

**Including Representative Children's Books
in Primary Schools:
A Participatory Action Research Study**

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Summary

This thesis portfolio is comprised of three chapters, a literature review, an empirical study and a reflective chapter. The themed narrative literature review will focus on research into representation in children's books both in the UK and worldwide. It will consider the psychological concept of belonging along with the effect that ethnicity and culture has on this concept, particularly in schools. The review will consider diversity in the school curriculum, the process of learning to read and the role that teachers have in providing a diverse curriculum.

The empirical study chapter is a mixed methods participatory action research study in which a Trainee Educational Psychologist worked with eight members of staff in a primary school to increase their use of representative children's books within their classes. Analysis of mean scores from staff surveys and reflexive thematic analysis of interviews with teachers and focus groups with children in the school is detailed. The section concludes with implications for schools and educational psychology practice.

Finally, the reflective chapter is a personal reflection on the research process, from identifying a research area, through shaping the research, to the experience of undertaking participatory research and carrying out the analysis. Limitations to the study and a dissemination plan is also included.

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**Including Representative Children's Books
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**Chapter 1:
Literature Review**

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Diversity in children's books is currently an area of global interest with researchers exploring how well books represent the children who read them. The common theme emerging from the research is that children from ethnic minorities are under-represented (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021; de Bruijn et al., 2020; Fang & Bi, 2018; Gomez-Najarro, 2020). This is an area of interest in wider society, with many people taking to interviews, blogs and social media to highlight the importance of representation (e.g. Lee, 2020; Mpike, 2020; Suchet, 2014). The over-riding message from these voices is that not seeing oneself reflected in books communicates to the reader a sense of invisibility or erasure which affects their sense of belonging and their motivation to read (Gomez-Najarro, 2020; Meek, 2001; Sehgal, 2016). Teachers are gatekeepers to children accessing books which represent them in schools (Glazier & Seo, 2005; Louie, 2006; Milner, 2020), however they need appropriate training and resources in order to do this effectively (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013; Blair, 2004; Clark, 2020).

This themed narrative literature review will focus on the global research into representation in children's books before focusing on the context in the UK. As research has highlighted a sense of belonging as an area affected by representation in books, this psychological concept will be the focus of the second part of the literature review, particularly children's sense of belonging within the school environment. Children's understanding of ethnicity and race along with diversity within the school curriculum will be the third area of focus, leading to a review of the literature on reading. The final area of the review will be the role of teachers in implementing a diverse curriculum, especially incorporating diverse and multicultural books before considering the role that Educational Psychologists can take in teacher education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

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Due to the number of areas pertinent to the thesis, a themed narrative literature review was decided to be the most appropriate style of literature review. Literature was searched for using Google Scholar along with EBSCO, ERIC and PsycINFO databases. Key terms included “diversity”, “ethnicity”, “race”, “multicultural education”, “intercultural education”, “belonging”, “children’s literature”, “multicultural literature”, “reading”, “science of reading”, “teacher education”, “educational psychology”, “qualitative” and “reading motivation”. These terms were used in various combinations to source relevant literature. Further literature was found using the reference lists of the selected articles. For the most part, literature since 2000 was included, in order to give an up to date picture, however, some references were included from pre-2000, particularly for the area of belonging as key research pre-dated 2000.

Within this literature review the terms ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘culture’ will be used, so it is important to consider the definitions of these terms. Race was previously thought to have a biological, genetic basis, however this has been refuted since the early 20th century (Sewell, 2009) and race is now widely accepted to be a socially constructed term, a system created to categorise humans who appear to share physical characteristics and features, even though there is no biological basis for these differences (Quintana, 1998; Singh, 2019). In contrast, ethnicity groups people by those who share “a common or distinct ancestry and cultural practices” (Singh, 2019, p.3) this could include “customs, religious practices and language usage” (Quintana, 1998, p.28) and may originate in a particular geographic region. Culture has been described as the “substance of cohesion between people” (Sewell, 2009, p.19), consisting of habits, rules and shared ideas; it is therefore changeable and open to the influence of others. Within the definition for ethnicity, the word

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'cultural' has been used which highlights the difficulty in trying to give distinct definitions for the three terms.

Within this literature review, the terms multicultural literature, diverse literature and representative books are also used. Multicultural literature is defined as "books that describe people and events about countries and cultures other than the dominant ones" (Iwai, 2013). Diverse literature widens this definition to incorporate books which include categories such as gender, families and (dis)abilities. Finally, representative books are defined for the purposes of this review as books in which children are able to see a character that represents themselves (their culture, ethnicity, race, disability, gender identity etc.); these books therefore may be multicultural and/or diverse titles.

Representation in Books

Style (1988) first coined the phrase "mirrors and windows" in relation to education, she wrote about the importance for curriculum to "reflect and reveal most accurately both a multicultural world and the student himself or herself" (para. 7). Dr Rudine Sims Bishop developed the phrase to campaign for change in children's book publishing by suggesting that books should be "mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors" (Sims Bishop, 1990). A book can be a window if it shows the reader into a context different to their own and those windows can be sliding glass doors for a reader to walk through in their imagination, entering the world described by the author. For a book to be a mirror it needs to show the reader's own lives and experiences, reflecting the reality of the reader, whether that is their ethnic identity or a different reality, for instance their disability or gender identity.

An alternative view is that books can be maps (Myers, 2014). Similarly to books as mirrors and sliding glass doors, books as maps help children and young

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people see themselves in the world and show them possible destinations. Myers argues that if children do not see themselves in these maps then their destinations are restricted, they do not see the possibilities that are open to them.

Thirty years on from Sims Bishop's (1990) call to arms, representation in books is an issue which is as important now as it was then (Krishnaswami, 2019). Furthermore, diversity and multiculturalism in schools are hot topics for educators in the UK, including how they are incorporated into the curriculum (McPhee, 2021; Pethick, 2020); representation in children's books within the curriculum needs to be considered as part of this (Thompson, 2021). Researchers around the world are examining how the children's book industries in their own countries are dealing with the issue of representation within the books they produce. For example, in China, Fang and Bi (2018) created a historical account of how minority ethnicities within China are represented in children's literature. They document the dominance of the Han culture over several decades to the detriment of Chinese ethnic minorities. Although written with a political bias, the account is an example of how publishing practices can affect the portrayal of non-dominant cultures.

In Finland, Pesonen (2013) recognises that books are the product of the culture in which they are produced and that they can convey ideologies and worldviews to their readers. She examined four children's books published in Finland over a period of 20 years to examine how they handled topics of belonging and exclusion. Her findings suggest that children's books can be used to challenge prejudice and discrimination and that, within the four books examined, a shift towards this can be evidenced over the 20-year period. However, as this study is based on just four texts an examination of a wider number of texts is necessary when considering the number of books a child will encounter during their childhood.

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In the Netherlands, de Bruijn et al. (2020) carried out a content analysis of 64 books with human characters written for children aged 6 and under published in the Netherlands that had been sold most, borrowed most or received an award from 2009 until 2018. Their analysis of the illustrations found that there was an underrepresentation of characters of colour compared to the general population in the Netherlands. This was the expected outcome of the study; however, representation could be viewed as being more than just the physical characteristics and this study did not examine how the characters were portrayed within the books.

Bainbridge and Brenna (2013) carried out qualitative research with Canadian trainee teachers who attended a workshop on diversity in picture books and then took part in interviews or focus groups with the researchers. They cited one trainee who highlighted that diverse picture books “are really vehicles that cover the same thing as in “adult” novels” (p. 34). As such, a secondary school student examining the text content in a book and finding their lived experiences reflected is likely to be a different experience to a younger child seeing themselves reflected in a picture book, however, Sims Bishop (1990) would suggest that the importance of that reflection holds true for both situations.

In all four studies, representation was compared to the population of the particular country in which the research was taking place. The context of this study is the UK and it is therefore necessary to understand representation in children's books in the UK context.

Representation in Books in the UK.

In the UK, discussions calling for books to reflect the realities of the readers and the communities in which they live have had increasing media coverage (e.g.

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Books for Change, 2021; Caspaces, 2021; Doyle, 2020; Foran, 2021; The British Library, 2021).

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) has published research for the past four years which quantifies the extent to which children's books published in the UK contain characters from ethnic minority backgrounds (CLPE 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). They reported that in 2017, 9115 children's books were published in the UK, only 4% of these featured ethnic minority characters and only 1% had an ethnic minority main character (CLPE, 2018). This is contrasted with figures from the Department for Education (DfE) who reported that 32.1% of primary pupils in 2017 were of minority ethnic origins (DfE, 2017). The most recent report (CLPE, 2021) analysed children's books published in 2020. It found that 15% of children's books published featured ethnic minority characters and 8% had an ethnic minority main character whilst the DfE reported 33.9% of pupils of primary school age were from a minority ethnic background (DfE, 2021a).

CLPE's research indicates that the quantity of ethnic representation in recently published books is increasing year on year (CLPE, 2021), but there is still great disparity between the number of pupils of primary age from a minority ethnic background and the number of minority ethnic characters they may encounter in books. Furthermore, access to these books may be limited as CLPE's research is concerned with books published in the past four years, schools may not yet be stocking these books for children to access.

Representative children's books don't just appear on bookshelves, Botelho (2021) states "children's books are cultural products that are shaped by the ideologies and publishing practices of the time in which they were produced" (p.123). Therefore, the role of authors, illustrators and publishers must be acknowledged as

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gatekeepers to change as it is at this level that decisions are made about which, and how often, cultures are being reflected, and which are not (Botelho, 2021).

The lack of diversity in children's literature has inspired individuals to become writers to address the gap that they have identified. For example, children's author Zanib Mian identified the gap when she had children and realised that they were not represented in children's literature "I felt that all children should see themselves as main characters in books. I started by making up stories to tell to my children" (The British Library, 2020). However, Botelho (2021) suggests that writing the books is not the problem, but that addressing diversity in the publishing industry is key to getting diverse, authentic, representative books published and distributed. The Book Trust published a report in 2019 entitled "Representation of people of colour among children's book authors and illustrators" (Ramdarshan Bold, 2019). Having analysed a corpus of 56,858 children's books published in the UK between January 2007 and December 2017, they detailed that 5.58% of children's book creators in that time period were people of colour, much less than the 13% of the population made up of Black, Asian, Mixed (those whose parents are of two or more different ethnic backgrounds) or other ethnic groups in the UK recorded in the 2011 census (Office for National Statistics, 2011). A quote included in the report from comic book artist and illustrator John Aggs suggests that the effect of this may be long lasting:

"It's a vicious cycle. It's like, you don't have brown people in children's books, so brown people don't grow up reading children's books or enjoying children's books, so they don't make children's books, and so on and so forth"

(Ramdarshan Bold, 2019, p.12).

Issues surrounding representation within children's books runs deeper than a statistical analysis of the ethnicity of characters within stories, or the number of

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authors from diverse backgrounds who are able to get their books published. The impact that representation or a lack of representation within children's books on the children that read them also needs attention.

Impact of a Lack of Representation in Books.

A large-scale quantitative research study was carried out in the UK by the National Literacy Trust in 2020 in their Annual Literacy Survey. 58,346 children and young people aged between 9 and 18 took part in the survey, key findings were that 40% of children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds did not see themselves represented in the books they read, this compared to 30.5% of children and young people from white British backgrounds (Best et al., 2020). Such large surveys give an overall perspective, however, the individual voices and experiences of the young people is missing in such surveys and is impossible to capture using quantitative methods.

Mpike (2020), a researcher and founder of her own publishing house focused on publishing diverse stories, suggests that not seeing oneself represented in fiction books sends a message to the reader of invisibility and denial of being part of society. If children do not see their own reality reflected in the books they encounter in school, whether that is ethnicity, disability, gender identify etc., they could be experiencing 'erasure', a term used to describe the "practice of collective indifference that renders certain people and groups invisible" (Sehgal, 2016). The vicious cycle described by Aggs (Ramdarshan Bold, 2019) is mirrored in interviews with African American adults and children reported by Hefflin and Barksdale-Ladd (2001) in an article recommending representative African American children's literature, aimed at teachers in the US. They suggest that erasure has severe implications for children, impacting on their motivation to read and their enjoyment of reading.

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In a content analysis of the 20 Common Core State Standards exemplar texts for grades two and three in the US, which are adopted by 42 states, Gomez-Najarro (2020) highlighted a lack of diversity, particularly through an intersectionality lens. In the 20 books analysed, only three books had a central character who is a person of colour, only three had a female central character and only one had a female central character of colour. Gomez-Najarro stated that the impact for diverse pupils not seeing themselves represented is far reaching: "literacy instruction becomes the amputation of their identities, as well as their motivation to read and engage in school" (p.405). This study was focused on the books recommended in the US for a narrow age-range, however, the wider literature would suggest that this is an issue across age-ranges and countries (de Bruijn et al., 2020; Fang & Bi, 2018; O'Sullivan & Immel, 2017).

Author Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche described needing a "mental shift" in her perception of literature having grown up in Nigeria reading British and American children's books, she stated "I did not know that people like me could exist in literature" (Adichie, 2009). This mental shift allowed her to stop writing about the white people, snow and ginger beer she had read about as a child and move to writing about characters and situations which were part of her lived experiences growing up in Nigeria.

Primary school teacher Darren Chetty describes teaching children growing up in a diverse area of London who, despite the best efforts of Chetty to include multicultural books and resources with them, had firmly held beliefs that "stories have to be about white people" (Chetty, 2016, p.96). It appears, then, that children growing up within the UK education system are also in need of Adiche's mental shift.

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Lee (2020), a children's author of colour, took part in a discussion about representation in children's books at the Edinburgh International Book Festival in 2020. She described her own experiences, growing up with only two books that had a black girl represented in them and described erasure as violent "if I can't see myself it feels like an attack on me". If erasure is being invisible, then the antithesis would be 'being seen'. Malorie Blackman, children's laureate from 2013 to 2015 in an interview with Sky News said "I think there is a very significant message that goes out when you cannot see yourself at all in the books you are reading. I think it is saying "well you may be here, but do you really belong?" (Suchet, 2014).

Benefits of Representation in Books.

Meek (2001), in an introduction to a collection of articles related to children's literature and national identity, states that children's literature has a role in helping or hindering the children reading the books to understand, and therefore develop, a sense of belonging or conversely a sense of differentiation, perceived as otherness. O'Sullivan and Immel (2017), in the first chapter of their book entitled *Imagining Sameness and Difference in Children's Literature*, examine how sameness and difference has been portrayed in children's literature from the enlightenment to the present day across a number of Western countries. It gives primarily an historical, literary view, however, themes of belonging and representation are touched on. They state that "children's literature tells readers about their place in the world, in some cases by impressing upon them who they are not" (p.8) and note that there are common issues across borders and literature genres in how difference is portrayed in children's literature.

Not only does the use of representative books benefit those who are represented, it can also benefit those outside of the representation, Kim (2016)

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utilised a qualitative case study design to examine the use of diverse texts in Korean kindergartens. She found that the use of the texts benefited the children in that it gave them the opportunity to understand issues of racial diversity and equality with texts which gave the children insight into people not of their own cultural background.

Research has found that stories have the potential to challenge stereotypes (Ginsberg & Glenn, 2019) and are effective in improving primary aged children in the UK's attitudes and reduce prejudice towards refugees (Cameron et al., 2006, 2007) and people with disabilities (Cameron et al., 2007). Cameron et al.'s studies used a between-participants experimental design, using rating scales to measure attitudes towards refugees and/or people with disabilities before and after an intervention. The texts used in the study were manipulated to facilitate the experimental design and as such are not available to the general public.

The literature explored in this section has primarily been from literary sources and although some have made reference to belonging, this has not been explored with reference to psychological theory. If a lack of representation in children's books is thought to impact on children's sense of belonging (Meek, 2001; O'Sullivan & Immel, 2017; Suchet, 2014), or if they are experiencing erasure by not seeing themselves represented in the books they read (Gomez-Najarro, 2020; Lee, 2020; Sehgal, 2016) then it is important to attend to psychological theories of belonging and, in particular for this study, school belonging, in order to understand what these theories suggest about the impact representation in children's books will have on the sense of belonging for the children who read them.

Belonging

Belonging has been defined as "the process of creating a sense of identification with, or connection to, cultures, people, place and material objects"

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(May, 2013). It has been long thought of as a basic human need, it is “regarded as a positive, and as something to be achieved” (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016, p.238).

Maslow (1954), in his hierarchy of needs included belonging with physiological and safety needs as needs which are essential for survival and therefore strong motivators for human behaviour. Maslow's theory has been criticised for not being generalisable across cultures (Neher, 1991) and the hierarchical nature of the theory has been questioned (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976), as has the lack of empirical data to support his theory (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). However, further research has also highlighted the importance of belonging as a motivator.

Although belonging has featured in social psychology since Maslow (1954) included it as part of his hierarchy of needs, Baumeister and Leary (1995) are credited as writing a seminal paper on belonging (Hirsch & Clark, 2019; Over, 2016), firmly placing it as more than a human desire but as a need which crosses cultures and forms the basis for motivating humans to engage in positive interactions with others over a sustained period of time. Baumeister and Leary (1995) suggest “the belongingness hypothesis raises the possibility that much of what human beings do is done in the service of belongingness” (p.498), structuring compelling evidence from across psychology which supports their hypothesis. They conclude that belongingness has two criteria: the frequency of pleasant interaction with a few individuals and the long-term and stable nature of the relationship. They suggest that without one or both criteria individuals will lack belongingness, resulting in distress and long-term negative consequences. Baumeister and Leary (1995) link belongingness hypothesis to group behaviour, providing motivation to promote in-group and out-group behaviour in order to experience belonging to the in-group.

