

DON'T DIVIDE US



Who's in charge?

A report on councils' anti-racist policies for schools

July 2022



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021 we were alerted by concerned parents and teachers to a divisive and partisan teacher professional development course, Racial Literacy 101, being sponsored by Brighton and Hove Council. Our whistle-blowers revealed contentious advice to teachers, with the council recommending lesson plans that focused on racial division being taught to children as young as five. Following widespread concern in Parliament, the Education Secretary, Rt. Hon Nadim Zahawi MP, launched an enquiry and we await its publication.

In light of that experience, alongside curriculum examples we have received from parents and teachers elsewhere over the past two years, we set out to develop a granular picture of how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ("EDI") and anti-racist policies are being implemented by local councils across England and Wales. Alongside this, we sought the views of parents to test whether public thinking was aligned to the strategic direction being promoted by local councils. What we found is deeply concerning and demonstrates a widening gulf between parents and those tasked with the education of their children.

Almost one in four councils (23%) that are transparent about their policies are promoting deeply biased and a highly contentious model of anti-racism, based on division, in their education policies and guidance (for the purposes of this report, we refer to these as "Biased councils"). This approach suppresses the distinction between facts, opinions, and beliefs. Key concepts such as 'structural racism', 'white privilege' and 'unconscious bias' – ill-defined concepts that enable varying interpretations and policies – are present throughout.

Of these biased councils, **the vast majority (88%) partner with third party providers** ("3PPs"), nominally commercial companies and charities. This is a growing

field, with over half of councils now partnering with third party providers overall. Councils are not transparent about these partnerships, despite many providers adopting an activist orientation. DDU supporters are repeatedly denied access to teaching materials from these providers on grounds of commercial interest. **It is striking that not a single Council we identified as adopting an unbiased position employs or partners with a third-party provider.** The Government has rightly criticised the roles of third-party providers within Higher Education settings – namely Advance HE and Stonewall. Our findings indicate that primary settings have been severely overlooked.

This stands in opposition to the beliefs of parents. A YouGov poll, commissioned by Don't Divide Us, demonstrates that **a majority of parents (38%) believe schools should not teach pupils that Britain is structurally racist**, such as concepts that Britain is structurally racist. **More than two thirds (69%) believe schools should teach in a non-partisan way.** Teaching a diversity of viewpoints in a way that encourages independent thinking and judgment – a publicly accepted educational goal – remains the view of parents and should not be denied. Tellingly, **71% of parents believe they have a fundamental right to access lessons plans and teaching materials.**

Perhaps the most troubling finding is the **complete lack of transparency at Local Council level.** Just over half of councils (54.3%) approached either did not respond to Freedom of Information requests or failed to provide sufficient information about their EDI policies or their use of third-party providers.

There is little standardisation in how councils interpret concepts of 'racism', 'anti-racism', 'diversity', 'inclusion' and 'equality'. There is no uniform understanding of the role schools should play in combatting racism, making schools vulnerable to indoctrination by biased councils, going well beyond existing legislation and accepted norms. In effect, we have found a postcode lottery, where children from Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff, London, Nottingham and elsewhere are more likely to be taught vastly differently on issues of race than children from Barnsley, Blackpool, Durham, Hertfordshire and Kent.



We conclude that that the model of anti-racism – which asserts that Britain is a systematically racist society which automatically discriminates against racial minorities and denies the progress we have made in becoming a successful multi-cultural society – is being legitimised in schools through the reframing of equality policies. This is having a detrimental impact on educational aims, with little or no scrutiny from any independent authority, and risks eroding trust between parents and schools. If not confronted, we are danger of creating a generation of division and distrust in the very institutions tasked with shaping our children's futures.

88%

of biased councils partner with third party providers

38%

of parents believe schools should not teach pupils that Britain is structurally racist

69%

of parents believe schools should teach in a non-partisan way



INTRODUCTION

Background

Since Don't Divide Us (DDU) began in the autumn of 2020 we have been contacted by numerous parents and teachers from diverse political and cultural backgrounds, who are deeply concerned about what is being taught in schools in the name of anti-racism. Many of were also concerned that such anti-racism seemed to be sowing seeds of division among pupils and between schools, parents and their children.

When Adrian Hart, a concerned parent and DDU supporter, inquired about a new anti-racist strategy, Racial Literacy 101, introduced by his local authority, Brighton and Hove City Council, he encountered a process that was anything but transparent. A simple request to see materials deemed suitable for teachers' professional development was denied to a parent on the grounds of commercial interest. The experiences of parents who contacted us, combined with Recent press coverage, suggested that this was not an isolated event. But Adrian persisted, and he eventually obtained access to an edited version of the training materials.

As soon as he read them, he saw that they promoted a highly contentious model of racism and anti-racism while suppressing the distinction between facts, opinions and beliefs.

DDU came into existence in the autumn of 2020 in the context of an intense public focus on race in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests. In widespread media coverage and a multitude of statements from leaders of academic and cultural institutions, these events were presented as a source of revelatory knowledge – a moment of awakening that justified undertaking reviews, periods of self-reflection and, in some cases, far-reaching changes implemented with little or no consultation.

We heard from parents worried about their children's schools, having just re-opened after the Covid Lockdown – which were introducing classroom exercises based on checking unconscious bias, reflecting on white privilege, and the need to promote



positive racial identity. We heard of schools putting up new diversity statements on their website (in addition to the statutory policies on equality), reviewing curriculums and adopting pledges produced by third-party providers (3PP). These important changes which underpin the ethos and practice of schools, were authorised and implemented with little to no consultation with parents.

OUR BELIEFS

- 1 We should treat everyone as an individual worthy of respect regardless of race, religion or the colour of their skin
- 2 We call this colourblind anti-racism – it is based on freedom and tolerance – and we believe it is the best way to counter prejudice where it does exist
- 3 Today's so-called anti-racism sees group identity before it sees a person and risks reinforcing prejudice by dividing us into a world of victims and oppressors
- 4 Britain is a successful multi-cultural society with a positive story to tell about race relations
- 5 We won't benefit from importing divisive political ideas from the US that don't reflect our history and which undermine our shared values today



WIDER CONTEXT

Public understanding of race/racism and anti-racism is under increasing strain as the leadership of cultural and academic institutions, encouraged by the high visible support of virtually every major global corporation, pronounced their uncritical support for BLM. To question was seen by leaders versed in new EDI/anti-racism policies as an offense meriting informal or formal censure if not dismissal.

Since 2020 a previously obscure subset of sociology and law, critical race theory, seems to have burst out of academia into everyday life, and a new national narrative has been spun before our eyes. This is the narrative of 'institutional racism' on a national scale, and it is radically different to the story of Britain which most people living in Britain subscribe to. Many people who spoke with us said they simply could not recognise the version of Britain, or its history and culture, they were being asked to accept without question. Even where critical race theory (CRT) is not explicitly mentioned, its underlying anti-majoritarian premise that everything about Britain's culture, history and values is tainted with racism is endorsed.

When Minister for Equalities, Kemi Badenoch MP, spoke in Parliament to remind the education profession of its duty to uphold political impartiality in schools, academia and the teaching profession were outraged. When the government published its Commission for Racial Disparities Report, this outrage fermented. More worryingly, previously insightful organisations such as the Runnymede Trust dismissed out of hand the Report's main methodological finding, i.e. social phenomena are complex and require multi-variate analysis based on empirical evidence. What is clear is that the new definition of racism being promoted by a hardened activist base is not open to debate or tolerant of alternative views.

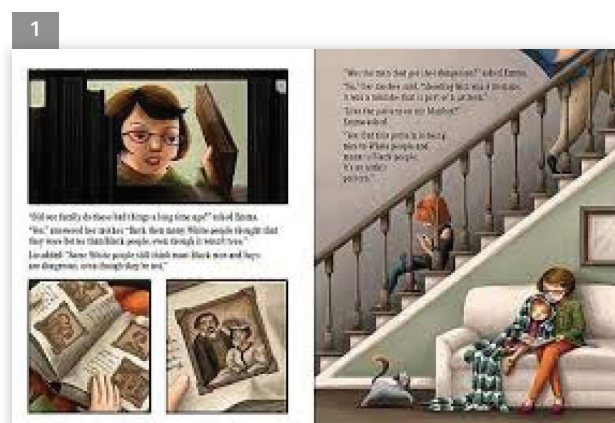
The intolerance and the associated antipathy to freedom of speech are not accidental exceptions to an otherwise liberal world view. The new anti-racism arises from a radically different view of society and relationships from the one accepted by most people in Britain, which can be traced to the intellectual and political achievements of the Enlightenment.

