country made by migration. Without giving every student a knowledge of this history, the UK’s understanding of itself will always be mythical and inaccurate – and it will allow migrants to be scapegoated by various politicians. The UK’s migration history- and how we all think about migration today (as teachers and pupils) – can’t be understood without looking at how migration and immigration legislation relates to race and the colonial project.

### Our Migration Story: The Making of Britain

You will find an excellent resource from The Runnymede Trust and the University of Cambridge at [ourmigrationstory.org.uk](http://ourmigrationstory.org.uk). This website presents the often untold stories of the generations of migrants who shaped the British Isles. It is designed to support teachers and pupils studying migration to Britain.

The site is organised through stories of individuals and groups. These stories are told through a diverse range of historical source material and are arranged into four time-period categories: AD43-1500; 1500-1750; 1750-1900; 1900-2000s. Across each period, you will find images, quotations, newspaper clippings, Parliamentary reports, videos, poems, extracts from novels, and many other materials that present the successes, challenges, obstacles and surprises faced by Britain’s migrants over more than a thousand years.

Most case studies end with potential questions and classroom activities, and there are excellent lesson plans and classroom activities.

What could you do differently to teach about the fullness and the richness of the contributions made, and lives lived, by Britain’s many migrant groups?

# The Power of language

## What does 'race' mean?

Race is a socially constructed concept- it is what is sometimes called 'a social construct'.

We all have an ethnicity but there is no biological merit or accuracy in the concept of 'race'. Some anti-racist organisations place race in inverted commas ('race') to remind us that 'race' has been created and used differently across history.

We are all influenced more than we realise by racial discourses which link supposedly biological characteristics to racial groups and such characteristics are sometimes misunderstood to be genetically inherent.

Throughout history, 'race' has been used to categorise different groups of people based on perceived physical differences- and has been the basis of supposedly biological categorisations behind genocides.

## What is 'ethnicity'?

Race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably.

An ethnic group generally refers to a community which has a long, shared history of which the group is conscious of as distinguishing it from other groups and the memory of which keeps it alive; a cultural tradition of its own including family and social manners; sometimes associated with religious observance; a common, however distant, geographical origin and a common language and literature.

We all have an ethnicity.

'White British' is used to denote an ethnic group, although this obscures regional differences in terms of how people feel and identify and ignores the existence of social class.

There are many different white minority ethnic groups and their experiences of access to education are different - for example, some Jewish, Irish and European people who may face many barriers, discrimination and forms of stigma. Additionally, racism may affect some Gypsy, Roma or Traveller people who may not identify as white.

## Why do some reports and organisations use BME or BAME?

BME (Black and minority ethnic) and BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) are used widely but have significant limitations:

- They suggest that individuals are a homogenous group.
- They can appear to be convenient descriptions but are not generally identities which people have themselves chosen to identify.
- They overlook the fact that African, Asian and all non-white people are actually a global majority.
- The terms can pathologise certain groups and implies the putting down of a group as "less than"

### How to use the right language?

It is important to talk about ethnicity, perceptions about race and what needs to be done to challenge stereotypes so that we can advance race equality.

The more often racism is talked about the more comfortable staff will become in having these discussions, thinking critically about our perceptions and where they come from and examining our unconscious biases.

Involve and engage your staff and pupils in discussions about language and this will signal your awareness of the sensitivities and complexity around how we identify.

Discussing language and terminology can help open up wider discussions about race and the importance of monitoring by ethnicity and improve disclosure rates in monitoring exercise - a clear commitment to taking action will increase engagement.

### Why is Black a political term?

This framework mainly uses the term 'Black'.

Black is used in its political sense to denote a solidarity between Asian, African and Caribbean and all people of colour who identify with political 'Blackness'.

'Black' was first used by white people to describe colonised and enslaved Asian and African people as a derogatory comparison to White.

This term was reclaimed in Britain as part of the struggle of working-class African Caribbean and Asian communities against racism in the 1970s.

While many anti-racist organisations continue to use Black as a political term, the understanding and unity of action symbolised by this term has been declining.

Black members in the NEU have determined that they want the term Black used, to re-assert the unity intended within the term and to get teachers talking about the origins of racism.

### Be clear about what you are doing and who you mean

The NEU Black Members conference agreed that the NEU should use Black in a political context to encompass "all members who self-identify as Black, Asian and any other minority ethnic groups who do not identify themselves as white". This includes Gypsy and Roma non-white people. The NEU recognises that the term Black is not universally accepted by African, African Caribbean teachers, Asian or non-white people, and won't be understood by all.

Have a conversation about language in your school/college and use terms that are accurate for each group of pupils.

If you have a project on Roma pupils, say that.

If you have a project involving African/Caribbean girls, say that.

### Discrimination and which terms are used in legislation

The Equality Act 2010 protects staff from discrimination on the grounds of their skin colour, nationality or ethnic origins.

The Equality Act 2010 also prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.

### Adapted from the HE Race Equality Charter

# Values that support Anti-Racist Education

**Equity:** Fairness in access, opportunity, experience and outcome.

**Justice:** Fairness and non-discrimination, safety and security.

**Inclusion:** Belonging and feeling relevant and involved.

**Voice:** Representation, participation and the power to affect decisions.

**Respect:** Enabling and protecting personal, community and cultural dignity, enabling truthful histories, destigmatising communities.

**Wellbeing:** Improving physical, mental and emotional wellbeing that is so often damaged by racism.

Equity

Justice

Inclusion

Voice

Respect

Wellbeing



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