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Use of the terms in-group and out-group behaviour by Baumeister and Leary (1985) indicate a link between belonging and social identity theory. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1974) came about from the study of intergroup behaviour and has three basic concepts: social identity, knowledge of our membership to social groups; social categorisation, creating and defining our place in the social world; and social comparison, evaluating and comparing these categories with others (Sani & Bennett, 2004). Through these concepts individuals create in-groups and out-groups within their social worlds impacting on each individual's social identity. In contrast to the individualistic stance of Social Identity Theory, a sense of belonging is created through a relational rather than individual understanding of "who 'we' are and what 'we' stand for, and who gets excluded as the 'other'" (May, 2013, p.3). Therefore a sense of belonging is concerned with connections with people, places and material objects to create a sense of self (May, 2013). Due to the connection the concept of belonging places with others and with material objects, which could include children's books, this study will focus on research into developing a sense of belonging through connections rather than identity theories focusing on individuals.

Hirsch and Clark (2019), also from a social psychology perspective, identified four different paths to achieving belonging, using evidence from empirical research to support their model. The four paths focus on the importance of others in developing a sense of belonging through relationships, acceptance and validation, group membership and minor social interactions. What is not taken into account are factors not directly involving a relationship with other people which could aid developing a sense of belonging e.g. objects, media and literature.

Social psychology approaches to belonging such as Baumeister and Leary's (1995) belongingness theory and Hirsch and Clark's (2019) model have been

criticised for basing their research on adults, taking an individualistic view (Puroila et al., 2021) and not exploring belonging as a construct that has been described by others as “dynamic” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.199) or fluid and flexible (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016). These terms reflect the premise that constructions of belonging will shift and change for individuals, and that belonging is not static or fixed. Yuval-Davis, draws on both psychological and sociological theory to create an analytical framework for the study of belonging, suggesting that when considering belonging, it is important to take into account social locations, individual identifications, emotional attachments and the politics of belonging as well as considering the further complexity of intersectionality. To consider the concept of belonging within this framework highlights the complexity of belonging along with the difficulty of unpicking the concept without succumbing to reductionism.

The dynamic process of belonging is important when considering children's sense of belonging. Puroila et al. (2021) suggest that for children, the dynamic process involves using an intersectional lens to examine how cultures, places, material objects and people including parents, siblings, teachers and peers shape children's sense of belonging. In their study, qualitative methods were employed to analyse educational policy documents and gather ethnographic material including group interviews with eleven educators and seven parents as well as observations within three settings. They also included the viewpoints of 47 children through photographs taken by children as well as discussions with them. Using a situational mapping framework, they analysed the data at a macro-, meso-, and micro- level. Highlighted in Puroila et al.'s (2021) study is the role of adults in developing children's sense of belonging, They state that within schools, it is the adults who have the power in creating environments which foster belonging. Adults choose the

classes and groupings that the children are a part of and would be expected to develop a sense of belonging to. Adults manage the resources including the learning environment and the resources within it. Adults therefore must treat that power with great care and make every effort to “provide children with educational environments that are welcoming for all” (p.17).

Although the majority of research into belonging takes a social psychology stance, belonging can also be approached from the perspective of developmental psychology. Over (2016), in an academic journal article, argues for belonging to be seen as a motivator for children's social behaviour and therefore an important force in child development (Over, 2016).

School Belonging

Much of the research concerning belonging and children is within the context of schools. School belonging is defined as a student feeling that they are “personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others” within the school setting (Goodenow and Grady, 1993, p.61). Goodenow and Grady (1993) linked school belonging and academic motivation through correlational research. They state that “almost all people find school (...) more enjoyable, worthwhile and interesting when they believe that others in the environment like and value them” (p.68). Although nearly thirty years old, this research is seen as seminal and the definition provided by Goodenow and Grady is widely accepted by researchers studying school belonging (Korpershoek et al., 2020; Thijs et al., 2019).

School belonging has been shown to be an important factor in academic achievement. Reynolds et al. (2017) completed a cross-sectional study which utilised questionnaires to investigate the relationship between school climate and academic achievement in reading, writing and maths for students in grades seven

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(students aged 12-13 years) and nine (students aged 14-15 years) at two Australian high schools. The study found that school identification accounted for significant variance in academic achievement in both numeracy and writing, leading the authors to suggest that “strengthening students’ psychological connection to the school is important in improving learning” (p.90). Unfortunately, the quantitative nature of the research did not allow the specific strategies the schools had used to enhance school identification to be investigated. Furthermore, the statistical analysis took into account the age, gender, number of years at the school, socio-economic status and parental education of the students, however ethnicity was not accounted for therefore differences in school identification for students with different ethnic backgrounds could not be investigated.

School Belonging and Ethnicity.

In other studies, researchers have found that students from ethnic minorities experience less connectedness or belonging to school (Biag, 2016; Hernández et al., 2017; Walton & Cohen, 2011; Williams et al., 2020). An intervention for college students in the US used positive reframing by normalising the challenges faced and emphasising that the challenges are transient and will improve over time. The aim was to improve belonging for the college students, particularly for students from ethnic minorities. Results showed a positive impact on both the academic achievement and the health and well-being of the students, particularly African American students, with the effects seen over three years (Walton & Cohen, 2011). The intervention was replicated for a small cohort of younger, high school students, this time using video rather than a written materials to inform the students about social belonging as this was thought to be more engaging for younger students. The

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intervention was again found to be successful over the students' first year, again with most impact for students from ethnic minorities (Williams et al., 2020).

If belonging is seen as a flexible and fluid process then the use of scales to measure belonging, as is common in belonging research, may not give a rich, detailed picture of this complex and messy construct. However, there are limited qualitative studies researching school belonging or school connectedness and the positivistic nature of many studies mean that underlying thoughts and feelings of individual students have not been explored, including which elements of school climate are most important nor how the psychological connection can be strengthened. Furthermore, interventions such as the social belonging intervention from Walton and Cohen (2011), replicated by Williams et al. (2020) focused on intervention at the individual level. Enabling students from ethnic minorities to improve their own sense of belonging is an achievement which should not be minimised, however, systemic, organisational approaches to improve students' sense of belonging must also be considered. For example, research in South Africa identified that among other things, policies in the school should reflect diverse schools (Rawatlal & Petersen, 2012), suggesting that a systemic approach is needed in order to foster a sense of belonging for students.

Studies which have employed qualitative research methods have explored pupil and/or school staff constructions about different ways to promote school belonging (Biag, 2016; Bower et al., 2015; Chhuon & LeBaron Wallace, 2014; Craggs & Kelly, 2018; Rawatlal & Petersen, 2012). Biag (2016) used a descriptive single case analysis to study school connectedness from the point of view of the school staff in one urban American middle school serving ethnically diverse, low-income families. Using inductive analysis, he states that staff should support

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students, keep them safe at school and hold them accountable to high academic standards in order to aid their sense of connection to the school. Biag's definition of school connection: "belief by students that adults in the school care about them as well as their learning" (p.32) differs from Goodenow and Grady's (1993) definition of school belonging. However, being cared for by adults in school is congruent with being "personally accepted, respected, included and supported" (Goodenow and Grady, 1993, p.61) by those adults and therefore Biag's systemic level study also informs what adults in school can do to foster a sense of belonging for their students.

In a short-term longitudinal study of 9-13 year-olds in the Netherlands, utilising scales within questionnaires, relationships between staff and pupils were seen to have an impact on classroom identification, and therefore belonging, for students from ethnic minorities (Thijs et al., 2019). Special events have also been found to enhance school belonging; research by Neely, Walton, and Stephens (2016) found that food events within school increased social interactions, enabling "the experience of, and appreciation for, cultural diversity" (p.330). This was seen to increase a sense of belonging for students, enabling them to feel more connected to their school.

Multiple studies show that the role of school staff is important in fostering a sense of belonging for students from ethnic minorities (Biag, 2016; Byrd & Chavous, 2011; Neely et al., 2016; Thijs et al., 2019). Thijs et al. (2019), state that multicultural teaching practices, which may include positively addressing and valuing cultural diversity, along with promoting equality, for instance by condemning discrimination and prejudice, can help students from ethnic minority backgrounds to feel more welcome in the classroom, promoting classroom identification and therefore belonging. This is seen as being important in all schools, however it is

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likely to be more effective in schools with culturally diverse populations as it is contextually relevant to the children (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013).

Lähdesmäki et al. (2016) explored the concept of belonging in content analysis of 67 journal articles published in 2014. The analysis found that “a great majority of the articles focus on migration and immigration, ethnic or racial relations, and differences faced by people in their everyday life” (p. 240). They found that the concept of belonging is being used in emancipatory research to tackle inequalities and exclusion. However, the role of the arts, including literature, was missing in the studies analysed, finding that none dealt with representations of belonging in the arts. The content analysis was restricted to one year of publications and only used one academic database and as such may not be representative of global research over time. However, it could be indicative that the role of representation in literature on school belonging is an area which needs further research.

It has already been suggested that a lack of representation in children's books is also thought to impact on children's sense of belonging (Gomez-Najarro, 2020; Lee, 2020; Meek, 2001; O'Sullivan & Immel, 2017; Sehgal, 2016; Suchet, 2014). The psychological theories and research explored here suggests that students from ethnic minorities experience less connectedness or belonging to school (Biag, 2016; Hernández et al., 2017; Walton & Cohen, 2011; Williams et al. 2020) and that adults in schools have a key role to play in fostering a sense of belonging for ethnic minority students (Biag, 2016; Neely et al., 2016; Thijs et al., 2019) with the ultimate aim to achieve the definition of school belonging: being “personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others” (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p.61).

As has been seen, the role of staff in relation to fostering a sense of belonging for students from ethnic minorities has been explored, it should be noted that much

of this research has been in high schools with adolescents. However, there are other factors which also need to be considered, including the development of children's understanding of ethnicity, race and racial identity. This is particularly important when considering children in primary schools as their understanding may not be as developed as students in secondary education. Therefore, if adults in school are to increase a sense of belonging for children and young people from ethnic minorities then it is important to understand how children and young people understand the socially constructed concept of race.

Ethnicity and Race

Quintana (1994) developed a model of children's understanding of ethnicity and race, based on interviews with 97 Mexican-American children and previous research. This model was also integrated into Quintana's review of research carried out over a fifty year period (Quintana, 1998). Quintana's model has five developmental levels ranging from Level 0: approximately ages 3 to 6 years, through to Level 4: adults. Quintana's model is written for applied psychologists and so may have some relevance for this study, it is also useful to inform discussions around ethnicity and race held in schools as it suggests how children come to understand ethnicity and race at different ages. For the purpose of this study, levels 0, 1 and 2 are pertinent and are outlined in table 1 below.

Table 1

Levels 0-2 of Development in Children's Understanding of Ethnicity (Adapted from: Quintana, 1994)

Level	Age Range (approximate)	Key Features
0	3-6 years	<i>Integration of affective and perceptual understanding of ethnicity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of race based on observable, biological features
1	6-10 years	<i>Literal understanding of ethnicity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of relatively permanent, non-observable characteristics of ethnicity e.g. languages, food • Understand the permanence and constancy of ethnic and racial status
2	10-14 years	<i>Social perspective of ethnicity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of the more subtle characteristics of ethnicity • Aware of prejudice, bias and discrimination • Can see their ethnicity through the eyes of others

It should be noted that Quintana's model provides generalised levels which may not match an individual child's own development, particularly if they are exposed to polarised views from a young age. Furthermore, it was developed with a limited sample of 97 children from one cultural background. It should therefore be treated with caution as it may not be fully generalisable, nevertheless it does give some indication of how children's understanding of ethnicity may develop.

Critical Race Theory has become embedded in discussions on diversity, by exploring and challenging racial inequalities including in education, through themes of 'centrality of racism', 'white supremacy', 'voices of people of colour', 'interest convergence' and 'intersectionality' (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011; Warmington, 2019). Critical Race Theory asserts that white dominance and non-white subordination are

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embedded in the political and economic systems of our lives; as such, both the education system and the publishing industry are purporting unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement.

In a piece of participatory research which took a narrative approach, the experience of one 16-year-old Black Somali student is shared (Abdi, 2015). Abdi suggests that whiteness dominates in UK classrooms and racial identities are imposed onto young people in these classrooms, leading the young people to have racialised experiences of education.

Milner (2020), in an article inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and his own experiences as a Black professor conducting observational studies in schools for over 20 years, suggests that white supremacy is evident in book lists within schools, within the research into the science of reading and within the methodological tools used to construct knowledge by academics. He calls for a “disruptive movement” (p. S252) which exposes white supremacy, where researchers use their standing to examine and expose injustice and ultimately effect change.

Critics of Critical Race Theory do not deny that racism exists within education in Britain, however rather than explaining ethnic differences in attainment by institutional racism the differences are attributed to teacher, school leaders and curriculum choices (Parsons & Thompson, 2017) and have been explained using an ecological framework exploring intersectionality at micro, meso and macro levels (Phillips, 2011).

As was discussed in the previous section, adults have been described as the gatekeepers to children accessing representative books (O'Sullivan & Immel, 2017) and could therefore be Milner's (2020) 'disruptive movement', by delivering a

diverse curriculum, which could include incorporating representative books in the curriculum. The literature reviewed thus far has not attended to the role of the curriculum and whether this enables children and young people to experience a sense of belonging through reflecting diversity, this will be explored in the next section.

Diversity in the Curriculum

A multidisciplinary review designed to integrate literature on practices within schools that may have implications for ethnic-racial socialisation found that ethnic and racial omissions within the curriculum could carry implicit messages to the students about race and ethnicity contributing to their understanding of race and ethnicity (Aldana & Byrd, 2015) and the racialisation of the curriculum. The authors concede that the review is not exhaustive, merely providing exemplars of educational practices related to race and ethnicity. However, these exemplars suggest that the content of school curriculums should be considered carefully in order to promote ethnic-racial socialisation.

One way of making these considerations can be to implement Multicultural Education within schools, this is where cultural content is integrated into the curriculum. A review of Multicultural Education in the Netherlands found that doing this reduced prejudice and improved children's cultural knowledge and understanding (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). The review was based on quantitative research and as such it does not provide rich insight into individual experiences, furthermore it is not based in the UK, so does not reflect the curriculum nor teaching practices within the UK.

Votes for Schools are an organisation who create weekly lesson content and surveys for schools and colleges based on current affairs. In October 2020, they

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carried out a national survey asking primary, secondary and college students “does the curriculum represent you?” (Votes for Schools, 2020). Although it is unclear what explanation into representation is given to the students prior to answering the question, the results suggest that there is less representation in the curriculum as children progress through school. Another interpretation could be that children become more aware of a lack of representation as they progress through school. Children in Year 3 (aged 7-8) had the highest percentage of feeling represented at 61.86%. The percentage then decreases year by year through to year 9 (aged 13-14) where only 22.7% responded that the curriculum represented them. Additionally, the Votes for Schools (2020) survey was for pupils in primary and secondary schools and colleges. Therefore, utilising Quintana's (1998) model, the differing ages of the pupils may have affected their understanding of race, diversity and representation and consequently affected how they answered the questions in the survey.

The Votes for Schools survey included qualitative comments from students, these indicated a variety of experiences: one primary school student in Essex said, “the curriculum teaches me about a wide range of people” (p. 8), another student from Greater London said, “my friends are represented but I'm not” (p.9). This comment in particular may suggest that children are looking for more than just themselves to be reflected in the curriculum and in the books they read, they are looking for their friends and possibly wider communities too.

The Votes for Schools (2020) survey suggests that some progress has been made but that there is still room for further improvement. A secondary school pupil from Berkshire said, “many of us are represented in some way, but not in others. The more diversity in the curriculum, the better represented we will feel” (p.8). Although this was not part of empirical research, as such, this survey suggests that

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children and young people are capable of understanding issues around diversity and representation in the curriculum and how it affects them and their friends and are able to express their views.

Reading

Having considered the wider curriculum, the focus of the literature review will now concentrate on reading as this is the area of the curriculum most closely associated with representative books. Reading is a fundamental part of the curriculum, and has been described by Quigley (2020) as the “master skill of school” (p.15), he goes on to explain that children need to learn to read before they can read to learn. A significant part of the curriculum, therefore, are the books that are used in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to have language rich classrooms with a range of high-quality books available and accessible (Chambers, 2011; Ellis & Coddington, 2013). In a book aimed to help teachers improve their teaching of reading in order to close the reading gap, Quigley (2020) says,

“we are beholden to fill [every pupil’s] school day with a richness of countless books, helping them access a wealth of powerful reading experiences, so that they can be buoyed by the world of imagination and knowledge offered to us by possessing the capability to read successfully” (p.4).

Models of Reading.

In order to understand how children learn to read successfully, several models of reading have been proposed under the umbrella term the ‘science of reading’. One of these models is the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) this suggests that in order to become a fluent and skilled reader, an individual needs to be able to decode the written text and comprehend what they are decoding. The paper was written based on the viewpoint of the authors and the evidence available

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at the time which supported their view but was not based on an empirical study. The authors proposed the Simple View of Reading model “in the hope that its truth or falsity might be decisively settled by future research” (p.6). In the intervening 36 years, the Simple View of Reading model has “been fundamental in changing the debate about the teaching of reading” (DfE, 2022, p.15) and is the model which underpins the current governmental guidance for the teaching of reading in English schools.