THE NEW IDEOLOGY OF ANTI-RACISM

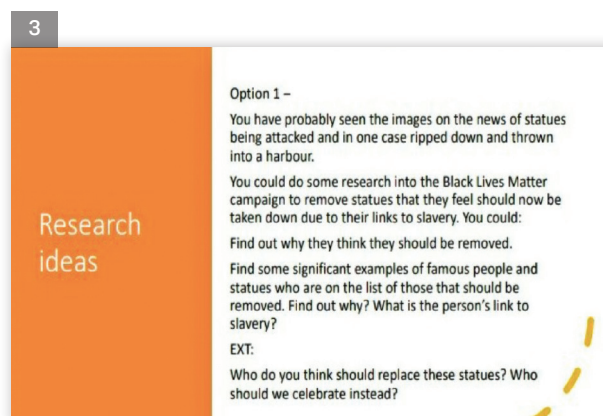
The new anti-racism treats individuals as if they belong to fixed identity groups. It claims that Britain today is solely built on a history of oppression and exploitation based on its colonial past.

The logic is therefore that the UK is made of two defining groups either white skinned oppressors and black skinned victims. White supremacy is the legacy from these historic misdeeds. And without re-educating, the biases and white privilege/supremacy will continue to grow. Furthermore, this past wrongdoing cannot be questioned, and it can only be ended by listening to the voices or lived experiences of people who belong to the victim group. It is in this sense that the new anti-racism is ideological: it arises from, and relates to, interlinked ideas or beliefs rather than practical problems or struggles. The latter aims were the basis of past and anti-racist struggles which do not preclude the possibility of solidarity across lines of ethnicity as morally equal citizens.

The new anti-racism ideology has been bolstered by and is fostering an industry of EDI consultancy, new policy development, corporate HR updates and schools interventions that allow only one interpretation of what it is to be anti-racist. Furthermore, to question or refuse such interventions is often seen as endorsing racism. Established approaches to anti-racism, such as the 'colour blind' ideal to see every person as a unique individual rather than first by a group identity, are being written out of our narrative about race relations in this country.



Below are some illustrative examples from books that are used in primary schools and an example of a secondary pupil's homework task. In our view, the books are anti-educational and socially divisive. Sometimes they have been a teacher's own choice, and sometimes they have been recommended to teachers by senior leadership or third party providers (3PPs). They assert a belief that racism is everywhere in British society as if it were a self-evident truth and they promote the idea that a fundamental difference between individuals is ethnicity or skin colour. The parent who sent in the homework example told us that no alternative viewpoints i.e. why it might be wrong to pull down statues, had been presented, so the content was taught in a partisan way and failed to encourage independent thinking.



METHOD FOR ANALYSING AND CLASSIFYING COUNCILS

Initially, we wrote to every Chair of Children's Services, or lead committee member for Children's Services across England and Wales to inquire about their authority's EDI policies as they might affect schools.

We were disappointed with the lack of response, and subsequently launched a dedicated Freedom of Information request to 173 councils in England and Wales as a nationally representative sample. This was issued on the 13th and 14th of April 2022. We engaged all councils in England and Wales which have a designated member, or Chair, responsible for Children's Services.

Where councils have responded after the FOI deadline of 20 working days, or where they would like to respond after the report's publication, we are happy to reflect this in the online version of the report available on our website.

We made the following requests:

- 1** Confirmation if you currently have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ("EDI") policy which impacts specifically on schools within your area.
- 2** Copies of your EDI policy and all associated literature on anti-racism that inform teacher training, teaching and the curriculum in schools.
- 3** Details of any third-party organisations that you liaise with in support of the preparation and facilitation of your EDI policies within schools, including for teacher training.

Although education is devolved, we included Wales because until recently it followed the guidance of the National Curriculum.

It should be noted that since the 1988 Education Reform Act, schools have been less directly accountable to local authorities than during the previous post-war period when close professional

relationships between national government, local education authorities and the profession existed. Nonetheless, local councils still have a statutory duty 'to ensure every child fulfils his or her educational potential' and they can still exert influence indirectly – or set the tone – for what is within acceptable bounds of local practice by:

- Providing professional development courses
- Setting up local school hubs
- Establishing working groups on issues including anti-racism
- Producing guidance on meeting their interpretation of legal requirements and ethical duties.
- Making statements or pledges
- Providing lists of resources or 3PPs

In short, while local councils do not directly control what any individual schools provides by way of anti-racist teaching, local policies, guidance, pledges and recommended resources combine to legitimise and signal support for a particular way of behaving. They create a framework of reference which legitimises norms and practices that shape the experience of school life.

Alongside the FOI campaign, we partnered with YouGov to commission a poll of the views of a thousand parents towards the teaching of partisan ideas in schools, such as anti-racism, to complement the official empirical basis of our document analysis.

The questions we asked included:

- In general, do you think that schools in Britain should or should not teach pupils that Britain is structurally racist?
- In general, do you think that schools in Britain should educate in a partisan or non-partisan way?
- As a parent, I should have a right to access lesson plans and teaching materials being taught to my child

Coding and classification of our sample

Our sample consists of a combination of FOI responses themselves, the policies and guidance they refer us to, and the content of third-party providers (3PPs).

We coded each council's documentation according to the presence of terms that mark the new ideology of anti-racism:

A:	Allyship
BLM:	Reference to Black Lives Matter
EQ:	Equity, including diversity quotas, role models etc
DC:	Decolonising and/or diversifying
DH:	Distorting, one-sided reference to British/Western history
GF:	Reference to George Floyd
IS:	Intersectionality
IR:	Institutional racism
LE:	Lived Experience
MA:	Microaggressions
RD:	Reflect diversity of community
RI:	Racial identity
SR:	Systemic Racism
SB:	Systemic Bias
UB:	Unconscious Bias
UD:	Where unreliable use of Data is presented as sufficient evidence of racism. Usually means figures have not been disaggregated sufficiently, and/or that race is used as a naturalised or essentialized category in the research.
WB/SG:	Wellbeing/Safeguarding
WP:	White Privilege
3PP:	Third party providers are listed either on EDI statements or sections, other referenced policies or guidance.

We then classified each council:

Biased. Going beyond existing legislation and accepted norms. Council EDI statements and/or supporting content contains explicit statements committing themselves to changing social and/or institutional culture. Concepts such as white privilege, structural racism and listening to lived experience feature prominently along with suggestions that to not follow prescribed practices may be harmful.

At risk. Documents use language that remains strictly within, though not always within the spirit, of the legal requirements of the Equality Act. Some features of identity politics appear, though these are either minimal, rhetorical, or co-exist with established language of equality. Such councils remain at risk of adopting a more concerted partisan approach, and require careful monitoring moving forward.

