

PRIME MINISTER1 March 1985ETHNIC MINORITY EDUCATION*(A Committee paper attached)*

The Swann Committee Report is an intellectual and practical nightmare. It fails to define its own terms and provides bad arguments for bad policies.

In the report, Professor Mackintosh, of Cambridge University, demonstrates that West Indian children on average have lower IQs than the rest of the population. However, he also shows that West Indians tend to be poorer, to have more broken homes, larger families, and more over-crowding. Since these conditions are associated with low IQ in all parts of the population, Professor Mackintosh concludes that the cause of West Indian children's low abilities is their 'social deprivation' rather than any genetic deficiency. This ignores the possibility that the social disadvantages are themselves in part a product of innate lack of intelligence.

On these shaky foundations, the report dismisses the suggestion that lack of intelligence is responsible for the relatively poor performance of West Indian children, and attributes the failure mainly to widespread and insidious racism. It recommends a large number of measures to introduce 'awareness' of racism and 'multiculturalism' into the schools. If implemented, these recommendations would no doubt provide the ILEA and other radical LEAs with a marvellous opportunity for political propaganda under the guise of creating racial harmony and seem likely to lead to 'positive discrimination'.

What should be done?

Morally, the right response is to attack the report's poor argumentation, to reject all nonsensical proposals, and to insist that English schools should provide all pupils with the skills and knowledge they need to live in English society, regardless of race or colour.

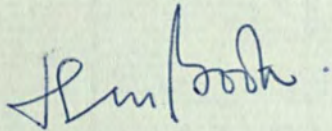
But if Keith Joseph takes this line, he will face prolonged and articulate opposition from a large number of professional lobbyists. They will ask why the Government commissioned the report if it did not intend to take any action.

Keith therefore proposes to make a minimal response, which will go some way towards placating the lobbyists without giving too much away, and which takes the opportunity to restate his sensible policies for all children. His 'new responses' are anodyne.

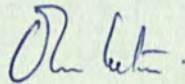
- i. Taking account of ethnic 'diversity' in criteria for teacher training, the school curriculum and examinations. This means little or nothing: the criteria for training have already been written, and they contain no more than a verbal obeisance to the notion of ethnic diversity; much the same is true of the curriculum and the National Criteria for GCSE.
- ii. Pilot projects to improve education for ethnic groups funded by Education Support Grants. These are probably useless: but they too are already under way.
- iii. Collection of more information on the progress of 'ethnic' pupils and a research project on the causes of under-achievement for all pupils.

Neither of these is likely to bear much fruit; but both should be cheap, and they may serve to protect the Government against claims that it is ignoring the matter.

We recommend that you should leave H Committee to decide whether it is politically possible to take a more sensible and aggressive stance, or whether Keith's plan is the best that can be devised.



HARTLEY BOOTH



OLIVER LETWIN

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Pine Martin:



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To note.

This will not be very popular either with Government

T J Flesher Esq Private Secretary 10 Downing Street LONDON SW1

1. Thanks the draft could be improved. There are several points...

Your reference

Our reference w Opposites

Date backbench, 8

8 March 1985

rather different reasons

Dear Tim,

SWANN COMMITTEE FINAL REPORT: EDUCATION OF CHILDREN FROM ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS - PROPOSED MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

8/3

H Committee discussed the Swann Report on 4 March and agreed the main elements of the Government's response as proposed in my Secretary of State's paper. In view of the likely interest in the Report and of the need to set the terms of the ensuing debate, it was also agreed that my Secretary of State should make an oral statement in the House on the day of publication. The date of Thursday 14 March has already been provisionally agreed with the Leader of the House's Office. The statement would be repeated by the Government's education spokesman, the Earl of Swinton, in the House of Lords.

I attach a draft of the statement; it follows the line of the proposals which were approved by other colleagues in H Committee on 4 March.

I should be grateful for your agreement to our proceeding on these lines.

Copies of this letter and draft statement go to the Private Secretaries of the Leader of the House, the Lord President of the Council, the Home Secretary, the Chief Whip (Commons), the Chief Whip (Lords), the Secretary of the Cabinet and to the Chief Press Secretary, No 10.

Yours,

Aran Thompson

A B THOMPSON Parliamentary Clerk

Comments passed

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ETHNIC MINORITY PUPILS

Oral Statement by the Secretary of State for Education and Science

1. I wish to make a statement about the final report, published today, of the Committee of Inquiry into the education of children from ethnic minority groups.

Also published today is a guide to the main issues in the report written at my invitation by the chairman, Lord Swann, which I am arranging to be sent to all schools. Copies of both documents are available in the Vote Office. ?