Scarborough (2001), in a review of longitudinal research into language and literacy development expands on Gough and Tunmer's (1986) model, taking the two strands of decoding and comprehension and suggesting different aspects within those strands which need to be woven together in order to produce the 'reading rope' of skilled reading. The empirical basis of his 'reading rope' model is from the synthesis of research into reading carried out by The National Academy of Sciences in the USA (National Research Council, 1998). Within the decoding strand, Scarborough proposes that children need phonological awareness, decoding and sight-recognition skills. Pertinent for this study is the comprehension strand which is made up of “background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning and literacy knowledge” (Scarborough, 2001, p.98).

Despite both the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) and the reading rope (Scarborough, 2001) models' popularity and widespread use in UK education, they have been criticised for not incorporating factors which recent research has shown to also influence the science of reading (Cabell & Hwang, 2020; Duke & Cartwright, 2021). For example, Duke and Cartwright (2021) critique the simplicity of the simple view of reading, arguing that there is an interaction between decoding and comprehension which the model does not account for, furthermore

factors such as executive functioning skills, motivation and engagement are not featured in either of the original models. Instead, they propose the Active View of Reading which incorporates these factors. Similarly to the original proposal of the Simple View of Reading, Duke and Cartwright (2021) state that the active view of reading as a complete model has not been subject to empirical research, although the elements which make it up are all empirically based.

One factor included in the comprehension strand of the reading rope (Scarborough, 2001) and the active view of reading (Duke & Cartwright, 2021) is content knowledge. Content knowledge can include cultural knowledge of experiences, objects and concepts and is deemed to be important in allowing the reader to comprehend both spoken and written word (Cabell & Hwang, 2020; Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Taboada Barber & Lutz Klauda, 2020); understanding is shaped by the reader's experiences, knowledge and social interactions (Ellis & Coddington, 2013). By using comparisons to real world experiences, readers' beliefs and attitudes shape the construction of the world presented within a text (Beach, 1998; Kardaş İşler & Dedeoğlu, 2019; Kirkland, 2011; Louie, 2006). Duke and Cartwright (2021) state:

“readers who are rarely provided with opportunities to read texts that reflect their cultural background will experience the reading process differently than those with the privilege of a frequent match of their cultural background and knowledge assumed by an author/text” (p.S28)

Reading Motivation and Engagement

Along with content knowledge, motivational factors including the associated area of engagement, are further areas which affect the reading process. Firstly, the relationship between motivation and engagement must be addressed before

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considering why it is important to have engaged readers and ways in which individuals can be motivated to become engaged in their reading. Taboada Barber and Lutz Klauda (2020) state that “engagement (active involvement in reading) is the direct product of motivation (values, goals, and beliefs)” (p.31). These two concepts are closely linked, with individuals who are intrinsically motivated to read being more likely to be engaged readers as well as achieving better reading outcomes (Becker et al., 2010). Ellis and Coddington (2013) have taken a multidisciplinary, international approach in writing an overview of research into reading engagement. They state that the effects of high reading engagement on academic achievement are powerful and long term. Children who are more engaged in reading, access more books, leading them to reap benefits in terms of academic achievement. These engaged readers have the benefit of “wider vocabularies, better verbal reasoning powers, and a wider general knowledge and understanding of the world” (Ellis and Coddington, 2013, p.231).

Further research has shown that Black students have greater motivation to read when the texts reflect them, their experiences and their world view (Kirkland, 2011; Milner, 2020). Kirkland (2011) carried out a single case study on one 16-year-old male, Derrick, observing both him and his teacher through 18 weeks of his 11th grade English classes in the US. Kirkland advises educators to “think of reading as extension of self” (p.206), reporting that Derrick could not see himself or his culture in the text he was asked to read and was disengaged. This contrasted strongly with his engagement when he could relate to the text presented, he used his own everyday vocabulary to “integrate a text into himself” (p.205). This could be as much to do with the teaching methods employed with the two texts and is based on one student in post-16 education, but the findings fit with Ellis and Coddington’s (2013)

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assertion that understanding of text is shaped by the reader's own experiences and increases motivation and therefore engagement. Derrick, appeared to be able to use his own knowledge and experience and his own everyday vocabulary to interpret what the text meant and engage in discussions with others, comparing and contrasting the meanings they were creating from the text, thereby increasing his social motivation to read.

In order to maximise the opportunities for children to be motivated to read, research suggests that teachers should consider their children's interests and furthermore consider their culture when choosing books (Taboada Barber & Lutz Klauda, 2020). As seen with Duke and Cartwright (2021), for Christian and Bloome (2004) culture is also recognised as an important factor in learning to read, particularly for children who are learning in a different culture to their own. They talk of the extra effort that is needed for children whose knowledge of language and culture is different to that which is in their reading books, "for some children ... they have to eschew their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and identities and assume those of the dominant culture" (p. 367). Christian and Bloome's (2004) study used discourse analysis and sociolinguistic ethnography to analyse one peer-group reading activity with four children aged 6 and 7 in the US, two girls, one white, one African American and two boys, both described as Latino learning English as an additional language. There were multiple factors reported to be at play in the children's interaction, including the children's own perception of their reading ability. In this study, the girls were 'good readers' which the authors felt gave them symbolic capital to monopolise the activity and keep the boys on the periphery. Christian and Bloom suggest that the boys began with a lower status within the class "simply

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because of “who they were” (p.382), they also state that if the boys continue to be marginalised in such a way then the gap to their peers will only widen.

Teachers have been shown to have a role to play in choosing books and employing teaching methods which will motivate children and young people to read (Taboada Barber and Lutz Klauda, 2020; Kirkland, 2011). This is in addition to their role in helping children and young people to develop a sense of belonging as explored previously. The final section of this literature review will focus on the role of teachers in incorporating diverse and representative literature in their classes, the training they need and the role that Educational Psychologists could have in facilitating that training.

Role of Teachers

The English programmes of study for key stages 1 and 2 in England (Department for Education, 2013, p.4) state:

“All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum”.

These programmes of study are statutory for schools across England and therefore must be followed by all maintained schools. The most pertinent part of the statement in the context of this review is the expectation that through the literature chosen for teaching, children should develop knowledge of themselves and of the world in which they live.

Teachers are able to include topics to be taught which include multiculturalism, prejudice and discrimination, however, academics suggests there needs to be more than just the discrete subjects taught. For example, Crutcher

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(2006) and Gay (2003) suggest that themes such as these need to be included in the wider curriculum and revisited often, they should form part of the ethos of the school, not merely a bolt on subject to be taught in a particular unit. Glazier and Seo (2005) in an ethnographic and sociolinguistic case study of a US high school teacher who utilised multicultural texts in her teaching, suggest that potentially difficult classroom discussions including race and culture tend to be “avoided rather than explored” (p.687). The study found that in including multicultural texts and enabling discussions about culture, race and religion, students learnt to understand and respect other cultures. Those students who were identified as being in the minority were usually passive in “traditional classrooms ... were “not afraid to talk out” (student interviews) in class discussions” (p.697). Therefore, it is suggested that school leaders and teachers should not “shy away from issues of race and culture” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p.316). Schools may state that valuing diversity is part of the school's ethos and vision, however Blair (2004), in an article written for Education Review, states that a vision is not enough, pupils must experience that appreciation of diversity in their lived experience in school. To realise the vision, Blair (2004) suggests that school leadership need to take responsibility for race equality so that it can be embedded throughout the leadership structure, policies and day to day practices of the staff. This would suggest that teachers demonstrating good practice in isolation would not have the impact that is possible when a whole school commits to addressing race equality. In order to do this, multicultural books are seen as “key tools ... to foster children's awareness of diversity and respect and tolerance towards difference” (Iwai, 2013, p.194).

Teachers as Gatekeepers to Representative Books.

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Researchers suggest that the responsibility placed on teachers, as gatekeepers to using diverse and multicultural books in schools, is great; they have a responsibility to choose books which will consider the pupils in their classes and select appropriate books which will open discussions (Evans, 2010) and motivate all of them (Milner, 2020). However, it should be recognised that teachers, and even individual schools, do not work in a vacuum and as such, they are subject to their own gatekeepers. Schools in the UK work within several systems of power, each of which has influence over each other and over decisions that schools take. For example the Department for Education sets the national curriculum for maintained schools and the school curriculum at the heart of Ofsted's inspection framework (Roberts, 2022). However, this curriculum has been described as narrow and restrictive, including the lack of diversity within the English literature curriculum (Evaristo, 2021). A further system of power within the education system are the exam boards which set the literature for their examinations, reducing the choice that teachers have over the texts they can choose to teach. One exam board recently took steps to increase the number of diverse poets within the GCSE English Literature Poetry anthology in order to make their reading materials more accessible and relatable (OCR, 2022). This was met with derision from the then Education Secretary who called the move to remove some more traditional, white poets as "cultural vandalism" (Schools Week, 2022). This indicates that steps to increase the use of diverse and multicultural books will not always be welcomed and that challenging the status quo can be hindered by those who are in positions of power over schools.

Notwithstanding the external influences, teachers' book choices will change from year to year and from class to class; Kirkland (2011) suggests that teachers

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need to ask themselves questions about their pupils such as “who are our students, and how do their histories and deep sociologies shape who they seek to be and how they read?” (p.206) to enable suitable book choices. Kirkland suggests that committing to making book decisions based on the individuals in each class increases the probability that all the class will be motivated and therefore engaged with the teaching, thereby improving chances of positive outcomes.

The research reviewed so far indicates that incorporating multicultural books into the curriculum has benefits for pupils who can see themselves and their communities reflected in the books. However, it also benefits pupils from the majority culture who have the opportunity to develop multicultural understanding and respect (Cameron et al., 2006, 2007; Ginsberg & Glenn, 2019; Glazier & Seo, 2005; Kim, 2016; Sims Bishop, 1990). To enable this, further research suggests that children need to “engage and connect with multicultural literature” (Bedard and Fuhrken, 2019, p.25). Bedard and Fuhrken (2019), a teacher and an author, detail seven experiences 7th grade students (aged 12 – 13 years) engaged in as they read a multicultural novel in school. The article which ensued included extracts of the children's work but does not detail how the children found the experience of engaging with a multicultural novel nor comment on their personal responses to the experience. Louie (2006), in a case study of one 4th grade (children aged 9-10 years old) teacher in the US who implemented multicultural literature, suggests seven guiding principles to enable engagement with multicultural literature including learning opportunities to “understand the world of the ethnic character, ... see the world through the characters' perspectives, [and] ... use variants of the same story or collection of stories” (p.439-440). Both Bedard and Fuhrken (2019) and Louie

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(2006) provide interesting examples of how multicultural literature activities have been implemented in American schools, but lack the child's voice in their studies.

In contrast, Evans (2010) carried out a critical ethnography study within a fourth-grade (children aged 9-10 years old) classroom in the US, which did centre on hearing the voices of the children. Over a period of eight months, children were read fifty multicultural picture books, these readings took place twice a week. Following the reading, the teachers engaged students in discussions about the books as well as their personal response to the books which were audio- and video-taped to generate the data for the study. Evans (2010) found that the exposure to these multicultural books allowed children to have a greater appreciation for ethnic differences, they developed new perspective and reduced their ethnocentrism. The study had a focus on the children's perspectives towards diversity and therefore may have missed other effects of reading multicultural picture books with children. Furthermore the role of the teachers was not explored, nor the impact the study had on their teaching practice.

Engagement with diverse and multicultural texts does not have to be restricted to the timetabled lessons within the school day; Kardaş İşler and Dedeoğlu (2019) suggest that the use of literature circles can lead children to connect with multicultural literature in a meaningful way. In their case study, utilising qualitative content analysis, trainee teachers in Turkey participated in literature circles to engage with multicultural children's literature with a view to give them experience with diverse books and with the idea that they may use literature circles in their own practice. The literature circles in the research enabled trainee teachers to gain understanding of different cultures and perspectives, however, they did not enable spontaneous relating of the readers own experiences to the different cultures in the

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texts. Therefore, it seems that for a children's literature circle these discussions would need to be facilitated by a member of staff in order to be able to allow the children to gain the most benefit. This again reinforces the important role teachers have in providing and facilitating learning using diverse literature.

Much of the research concerning multicultural literature's use in schools and the role of teachers in using it is not based in the UK, with much of it based on American literature in American high schools. Although many of the salient points hold true in the UK education system it should be acknowledged that the learning activities happening in US high schools and the pedagogic approaches taken by staff may be different to those in UK primary schools. Furthermore, much of the research is with adults, particularly trainee teachers looking at diverse books with other trainee teachers, not with children and young people themselves. Research supporting teachers to use diverse and representative books with primary-aged children in the UK is lacking.

In order for teachers to effectively include diverse literature in their classrooms they need to be introduced to diverse texts (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013), they also need to be specifically trained to teach literacy, including reading, to children who are culturally diverse from their teacher (Clark, 2020; Evans, 2010). Teachers also need time to consider their own belief systems and any social stereotypes that are embedded despite a desire for social justice (Bainbridge and Brenna, 2013). They will need to thoroughly think through any implications that may occur from including these books in their teaching. Consideration needs to be given to views of the school leadership team along with parental views (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013). It would seem that providing this time is more straightforward to arrange during initial teacher training, however, as more individuals involved in education consider issues

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of diversity in schools it may also be pertinent to allow time and space for qualified teachers to engage with up to date research and thinking in the areas of equity and social justice in relation to representation in children's books through opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013; Blair, 2004).

Role of Educational Psychologists in teacher education and CPD

Educational Psychologists' (EPs') core activities can be divided into the areas of consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research (Scottish Executive, 2017). These are performance indicators for EPs in Scotland and form a substantial part of the competency framework used for trainees in England, Northern Ireland and Wales (BPS, 2019). Therefore, these core activities can be used to describe the distinctive contribution of EPs in schools. Of these areas, training allows EPs to work systemically, identifying with schools initiatives which will facilitate change within the school system and therefore having a wider impact (Beaver, 2011).

Training staff as part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) can lead to effective change within a school by developing staff practice. The teachers' standards (DfE, 2021b) are explicit in requiring teachers to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date and to "take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development" (p.13). Educational Psychologists with training as one of the key areas of work, would seem to be well positioned to work with staff in schools to deliver training.

In order to effect change, an understanding of the process of change needs to be understood. Lewin (1947) developed a conceptualisation that change has three stages: unfreezing, when the individual experiences the need for change; moving, when new standards of behaviour and values are adopted; and refreezing, when the

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new behaviours are stabilised to become the new norm. Essentially, Lewin suggests that individuals need to be involved in and understand the importance of the change process in order to change. Three studies will be outlined now in which Educational Psychologists have worked in collaboration with school staff in order to effect change.

Forrest et al. (2019) carried out a realistic evaluation research design in their study which involved an EP working with a school in the UK to effect change in teaching practice. They identified five factors which influenced teacher practice change: knowledge, collaboration, reflection, time and pressure. Additionally, they found that there was a need to challenge the 'EP as expert' role. They advocate including EPs in Professional Learning Communities as a collaborative approach to improving staff practice through building relationships with staff and avoiding a power imbalance.

Action Research was developed by Lewin as a methodology for effecting change. Ackerley and Bunn (2018) conducted an organisational change project which allowed EPs to work as scientist practitioners with school staff in one primary school to develop inclusive practice. Employing organisational change with an action research methodology produced changes in the school which were still evident six months after the EP's involvement. This suggests that EP involvement, working with staff in a systemic, collaborative way, has a lasting impact on staff and therefore on the pupils they work with.

Educational Psychologist, Douglas-Osborn (2017) carried out a study in an early years setting utilising an action research and Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) framework over the course of a year. She also found that the collaborative approach, which is fundamental in action research, facilitated by

good relationships between staff and the EP contributed to the success of a new model of EP practice in an early years setting.

These three studies all highlighted the importance of collaboration and relationships in effective working between school staff and Educational Psychologists when effecting organisational change. They also show the effectiveness of staff working with Educational Psychologists in processes of organisational change. However, there is a paucity of research which involves Educational Psychologists working with school staff to improve their use of diverse and representative books as an organisational change project.

Conclusion

Bedard and Fuhrken (2019) state that “students deserve exposure to inclusive literature that represents the world” (p. 25). Representation in literature is therefore not just a matter for those from minority ethnic groups but for everyone who lives in a multicultural society (Glazier & Seo, 2005). If children are experiencing erasure in the books used in learning activities at school then it could be questioned to what extent they can believe that they are valued and belong within their school.

Within individual schools, the leadership teams and teachers could be described as the gatekeepers to tackling inequalities within their pupils' education in order to enhance a sense of belonging for all pupils, although this can be hampered by those in positions of power over schools, such as the Department for Education, Multi Academy Trust directives and Ofsted. For schools to address ethnic and culturally based inequalities effectively, research suggests there needs to be a systemic, whole-school approach including appropriate CPD for staff (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013; Blair, 2004). Further research suggests that such moves will improve a sense of belonging and associated academic motivation (Gomez-Najarro, 2020;

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Kirkland, 2011; Milner, 2020) which can, in turn, have a positive impact on achievement (Ellis & Coddington, 2013).

**Including Representative Children's Books
in Primary Schools:
A Participatory Action Research Study**

**Chapter 2:
Empirical Study**

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Abstract

Research has found a great disparity between the number of pupils of primary age from a minority ethnic background and the number of minority ethnic characters they may encounter in books published in the UK (CLPE, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). If children do not see their own lived experiences reflected in the books they encounter in school, they could be experiencing 'erasure'. This in turn could impact on the extent to which they believe they are valued and belong at school, impacting on their academic motivation and achievement.