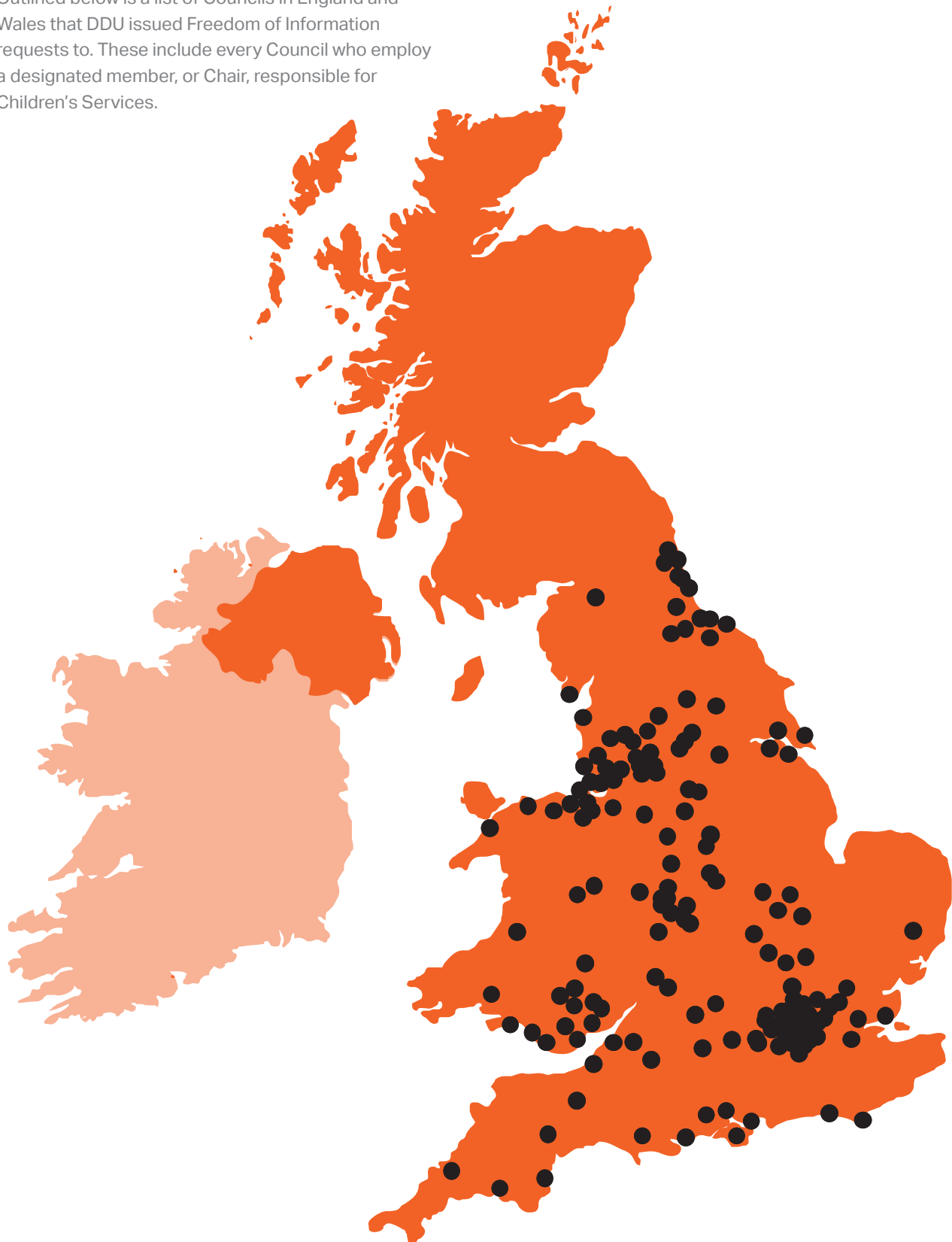
Unbiased. These councils use language that remains with legal requirements of the Equality Act, and other statutory laws. For example, Cambridgeshire County Council shows no presence of critical social or racial justice discourse. Although there is an acknowledgement of more subjective criteria of 'not all prejudice related incidents involve bullying, nor do they necessarily have a victim', the language remains within established broadly liberal narrative.

No information supplied. Where possible, we have provided what is available via searching on Google but this may not have been sufficient to allocate a classification. While all organisations have a legal duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010, it is not clear if the legal duty extends to ensuring a formal policy has to be made publicly accessible.

We arrived at the final classifications of A, B or C after several iterative readings to crosscheck variables including political party control, use of 3PPs, how extensively the new anti-racist terminology is present in the document, and whether new anti-racism is used to justify introducing new practices in education and schools. Our findings are represented in the following section in tables and a written summary.

COUNCILS IN ENGLAND AND WALES ENGAGED

Outlined below is a list of Councils in England and Wales that DDU issued Freedom of Information requests to. These include every Council who employ a designated member, or Chair, responsible for Children's Services.



- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council
- Bedford Borough Council
- Birmingham City Council
- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackpool Council
- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council
- Bracknell Forest Council
- Bridgend County Borough Council
- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Bristol City Council
- Buckinghamshire Council
- Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Ceredigion County Council
- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- City & County of Cardiff Council
- City & County of Swansea
- City of London Corporation
- City of Wolverhampton Council
- City of York Council
- Conwy County Borough Council
- Cornwall Council
- Coventry City Council
- Cumbria County Council
- Cyngor Gwynedd
- Cyngor Sir Ynys Mon
- Darlington Borough Council
- Denbighshire County Council
- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Devon County Council
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
- Dorset Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Durham County Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- East Sussex County Council
- Enfield Council
- Essex County Council
- Flintshire County Council
- Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Halton Borough Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Isle of Wight Council
- Kent County Council
- Kingston upon Hull City Council
- Kirklees Council
- Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Lancashire County Council
- Leeds City Council
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Liverpool City Council
- London Borough of Barking & Dagenham
- London Borough of Barnet
- London Borough of Bexley
- London Borough of Brent
- London Borough of Bromley
- London Borough of Camden
- London Borough of Croydon
- London Borough of Ealing
- London Borough of Hackney
- London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- London Borough of Haringey
- London Borough of Harrow
- London Borough of Havering
- London Borough of Hillingdon
- London Borough of Hounslow
- London Borough of Islington
- London Borough of Lambeth
- London Borough of Lewisham
- London Borough of Merton
- London Borough of Newham
- London Borough of Redbridge
- London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (N.B. FOI services for education run by AFC; investigate)
- London Borough of Southwark
- London Borough of Sutton
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- London Borough of Waltham Forest
- Luton Borough Council
- Manchester City Council
- Medway Council
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- Middlesbrough Council
- Milton Keynes Council
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
- Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
- Newport City Council
- Norfolk County Council
- North East Lincolnshire Council
- North Lincolnshire Council
- North Northamptonshire Council
- North Somerset Council
- North Tyneside Council
- North Yorkshire County Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Peterborough City Council
- Plymouth City Council
- Portsmouth City Council
- Powys County Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Redcar & Cleveland Council
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Royal Borough of Greenwich
- Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
- Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (N.B. FOI services for education run by AFC; investigate)
- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (N.B. FOI services for education run by AFC; investigate)
- Rutland County Council
- Salford City Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sheffield City Council
- Shropshire Council
- Slough Borough Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- Somerset County Council
- South Gloucestershire Council
- South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
- Southampton City Council
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- St Helens Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Stevenage Borough Council
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council
- Suffolk County Council
- Sunderland City Council
- Surrey County Council
- Swindon Borough Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- Telford & Wrekin Council
- Tewkesbury Borough Council
- Thurrock Council
- Torbay Council
- Torfaen County Borough Council
- Trafford Council
- Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
- Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- Wandsworth Borough Council
- Warrington Borough Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- West Berkshire Council
- West Northamptonshire Council
- West Sussex County Council
- Westminster City Council
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
- Wiltshire Council
- Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
- Wokingham Borough Council
- Worcestershire County Council
- Wrexham County Borough Council

FINDINGS – TABLES

The tables below represent the results of several iterative readings of the documents looking for patterns of correlation of bias with regards to political party control of councils and use of 3PPs.

Each council was then classified according to the coding and classification criteria listed in the earlier section (Method for coding and classifying councils).

Table 1 – Classifications of Councils After Coding

	Biased	At Risk	Unbiased	Nis (insufficient information)	No Response	Total Responses
Total	18	26	34	64	29	= 171

Table 2 – Classifications as a % of total from 78 adequate responses received

(Adjusted sample size = 171 – (64 + 29) = 78 adequate responses)

Biased	At Risk	Unbiased
23%	33.3%	43.5.%

Table 3 – % breakdown of the 93 inadequate responses (Nis + No Response)