2. The Government is profoundly grateful to the chairman and members of the Committee for their long and dedicated labours on an issue of crucial importance. We believe that we have a duty to the House, to the ethnic minorities, and to the nation, to declare immediately where we stand on this issue.

3. The Government accepts the Committee's finding that many ethnic minority pupils are achieving below their potential and recognises the concern that is felt about this among their parents. We shall strive to improve the position through three broad lines of policy. For little

4. First, under-achievement is not confined to the ethnic minorities. Many in the white majority could be doing far better, and I am determined that they too should be helped, wherever they are at school.

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As the House knows, our policies for schools are designed to raise the performance of all pupils and to tackle the obstacles to higher achievement which are common to all. These policies apply to all pupils irrespective of ethnic origin. As they bear fruit, ethnic minority pupils will share in the benefit.

5. Second, we are determined to give ethnic minority pupils the same opportunity as all others to profit from what the schools can offer them. We are tackling the obstacles to opportunity, notably by promoting good practice in the teaching of English as a second language.

6. Third, we want the schools to preserve and transmit our national values in a way which accepts Britain's ethnic diversity and promotes tolerance and racial harmony. Whether or not a school contains ethnic minority pupils, its ethos and curriculum should promote understanding and respect among all its pupils for the different ethnic groups who now contribute to our national life.

7. These three lines of policy are being supported by a number of measures. I have referred to the steps I am taking to raise pupil achievement generally. The need to take account of the ethnic diversity of our society has been written into the new criteria which will govern initial teacher training and the GCSE examinations, and will be incorporated in the objectives

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for the relevant subject areas of the school curriculum which we are formulating in co-operation with the education service. The same need lies at the heart of a group of projects, totalling some £1m in 1985/6, which will be supported through the new Education Support Grant scheme, and of some urban programme projects. I shall propose to the local authority associations that from 1986/7 onwards the in-service training grant scheme should include training dealing with the need to respond to ethnic diversity. Meanwhile in English language and mother tongue teaching the good practice endorsed by the Committee will continue to be encouraged and disseminated by Her Majesty's Inspectorate and supported by grants made by my rt hon Friend, the Home Secretary, under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966. These measures are essentially designed to change attitudes; they will not entail any increase in local authority expenditure.

8. Policy for securing the good education of ethnic minority pupils needs to be built on adequate information.

The availability of ethnically based statistics would be a valuable means of measuring and securing progress

Some local authorities already collect information on pupils on an ethnic basis. As the Committee's Interim Report recommended, I have been exploring with the

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education service and the ethnic minorities the collection of ethnically based statistics on school pupils. There are difficulties. I hope soon, however, to bring this work to a successful conclusion so that I may commend to local authorities an acceptable scheme which respects confidentiality. I shall also consult about the possibility of establishing acceptable arrangements for the collection of statistics of ethnic minority teachers and students in teacher training which the Committee also recommends. This is important for the objective, recommended by the Committee and accepted by the Government, to increase the proportion of qualified ethnic minority teachers. I intend to consider with the education service and the ethnic minorities how this objective might best be advanced,

9. We badly need more hard information about the effect of social background on achievement at school. I intend to commission research which will look at the factors, in and out of school, that may contribute to under-achievement among pupils of all backgrounds; ethnic minority pupils would be one part of such a study.

10. The report contains many detailed recommendations which I will consider in consultation with those

Without in any way reducing the standards of admission to teacher-training (which are a vital safeguard for all the pupils whom the students will teach).

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concerned in the education service and outside it.

I shall also consider what might be done in these matters in further education, which was outside the Committee's remit. But to forestall unfounded fears or hopes the Government wishes to make clear that it cannot accept four recommendations in the report. We do not intend to change the present statutory requirements for daily collective worship and for religious education in maintained schools. Nor do we wish in any way to call in question the present dual system of county and voluntary schools. It remains our policy not to extend mandatory student awards to any form of study which precedes higher education. And we see no immediate prospect of legislation to amend section 11 of the 1966 Act. Its operation has been fully reviewed and new administrative criteria have applied since January 1983 which have allowed its wider and more flexible use.

11. These four matters are not at the heart of this issue. It is the policies and practical actions ^{which} I have outlined that offer the best prospect of mobilising the combined efforts of the education service to the vital, but difficult, task of reducing under-achievement at school and promoting good education in our multi-ethnic society.

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Tim

This needs very fast
clearance, please.