In this participatory action research, teachers in a diverse primary school worked with a Trainee Educational Psychologist to increase their understanding of this issue and their use of representative books in their classes. A mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis was taken, combining mean comparisons from staff surveys at the beginning and end of the study and inductive reflexive thematic analysis of focus groups with children and interviews with teachers.

Participating in the study appeared to benefit the children who were represented in the books. Both children and adults constructed that the children were able to make connections with the books which improved their engagement and motivation to read. There were also indications of benefits for children who were not represented in the books, as they had opportunities to learn about others. Teachers shared the belief that they benefited from the training offered as part of the study and from incorporating representative books into their teaching. Completion of a staff survey indicated an increase in their confidence in planning learning using diverse books, and through interviews, they indicated a desire to build on this change in their practice. Implications for schools are discussed along with the role of Educational Psychologists in undertaking participatory action research in schools.

Introduction

Representative Children's Books

Representation in children's books has had increasing attention in literary, media and social media discussions. Furthermore, researchers are studying how well books represent the children who read them. According to campaigners, books should be "mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors" (Sims Bishop, 1990) for their readers, reflecting their lived experiences or realities and giving the opportunity to see into realities different to their own. The common theme emerging from the research is that children from ethnic minorities are under-represented in children's books (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021; de Bruijn et al., 2020; Fang & Bi, 2018; Gomez-Najarro, 2020). The lack of equality in the publishing of representative books is a social justice issue (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013) and one which should be highlighted to increase awareness and to effect change, this study aims to be emancipatory and to effect change within the school which participates. The study also aims to take a positive stance by giving pupils in a primary school the opportunity to read books which represent them as part of the research project. This is in contrast to research which focuses on the negative impact of a lack of representation (e.g. Best et al, 2020, CLPE 2018, Gomez-Najarro, 2020).

In the UK, the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) have published research for the past four years which quantifies the extent to which children's books published in the UK contain characters from ethnic minority backgrounds (CLPE 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). CLPE's research indicates that the quantity of ethnic representation in recently published books is increasing year on year (CLPE, 2021), but there is still great disparity between the number of pupils of

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primary age from a minority ethnic background and the number of minority ethnic characters they may encounter in books. CLPE also state the need for representations within the books to be positive, authentic and not tokenistic (CLPE, 2018).

Also in the UK, the National Literacy Trust's annual literacy survey revealed that 40% of children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds did not see themselves represented in the books they read, this compared to 30.5% of children and young people from white British backgrounds (Best et al., 2020). Both the CLPE and National Literacy Trust surveys give an overall perspective, however, using quantitative methods does not fully capture the individual voices and experiences of the children and young people who are reading books in which they are or are not represented. Therefore, this study will utilise mixed methods, including inductive, reflexive thematic analysis of qualitative data gathered in focus groups and interviews in order to give a voice to children and young people in this area which is currently dominated by statistics and adult voices.

Representative Books and Belonging

Adult researchers and adults connected with the publishing industry have made claims about the effect of not being represented in children's books on the children who read them. Effects include "amputation of identities" and motivation to read (Gomez-Najarro, 2020, p.405), a sense of erasure (Lee, 2020) and messages of invisibility to the reader (Mpike, 2020). Malorie Blackman, children's laureate from 2013 to 2015, in an interview with Sky News said "I think there is a very significant message that goes out when you cannot see yourself at all in the books you are reading. I think it is saying "well you may be here, but do you really belong?" (Suchet, 2014). Links are therefore being made between representative children's

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books and a sense of belonging. Other academics have suggested that children's literature has a role in helping children to develop a sense of belonging (Meek, 2001) and to understand their place in the world (O'Sullivan & Immel, 2017).

Belonging is a psychological concept, defined as "the process of creating a sense of identification with, or connection to, cultures, people, place and material objects" (May, 2013). Included in Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs and seen as a key factor in human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), there has been much research into belonging. For children, research into belonging is generally within the context of schools. School belonging is defined as a student feeling that they are "personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others" within the school setting (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p.61). School belonging has been shown to be an important factor in academic achievement (Reynolds et al., 2017). However, students from ethnic minorities can experience less connectedness or belonging to school (Biag, 2016; Hernández et al., 2017; Walton & Cohen, 2011; Williams et al., 2020). Furthermore, theorists suggest that whiteness is dominant within the UK education system (Abdi, 2015; Gillborn et al., 2012), creating further barriers for children from ethnic minorities. It is important therefore to find interventions which can be employed to increase a sense of belonging for all students.

Lähdesmäki et al. (2016) explored the concept of belonging in a content analysis of 67 journal articles published in 2014. They found that belonging is being used in emancipatory research to tackle inequalities and exclusion. However, they stated that the role of the arts, including literature, was missing in the studies analysed, finding that none dealt with representations of belonging in the arts, including literature. This could be indicative that the role of literature in developing a sense of belonging needs further research, this includes representation in children's

literature on children's sense of belonging in a school context. If representative children's literature does have a role in developing a sense of belonging for children who are represented in texts (Meek, 2001; O'Sullivan & Immel, 2017), then implementing them in school may be a suitable intervention to increase a sense of school belonging. This research will study the impact that the intervention of implementing representative books in school has on the children who read them.

Multicultural Teaching Practices

Multicultural teaching practices may include positively addressing and valuing cultural diversity, along with promoting equality, for instance by condemning discrimination and prejudice. Research has found it can help students from ethnic minority backgrounds to feel more welcome in the classroom, promoting classroom identification and therefore belonging (Thijs et al., 2019). In order to address and value cultural diversity, the content of the school curriculum needs to be considered (Aldana & Byrd, 2015), cultural content should be integrated to promote ethnic-racial socialisation (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013).

Cultural content in the curriculum can include incorporating multicultural children's literature into teaching. Doing this has been found to improve children's understanding of racial diversity and equality (Evans, 2010; Glazier & Seo, 2005; Kim, 2016), to challenge stereotypes (Ginsberg & Glenn, 2019) and reduce prejudice (Cameron et al, 2006; 2007), these books are therefore beneficial to pupils from the majority culture (Glazier & Seo, 2005; Sims Bishop, 1990). They are also beneficial to the children whose lived experiences are represented in the books, they have been shown to improve motivation to read (Kirkland, 2011; Milner, 2020) and understanding of the texts (Christian & Bloome, 2004). Glazier and Seo (2005) utilised a case study design to study the impact of incorporating multicultural books

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in one 9th grade, American high school class. They found that students from minority backgrounds were enabled to make greater contributions in discussions and that students from the majority culture had greater respect and understanding of the minority cultures included in lessons. However, this was not a participatory design and was not emancipatory in nature, in that the methodology did not directly inform other teachers' practices as part of the study. Further research has given examples of how multicultural literature activities have been implemented in American schools (Bedard & Fuhrken, 2019; Louie, 2006), but lack the child's voice to hear about their experiences of reading representative books; furthermore there is a dearth of UK based research.

Children's experiences of multicultural education should also take into account their developmental stage and understanding of ethnicity. As this study includes children in years 2, 4 and 6, the understanding of ethnicity and race across the three age groups may be different, this may affect how they understand the content of and respond to the representative books used in their classes. Quintana (1994) has developed a model of children's understanding of ethnicity and race, proposing five developmental levels ranging from level 0: approximately ages 3 to 6 years, through to level 4: adults. Within the context of this study, levels 0 to 2 are relevant. Level 0 (3-6 years) is characterised by an awareness of race based on observable, biological features; level 1 (6-10 years) is characterised by a literal understanding of ethnicity; and level 2 (10-14 years) is characterised by a social perspective of ethnicity, including awareness of prejudice, bias and discrimination.

Role of Teachers

Teachers are gatekeepers to children accessing books which represent them in schools (Glazier & Seo, 2005; Louie, 2006; Milner, 2020). They are key to getting

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these diverse and representative texts incorporated into the curriculum (Kirkland, 2011; Taboada Barber & Lutz Klauda, 2020). However, the structures around schools, namely those in power over schools including the Department for Education, Ofsted, Multi Academy Trusts and exam boards also have a part to play in enabling or hindering teachers to incorporate multicultural and diverse texts in their teaching. In order for teachers to effectively include diverse literature in their classrooms they need to be introduced to diverse texts (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013), they also need to be specifically trained to teach literacy, including reading, to children who are culturally diverse from themselves (Blair, 2004; Clark, 2020; Evans, 2010). Teachers also need time to consider their own belief systems and any social stereotypes that are embedded despite a desire for social justice (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013). They will need to thoroughly think through any implications that may occur from including these books in their teaching. Consideration needs to be given to views of the school leadership team along with parental views (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013). Providing this time is likely to be more straightforward to arrange during initial teacher training, however, as more individuals involved in education consider issues of diversity in schools it could also be pertinent to allow time and space for qualified teachers to engage with up to date research and thinking in the areas of equity and social justice in relation to representation in children's books through opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) (Bainbridge & Brenna, 2013; Blair, 2004).

Role of Educational Psychologists

Educational Psychologists (EPs) are well placed to deliver CPD to teachers as training is one of the five core activities identified by the Scottish Executive in its review of Educational Psychology Service Provision (2017). EPs have been found to

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effect organisational change within school settings by working in collaboration with school staff (Forrest et al., 2019) and through using action research methodologies (Ackerley & Bunn, 2018; Douglas-Osborn, 2017). This study will therefore employ an action research methodology in order to offer teachers CPD in the area of representative children's books, supporting staff to implement these books in their classes allowing time for discussion and reflection before measuring the impact of the implementation of the books.

The Current Study

Drawing on the findings in the areas of diverse and representative children's literature, theories of belonging, the role of teachers in delivering a diverse curriculum in the UK and the role of EPs in delivering training to school staff, the present study is novel in a number of respects. Much of the literature around representation in books focuses on the lack of representation and the negative impact this has. In contrast, this study will take a positive stance, looking at the impact reading diverse and multicultural books which represent the children who read them, has on them. Furthermore, rather than taking a purely quantitative approach to studying diverse and multicultural children's literature in the UK, a mixed-method approach is taken, with quantitative measures of the impact the project on school staff and qualitative measures of the impact of the representative books. This is to allow the children who read the books and the staff who implement them to have a voice about the impact this has on them. In order for children to have access to these books in school, the role of teachers is acknowledged, therefore a Trainee Educational Psychologist used a participatory action research design to work with staff in a primary school to implement diverse and multicultural books within their classrooms.

Aims and Research Questions

The aims of this research are for staff in a primary school to increase their use of diverse and multicultural books which represent the children in their school by working with a Trainee Educational Psychologist. This increase will enable the gathering of staff and children's perspectives into the impact of the use of these books, particularly focusing on positive experiences of reading diverse and multicultural books and when representation does happen.

The research was shaped by three broad research questions:

1. What impact does representation in children's books have on the children who read them?
2. What perceptions and experiences do class teachers have in relation to representation in children's books?
3. What facilitates teachers in primary schools to increase their use of books with positive representations?

Methodology

Ontological and Epistemological Perspective

The ontological and epistemological position taken for this study is that of critical realism. With regard to ontology, critical realism acknowledges that there is a social and psychological reality which exists independently of the researcher and of those taking part in the research which can be observed through the process of the research (Willig, 2013). Although this is a positivistic ontology, the critical strand of critical realism is a post-modern standpoint and a resistance to the mainstream positivist, experimental approaches in psychology (Ibáñez, 1997). The epistemological position is therefore one of relativism which suggests that knowledge about the world can only ever be partial and incomplete.

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Critical realism therefore takes the view that there is a reality which can be observed, whilst acknowledging this reality has been shaped by numerous underlying structures e.g. social, cultural, ethnic, economic and political factors. These factors, in our “rule-governed social worlds” (Parker, 2014, p.27) are open systems: objects cannot be separated from the conditions they are bound up in. Consequently, with regard to a critical realist epistemology, the assumption is that the data generated through research is not a “direct reflection of what is going on in the world” (Willig, 2013, p.16), rather the underlying structures need to be understood in order to generate knowledge.

Critical realism is purported to be relevant to educational psychology because “individual, social and cultural entities are jointly activated in the production of events in education” (Booker, 2021, p.240). Booker posits that it is useful to examine entities which psychology has developed theories about, including a sense of belonging, from a critical realist perspective to allow the consideration of the multiple factors at play within each single entity.

Furthermore, Scotland (2012) suggests that the critical realist perspective is congruent with social justice issues; as an issue of equality, representation in children's books comes under this category. In the context of this research, the critical realist stance allows recognition of the complex underlying structures which underpin the current inequality in representation in children's books (CLPE, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021) along with the complex contexts (e.g. national directives from the Department for Education, Ofsted and exam boards, school priorities, individual professional development, cohort differences) which are at play within schools.

Design

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The methodology chosen for this study was one cycle of participatory action research. Action research, including educational action research, is emancipatory (Kinsler, 2010) and as such, it “takes action toward positive impact” (Bradbury, 2015, p.1) and can be closely linked to critical realism. Critical realism, in its emancipatory stance, aims to highlight areas of concern so that steps to effect change can be taken (Houston, 2014). In this study, the underlying mechanisms which appear to be obstructing the use of representative books in schools are targeted in order to promote their inclusion for the benefit of the children in the school. Within the remit of their own classes, teachers are the gatekeepers to implementing books with positive representation in schools: children need teachers to include these books in their classrooms and teaching in order to access them in their learning. In this way, the study is seeking social justice through emancipatory change within the school. To enable long-term changes, and therefore for the study to be truly emancipatory, the teachers need to be fully involved in the research rather than the research ‘being done’ to them (Lewin, 1947), participatory action research allows this (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015; McNiff, 2017). In this study, the teachers had the opportunity to be actively involved in shaping the research at all stages, they were therefore agents for change, aligning again with the critical realist perspective (Houston, 2014). Teacher workloads meant that full participation and co-construction of the study was not always possible for all staff members.

Pertinent to this study, action research has been used to good effect within education (McNiff, 2017), allowing teachers to examine their own practices rather than their practices being examined by an outsider researcher. Rather than separating research and action, as would be the case with an outsider researcher, action research is “in the midst of the action” (Torbert, 2000, p.255). The action

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research process typically takes a cyclical form of “observe – reflect – act – evaluate – modify – move in new direction” (McNiff, 2017, p.12), once the new direction is taken, the cycle can begin again. Torbert (2000) suggests that action research can be within individuals (first-person research), groups (second-person research) and organisations (third-person research). In this study, the cycle of action research, constitutes second-person research as a group of teachers were involved in the study alongside the researcher, albeit virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions. It is possible that the study could lead to further cycles of action research, at the third-person research level, in that the whole school or even the wider academy trust could build on the initial cycle at an organisational level, however, this study is focused on the first cycle only.

Participants

The research involved eight members of the teaching staff at a two-form entry primary school in a diverse area of the country which was keen to improve their use of books with positive representations. A senior teacher from within the school responded to an advert about the research project shared by the Director of Education within the local authority. The local authority which the school is in recorded 45% minority ethnic pupils in the 2015 school census, above the proportion of the general population from ethnic minorities that was recorded in the 2011 census (28.4%) (Office for National Statistics, 2011). The staff members consisted of three members of the senior leadership team and six class teachers from years 2, 4 and 6 (one class teacher was also a member of the senior leadership team). From the six classes, parental and child consent to take part in the research was obtained for 18 children to participate in the focus group discussions. Planning and contracting meetings were held with two senior teachers prior to the start of the

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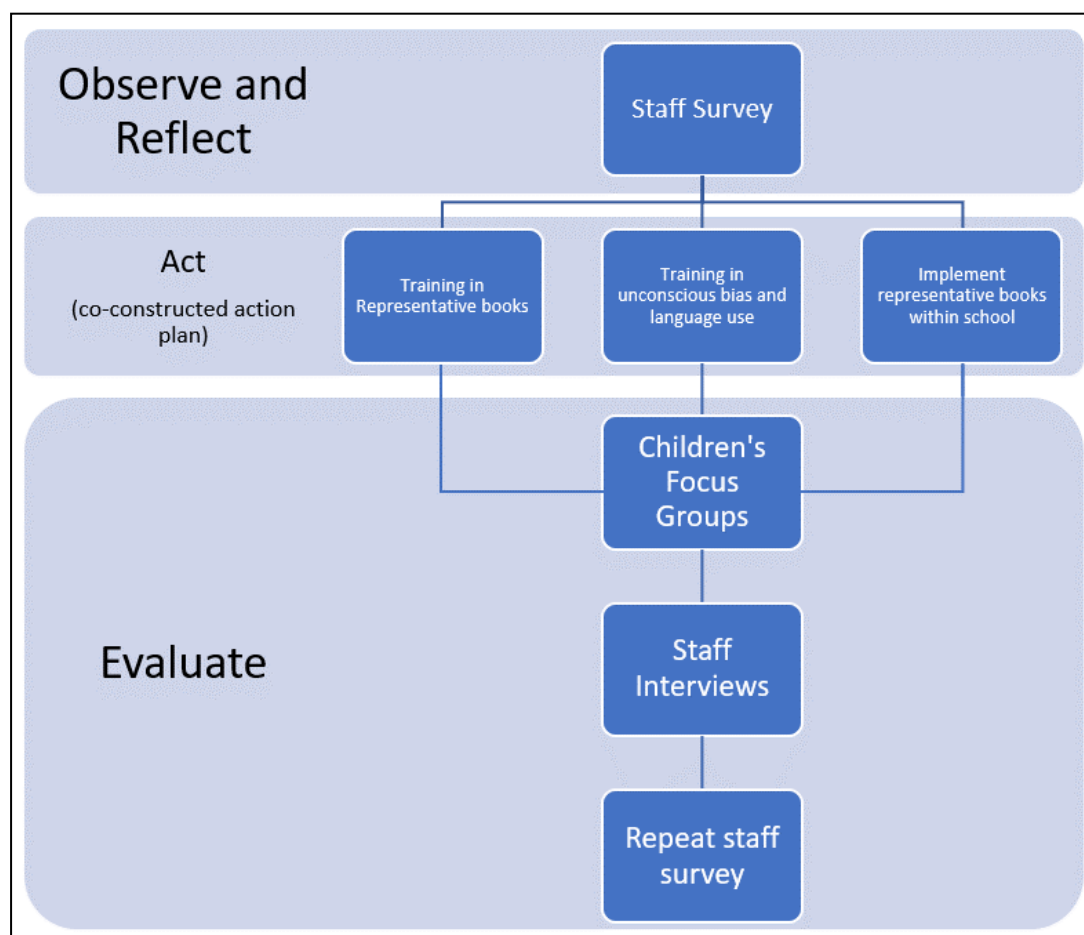
project to discuss the project and what it would mean for their school, teachers and pupils.