Nis (insufficient information)	No Response
68.8%	31.1%

Table 4 – % of inadequate/no responses out of total of 171 FOIs sent

Total % of inadequate/ null responses out of 171 FOIs
54.3%

Table 5 – Councils according to classification and political control

*Those with asterisk * refer to, or endorse, third-party providers (3PPs)*

Lab = Labour controlled Con = Conservative controlled Ind. = independent

NOC = no overall control PC = Plaid Cymru

	Biased		At Risk		Unbiased	
1	Birmingham*	Lab	Bedford*	NOC	Barnsley	Lab
2	Brighton and Hove*	NOC	Blaenau Gwent	Ind.	Blackpool	Lab
3	Cardiff	Lab	Caerphilly*	Lab	Bristol	NOC
4	Coventry*	Lab	Cornwall*	Con	Calderdale	Lab
5	East Sussex*	Con	Cumbria	NOC	Cambridgeshire	NOC
6	London Brent*	Lab	Cyngor Gwynedd*	PC	Cheshire East	NOC
7	London Croydon*	Lab	Denbighshire*	NOC	Conwy	NOC
8	London Hackney*	Lab	Devon	Con	Doncaster	Lab
9	London Hammersmith & Fulham*	Lab	Enfield	Lab	Dorset	Con
10	London Lewisham*	Lab	Essex*	Con	Dudley	Con
11	London Merton*	Lab	Halton*	Lab	Gateshead	NOC
12	London Southwark*	Lab	Leeds	Lab	Gloucestershire	Con
13	Luton*	Lab	Leicester City	Lab	Hartlepool	NOC
14	Northumberland*	Con	London Barking & Dagenham	Lab	Herefordshire	NOC
15	Nottinghamshire County*	Con	London Ealing*	Lab	Isle of Wight	NOC
16	Portsmouth*	NOC	London Havering	NOC	Knowsley	Lab
17	Wokingham*	Con	Merthyr Tydfil*	Ind.	London – Bexley	Con
18	Leicestershire County	Con	Newport	Lab	London – Camden	Lab
19			North Yorkshire	Con	London – Hillingdon	Con
20			Powys	NOC	Middlesbrough	NOC
21			Reading*	Lab	Newcastle Upon Tyne	Lab
22			Southampton	Con	Redcar & Cleveland	NOC
23			Vale of Glamorgan*	NOC	Salford	Lab
24			Warwickshire*	Con	Sandwell	Lab
25			Westminster	Con	Shropshire	Con
26			Wiltshire	Con	Solihull	Con
27					Staffordshire	Con
28					Tameside	Lab
29					Trafford	Lab
30					Telford & Wrekin	Lab
31					Warrington	Lab
32					West Northamptonshire	Con
33					Wirral	NOC
34					Wrexham	NOC

Table 6 – Councils according to classification and political control

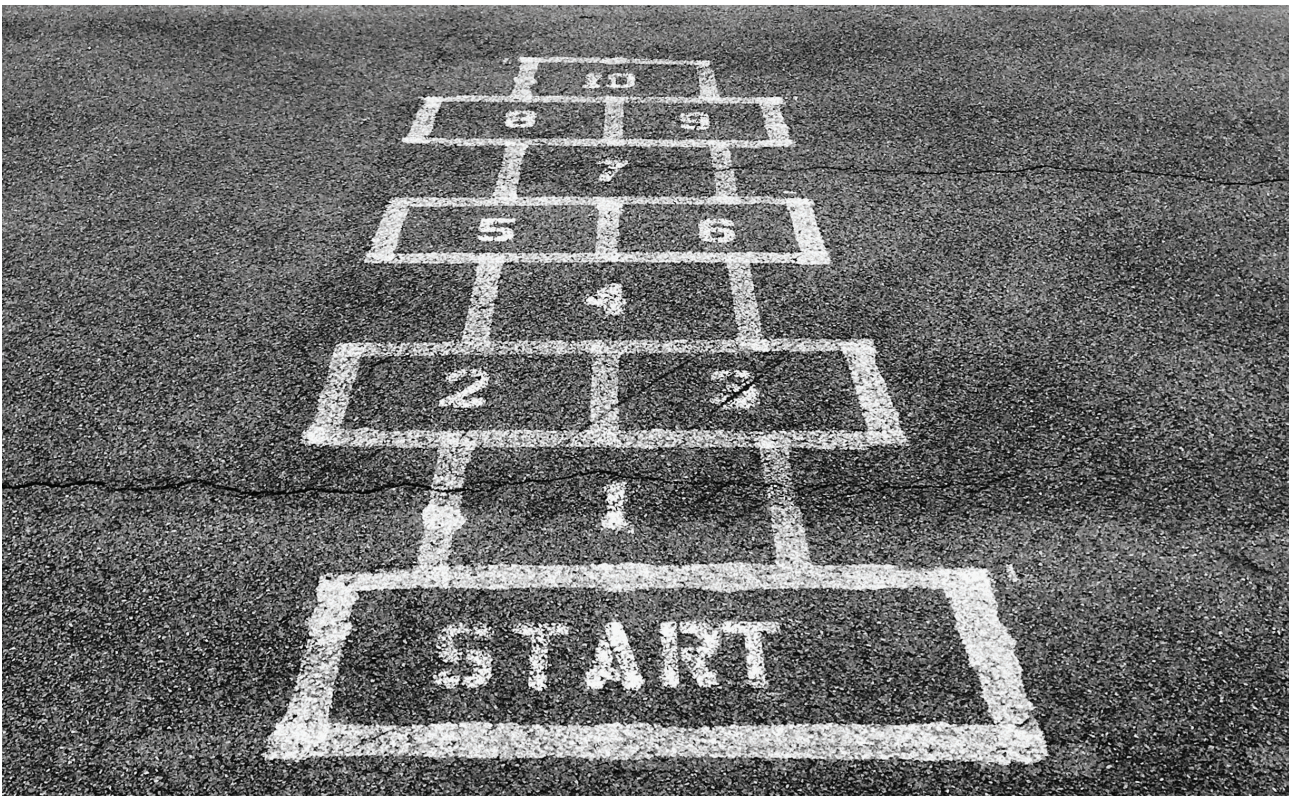
	Con		Lab		Ind.		Noc		PC		Totals
Biased	5	28%	11	61%	0	0%	2	11%	0	0%	18
At Risk	8	31%	9	35%	2	8%	6	23%	1	4%	26
Unbiased	9	26.5%	13	38%	0	0%	12	35%	0	0%	34

Table 7 – Breakdown of classifications according to Labour, Conservative or NOC

	Con	Lab	Noc
Biased	23%	33%	10%
At Risk	36%	27%	30%
Unbiased	41%	39%	60%

Table 8 – Summary of councils who refer to/or endorse third-party providers (3PPs)

No of councils referring or endorsing 3PPs by classification	No of councils	%
Biased	16/18	89%
At Risk	12/26	46%
Unbiased	0/34	N/A



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From Table 4 we can see that from the 171 FOIs sent, the responses of 54.3% councils either did not respond at all, or their responses contain insufficient information about their EDI policies or use of 3PPs to make an evaluation or judgement.

Of the remaining responses that *were* classifiable: **43.5%** of the EDI statements and/or guidance are **unbiased** in their political orientation: **33.3%** are **at risk**; and **23%** are **biased**.

Those councils using biased materials are predominantly Labour controlled – this could be due to a higher proportion of responses from Labour councils:

- Labour controlled = 72%;
- Conservative controlled = 18%%;
- NOC = 10%.

Among the councils that are using unbiased materials there is a greater breadth of political representation. There are competing beliefs about the aims and reach of anti-racist policies in schools. Most unbiased, and some at risk, councils have equality policies that are council-wide only: they do not have school-specific guidance. **It is striking that not one of the unbiased councils make references to, or endorse, the use of 3PPs.**

There are also different interpretations about the scope and meaning of concepts of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as how the duties in the Equality Act 2010, the DfE's Impartiality Guidance and OFSTED's inspection framework are understood and enacted. Unbiased, and some at risk, councils justify their policies through an interpretation of existing legislation that adhered to universalist principles i.e. agreed upon standards applied to all. Disadvantages faced by specific groups are acknowledged, but addressed as solvable broadly within existing norms and practice. Most of the biased councils refer to the same legislation in EDI policies, but they also have supplementary content that applies to education or schools, under the name of anti-racism. It is often here, rather than on the councils' main EDI landing pages, where the biased content and resources can be found.

But even there they are often not clearly signposted on the councils' main policy.

The main differences between biased and unbiased councils are over the following:

- The extent to which the council promotes its anti-racist policies as sitting within a liberal universalist framework, or within a framework of radical cultural and political change.
- The extent to which councils encourage schools to see anti-racist policies within their existing norms and practices, or whether they are encouraged to use anti-racist policies to radically transform school norms and culture.

Our research snapshot suggests that while there is a consensus that schools have some responsibility to address racism, there are very different views about how, or the extent to which, schools should do it. There are two major conflicting definitions of racism at play. One associates racism with failing to treat people fairly, with respect and tolerance. It aims to extend access and equal opportunity, and to improve engagement between people from different minority ethnic backgrounds. The second definition is of racism as **a deficit of knowledge or correct moral attitudes**: it is a more psychologized definition as our case studies demonstrate. Not being racist, or liberal anti-racism which encourages tolerance and fairness is insufficient because of the prior social disadvantages with which children arrive at school. If accepted, it is an easy step towards accepting, at least rhetorically, that councils and schools need to be actively anti-racist to address these directly. Some seem to embrace the prospect with full gusto and seek wholesale institutional transformation. In contrast, councils who refrain from adopting policies framed in this way, tend to see schools as places to teach about racism or anti-racism. It is the crucial difference between knowledge and a belief or precept which, if blurred or ignored, leaves schools less insulated from external political influences.

THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS (3PPS)

Listed by biased and at risk councils' EDI/anti-racist school policies or guidance

The following list of 72 3PPs come from policies and/or statements given in FOI responses, or where these have not been made available, from our own internet searches.

The discrepancy between the 28 biased and at risk councils using 3PPs and the 72 listed here is due to the complex web of links on, and within, official EDI or anti-racist policies. Public documents that are easily accessible often have links under related sections, which in turn have links to, for example, guidance for schools or teachers. Some councils, Northumberland for example, provide a collation of many EDI organisations. Or in the case of 3PP Race Equality Matters, we find that it is the product of two global 3PPs, Green Part and The Collaboratory. In short, a council may cite one or two 3PPs, but those may have further links to other organisations.

The lack of standardisation of where and how such materials are made available contributes to the problem of transparency and accountability. In a way, you have to have some idea of what you are looking for to find information about 3PPs that schools use and councils endorse if only by including them on official websites without comment.

Some councils have general council-wide EDI or Equality policies with no specific content for schools on their landing page. In these cases, we searched under the label of racism/anti-racism as distinct from EDI policies. In some cases, Portsmouth for example, this reveals startling differences in tone and substance between more official and more activist documents. We have included very different types of 3PPs in one list, but indicated where possible, the type of organisation they are e.g. local networks, charities, not-for-profit companies, global companies, and professional or official institutions.

It is beyond the scope of this study to comment in detail about the educational quality of the 3PPs, but we can say they vary greatly, and it cannot be assumed that the larger professional bodies are free from ideologically biased content.

Table 9 – Third Party Providers identified

*Those with asterisks * rare where partisan material is embedded in unbiased material*

N = national L = local G = global P = professional UK body R = regional ? = no info found

	Name	Reference
1	Anna Freud Centre	N charity
2	BAMEed	N network
3	BBC	N official
4	BBC Black History Month	N official
5	BFI	N official
6	100 Black Britons	N?
7	Black History 4 Schools linked with SchoolHistory.co.uk	N ?
8	B:M2022	N?
9	Black Learning Achievement and Mental Health	R charity
10	The Black Cultural Archives	L
11	Black Story Partnership	L
12	Birmingham Education Partnership	L
13	Birmingham Race Impact Group	L
14	Birmingham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education SACRE	N with local bodies
15	BrainPOP (hosted by GD, partner of NATRE)	G
16	British Red Cross	N charity
17	CBBC Newsround	N official
18	CBeebies	N official
19	Collaborative Learning	L
20	Diocese of Coventry Education Department	L official
21	Diverse Educators which lists the following in its EDI directory:	N
	Africa Learning International (ALI)	
	Alternative Curriculum	
	ARISE: anti-racism in schools and education	
	Aspiring Heads BAMEed	
	Black British Studies	
	Black Business Institute	
	Black Teachers Connect	
	Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality	
	The Early Years Black List	
	Educational Equity Services	
	Kids of Colour	
	Mindful Equity	
	PhysEquity	
	Representation Matters	
	Young Black Teachers Network	
22	Diversity International	?
23	East Sussex Equality & Diversity Teaching Resources	L
24	Educate Against Hate	N govt website
25	Extreme Dialogue	N

	Name	Reference
26	Equaliteach	N community interest co.
27	Global Dimension (GD) partners with NATRE	G ?
28	Green Park partners with The Collaboratory and Race Equality Matters	G company
29	Hackney Diverse Curriculum	L
30	High Speed Training	N
31	Instead	N
32	Institute of Race Relations	N ed.charity
33	International Slavery Museum	R
34	Jigsaw	N
35	Kick It Out	N charity
36	Letterbox Library	L
37	Monitoring and Combatting Islamaphobia	G
38	Muslim Association of Britain	N
38	National Association of Teachers of English (NATE)	P
39	National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)	P
40	NEU Anti-Racism Charter	N
41	No Room for Racism	N Premier League
42	North Wales Race Equality Network	R charity
43	PeerNet BC	R
44	PSHE Association	N charity & m'ship org.
45	Race Equality Matters	N (but supported by Gs)
46	Race Matters	R
47	Reading International Solidarity	L ed. charity
48	Recovered Histories	N charity
49	Runnymede Trust	N charity
50	Show Racism the Red Card	N charity
51	Tamarind Books	G (part of Penguin)
52	Tell MAMA	N ngo
53	The Black Curriculum	N social enterprise
54	The Collaboratory	G company
55	The Joshua Academy	G
56	The Key	N (m'ship organization)
57	The National Archives	N official
58	The National College	N
59	Therapeutic Thinking	R
60	Titan Partnership	L charity
61	UNICEF UK	N -part of intergovernmental org.
62	Votes for Schools	N company

CASE STUDIES

From biased councils' in-house policies and guidance

The following six case studies are based on extracts from in-house policies or guidance which are most explicitly biased:

- Birmingham
- Brighton and Hove
- Coventry
- London Borough of Southwark
- Nottinghamshire
- Portsmouth

In choosing the extracts, we identified key phrases (italicized) that mark the presence of:

- 1 A critical social/racial justice conception of anti-racism (referred to as the new anti-racism)
- 2 An instrumental conception of schools as places to effect wider social, cultural and political change
- 3 An association of anti-racism with ideas of emotional well-being, racial identity and/or safety –concepts which arise from superficial readings of literature on psychology and identity formation



1. Birmingham (Lab)

Appendix 3 'Equality Strategy and Action Plan', 2021-2023

Page 6 – States the focus will be on:

'Equity' because 'offering same opportunities to everyone will not always lead to equal outcomes.' Also, a commitment to 'Actively listening to the voices of lived experience', which elsewhere in the same document is referred to as those who have 'experiences of inequality'.

Page 35 – Under 'Equality Objective 4: Actions':

'Deliver interactive sessions to cover the application of the Equality Act 2010 within a dynamic education context. This will challenge participants to look beyond the legislation and reflect on the quality and impact of their practice in their school.'

'Anti-racist sessions with schools to explore what it means to be anti-racist in Britain today and what is involved in offering an anti-racist education to children and young people. This offer aims to move participants beyond simply making statements that support race equality, to ensuring that they act to make the changes needed to move their schools to a position where they are actively anti-racist and uphold social justice.'

What Does This Mean?

Actively listening to voices of lived experience is different to the idea of councils listening to local citizens to find out their views/suggestions and so forth. Actively listening in the new ideology usually means to agree with or to comply with a view because of the presumed authority of the speaker rather than through your own reasoning and judgement. Together with the phrase lived experience, it functions as a way of protecting claims about racism from scrutiny or criticism because a person's experience is not something that can be disproven or easily criticised. To this extent, the use of these terms is a way of indirectly limiting, or a priori devaluing, the speech of others. This shows disregard for a core value of freedom of speech.

The phrases to 'look beyond the legislation' and 'make the changes needed to move their schools to a position where they are actively anti-racist and uphold social justice' imply that as existing legislation is insufficient, those who claim to be anti-racist need to 'look beyond' it. The claims are not argued with reasons that show a consideration of possible objections. The term 'lived experience' is invoked to create a protective shield from questioning. This new anti-racism ideology suggests that existing legislation is not something its followers need to consider too carefully. But the rule of law is cited as a British value, but 'go beyond legislation' is ambiguous – it could mean ignore the law, or it could mean observe the law but take extra action to supplement its perceived blind spots. At any rate, it is a more explicit cavalier attitude towards the rule of law than most parents expect from schools, or would be likely to endorse.

2. Brighton & Hove City (Noc)



The council's EDI policy is unbiased in terms of race/ racism/anti-racism (although there is a section on teaching pronouns in schools). However, the council signalled its intention go beyond legislation in June 2020 in a pledge called 'Tackling Racism and Bias in Schools' in which Councillor Kate Knight writes:

'We are committed to becoming an anti-racist council, and we strongly support the Black Lives Matter movement.'

'We want to offer more guidance to our city's schools around educating in a way that not only acknowledges, but also is critical of, the racial prejudices and discrimination of the past.'

The minutes of the 'Children Young People and Skills Committee' meeting held on November 9th 2020 includes an Appendix called Brighton and Hove Anti-Racist Schools Strategy. Here, on P13, the council committee makes its aims explicit:

- There must be a balance between dismantling and navigation work i.e. The resource/focus on dismantling racist practices, and the resource on supporting BAME pupils/staff/parents with navigating racist practices.
- Emergent best practice for Anti-Racist leadership indicates BAME and White allies working in partnership (CIPD, 2020).
- A series of measurable outcomes and appropriate structures must be established for auditing and monitoring purposes (BAME staff representation, curricula changes, well-being indicators, structural changes, attainment, attendance, exclusions).