With the Private Secretary's Compliments

Law Hylker

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ETHNIC MINORITY PUPILS

Oral Statement by the Secretary of State for Education and Science Delivered on 14 March 1985

1. With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the final report, published today, of the Committee of Inquiry into the education of children from ethnic minority groups. Also published today is a guide to the main issues in the report written at my invitation by the chairman, Lord Swann, which I am arranging to be sent to all schools. Copies of both documents are available in the Vote Office.
2. The Government is profoundly grateful to the chairman and members of the Committee for their long and dedicated labours on an issue of crucial importance. We believe that we have a duty to the House, to the ethnic minorities, and to the nation as a whole, to declare immediately where we stand on this issue.
3. The Government accepts the Committee's finding that many ethnic minority pupils are achieving below their potential and recognises the concern that is felt about this among their parents. We shall strive to improve the position through three broad lines of policy.
4. First, under-achievement is not confined to the ethnic minorities. Many in the majority community could be doing far better, and I am determined that they too should be helped, wherever they are at school. As the House knows, our policies for schools are designed to raise the performance of all pupils and to tackle the

obstacles to higher achievement which are common to all. These policies apply to all pupils irrespective of ethnic origin. As they bear fruit, ethnic minority pupils will share in the benefit.

5. Second, we are determined to give ethnic minority pupils the same opportunity as all others to profit from what the schools can offer them. We are tackling the obstacles to opportunity, notably by promoting good practice in the teaching of English as a second language.

6. Third, we want the schools to preserve and transmit our national values in a way which accepts Britain's ethnic diversity and promotes tolerance and racial harmony. Whether or not a school contains ethnic minority pupils, its ethos and curriculum should promote understanding and respect among all its pupils for the different ethnic groups who now contribute to our national life.

7. These three lines of policy are being supported by a number of measures. I have referred to the steps the Government is taking to raise pupil achievement generally. The need to take account of the ethnic diversity of our society has been written into the new criteria which will govern initial teacher training and the GCSE examinations, and will be incorporated in the objectives for the relevant subject areas of the school curriculum which we are formulating in co-operation with the education service. The same need lies at the heart of a group of projects, totalling some £1m in 1985/86, which will be supported through the new Education Support Grant scheme, and of some urban programme projects. I shall propose to the local authority associations that from 1986/87 onwards the in-service training grant scheme should include training dealing

With the need to respond to ethnic diversity. Meanwhile in English language and mother tongue teaching the good practice endorsed by the Committee will continue to be encouraged and disseminated by Her Majesty's Inspectorate and supported by grants made by my Rt Hon Friend, the Home Secretary, under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966. These measures are essentially designed to change attitudes; they will not entail an increase in local authority expenditure as a whole.

8. Policy for the good education of ethnic minority pupils needs information which is adequate to measure and secure progress. Some local authorities already collect information on pupils on an ethnic basis. As the Committee's Interim Report recommended, I have been exploring with the education service and the ethnic minorities the collection of ethnically based statistics on school pupils. There are legitimate concerns and practical difficulties. I hope soon, however, that this work will come to a successful conclusion so that all local authorities can operate acceptable and mutually compatible schemes which respect confidentiality. The Committee recommended that, without positive discrimination and without any reduction in the required level of qualification, an increase in the proportion of ethnic minority teachers should be sought. The Government accepts this recommendation. I intend to consider with the education service and the ethnic minorities how it might best be pursued. I shall consult about the possibility of establishing acceptable arrangements for the collection of statistics on ethnic minority teachers and students in teacher training as the Committee also recommends.

9. We badly need more hard information about the effect on achievement of factors in and out of school. I intend to commission research which will look at these factors, and at the extent to which they contribute to under-achievement among pupils of all backgrounds; ethnic minority pupils would be one part of such a study.

10. The report contains many detailed recommendations which I will consider in consultation with those concerned in the education service and outside it. I shall also consider what might be done in these matters in further education, which was outside the Committee's remit. But to forestall unfounded fears or hopes the Government wishes to make clear that it cannot accept four recommendations in the report. We do not intend to change the present statutory requirements for daily collective worship and for religious education in maintained schools. Nor do we wish in any way to call in question the present dual system of county and voluntary schools. It remains our policy not to extend mandatory student awards to any form of study which precedes higher education. And we see no immediate prospect of legislation to amend Section 11 of the 1966 Act. Its operation has been fully reviewed and new administrative criteria have applied since January 1983 which have allowed its wider and more flexible use.

11. These four matters are not at the heart of this issue. It is the policies and practical actions which I have outlined that offer the best prospect of mobilising the combined efforts of the education service to the vital, but difficult, task of reducing under-achievement at school and promoting good education in our multi-ethnic society.

14 MAR 1985