Procedure

The research constituted one cycle of action research (McNiff, 2017), following the stages of observe, reflect, act and evaluate. Figure 1 shows an overview of the procedure.

Figure 1

Overview of the Action Research Cycle



Observe

At the 'observe' stage, six of the eight teachers completed an anonymous survey to establish the current situation with regard to the attitudes of staff towards and their use of representative books in school (Appendix A), a heavy workload at the beginning of term prevented everyone from completing this initial survey. There were two types of questions within the survey, four questions related to teacher confidence, these were rated on a ten-point scale, and 19 further questions related to training, teaching and learning, these questions were rated on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). Questions for the staff survey were informed by questions identified by Verkuyten and Thijs (2013) in their studies measuring equality as part of multiculturalism in schools. Representation was taken at its widest sense and therefore could be ethnicity, disability or another area relevant to the children in their class.

Reflect

At the 'reflect' stage, the results of the initial survey were considered by all the participating staff members in a meeting with the researcher. Unfortunately, this meeting clashed with a school staff meeting, therefore next steps and the generation of the action plan (Table 2) were finalised in a meeting with two senior teachers and the researcher, this was then shared with all the teachers involved to ensure it reflected the discussion they had been part of. Representation was left at its widest sense, however, cultural and ethnic representation became evident as the area most pertinent to the school and this became the focus. The results of the survey showed that only two members of staff had received training related to representation in the curriculum and representation in children's books. All participating staff members were keen to have further training, it was therefore decided to include training for

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staff within the action plan (Table 2), the details of which were decided with two senior teachers . Similarly, only two members of staff used representative texts in their teaching, therefore supporting staff to increase their use of representative texts was also included in the action plan.

Table 2

Action Plan

What?	Why?	Who?
Training on representative children's books including time in the library to explore new books	CPD for teachers	Lead researcher to teachers in project
Implementation of representative children's books within school: Y2 – End of the day reader Y4 – Comprehension lessons and end of the day reader Y6 – Comprehension lessons	To increase children's exposure to representative texts in their learning	Teacher with English Lead's support
Training on language use, unconscious bias etc.	Increasing confidence for teachers	Lead researcher to teachers in project

Act

The actions were then implemented by the researcher and staff during the 'act' stage of the cycle. Two twilight training sessions were held for staff, led by the lead researcher, the first gave staff an introduction to representative children's books (Appendix J). Topics covered included what it means for a book to be representative, the psychology of belonging, understanding representation within the context of reading models and how it fits with latest government guidance for schools. Senior teachers requested that staff also had time in the school library to identify suitable texts to include in their planning. The second training session was on anti-racist practice, including key terminology such as race, ethnicity, culture, unconscious bias and white privilege (Appendix K), these topics came out of the discussion with all staff when discussing the results of the initial survey. Staff were strongly encouraged to attend both training sessions, however again due to heavy workloads and a busy staff training schedule, not everyone could attend. Seven staff members attended the first training session and four attended the second session.

Staff were also asked to include representative texts within their classes, the teachers selected books for their own classes which fitted in with their curriculum topics and represented at least some of their students. Teachers chose how and where to use the books within their classes. In year 2, two picture books were selected: *Lailah's Lunchbox* (Faruqi, 2015) and *The Proudest Blue* (Muhammad, 2020). These were planned to be used as stories to read at the end of the day, but were also used, where they linked, in RE lessons about Islamic practices. In year 4, *Stories of 20 Mighty Muslim Heroes* (Haque, 2021), was used to develop comprehension skills as part of the English curriculum over a two-week period. Additionally, *Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Missing Diamonds* (Sami, 2020) was

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read in one class as the class novel at the end of the day. In year 6, *The Night Diary* (Hiranandani, 2018) was used in English reading and comprehension lessons over a period of two weeks.

Evaluate

The final stage within the context of this study was to 'evaluate' the impact of these actions. This was done through focus group discussions held with pupils from all year groups involved and paired or individual interviews carried out with teachers who had taken part in the 'act' stage. These were all held on Microsoft Teams to comply with covid-19 restrictions. Eighteen children attended one focus group each, these were grouped by ages which meant that the children in each group had all read the same books. There were two focus groups held for children in year two, two focus groups for children in year four and one further focus group for children in year six. Children in the focus groups answered open-ended questions (Appendix B) and discussed their experiences related to the books used in their classes as part of the research project and their experience of representation in books in general. Six interviews were held with school staff, due to teacher availability, four of these were individual interviews and two were paired interviews. During the interviews, open-ended questions (Appendix C) were utilised in a semi-structures interview style to allow staff to share their experiences of using representative texts as part of the research project along with how they envisage their use of representative texts following the research project and their experiences of taking part in the participatory action research. Finally, a repetition of the initial, anonymous staff survey (Appendix D) was carried out to allow a comparison of scores from the beginning of the study.

It should be noted that through the project, the staff built professional relationships with the researcher; furthermore, as staff had been involved in all

aspects of the project and were aware of the aims of the research, they may have given answers in the interviews which were perceived to be desirable by the researcher or which were aligned to the aims of the project.

Analysis of Data

The analysis undertaken for the mixed-method design is congruent with the critical realist position of the research. From a critical realist position, the quantitative aspect of the study, namely the staff survey undertaken at the beginning and end of the project, provides a “surface depiction” (Modell, 2009, p.213) of the effects of the project, this is particularly true with a small sample size. However, using this information in triangulation with the reflexive thematic analysis of the participants’ constructions around representative books and the wider project allows the context around the survey results to be explored adding the critical element to the realist survey results.

The quantitative data was generated in staff surveys completed by the teachers involved in the study at the beginning (Appendix A) and end (Appendix D) of the project. Six teachers completed both surveys, with two teachers only completing the final survey due to a heavy workload at the beginning of term. The data was analysed using the mean scores obtained from the six teachers, to allow a comparison from both data points (see Appendix I). Due to such a small sample size no statistical tests of difference were used to analyse the data.

The focus group discussions with the children and interviews with staff were transcribed verbatim and analysed using inductive, reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022), reflexive thematic analysis was chosen as the analytic approach as it allowed for common themes to be identified from experiences of all the children and teachers participating in the study. Critical realism is reported as

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being a popular ontological and epistemological position to take for reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) because it offers a “contextualised version of realism” (p.169).

The six phases of reflexive thematic analysis undertaken were: familiarisation with the data; coding; generating initial themes; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining and naming themes; writing up. The researcher carried out the initial coding and shared the initial codes with the school staff to ensure that the initial coding was consistent with the views of the staff prior to the full analysis. Themes were developed by refining and grouping the initial codes and extracts selected from within these themes were analysed in relation to the themes.

By its nature, reflexive thematic analysis is a subjective process (Braun and Clarke, 2022), and as such will be influenced by the researcher's own thoughts, ideas and beliefs. Indeed taking a critical realist position to the research acknowledges that the researcher cannot stand outside the reality being observed as part of the research (Pilgrim, 2014). Braun and Clarke (2022) state “research within a qualitative paradigm *values* reflexivity, subjectivity, and indeed the contextual, partial and located nature of knowledge” (p.232). Furthermore, utilising Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase model in a systematic and rigorous way, additionally, by taking an inductive approach and seeking to understand what message the participants are giving and how they are presenting it (Watts, 2014) has enabled a consistent approach across the data.

Ethical Considerations

The study had full ethical approval from the University of East Anglia School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Committee (Appendix E). Furthermore, the study was carried out in accordance with the principles detailed

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in the Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2021). In order to inform the participants of the study prior to asking for consent, the lead researcher met with the teachers at the school via Microsoft Teams to explain the project and answer any questions, at the end of this, the teachers received an information sheet (Appendix F) and a link to the electronic consent form. Once the teachers had given consent, an information sheet (Appendix G) and link to electronic consent form was sent to parents of the children in the classes taking part via a letter from the school. Within the classes, a child-friendly PowerPoint explaining the research was shared with the children (Appendix H), if the children were interested in taking part, and if parental consent had been received then they completed the online consent form. Only children who had parental consent to be recorded, and gave consent themselves to be recorded, were included in the focus groups. At the start of the interviews and focus groups, the right to not answer questions, the right to withdraw and the right of anonymity was reiterated to all the participants, verbal consent to take part was gained before the interviews and focus groups commenced.

Data was handled and stored securely in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act (Information Commissioner's Office, 1998). Electronic data was stored on secure university servers and protected by passwords.

It was recognised that this study covered a potentially sensitive area and involved young children. When considering the need to protect the participants from harm, this was of particular concern for the children. The decision to undertake participatory action research for the topic was hoped to address some of these issues as the research was part of a longer-term implementation of change and staff in the school would therefore be able to support the children to minimise harm. This

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also meant that the project was undertaken within the bounds of the school safeguarding policies and procedures, along with the diversity policy, all designed to minimise the risk of harm to the children and young people.

It was also acknowledged that the adults involved may have had lived experiences which were touched on by the research, this was be acknowledged from the outset. With eight staff members participating, it was anticipated that adults would be able to offer each other peer support should it be needed. The lead researcher prepared information to be able to signpost to further agencies for support if it was needed. The school Staff Wellbeing policy also contained information on ways the staff members could be supported if needed.

Findings

Teacher Survey Results

In this section, the findings from the quantitative data will be explored. The staff surveys were analysed using mean scores for each question. Scores from the six teachers who completed both surveys were included to enable a comparison between the two data points. The results are discussed below in sections according to the different areas each section of the surveys addressed.

Teacher Confidence Ratings**Table 3*****Teacher Confidence Ratings***

Statement	Before	After	Change
How would you rate your confidence in planning learning which includes positive representations?	6.33	7.5	+1.17
How would you rate your confidence in planning learning which uses books which are representative of your class?	6.5	7.5	+1
How would you rate your confidence in talking about different cultures in the UK in lessons?	7	8.17	+1.17
How would you rate your confidence in talking about discrimination and racism during lessons?	7.17	7.67	+0.5

Note: The statements were rated on a ten-point scale (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)

Within the teacher confidence ratings, mean scores in all four statements have increased suggesting that teacher involvement in the research study has had a positive impact on their confidence in the areas covered by the questions.

Furthermore, it can be seen that the highest increase in mean confidence score was in the areas of planning learning including positive representations and in talking about different cultures in the UK within lessons.

Training, Teaching and Learning Ratings.**Table 4***Training*

Statement	Before	After	Change
I have had sufficient training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in the curriculum.	2.83	3.67	+0.84
I have had sufficient training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in children's books.	2.33	3.83	+1.5

Note: The statements were rated on a five point-Likert scale (strongly agree (score 5), agree (score 4), neutral (score 3), disagree (score 2), strongly disagree (score 1).

Within the area of training, it can be seen that the mean score increased in both statements, suggesting that the training received as part of the research study had a positive impact on the teachers. The greatest increase was with regard to training related to representation in children's books, indeed, this was the greatest increase in mean score across all five-point Likert scale questions in the survey. Furthermore, it should be noted that not all teachers were able to attend the training delivered as part of the project due to other school commitments and so this number could have been higher had more attended the training on offer.

Table 5*Planning and Teaching*

Statement	Before	After	Change
Attending to cultural differences in my planning is important	4	4.33	+0.33
I use books in my teaching which are representative of the children in my class	3	3.5	+0.5
It is important to me to use books which are representative of my class in lessons	4.17	4.5	+0.33

Note: The statements were rated on a five point-Likert scale (strongly agree (score 5), agree (score 4), neutral (score 3), disagree (score 2), strongly disagree (score 1)).

Within the area of planning and teaching there were small mean score increases across all statements, again suggesting that the research study had a positive impact on the teachers' planning and teaching, particularly using representative texts. In the second survey, the mean score for the statement 'It is important to me to use books which are representative of my class in lessons' was 4.5, this equates to three strongly agree and three agree responses. The difference in means between the importance of using representative books and the actual use of them is 1, suggesting that teachers are not using representative books as much as they feel it is important to do.

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Table 6

Resources

Statement	Before	After	Change
Fiction books in my classroom are representative of the children in my class.	2.33	2.5	+0.17
Non-fiction books in my classroom are representative of the children in my class.	2.33	2.67	+0.34
Poetry books in my classroom are representative of the children in my class	2.33	2.67	+0.34
Fiction books in the school library are representative of the children in our school	2.67	3	+0.33
Non-fiction books in the school library are representative of the children in our school	2.67	3	+0.33
Poetry books in the school library are representative of the children in our school.	2.5	2.67	+0.17
I have enough resources (books, puzzles, games, art materials) in my classroom to plan learning	2	2	0

Note: The statements were rated on a five point-Likert scale (strongly agree (score 5), agree (score 4), neutral (score 3), disagree (score 2), strongly disagree (score 1).

Within the area of resources, the scores were comparatively low, with a greatest mean score in this area of 3. There were small increases across all statements. This suggests that lack of resourcing or a perceived lack of resourcing within school may be impacting on the teachers' ability to use representative books in their planning and teaching.

Table 7*Teaching About Difference*

Statement	Before	After	Change
I talk about different cultures in the UK in lessons	4.33	4.17	-0.16
Children in my class spontaneously talk about different cultures in the UK in lessons	3.33	3.67	+0.34
Children in my class will participate in an adult directed discussion about different cultures in the UK in lessons	3.83	4.17	+0.34
Children in my class talk about different cultures in the UK at non-structured times (break/lunch).	3	3	0
It is important to me to teach about cultural differences in the UK	4.5	4.83	+0.33
It is important to me to teach about respecting other cultures.	5	5	0
I talk about discrimination and racism during lessons	4	3.67	-0.33

Note: The statements were rated on a five point-Likert scale (strongly agree (score 5), agree (score 4), neutral (score 3), disagree (score 2), strongly disagree (score 1).

Within the area of teaching about difference, there were small decreases in means for two statements regarding talking about different cultures in the UK in lessons and talking about discrimination and racism during lessons. Teaching about cultural differences and teaching about respecting other cultures had very high mean scores at 4.83 and 5 respectively, suggesting these are areas which teachers value the importance of within their teaching roles.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

In this section, the analysis of the qualitative data collection will be presented. The qualitative data was generated in focus groups with children and interviews with school staff and analysed using inductive, reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022). This process led to the development of three overarching themes which are detailed by five main themes (Table 8) each with a number of subthemes. Each overarching and main theme will be presented and detailed in turn, analysing extracts from each subtheme. These extracts are a purposive sample, chosen because each makes a “distinct and interesting” (Watts, 2014, p.7) contribution about the theme. The analysis provided for each extract aims to amplify the meanings within the extract and draw out what the extract adds to the particular theme it is part of. This has been done, with awareness of the position of the researcher in the process, by staying close to the data and seeking to understand the speakers' points of view, as such there will not be reference to theory or literature at this stage, this will be drawn together in the discussion section.

Table 8:

Summary of Overarching themes and themes

Overarching Theme 1: Impact of including representative texts in teaching	
Theme 1a: Representative texts are mirrors reflecting the experiences of those represented	Theme 1b: Representative texts are windows giving insight to others about the experiences of those represented
Overarching Theme 2: Future implications of including representative texts	
Theme 2a: Teachers value the use of representative texts in schools	Theme 2b: Barriers to teachers including representative texts in teaching
Overarching Theme 3: Reflections on the process	
Theme 3a: Teacher experiences of being part of the research project	

Overarching Theme 1: Impact of Including Representative Texts in Teaching

The overarching theme “impact of including representative texts in teaching” is expanded into two main themes, “representative texts are mirrors reflecting the experiences of those represented” and “representative texts are windows giving insights to others about the experiences of those represented”. These themes reflect on the use of representative books during the project and examine the impact they had for the children as evidenced by the views and experiences of the children and adults in the project.

Theme 1a: Representative Texts are Mirrors Reflecting the Experiences of those Represented. The theme “representative texts are mirrors reflecting the experiences of those represented” was developed from both the views and experiences of children and staff shared in the focus groups and interviews. The theme relates to children identifying features and activities in books as being reflective of their own lived experiences and the effect this has on them and their learning. It also highlights their awareness of when there is a lack of representation in their books.

Theme 1a has three sub-themes (Table 9) which will be explored in turn.

Table 9:

Summary of Theme 1a

Theme 1a: Representative texts are mirrors reflecting the experiences of those represented		
1a.i Making connections with representative texts	1a.ii Connections with representative texts improve learning experiences	1a.iii Children lack experience of representative texts as mirrors

1a.i. Making Connections with Representative Texts. The analysis of the data highlighted examples of positive experiences of using representative texts. These positive experiences were attributed to children making connections with the texts in some way, for example, this was evidenced in children being able to see images reflecting themselves and their lived experiences in the books. Furthermore, the children appeared to make connections when the written text contained references to objects or items within their own experiences, additionally hearing stories linked to their own culture was seen as positive.