Page 213: 'There is ample evidence spanning decades that children as young as 3 years old begin to learn the markers of racial categories and racial hierarchy

(Apfelbaum, Sullivan, and Wilton, 2020; Brown, 2005) and yet the widespread view that children, particularly young children, are racially 'innocent' persists.'

Page 218: 'It is important to recognise that some staff/ teachers/governors will be reluctant to acknowledge and participate in anti-racist work. This can lead to conflict and backlash that *thwarts efforts for progress*. It is advised that the program aims to initially engage with staff/teachers/governors that support the work and any mandatory engagement comes further down the line.'

What Does This Mean?

It is noteworthy that the lead writer of the Appendix, acknowledged on P 218 is Abha Aggarwal, one of two founders of the diversity consultancy Race Matters and the Brighton and Hove Educators of Colour Collective. Both are race relation activists and the list of academics or experts referenced are mostly those who share the same ideological version of anti-racism. The ideological aims are clear in Councillor Knight's strong support of the BLM movement with no reasons offered as to why this support should be accepted by the council or residents. As with many similar policies or pledges, reference to George Floyd or the BLM protests is presented as sufficient reason.

The anti-democratic nature is made explicit in the scope of the wholesale transformation they propose without proper public debate and scrutiny, and in the way the authors describe people who may disagree with them in deficit terms. The authors imply such people are unable to recognize the value of 'anti-racist' work or to participate in it. This goes further than protecting the claims of lived experience or unconscious bias, it actively delegitimises different views.

3. Coventry (Lab)

The Council has established a company, the Coventry Education Partnership, which has links with local schools. It also liaises with the Diocese of Coventry Board of Education. The latter produced the original version of the Council's statement, [Responding to Racism](#). Advice provided for educators includes:

- Use visuals such as the *White Supremacy Pyramid* or the Allport Scale of Prejudice in Society to help pupils understand how *bias, stereotypes and prejudice can lead to racist words and actions, leading to physical harm and death*
- Consider your environment – are you making use of black images in posters and other visuals around the school?
- Use the accompanying audit tool to see what your school's response might be to the Black Lives Matter movement.

This is one example of a White Supremacy Pyramid from [The Equality Institute](#):



'Responding to Racism' has many more bullet points of advice in a similar vein.

Resources provided by NATRE are recommended by the Warwickshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. Among material that is recognisably educational, we are [informed](#) that NATRE is also a partner with Global Learning Programme (GLP) which it describes as a subject organization. GLP provides access to many other providers of resources for teaching social and political issues, including an [American blog](#) on supporting anti-racist education where we find the following claim:

'It's important to acknowledge that children see *racial identity and skin color*. When we acknowledge identity—and encourage kids to take pride in their

diversity and respect the diversity of others – we empower them to stand up to racial injustice.

Talking about these issues with children also allows us to open the door to how they can *disrupt inequality* and combat *systemic racism*.'

NATRE claims that GLP will 'help schools develop an ethos of promoting tolerance, fairness and respect.' Which seems at odds with what is [written on page 2](#) of one of its main teaching resources:

'It is not enough to settle for mere tolerance (though this is a lot better than intolerance of ethnic diversity) – instead, the project aspires to promote mutual understanding, respect and harmony between people with very different experiences

Further on, on [page 3](#), we find:

'Teachers should be aware that anti-racist RE sometimes confronts prejudice within the school, and it is not enough *to change attitudes* merely to give extra information to pupils. Prejudice reduction is a complex process, but requires '*dangerous conversation*' in which learners experience challenging dialogue in a safe space.'

What Does This Mean?

It important to point out that the extracts above do not characterise all of NATRE's resources, and the American blog is not the first item anyone looking on the website would find. Nonetheless, Britain and America have very different histories in terms of immigration and race relations. There is a tendency to transfer American academic and political ideas to Britain uncritically, in ways that obscure important differences. This is evident in the more stridently activist language of the blog. Its presence on NATRE via GLP may well be due to lack of proper oversight, which in itself is concerning.

The Diocese of Coventry's Board of Education's 'Responding to Racism' is even more explicitly partisan. Both NATRE and the Diocese of Coventry have the authority of the Church and retain some intellectual and moral authority from its traditional functions in society. We could expect both to be staunch defenders of established standards of knowledge and of tolerance, not present oxymorons like 'dangerous conversations in safe spaces', contested beliefs in white privilege as self-evident truth or generally display signs of logical inconsistencies that suggest a superficiality of thought.

4. London Borough of Southwark (Lab)



The Council's FOI response directed us to individual schools, saying that they have no school specific policy. Our own search found a council-wide [Equality Framework](#) which refers to both the Local Government Association's Equality Framework and the Equality Act. In response to our question about 3PPs used for teacher development or education, the council refers us to Teach First and the NEU Anti-Racist Charter. The Council is working on setting up an Equality Resources site.

In '[Becoming an Anti-Racist School](#)', published in April 2021, Teach First's Diversity and Inclusion Lead states that:

'to challenge racial discrimination is not enough, we need to be *actively anti-racist*'.

Teach First provides online events that aim to help teachers 'challenge the normalization of racial inequality'. By racial inequality, they mean:

'transforming the relations between people from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority backgrounds, and people from white backgrounds, to be more equal.'

Penny Rabiger, co-founder and Trustee of the BAMEed Network, says in a Teach First webinar 'What Does it Take to Challenge Racism in Schools?':

'We've seen the MP for Women and Equalities Kemi Badenoch essentially outlawing teachers from engaging in concepts like whiteness, *white supremacy* or *critical race theory* and echoes of this moral panic has crept into the guidance for sex and relationships education early in the academic year ...As white people we haven't had to think about this much; to see how our racism and *our bias* runs like

lettering through a stick of rock in our curriculum, in our curriculum, in our behaviour management, in the way that we hire and develop staff, our governance of the school, the school environment, everything.'

What Does This Mean?

Rabiger is, of course, entitled to her political opinions, but here her statements are partisan in an explicitly party-political way and she is using her authority as an educator to promote a party-political position.

A government-supported charity, set up exclusively to improve education, endorses the view that the job of schools now includes transforming relations between ethnic minority and white people. When Rabiger speaks, somewhat patronizingly, of white people who as bearers of racism that runs through like lettering on a stick of rock, she is presenting her personal moral opinion about society in general. The idea that white people have not had to think about structural racism before implies that they are ignorant. The corollary of this particular claim is that experts like herself are needed to educate teachers to accept these beliefs – in effect, they want to 'change the lettering in the sticks of rock' and we are assumed to want such a moral make-over: our consent is assumed, rather than openly sought or argued for.

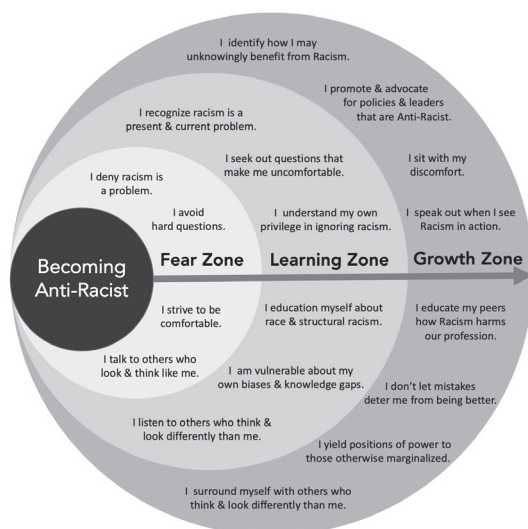
5. Nottinghamshire County (Con)

Nottinghamshire County Council were unable to answer our FOI requests about policies and third-party providers. Through our own search we found the following toolkit. The PDF is downloadable at:

[‘Equality is everyone’s business anti-racism toolkit’](#)

Page 3 – Aims of this toolkit

- To support education professionals, regardless of the community demographic, in becoming *effective anti-racism practitioners*
- For anti-racist principles and practices to become a part of not only our working lives but also our personal lives
- To promote racial literacy and anti-racism for our children in order to create a generation of young people who are confident to embody these principles and practices
- To help professionals to be confident in challenging racism as they come across it in an active and effective way
- To move us all into the growth zone and towards the transformational zone (see image below)



Adapted by Andrew M. Ibrahim MD, MSc from "Who Do I Want to Be During Covid-19" chart (original author unknown) with ideas drawn from Ibram X. Kendi's work

- This toolkit was developed to provide schools and other education settings with guidance around anti-racism. This work is necessary for all schools everywhere, regardless of their demographic and regardless of whether people consider that these issues affect them personally.