Both the teachers and the children expressed the idea that seeing images within the books which related to their lived experiences was positive.

Researcher: *What do you think it was about it [the representative book] that really helped them to engage?*

Teacher 2: *I think it was an image of them, so it was them looking at pictures that had, like, a lady with a hijab on, ... you know they could relate to it, it's something they see every day when they go home.*

This teacher suggested that seeing representative images within books can have positive effects on the children who read them. She expressed the belief that the images within the book used in the project (*Stories of 20 Mighty Muslim Heroes*, Haque, 2021), were the feature of the book that made the difference for the children in helping them to engage in their learning. The teacher suggested that seeing images that reflect what they see when they are at home, for example a lady wearing hijab, makes the book easier to relate to, in this instance it was the images that appeared to allow the children to make a connection to the book. This perception could also imply that if the books that children read in school do not reflect what they

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see every day when they get home then they could be harder to relate to and could impact on their engagement in lessons.

Even the youngest children in the research project echoed this view:

Researcher: Do you know anyone that wears hijab?

Child 17: yeah, my Nanny and my Mum... I do too ... I wear it at my Mosque.

Researcher: Did you like reading a book where the character was wearing hijab?

Child 17: I think, because I wear a hijab too.

Researcher: Do you think it's important to see, um, characters in books that look like you?

Child 17: (nods) Because if they look like you then, then, it makes you happy.

Child 17 is in year 2, and therefore aged 6 or 7. She was able to articulate that she liked reading *The Proudest Blue* (Muhammad, 2020) because the characters in the book were wearing hijab and this is something that is very familiar to her as her Nanny and Mum, undoubtedly key people in her life, do and something that she herself does when attending Mosque. It appears then, that she may have been able to make a strong connection to the characters in the book. Making connections to the characters in the book may have led to the child expressing a preference for such texts reflecting that reading books where she can identify with the characters makes her happy.

Further to the idea that seeing representative images could help children to build connections with the texts they read, is that the written content of the book may

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also reflect children's life experiences allowing the possibility of further connections being made.

I think the children really enjoyed seeing books, 'cos we use picture books as well, I think they really enjoyed seeing those picture representations of themselves as well as hearing the stories that are linked more to their own culture, both books were focused on ... the Pakistani ... community. ... But I think they really enjoyed ... hearing about mosque reflected in the story or like it was, one of them was around the festival of Ramadan... And I think they just really enjoyed that. (Teacher 7).

Teacher 7, a year 2 teacher, reinforces the concept of representative images in picture books increasing the potential connection and therefore the possibility of increased enjoyment of books for the children who are represented in the images. However, she also goes further to note that the connection appears to be not just based on the images. She shared the belief that the books used in the research project focused on experiences that the children from a Pakistani community would be familiar with, namely going to mosque and the festival of Ramadan, this focus on familiar experiences is constructed as allowing the children to make a connection with the book, which she links to enjoyment of the book. It is interesting to note therefore that this extract would suggest that book illustrators including representative images in their illustrations only goes part way to allowing children to make connections with books, it could be perceived that the written text also needs to reflect their experiences to allow a deeper connection.

Children also appeared to feel this deeper connection with regard to familiar experiences included in the written text as highlighted here.

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It felt really nice because it's... Muslim characters, so, whatever they're doing in the book is basically what in our generation what we do and then how they cook and how they eat and everything. Little things. Good. (Child 3).

In this extract, child 3 constructs that more than just seeing the image of a Muslim character, the little things that the characters in *The Night Diary* (Hiranandani, 2018) appeared to create the connection. The characters in the book cooked and ate food which is familiar to child 3, in this sense it is not the main storyline that she appears to be making the connection with, it is the smaller, more nuanced characterisation in the book which enabled a potential connection and led to a positive view of the book being shared.

The enjoyment of books was also captured by teachers who noticed the reaction of their classes when reading books which included representation in the written text.

I absolutely melted when I was reading that to my class because of the pure excitement, joy, recognition, on many of my children's faces. (Teacher 1).

Teacher 1 is referring to the fiction book *Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Missing Diamonds* (Sami, 2020) where the main protagonist is a young Pakistani girl and the story is set at a pre-wedding Mehndi party. Teacher 1 appeared to experience an emotional response when reading this story to her class because of her perception of the connection that many of the children appeared to be making to the written text. There are very few pictures in the book, therefore the connection was likely to be made with the written word, the description of clothing, food and events which are familiar to the children. In a similar way to child 3 in the previous extract, these more nuanced features of the book are likely to have enabled the connection; it was not that the story was about a Mehndi party, the story happened

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to be set at a Mehndi party. These features are constructed as prompting pure excitement, joy, and recognition for the children at making a connection with the characters in a book.

The belief that making connections with the books generated a positive response from the children who were represented was constructed by teacher 2.

I think the positive was um, just the response we got from the children. Like, I know from my class, ... I got a really positive response because ... it was about them. (Teacher 2).

Teacher 2 attributes this positive response to the apparent connection they felt to the book, because they appeared to be able to see themselves and their experiences reflected in the book: the book 'was about them'. This sense of connection to the book, of the book being about them was echoed by child 2.

It felt that we were put in the book, because we're really just, just there with... like... nobody talks about anything about Pakistan ... and then when we read the book there was loads of things about Pakistan and India. (Child 2).

Child 2 shared the belief that her lived experiences were reflected in the daily lives of the characters in the books, this suggests a connection with the book to the extent that she 'felt that we were put in the book'. Furthermore, she constructed 'nobody talks about anything about Pakistan' suggesting that this connection she felt to the characters in the book was not a familiar experience.

The qualitative data suggests that making connections with books through children seeing images and reading about life experiences which appear to reflect their own lives is constructed by children and teachers as being important to the children. This construction also appears to increase their enjoyment of books, creating positive reading experiences for the children and for school staff.

1a.ii. Connections with Representative Texts Improve Learning

Experiences. The previous subtheme indicated that making a connection to a book by using a representative text could improve a child's enjoyment of books and reading. In this subtheme, the potential effect that making connections with representative texts has on learning experiences will be detailed. Teachers shared beliefs of improved engagement in learning and greater understanding when using representative texts, leading them to construct value in using representative texts to aid children in their learning.

Teachers shared beliefs of a difference in learning behaviours during the period of time they were using representative texts, as part of the research project.

For me, it's just seeing the children really engaging in, in the book, um and just for those sort of week, two weeks where we were doing it, just to see that, the enthusiasm, the engagement, the curiosity. It was a really good period.
(Teacher 4)

In this extract, teacher 4 describes the short period of time that a representative text was used in class. It is suggested that the particular text choice for that two-week period made a difference to the children's engagement in the reading lessons. It appears that making a connection with a text promoted positive learning behaviours of enthusiasm, engagement and curiosity. The suggestion that 'it was a really good period' indicates that there was a difference to other times when less representative texts are used; that in those two weeks teachers perceived behaviours which would be desirable at all times but are currently not always seen.

The experience of teacher 4 was not unique as can be seen in the following extract:

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I feel like the children that could relate to the text were more like, keen to get on with the work, whereas sometimes you have to kind-of really be like okay, you know, you need to get on with your task now. (Teacher 2).

Teacher 2 suggests that the children who appeared to make a connection to the text were perceived to have improved learning behaviours for those lessons. The teacher shared the belief that children who had made that connection appeared more motivated to carry out the learning activities related to the text. The extract indicates that the teacher believed the representative texts made the difference to this increased motivation; the teacher contrasts the children's learning behaviour to other times when they have to be prompted to carry out their learning tasks. This perception could imply that if schools are looking for ways to improve engagement in the curriculum and to increase self-motivation, then using representative texts is potentially a way of doing this for those who are represented.

Further to improving engagement in learning, teachers also shared the belief that the children's understanding also increased when using representative texts.

I think they could talk, bring in things from their own lives their own personal experiences. Like, we were doing making connections at the time, um, and also inference, but the sort of making connections they found really easy to do because you know it was their history and they experience similar things within their families and then with their relatives and things. (Teacher 4).

This extract suggests that the connection that children appeared to experience with a representative text, the mirroring of activities, food and lived experiences may have enabled the children to engage with their learning in a more meaningful way. Further to this, it was also constructed that it was easy to make connections to the learning content and associated activities. It is suggested that

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because the representative text appeared to mirror their own lived experiences and because it was about 'their history', the children were perceived to engage in a different way: they appeared to draw on their own personal experiences from their own lives to engage with and contribute to the lessons.

Further teachers also constructed a difference in engagement and contributions to lessons when using representative texts.

I think that it's a valuable ... thing to put some effort into and to ... do, because, ... you really do see a different engagement in the children, it does bring out ... definitely some of the discussion sides that wouldn't happen if you were trying to do that through a lesson, maybe, a different lesson without a story. (Teacher 7).

Teacher 7 shared a belief in the value of using representative texts in school due to the perceived improved engagement she experienced with her class. In this class, representative texts were used at the end of the day and were brought into Religious Education (RE) lessons about Islam. The extract suggests that using representative texts in RE appeared to enable the children who were represented to engage and contribute to the lessons in a way that was perceived to be different to the engagement that would be expected if the same content was taught without a representative book. Therefore, the connection the children appeared to experience with the representative text was constructed as being key to enhancing the discussions held in class.

Teachers can be perceived as gatekeepers to children accessing representative texts in their lessons, their text choices that can make the difference.

It makes you wonder what sort of world their education is for them at the moment where there is so much of the language and culture is a barrier, so

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many things are confusing that they're almost in this state of, 'well everything is confusing so I generally don't understand anything anyway'. But as soon as they've got a connection, like a character in a book or a situation in a book or an interaction in a book or a text ... you can start to see that they've got something to hold on to or something to pin an idea on, or they can say 'I felt like that too, when this happened' or 'I can understand that 'cos when my Dad did this...'. (Teacher 5).

Teacher 5 explores the struggle that she perceives some children can experience in trying to access the learning offered at school. She shares the belief that children from ethnic minorities, in particular, are expected to navigate language and cultural barriers to access the current curriculum leading to a sense of confusion. She goes on to suggest that using a representative text, where the child can potentially make a connection because the text mirrors a familiar object, activity or lived experience gives them 'something to pin an idea on'. This has the potential to open the door to the teaching and learning opportunities, this is constructed as allowing them to access the curriculum in a way that is not possible when the barriers to learning are so great. This perception could imply that if teachers choose to make changes to use representative texts with their classes they are potentially offering the children the chance to make those connections, to understand and to learn.

1a.iii. Children Lack Experience of Representative Texts as Mirrors. This subtheme was developed using the data generated in both the interviews with teachers and the focus groups held with the children. The previous two subthemes were based on the experiences of the children who appeared to see their lived experiences reflected in books during the research project. However, this subtheme

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suggests that this is not a common experience for the children and explores their constructions about the lack of representative texts available to them.

Children were able to construct a distinction between the experience they had as part of the research project and their day-to-day experience of books:

Normally I don't find characters that are like me in books. (Child 12).

Child 12 is in year 4 and shared the belief that he does not normally experience books as mirrors, where the characters are like him. This belief was echoed by other children:

Researcher: How often do you open a book and find a picture of somebody that looks like you?

Child 8: I never

Child 10: It's usually not like me, but sometimes when I go out for a walk or drive I look at some people and sometimes uh, the pictures in the books sometimes look a bit like them.

Researcher: But do you ever find books that look like you?

Child 10: No

Child 8 is in year 2 and child 10 is in year 4, they both suggested that they do not see pictures of characters in books who look like them. In this sense the books they read do not appear to be mirrors in which they can see themselves reflected in the illustrations. Although these younger children could share the belief that they couldn't see themselves in the books they were unable to discuss any implications of this.

However, children in year 6 were able to construct their feelings about the lack of representation in children's books:

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Researcher: Do you find that there are characters like you and your friends in the books that you read?

Child 3: Not really

Researcher: Do you think that it matters?

Child 3: It does. ... It's not fair for the children who are Muslims or Hindus because ..., their religion never, or culture, or whatever it is, they don't ever get to be in a book and I think it's really important for them to be in a book.

Child 3, in a similar manner to the younger children, was able to share the belief that she does not see herself reflected in the characters in the books she reads. However, unlike the younger children she was able to consider the potential implications of this, in particular, a perceived injustice within the publishing industry. Having read *The Night Diary* (Hiranandani, 2018) in school, which does contain Muslim and Hindu characters, Child 3 was able to reflect and share the belief that her experience of such books is rare. Having had the experience of reading a book which did mirror her own life experiences, Child 3 advocates this experience constructing it as being 'really important' for all Muslim and Hindu children.

The feelings associated with a lack of representation in books were also discussed, again by children in year 6:

Researcher: How do you think it would be if you never found a child that was like you in the books that you read?

Child 4: It could be sad 'cos um, 'cos it's only talking about like, the, different people in the book except Pakistani and that could make people feel sad.

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Child 4, although not a child with Pakistani heritage himself, could recognise that not having your own culture represented in the books you read could have an impact on the readers. This extract suggests that not experiencing a book as a mirror, reflecting their own lived experiences could make people feel sad. This is a further example of the importance that the children themselves constructed on books being representative.

It also became evident that it was not just in the focus group that the children were discussing the lack of representation in books:

The thing that surprised me was ... some of the children were talking about .. the lack of their representation. ... They were actually vocalising that ... there weren't many books where they ... had characters which looked like them. ... I was surprised to actually hear. (Teacher 4).

This extract suggests that in using representative books in school, children appeared able to discuss representation in books and share the belief of a lack of representation that they have experienced thus far in their lives. Children vocalising their views in class in this way was constructed as being a surprise to the teacher.

Theme 1b: Representative Texts are Windows Giving Insight to Others about the Experiences of those Represented. The theme of “representative texts are windows giving insight to others about the experiences of those represented” was developed through analysis of the views shared during the children’s focus groups and the staff interviews. The theme relates to the opportunities that representative texts could provide for those represented to share their lived experiences for others to learn from. The theme also suggests how use of representative texts in educating others about difference may help to build respect and reduce prejudice and discrimination.

Theme 1b has three sub-themes (Table 10) which will be explored in turn.

Table 10

Summary of Theme 1b

Theme 1b: Representative texts are windows giving insight to others about the experiences of those represented		
1b.i Representative texts give the opportunity for those represented to share their own experiences	1b.ii Representative texts give information to those outside of a particular representation	1b.iii Representative texts help to build respect and reduce discrimination

1b.i. Representative Texts Give the Opportunity for Those Represented to Share Their Own Experiences. The reflexive thematic analysis of the qualitative data identified examples from staff of times when children have been perceived to have shared their own lived experiences in response to reading a text in which they are represented. This sharing of experiences has been constructed to have had different effects such as the child who experiences representation having the role of expert within the classroom, raising their self-esteem and having increased confidence to share in class. Furthermore, staff shared the belief that they are becoming more aware of different aspects of children's lives which may benefit from being shared in a representative text.

Sharing a text which was representative of Muslim children in the class, was perceived to enable those being represented to participate more fully in paired discussions:

Certainly, they at least had some experience of those Muslim texts and the vocabulary within them, the mosques, the um, various items of clothing, etcetera, so some of my children knew a bit more which I suppose did allow

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them to be a little more expert and so collaborating with a talk partner, particularly one from a different cultural background, meant that some children had the opportunity to shine where they might not previously have had, so I think self-esteem for some children may have risen slightly and the fact that it felt a bit more relevant I suppose, they already had some prior knowledge.

(Teacher 1):

This extract suggests that the children who appeared to see aspects of their lives mirrored in the text were perceived to be empowered to share their experiences with others. Teacher 1 shared the belief that hearing vocabulary and concepts linked to their own religion, including that related to religious buildings and familiar clothing increased the relevance of the text to them as well as giving them the role of expert and the opportunity to shine within their partnered work. It is implied that this may be an experience which is unfamiliar to them as they may be more accustomed to having to try and understand the experiences of others in order to understand a text. Furthermore, this perception could imply that reading a book which appears to reflect their own life experiences, may allow the children to experience higher self-esteem and are therefore perceived to be more likely to share their own thoughts and ideas.

In year 2, the representative books chosen for the project were planned to be read to the children at the end of the day. However, they were also drawn into RE lessons where the teachers constructed that reading books which included children wearing hijab and celebrating Ramadan were perceived to open up the discussions in class:

I think it was just really nice to see those children, ... they'll go to mosque and when we did that they'll say oh yeah, I go to mosque it looks like this, and

some of them ... were very shy but then when we started talking they were like oh, we don't do it because we're still children but my Mum or my sisters do this and this is what happens and yeah I think it just made them just that little bit more confident to share maybe, what they do and what they experience themselves.