- Schools and other education settings play an important role in supporting children and young people to understand racism and to become anti-racist.

What Does This Mean?

The term effective anti-racist practitioner recasts racism as a question of perfecting a set of skills – like a professional practice. This minimalizes the political significance of racism as an ideology that is fundamentally divisive. Those in ethnic minorities are seen as, and encouraged to see themselves as, reified members of groups rather than as individuals who might, under other criteria and circumstances, see themselves as part of a majority.

To say that anti-racism has to be made part of our personal lives blurs the boundary between public/professional life and personal life. In principle this authorizes monitoring personal lives – spaces where we practice and rehearse our roles a necessary degree of privacy. To create a generation of people who embody and practice one radical definition of anti-racism ignores, or is ignorant of, a prior commitment to moral autonomy. The principle of moral autonomy requires that we arrive at, and accept, claims according to our own judgments. If this classic liberal principle is not valued and enacted, then any proposed rule or policy depends more on authority from above, and is likely to require strong policing by the growing industry of so-called race experts.

The Growth and Transformational Diagram is informed by the work of well-known American promoter of the new anti-racism, Ibram X. Kendi. The claim that 'We willingly yield positions of power to those otherwise marginalized' confuses charity and patronage with the concept of equality. The 'otherwise marginalised' not only ignores the reality that any position of power will marginalize someone, in some way, and it leaves the 'otherwise marginalised' reliant on someone making space for them rather than being successful on their own merit.

The demand for this new anti-racism is presented as so urgent that it must be implemented by everyone regardless of whether people consider that these issues affect them personally as if councils know our inner thoughts better than we do ourselves. This is in effect a way of asserting a claim to have greater knowledge and moral authority than anyone who does not share the same view and is authoritarian.

6. Portsmouth



The Council's FOI response directed us to the [Portsmouth Educational Partnership](#) whose landing page is unbiased and covers normal professional management issues such as improving recruitment and attainment. It sits well within an established discourse of school improvement. There is no signposting of anything to do with anti-racism on the landing page. But if you look via the search box, it seems Portsmouth Educational Partnership has an extensive anti-racist toolkit which is extremely biased and proposes very far-reaching changes in every aspect of school life. In the examples below, the contrast in presentation between the first policy, which is conventionally professional, and the visually more dramatic or emotive toolkit is striking:

How you can improve your racial literacy

- To learn more about racism and how it affects people in British society look at the [Runnymede Trust online research](#)¹
- To understand more about racism by listening to stories of real, lived experiences. Use the [BBC Black Lives Matter resources for young people resource](#)² which contains stories and experiences as well as reflective activities to explore the effects of racism on individual wellbeing. Listening to the voices of those who experience racism is vital to understanding it but it is important to remember that these experiences can be distressing.
- To think about the unconscious bias which we all have, listen to these TED talks: [Inclusion, Exclusion, Illusion and Collusion](#) : Helen Turnbull or [Implicit Bias: how it affects us and how we push through it](#) Melaine Funchess³
- Educate yourself by reading widely – you could start by reading some of the [suggested reading](#)⁴

PORTSMOUTH EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

HOME STRATEGY OUR WORK NEWS PEP CALENDAR ABOUT US CONTACT US

WELCOME

Welcome to the Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP) website. The PEP brings together all Portsmouth schools and partners to improve attainment and opportunities for all children and young people across the city.

Our key priorities are to drive:

- INCLUSION**
We create an environment that is welcoming to all children and young people, and we do not give up on any pupil.
- ATTAINMENT, EXPECTATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS**
We have high aspirations for all of our children and help them and their families see what they could achieve.

However, the significance is not merely one of presentation. Each embeds different educational narrative, including fundamental aims, curriculum focus and practices. They are not obviously compatible unless we understand the anti-racism toolkit as providing an ersatz moral substance to the somewhat dry and attainment, aka target-driven ethos suggested by the Education Partnership document. Ironically, the authors of the Toolkit draw on the Department of Education's own Impartiality Guidelines to justify their strategy (page 4):

"Some concepts and views are shared principles that underpin our society and should be reinforced by schools. This includes fundamental rights, tolerance and challenging discrimination and prejudice".

What Does This Mean?

Our study illustrates that the recasting of discrimination and prejudice in terms of structural racism is precisely NOT shared. This suggests that the problem of making schools sites of activism arises from prior problems in public morality rather than a problem of, and for, legislation alone.

CONCLUSION

While some might conclude from our examples in the previous section that what is needed are more mechanisms of enforcement, which may well be true, there is a prior, more fundamental problem of public values and making moral judgments.

While some might conclude from our examples in the previous section that what is needed are more mechanisms of enforcement, which may well be true, there is a prior, more fundamental problem of public values and making moral judgments. If this aspect of the problem is not considered, and the discussion remains mainly technical, then policy decisions are likely to backfire and create new problems or exacerbate existing ones.

The Government's Guidance on Impartiality asserts the existence of shared values that our study illustrates is more wishful thinking than reality, at least when it concerns teaching anti-racism in schools. According to the YouGov poll that we commissioned, the redefinition of discrimination and prejudice in terms of structural racism is precisely what is not shared. This is an important point needing clarification which we identify in [our response](#) to the DfE's Guidance on Political Impartiality in Schools. The present problem of creeping activism in schools is due less to a lack of knowledge, bad law or its (mis) interpretation, but rather competing beliefs about the fundamental meaning of education and its public role in a democracy. This, above all, is a problem of lack of moral clarity and strength among those in positions of responsibility for our children's education.

To summarise, our study illustrates how the redefinition of anti-racism is politically ideological in substance but presents itself as moralistic in form.

Furthermore, it is having the negative consequences in the educational sphere in as far as it:

- Imposes an urgent moral imperative irrespective of people's own understanding of their lives and experiences
- Re-frames our understanding of racism and anti-racism away from knowledge-based concepts to anti-racism as precepts – *as a practice*. This is qualitatively different to applying sanctions to individuals for discrete discriminatory actions.
- Justifies the insertion of charities, race experts and new diversity consultants versed in race-based identity politics into schools in ways that bypass established sources of authority and accountability
- Further devalues classic liberal values and traditional norms of curriculum knowledge which differentiate between knowledge, belief and opinion
- Encourages partisan teaching with which a majority of our parents we polled do not agree
- Protects its claims from wider, potentially critical, scrutiny, be that from parents or the wider public.

In short, we can, with good reason, conclude today that some councils are allowing partisan political interests to overshadow their educational or democratic duties. They are mostly located in the south-east, and include 7 out of the 13 London councils who responded to our FOI requests. This particular distribution speaks to new fault lines in political culture that came to light in public discussion during and after the 2016 Referendum to leave the EU, notably in the different values held by metropolitan and regional Labour party representatives.

Implications for Democracy

The fact that 93 out of 171, or 54.3%, of our requests for information were met with either an insufficient, or no, response itself poses a problem in terms of public accountability. This could be due to genuine lack of knowledge because schools **do** have autonomy to make their own policies. Nonetheless, Section 9 of the 1996 Education Act states schools should educate in accordance with parents' wishes. But before parents can assent to such major changes in the aims, ethos and practices of their children's education, they need to know what is being planned and why.

It is heartening news that the majority of statements we looked at do not share the anti-democratic features of biased councils. But this does not mean all is well. As it stands, pupils in English schools are being introduced to new anti-racist, partisan teaching which, it turns out, are justifiable by criteria from the Equality Act, the Impartiality Guidelines and OFSTED. At the same time, no-one seems to know anything about the provenance, extent of influence, educational qualifications or aims of the many 3PPs operating in this landscape. We conclude that the new anti-racism – a radically critical ideology based on American theoretical abstractions,

that denies the progress Britain has made in becoming a successful multi-cultural society, is being legitimized in schools through the reframing of equality policies and the use of third-party anti-racist organizations. This is having a detrimental impact on educational aims, with little or no scrutiny from any independent authority.

To be clear, we are not arguing that this is a conspiracy, or that in every, or even in most schools up and down the country, children are being intentionally indoctrinated by every teacher in every school.

We are arguing that an important shift in public understanding of the purpose of education and politics is taking place in a context where the meaning of wider established moral values and norms lack consistent and robust support. The intrusion of 3PPs into this landscape, at the present moment, is more hegemonic than explicitly political – they are contributing to changing the Overton window in education but with even less public accountability than in the realm of politics. This makes the widest possible public debate and scrutiny about the fundamental public role of education a matter of urgency.



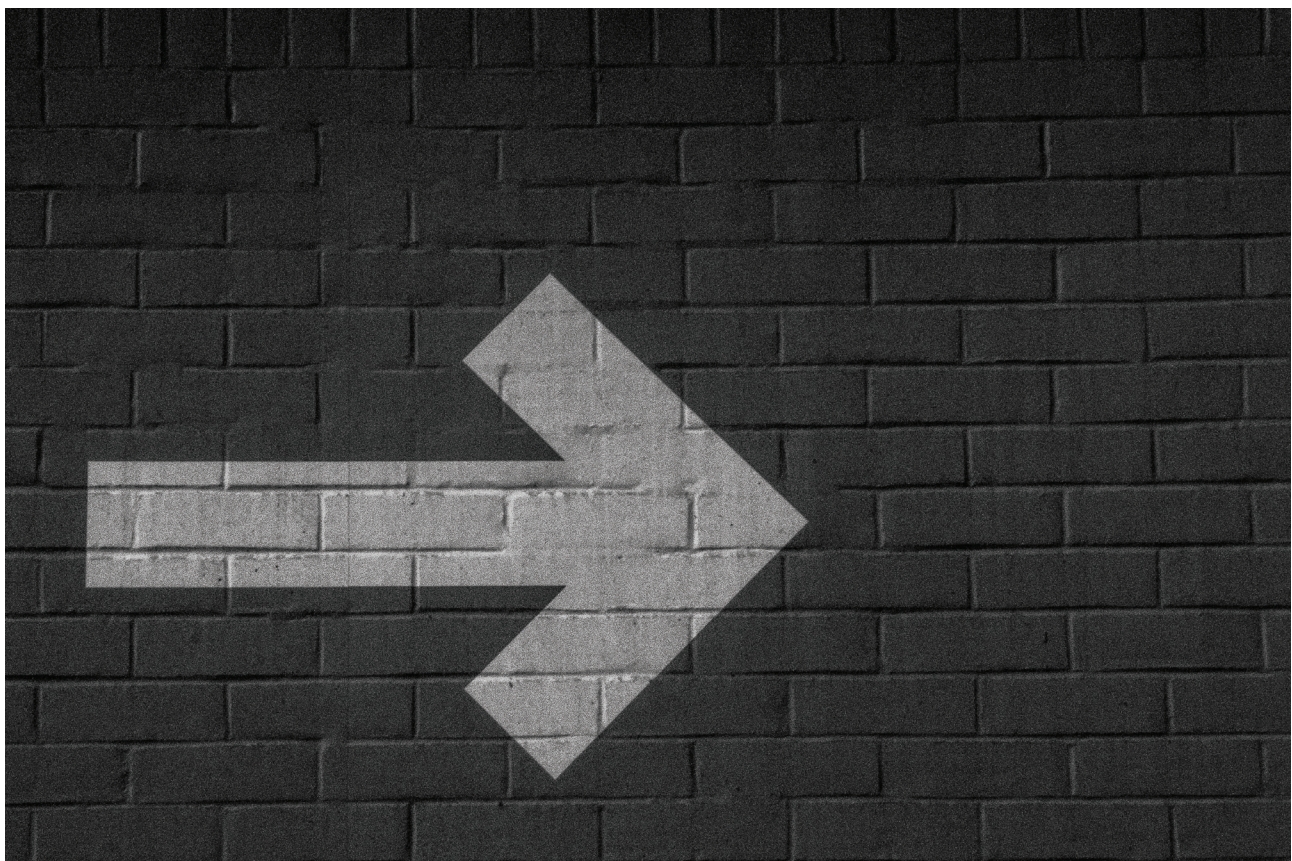
RECOMMENDATIONS

In the short term we recommend the following actions:

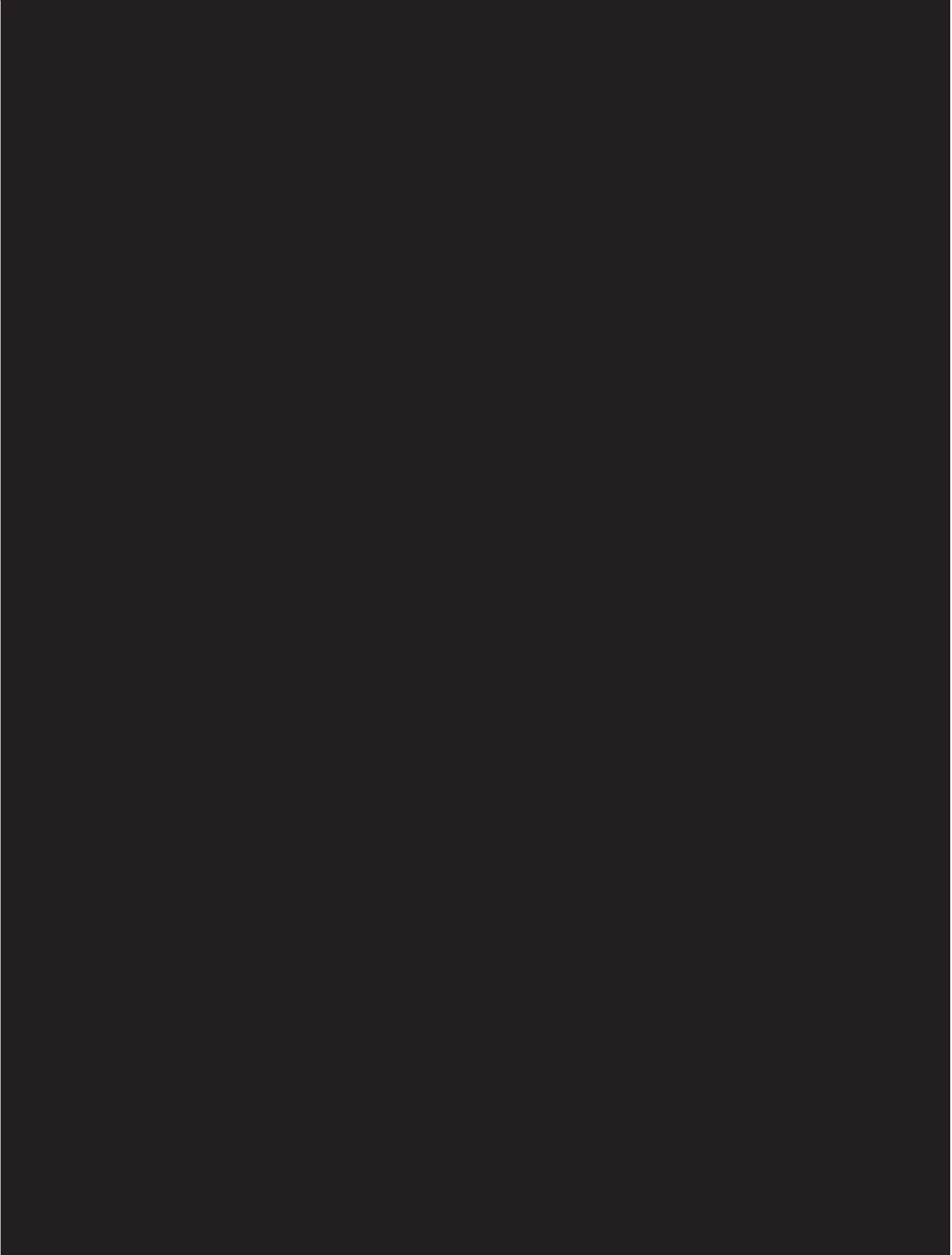
- 1 Mandate schools to list all 3PPs commissioned or invited into classes on their websites
- 2 Mandate schools to provide access to materials used for teaching anti-racism to parents when requested
- 3 Strongly encourage schools to consult as widely as possible when considering substantive changes in, or additions to, EDI or anti-racist policies

In the longer term we recommend that the government commission a review of existing policies that impinge on educational goals with a view to restricting, or defining more precisely, so that:

- Educational goals are strengthened
- The scope for politicization of curricula and schools more generally, is restricted
- Education as a liberal endeavour is more clearly, and strongly, articulated in policies.







DON'T DIVIDE US

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