Where sometimes in RE you don't get that, they'll just be like 'okay, yeah, she's taught me it, she's given me the knowledge, move on'. Where actually with it coming from the book and other children then chipping in, they were like wanting to know more, like 'do you, ooh, what do you wear, what do you buy and what food do you eat after', because it talks about some special food, 'and what's your...', like, it just brought about a nicer more natural conversation I think. (Teacher 7)

Teacher 7 constructs a comparison between teaching about Islam in RE with and without representative texts. She describes the teaching of RE without representative texts as a didactic teaching experience where she perceives that she 'gives' knowledge to the children for them to receive. In this style of lessons, even children who are Muslim, go to mosque and have those lived experiences are constructed as being reluctant to share those experiences in class and remaining very shy. This is contrasted with using representative texts in RE lessons which is perceived to have opened the door to the children being confident to share their lived experiences. The teacher shared the belief that children could explain to others about what they and their family do, adding information about practices at different ages. This is constructed as facilitating a more natural conversation where children who were represented in the text could share their experiences. These extracts

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suggest that the use of representative texts, where the children represented appeared to see aspects of themselves mirrored in the text, was perceived to give them the opportunity to allow others to view their experiences in a way that did not happen when the same information was presented without the use of representative texts. Furthermore, this also appeared to have an impact on those who were not represented whose interest seemed to be piqued by hearing about the lived experiences of their classmates. This is explored further in sub-theme 1b.ii.

Although the texts that were chosen as part of the research project focused on cultural and ethnic representation, teachers shared the belief that children have other aspects of their lives that may benefit from being represented in texts, allowing them to share their experiences.

It's not just about cultural ... either it's um dealing with topics like agoraphobia and things like that, more challenging topics that our children can actually cope with because they experience those things anyway and it's a, an opportunity for them to be, in some senses normalised, but in other senses ... that opportunity to talk about it openly with other people. (Teacher 5).

In this extract, teacher 5 shares the belief that representation is wider than just cultural representation. The extract indicates that teachers might avoid selecting books which cover challenging topics in a bid to protect the children they are teaching. However, the teacher notes that children may have lived experiences of these topics and therefore may benefit from seeing these lived experiences reflected in the books they read. The potential benefits of representative books identified by staff as part of the study, e.g. raised self-esteem, raised confidence to share lived experiences, the opportunities to take on the role of expert within the classroom, are constructed as being potential benefits to these children too. This perception could

imply that by sharing their own experiences, children who are represented in a text, in whatever form that representation takes, may enable other children, who are not represented, to learn about them.

1b.ii. Representative Texts Give Information to Those Outside of a Particular Representation. Analysis of the qualitative data suggested that teachers and children constructed experiences of representative texts giving information to both children and adults. These experiences were viewed as aiding understanding of cultural differences, learning about different cultural practices, increasing respect and opening respectful conversations.

The children who took part in the focus groups were able to share their beliefs about their interest in learning about others through representative books:

I liked the book because it tells you about ... the different things ... that

Pakistan and India people do... and I found the book very interesting. (Child 4).

Because Lailah was fasting and I haven't even heard that word or thought about it, not even once. (Child 5).

Neither of these children were represented in the books that were used in their classes, however, they both shared the idea that the books allowed them to learn about others. Child 4 is in a class which has a lot of children of Pakistani and Indian heritage so to learn about their history, culture and practices may have been relevant to him in that he could learn more about his classmates. Child 5 is in year 2 and in reading *Lailah's Lunchbox* (Faruqi, 2015) he encountered the practice of fasting, something which he shared as being completely new to him. He appeared to be engaged in learning about fasting through the book which is likely to have

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extended his knowledge of Islam and of fasting. In learning about fasting at this early age, it is possible to imagine that he will have a greater understanding of others who he encounters in the future who practice fasting.

Teachers shared the belief that using representative books to teach those outside of the representation was a positive way to teach about difference.

I do think it's nice not only for the children themselves of that representation but for others to maybe understand where they're coming from and why they maybe sometimes come across as how they are. (Teacher 7).

The lunchbox one ... helped other children understand ... what fasting was, you know, why some children wore hijabs and things like that. So, it allowed them, I suppose to connect in that way and although they accept it, ... if someone wears a hijab they don't, they don't think twice about it, they just think 'yeah, yeah, yeah, oh that person'. But it allowed them to have a little bit more understanding and ... begin to ask those questions that they might have, or ... hadn't realised that they did have and I suppose opens the floor for those kinds of conversations, ... in a positive way rather than ... 'oh you can't ask about that, no, no', ... it allowed those conversations to happen where they might not have. (Teacher 3)

The use of representative books appeared to enable children outside of the representation to learn about practices such as fasting, clothing such as hijabs and to potentially have greater understanding of cultural differences seen through different attitudes and behaviour. Teacher 3 shared the belief that children in the school are generally accepting of each other's differences, in that they don't think twice about it, however, it is suggested they do not necessarily have a good

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understanding of those differences. This perception could imply that accepting difference at a surface level, i.e. accepting that another child wears hijab without questioning why they do, or what significance it holds for them may deny the level of understanding and connection that is possible if those conversations are had. Representative books have been constructed as allowing the children to learn about difference and are perceived to have encouraged children outside of the representation to ask questions about difference, potentially enabling a greater connection between the children.

Further to using representative books to potentially enable children to learn about difference, they were also constructed as giving opportunities for teachers to learn too.

There's some parts where I was like 'oh my goodness, I didn't know that about...' so, um, I suppose the, some of the cultural differences that some of us weren't aware of within our books. (Teacher 3).

This extract suggests that teachers, who may be perceived as generally being used to having knowledge about the topics they are teaching, came across content within the representative books that was constructed as being new to them. The representative books therefore potentially gave the opportunity for teachers as well as children to learn about the cultural differences pertinent to their school.

As well as learning about difference pertinent to the relationships within a school, teachers also shared the belief that representative books are important where schools are less diverse in helping children to learn about difference:

Where the children are mainly white British and the texts that they are reading are mainly based around white British families and characters and heroes and heroines ... I think it's, it's definitely an area that we need to develop in terms

of widening those children's world and widening those children's understanding of life beyond [location]. (Teacher 5).

Teacher 5, in this extract, suggests that representative books could be a window for children who live in mainly white British areas or who attend majority white British schools, potentially allowing those children to learn about difference through the books. The extract shares the belief that their world view may be narrow through lack of exposure to characters other than those that mirror their own experiences. It appears then, that the use of and exposure to representative texts has the potential to widen children's world views and support their learning around difference.

1b.iii. Representative Texts Help to Build Respect and Reduce Discrimination. This subtheme was developed using the data generated by both the children's focus groups and the staff interviews. Building on the previous subtheme that representative texts can be windows that are used to educate about difference, this idea was extended to suggest that in being educated about difference, prejudice and discrimination could be reduced through the inclusion of representative texts in school.

Teachers shared the belief that they have a role to play in educating the children in their care for life beyond school, suggesting that there is a legacy to the work they do now:

When they go out to the working world, they're going to meet other cultures and other religions and you know they're going to meet all sorts of people, so they should be able to relate to them. ... The reason why I feel like them two children said 'oh, we don't want to learn about Muslims' is because they're not used to it, they weren't used to learning about it, they're just used to learning

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about white British people ... I think it's really important, it doesn't matter what school you go to. (Teacher 2).

Teacher 2 reflected on the curriculum currently on offer, suggesting that it is centred on white British people and experiences. She shares the belief that the curriculum is therefore restricting the opportunities for these children to learn about difference. Furthermore, she suggests that if children are not used to learning about different cultures and religions then they may be resistant to these learning experiences when they are offered, reducing the impact that they could have. However, she constructs that learning about different cultures and religions, including through diverse books, gives children the opportunity to learn about and ultimately relate to people of other cultures and religions. The potential is that in relating to people of different cultures and religions, prejudice and discrimination could be reduced. This is constructed as preparing them for when they enter the working world and enabling them to find commonality when they encounter people from other cultures.

Older children who took part in the focus group also referred to the issue of prejudice and were able to share beliefs of how the use of books which represent them could help to reduce prejudice and discrimination:

Child 3: Some people actually like call Muslims ... names that we don't like.

Researcher: So how do you think books like The Night Diary would help with that

Child 3: It would um, help other people like, people who are non-Muslims, or non-Hindus or something, like that. It will tell them um... like the why you shouldn't be calling that, why um, why

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we do things that they don't do and like how we do it and like not calling out others names.

In this extract, child 3 raises the issue of racism, stating that Muslims can be subjected to name-calling, she recognises this as offensive, as something that Muslims 'don't like'. She goes on to share the belief that reading diverse books could educate others on Islamic practices that non-Muslims may be unaware of, enabling the sharing of why and how they practice their religion. As such, she is constructing that diverse books can be windows for others to be able to see what it means to be a Muslim. She suggests that reading diverse books could also educate others as to why they shouldn't subject Muslims to racist name-calling. Therefore, suggesting that diverse books have the potential power to challenge racism by educating others.

The use of representative texts was also constructed as allowing the children to notice similarities where there had been perceived differences between cultures:

I think for a lot of them, as well, it gave them an appreciation of, ... because there is such a fractious relationship between them ... it did give them a little bit of ... actually, we're not that different. So, that was quite nice. (Teacher 3).

Prejudice and discrimination can be based on perceptions of difference which are unfounded. In this extract, teacher 3 shares the belief that reading *The Night Diary* (Hiranandani, 2018), not only gave children who were not represented in the book information, it was also a window to children of Pakistani and Indian heritage which appeared to allow them to identify similarities between cultures. Identifying similarities could potentially enable the increase of respect between cultures and a reduction in prejudice and/or discrimination.

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Differences other than racial or cultural differences were again constructed by teachers as being important to represent in books:

I've read George to both my year 6 classes that I've had and I've had children say, when we started reading the book, they were so honest about what they thought. They, one child was like 'I don't like George's character because they are transgender', that was where one child started, okay. By the end of the book, I came back to that point and I was like 'do you still think that or have you changed your mind?' and he was like 'I have learnt so much through this book and I have completely changed what I think about them'. (Teacher 6).

George is a book where the main character is transgender, teacher 6 in this extract recounts an experience where a child's opinion about people who are transgender appears to be completely changed by reading the book. This perception suggests that in using a representative book as a window to allow children to see and explore difference, attitudes and prejudices may be altered.

Teachers could be seen to have opportunities to make choices within their teaching, including to use diverse books, which might challenge prejudice.

It's just making sure that we as teachers ... are upskilling ourselves in those areas too, that ... aren't necessarily on the National Curriculum, but that our children do need to hear about because if they don't hear about them here, they're only going to be building up and building up prejudices from their parents or from, you know, the wrong places. (Teacher 3).

This extract shares teacher 3's belief of the importance of the role that schools have in addressing prejudices that children may pick up from home or other places. Teacher 3 suggests that this role is above and beyond what is already provided

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when following the National Curriculum and the skill set of teaching staff. As such, she constructs that staff need to go beyond the National Curriculum and upskill themselves in order to equip the children with impartial, unbiased views. As has been shown in this theme, diverse books have the potential to be a way to open up discussions about difference and to allow children to learn about others by looking through the windows they potentially provide.

Overarching Theme 2: Future Implications of Including Representative Texts

The overarching theme “future implications of including representative texts” is expanded into two main themes, “teacher views of representation in schools” and “barriers to teachers including representative texts in teaching”. These themes detail the views of the staff following the research project and describe how the experiences gained in the project could impact on future practice as well as the limitations which are suggested to make implementing the representative books a challenge.

Theme 2a: Teachers Value the Use of Representative Texts in Schools.

The main theme “teachers value the use of representative texts in schools” was identified in the views and experiences of the teachers taking part in the research project. It builds on the experiences they had during the project as explored in the previous overarching theme. Based on their experiences using diverse and representative texts, teachers reflected on how the research project might influence their practice in the future and what further considerations could be made within the wider school setting.

Theme 2a has three sub-themes (Table 11) which will be explored in turn.

Table 11*Summary of Theme 2a*

Theme 2a: Teachers value the use of representative texts in schools		
2a.i Representative texts are a resource which should be incorporated in teaching	2a.ii Representative texts are a resource other teachers should use	2a.iii Diversity in the wider curriculum needs further consideration

2a.i. Representative Texts are a Resource Which Should be Incorporated into Teaching. This subtheme was developed using the data from the interviews with staff following the use of representative texts. Teachers reflected on their experiences during the research project and looked to the future, detailing what the use of diverse and representative texts might look like following involvement in the research project.

Teachers reflected on the necessity of children seeing their lived experiences mirrored in the books that they encounter in school:

It is need, our children need to see that representation, but it's not a physical or an educational need... it's the unspoken need, it's the need that we should know about as teachers. (Teacher 5).

This extract constructs the role of teachers in implementing representative texts in their teaching. Teachers can be seen to have an established and recognised role to fulfil in meeting the educational needs of the children in their care: teaching and learning is the bread and butter of school life. The physical needs of children are also fulfilled by the school, through their safeguarding role, through providing nutrition and through the promotion of healthy living. However, teacher 5 suggests that there is a further role for school staff in meeting the 'unspoken need' of the

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children, namely the opportunity to experience representative books as mirrors reflecting their lived experiences. Constructing the use of representative texts as an 'unspoken need' suggests that it is not something that is widely known about or recognised within the school currently, but something that is as important to meet as the educational and physical needs which are recognised and met.

The role of teachers in their text choices was also evident within the data:

I think, um, thinking more specifically about the choices we are making for the children and thinking from the children's point of view in terms of how are they going to connect to the text that we are choosing, and not just thinking from a, you know, oh this will fit with this theme, but actually how will it make the children feel and how will this impact on their actual love of reading and their connection with books. ... Moving forward teachers have had more consideration about those books, um, thinking, ... 'yes I need to make links to theme but can I also, sort of, squeeze one in there that does have a bit more ... representation of my class'. (Teacher 3).

This extract constructs the role of teachers as gatekeepers to the use of diverse and representative texts in school. The perception implies that it is the choices of the teachers that affect the implementation of representative books. Teachers are currently choosing texts that fit with the established curriculum, fitting with the theme to deliver the curriculum content that is required. However, it is suggested that taking a different view on the text choices and considering the children's needs affects which books are chosen. Furthermore, the teacher shares the belief that the children's connection to a text, how it will make them feel needs to be considered alongside the necessities of the curriculum. It is also constructed that teachers' choices ultimately affect children's love of reading and therefore

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incorporating representative texts should be an active choice that teachers make.

The potential impact of the research is also evidenced: teachers involved in the project appear to have already increased their consideration of text choices outside of those chosen in the research project to include books which have greater representation of their classes.

Teacher 2 reflected on the use of diverse books specifically within the setting of their school:

I'd definitely want to encourage more ... diverse books being used and I think we need to do it a little bit more seriously than we have been doing at [school]. Because I think [school] is a school that could really benefit from it because we've got ... so many different cultures. (Teacher 2).

Reflecting on the cultural make-up of the school, teacher 2 suggests that the use of diverse books is particularly important to be taken seriously in their school. The school have a culturally diverse population, and therefore the implication is that there are many children who are not currently represented in the current text choices made by the teachers. Having taken part in the research project, teacher 2 shares the belief that she can see the benefit of using diverse texts and is ready to encourage their use more widely.

Further to teachers choosing diverse and representative texts, there was also a vision shared for the children:

It's like the love of reading isn't it ... I would love for them to just see a book on a shelf you know 'oh my gosh, that look likes me' or 'oh my gosh, that looks like my friend, I want to learn about it'. (Teacher 6)

Teacher 6 constructs a vision of the future where children in the school can have their love of reading nurtured through representative books. She shares the

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belief that making diverse and representative books available to the children would allow them to recognise something of themselves or their friends on the front covers, be drawn to the books and have a desire to read it and learn from it. The antithesis of this is not seeing themselves or their friends represented on the front covers, not being drawn to the books and not wanting to learn about it. The inclusion of diverse and representative texts on the school's bookshelves is constructed as a positive development which has the potential to have a real and discernible impact on the pupils.

2a.ii. Representative Texts are a Resource Which Other Teachers Should

Use. This subtheme was also developed using the data from the teacher interviews, it is linked to the previous subtheme of the importance of using diverse and representative texts within school. This subtheme builds on that importance and suggests that other teachers should also incorporate diverse and representative texts in their work.

Teachers were keen to share their experiences of being part of the research project, and of using representative books with others.

I think we've got the first-hand experience now of the impact that it's had, so, it would definitely be to encourage others, maybe showing some of the work and you know, the difference it had made. (Teacher 4).

In this extract, it appears that teacher 4 recognises the importance of experiencing an initiative in order to understand and become fully committed to it. Having first-hand experience of the impact seen in the research project is constructed as providing the teachers who were involved with anecdotes and examples of where using representative texts appears to have made a difference to the children's work. Teacher 4 shares the belief that using these anecdotes and

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examples, including examples of the children's work, could be used to potentially encourage other teachers to also try using representative books in their work.

This view appeared to be shared by other teachers who were advocating the use of diverse and representative texts across the school.

So I think it is to take ... the success of the project and the positives of the project and put them into the year groups that haven't ... taken part in the project. Bits of that are creeping in, anyway. ... I think it's about sharing that best practice really across the year groups. (Teacher 5).

In this extract, incorporating diverse and representative texts, as seen during the research project is constructed as being successful, positive and 'best practice' and is therefore something that should be incorporated in all year groups across the school. It appears that being part of the research project gave teacher 5 insight into the use of diverse and representative books which she now appears keen to advocate for with other staff. The research project is constructed as already having a wider impact as it is creeping in with staff who were not involved. More than simply creeping in, which suggests it might not reach everyone, or be systematic in the implementation, teacher 5 shares the belief that diverse and representative books could be shared across all year groups.

It was also suggested by teachers that diverse and representative texts have the potential to give children the opportunity to look through windows into many different experiences.

We should see it as not just year 2 but as it progresses through the school, have the children go through a wealth of experiences in different countries and continents throughout their primary education. (Teacher 8).

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Providing children with representative texts as windows to look into and therefore learn about difference is constructed as the responsibility of the whole school in this extract. Teacher 8 suggests that it is not enough for one year group to take it on; in order to give children a wealth of experiences across different countries and continents it needs the whole school to commit to their implementation. This perception may also imply that it could be particularly true in a school with such diversity, where providing representative texts as mirrors for all children will require a wide range of diverse and multicultural texts.

2a.iii. Diversity in the Wider Curriculum Needs Further Consideration.

Subthemes 2a.i. and 2a.ii. have explored how teachers involved in the research project have shared the desire to continue using diverse and representative texts in their teaching and that other teachers should also incorporate them. The research project focus on representative texts appears to have led the staff to think about their application primarily within the English curriculum. However, involvement in the research project has also led teachers to question other areas of school life and the wider curriculum with regard to diversity.

Consideration of diversity within specific curriculum subjects was shared by the teachers. For example, when learning about division by sharing in Maths:

I think having people sharing out something of a particular ethnicity or nationality rather than sharing out, we always do cakes and chocolate bars, why aren't they sharing out you know, samosas or why aren't they sharing out ... Polish dumplings ... why are we not sharing out that, why are we not splitting that in half ... Why is it always pizza? Like, most of our kids have never really eaten a pizza. (Teacher 6).

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This extract questions the relevance of examples used when teaching children mathematical concepts. Current practice of sharing out cakes or chocolate bars when teaching dividing is examined from a perspective which considers diversity. Teacher 6 shares the belief that if the children are engaged by a curriculum which is relevant to them and their lived experiences then their lived experiences need to be considered when choosing examples to use, down to the detail given in the extract.

Furthermore, the use of representative texts to support teaching in RE and topic lessons was also discussed:

I definitely think it would be nice to introduce some of those books more as stimulus maybe in RE as well to promote those representations and to try and bring about a more natural discussion, maybe have books instead of just you know telling the story... In theme ... in the summer for Beachcombers ... we do two stories about beaches, do they have to be UK beaches? Could they be beaches somewhere else in a different part of the world maybe... So the picture isn't always a white child on a beach basically, um, so can we find a book that still is the same theme of beach but somewhere else. (Teacher 7).

Teacher 7 appears to be building on the experiences she had in the project, when representative texts used at the end of the day were also brought into RE lessons. In the extract, it is constructed that using representative texts brought 'about a more natural discussion' and therefore appears to lead her to consider in which other curriculum areas this experience could be replicated. Beachcombers is the topic taught in the summer term and two books are used to support the teaching of the topic. In the extract, teacher 7 suggests that teachers have the choice of what images they share with their classes, through their book choices. She shares the

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belief that teachers could choose a book which will show a 'white child on a beach' or could choose to pick a book which will show beaches 'in a different part of the world', increasing the chances of representation for children from ethnic minorities in the class.

A further curriculum area which was constructed as needing attention with regard to diversity was science:

In ... science when we're looking at role models and just thinking ... who can we focus on who's not ... a white man. (Teacher 4).

In this extract, teacher 4 suggests that the role models currently used within science are white men. Teacher 4 shares the belief that it is not just the race or ethnicity of the role models but also their gender which should be considered when selecting role models to share with the children.

This belief is echoed in the following extract where the motivation behind teachers' curriculum choices is explored:

We've been providing quite a white British middle-class education for a lot of our children, and we've come at this from a female perspective as well and we have ... thought, 'yeah, this is great', 'I think this is really interesting', 'this is really exciting', 'oh, I'm going to love teaching this', 'I'm going to love teaching this' ... And we're stopping now and we're slowing down and we're saying but are our ... children going to enjoy learning this and is it going to matter to them. (Teacher 5).

Teacher 5 in this extract, shares the belief that the curriculum choices made by teachers is based on what they find 'interesting' and 'really exciting', that they appear motivated to choose topics that they will enjoy teaching rather than considering the impact on the children. The school has very diverse population of

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children, but a less diverse teaching staff, particularly in senior leadership, therefore teachers choosing what motivates them has led to a white British middle-class education. She constructs that stopping to consider what impact curriculum choices have on the children allows staff to consider what is relevant to the children and what they will enjoy, potentially increasing the children's motivation and engagement with their learning.

Wider issues within the school were also discussed along with the impact this could have on the relationship between parents and the school:

Renaming our classes ... I think that would be one that we could do and I think that in itself it would be like 'why are we renaming?'... To parents and everybody else it would be okay, 'your child's class is changing to X, Y, Z we're changing your child's class because we actually want our classes to be more reflective of ... authors'. So it almost allows an opening for parents, um, to be aware of that and to understand that ... we are seeing it as important. ... I think they would be quite, quite pleased and surprised that actually there were those considerations there. (Teacher 3).

The classes at the school are currently named after children's authors, teachers shared the belief that the class names were not representative of the diversity within the school, in fact, most of the authors were white British men. To go through the process of renaming the classes could be seen as a visible sign to the whole community about the school's commitment to celebrating and reflecting diversity. Using representative texts may or may not be obvious to parents, however, class names are used regularly by staff, children and parents. Therefore, in renaming the classes, it not only gives the opportunity to include more diverse authors, but potentially also opens the opportunity to build relationships with parents

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at the school. In having the discussion about changing class names, parents are likely to be made aware of the school's increasing consideration regarding diversity which teacher 3 suggests would both please and surprise the parents.

However, teachers also shared the belief that they may not be aware of where there are changes which need to be made:

We don't know. It's almost like we need a curriculum review, an external curriculum review, somebody to come in and say, 'okay, show me the diversity in your curriculum' and we will go 'ummmmm'. So ... I think it's that challenge, perhaps of, of somebody helping us to think about the things that we haven't thought of yet. (Teacher 5).

Teacher 5 suggests that the school are not currently able to show where the diversity is within their curriculum. It is also suggested that identifying where there are opportunities for greater diversity are hard to find by staff in the school themselves; the school needs help from somebody outside of the organisation to move forward in this area. Reviewing the curriculum is constructed as a challenge which needs to be brought to them by an external person, therefore not as something that is necessarily going to be a comfortable experience, but one that is needed. Parallels could be drawn between the teachers' experience of being part of the research project, working with a Trainee Educational Psychologist, someone who is external to the school, helping the staff to think about why they should include diverse and multicultural books in their school, supporting them to do it and reviewing the effects of this. A similar process around diversity in the curriculum has the potential to reap similar organisational changes.

Theme 2b: Barriers to Teachers Including Representative Texts in Teaching. The main theme 'barriers to teachers including representative texts in

teaching' was developed from the data gathered in the staff interviews. Staff, despite appearing to experience the positive impact of using representative books in their teaching as constructed in overarching theme 1, and valuing the use of representative texts as constructed in theme 2a, also shared potential barriers to including these books in their work.

Theme 2b has two sub-themes (Table 12) which will be explored in turn.

Table 12

Summary of Theme 2b

Theme 2b: Barriers to teachers including representative texts in teaching	
2b.i	2b.ii
School leadership decisions as limiting or enabling use of representative texts	Lack of resources as a barrier to using representative texts

2b.i. School Leadership Decisions as Limiting or Enabling Use of Representative Texts. This subtheme constructs school leaders as holding power within the school to make and implement decisions concerning representative texts, however, these decisions were viewed in both positive and negative ways in the interviews with teachers.

The decision-making power of the school leadership was evident in the following extract:

I think it comes back to thinking a bit more sort of, top level and long-term planning wise ... and making sure that the teachers were understanding why those changes were being made. (Teacher 3).

In discussing the implementation of representative books across the school, teacher 3 suggests that 'top level', therefore leadership, decisions need to be made. Incorporating representative books into long-term plans is likely to ensure that they will be included in the curriculum and therefore has the potential to enable the children to experience diverse and representative texts. However, this is constructed as a change being made by the school leadership which teachers would need to comply with. In order to comply with the decisions, teacher 3 shares the belief that teachers will need to understand why the leadership has decided to implement representative books across the school in the long-term plans. Nevertheless, the decision to implement representative books is not thought of as being optional, or a point for discussion, just as a decision to follow.

However, the school leadership imposing a decision to use diverse texts on teachers was constructed as adding to teachers' workload:

I think it is just as a school if we're moving this further, just you know, acknowledgement that as good as we are and as much as we want to be

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involved, our time is limited in, in having to do some of this. ... We can build it up once we know ... a little bit more about where they want us to go with it. ... I think it's just, it's just that worry, 'yeah we're going to do this as a school, but you need to find everything'. (Teacher 7).

In this extract the teacher shares the idea that choosing to use representative books in school is a decision that is made by leadership. The relationship between teachers and the leadership is constructed as an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy, they are not integrated. The school leadership will decide 'where they want us to go with it' for the staff to follow. The decision to continue using representative books after the research project has finished is therefore viewed as not being a choice for individual teachers, however, the extract suggests that the implications of that decision have ramifications for the individual teachers. 'They' are making the decisions however 'you need to find everything', this appears to be a concern for teacher 7 who also raises the issue of teachers having limited time.

In contrast to the previous extract, there was a differing idea shared in which teachers are expected to take responsibility and make the text choices themselves:

It's easy to say 'oh, no I don't have time to do that', or 'I don't have time to make a choice, you just tell me'. Actually 'no, this is about your children, and you make the choice'. (Teacher 5).

This extract suggests that teacher workload being a barrier to choosing representative texts was merely a perception held by some teachers. It builds on the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy constructing a struggle between teachers and school leaders as to who has the responsibility to make the book choices. In the previous extract, Teacher 7 shared the belief that the onus of finding appropriate books is placed on the teachers who have limited time. However, Teacher 5 shares an

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opposing belief, expecting the teachers to choose books not only for the topic but that represent the specific children in the teachers' own class. In this view, the class teacher is constructed as the one who knows the class best and are therefore best placed to make the choice. This perception could imply that diverse books could be chosen by the leadership team for a particular topic, but they may not be representative of the children in the class and therefore may not offer the mirror and window type experiences which may be possible with representative books.

A counter view presented was that decisions made at a leadership level were restricting the choices of the teachers who were keen to both choose and use diverse books in their teaching:

I think had I just been able to choose the texts I wanted to choose, and to teach it in the way I wanted to teach it, no issues. But, ... I had the combination of being in a new school that is quite specific about the way things get chosen and why they're chosen so I think it's just aligning the way that I would like to structure a lesson with a requirement. (Teacher 6).

In this extract, teacher 6 constructs a lack of autonomy in her choice of representative texts and in her choice of how to teach using the texts. Leadership in the school are constructed as being 'quite specific about the way things get chosen' and therefore in control of teacher choices, restricting the autonomy of the class teachers. It appears that if the views of the teacher do not align with the requirements of the school leadership, then the choices of the teacher have to give way. However, this could lead to a teacher who is keen to use representative texts in their class not being able to do so, at least in the way they had envisaged.

2b.ii. Lack of Resources as a Barrier to Using Representative Texts. This subtheme explores the beliefs around the necessity of having access to age-

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appropriate diverse and representative texts within the school in order for teachers to be able to implement them in their teaching. Teachers shared thoughts about barriers to selecting these resources including teacher knowledge of diverse books and knowledge of where to source them.

Diverse and representative texts need to meet various criteria in order to be considered by teachers for inclusion in their teaching:

It's being able to locate those said books ... not only find them but the content of the books really needs to be age appropriate. You know, I'm sure we could find books to suit every cultural background in this room but they wouldn't always be appropriate and we need to engage our children with the content as well as the cultural differences, so I think that's always going to be an issue.
(Teacher 1).

The brief of the research study was for teachers to include representative texts within their classrooms. However, in a school with a diverse population, such as the one in this study, there are many different ethnicities, religions and cultures which need to be represented. This extract constructs the difficulty of finding books which are potentially representative of all the lived experiences of those in the class. However, it is suggested that even if a book is found which is representative of a child's lived experiences, the book also needs to be age appropriate. Within a primary school, children's reading progresses from being non-readers, through picture books and simple reading books to reading chapter books. Therefore, it appears that to find a text which is at just the right reading level for the class is an added challenge. Furthermore, this perception implies that even if a book is representative of a child within the class, and if it is at an appropriate reading level, it

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may not have appropriate content for the age of the children, this may be particularly true of books which cover sensitive subjects.

Teacher knowledge of diverse books was constructed as being key to them being able to utilise them in the classroom:

I think it is ... knowing what resources are available ... because there are so many good things out there already. ... You don't necessarily know that there is diversity within the book, or it will hit that particular thing that you're looking for based on the blurb. (Teacher 5).

The extract suggests that teachers need to know what resources are available, in order to do this, it is constructed that teachers need to engage with the books at more than just a surface level. Relying on a quick read of a blurb is not likely to fully inform teachers about the diversity that it contains. Nor is it likely to allow teachers to decide if it meets all the criteria that they have for the book they are searching for. The implication is that if teachers are to engage with the books to make fully informed decisions about them then they are likely to need to handle the books, to engage with their content in a deeper way.

However, teachers shared the belief that they don't have knowledge of diverse and representative texts or where to go to get this knowledge, forming another barrier to their inclusion.

I looked online and I was like 'I just don't know where to look' and I said to Teacher 3, 'I've looked at some websites, but ... it doesn't seem appropriate, or I don't know if they are appropriate'. (Teacher 7).

It appears that compounding the difficulty of lack of knowledge of the books was not knowing where to look to browse and choose these resources. The extract suggests that even if teachers want to include diverse and representative books in

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their teaching, they need to have a reliable and trusted source to locate appropriate books. The extract suggests that using websites to browse books is not sufficient to gauge whether a book is appropriate. In a similar manner to the previous extract, it appears that the content needs to be engaged with at a deeper level in order to fully know whether the book is appropriate.

Another teacher also recognised the difficulty in locating books and suggested that there is work to be done by others in order for diverse books to be used by class teachers:

That somebody has done the work before to ... say 'that would be a perfect book for this' or 'that would be a perfect book for that' ... Or, 'there's a book about a beach in, wherever'. ... I think it would be much more efficient, ... not a staff meeting for 10 minutes to ... try and find a book because you don't have time to do that, ... it needs to be maybe a work that's been fully invested in. (Teacher 8).

Teacher 8 shares the belief that the time pressures associated with teacher workload are a barrier to choosing appropriate diverse books to include in teaching. She constructs that locating appropriate books takes time which busy teachers do not have. The extract suggests that a decision to incorporate diverse and representative books in a school needs to be fully invested in so that the resources are available. Furthermore, it is suggested that the resources need to be mapped onto the curriculum so that staff are not having to use precious time in finding books that are representative, fit the topic and are age appropriate.

The stock of diverse and representative books available in the school library was also constructed as an issue:

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Are we forcing ... a full stacked up library of books, ... does it really reflect the community that you're in is the question. Most of the time the answer is no... You've got Elmer, ... you've got The Hungry Caterpillar and all of these and if you look at them, many are what, David Walliams and Julia Donaldson and that's it, so, I think it's a whole nation issue. (Teacher 8).

School libraries across the country stock popular mainstream books and authors. In fact, the extract suggests school libraries are likely to be fairly uniform nationwide. Teacher 8 shares the belief that if school libraries are stocking the same books, regardless of the communities they are situated in, the books are unlikely to be representative of the lived experiences of the children who attend the school. This implies that the potential challenge is to purchase resources for the school library which do reflect the local community and are representative of the children's lived experiences.

One teacher also constructed the issue of the books that children take home to share with their parents as not being representative:

I think it would be nice to get some books ... that maybe we can read, but also maybe some in the library that the children could take home ... to read with parents. ... We talk ... a lot about 'we are a community; we know we've got diversity ... but we are a community'. But I suppose the books we send home don't really show that message. (Teacher 7).

This extract suggests that as well as choosing representative texts to use in the classroom, teachers should also consider the books that the children take home to read with parents and carers. The extract suggests there are mixed messages being given to parents by the school. The message of 'we are a community', suggests a valuing of diversity, of inclusivity, belonging together and caring about

and for one another. However, if the books which children bring home do not share this message, do not value diversity, do not show inclusivity then the sense of belonging together and caring about and for one another potentially lacks authenticity. The implication then is that sending representative books home which potentially reflect the life experiences of the families who are reading them is more likely to match the message of 'we are a community'. However, it appears that the barrier to doing this is not having these texts available and accessible across the school.

Overarching Theme 3: Reflections on the Process

The overarching theme "reflections on the process" is constructed in one main theme "teacher experiences of being part of the research project" with three subthemes (Table 13). The themes were developed using the data gathered in the teacher interviews; they detail the views of teachers about their experiences of being part of a research project led by a Trainee Educational Psychologist.

Table 13

Summary of Theme 3

Theme 3a: Teacher experiences of being part of the research project		
3a.i Teacher workload as a barrier to taking part in research	3a.ii Project provoked reflection on own teaching practices	3a.iii Research project as a positive CPD experience for teachers

3a.i Teacher Workload as a Barrier to Taking Part in Research. This subtheme contains extracts where teachers share constructions of the difficulties of taking part in the research project, particularly with respect to teacher workload.

When discussing what was the trickiest part of being part of the research project, the time involved was raised:

Time ... Always time ... well, first of all, make sure that the books were useful to the class and what the class were learning, the time to make sure that they were accessible to the children, ... the time to have meetings with staff and the time to actually get through the book. (Teacher 3).

The extract details all elements involved in the research project, choosing appropriate books, delivering the teaching sessions using the books and meeting with the Trainee Educational Psychologist to set up the project, for training and for the teacher interviews. It can be assumed that these activities and the associated thought processes are potentially time consuming for staff who are already incredibly busy. Therefore, it appears that time, which is constructed as always being a pressure, was further stretched by the requirements of the research project.

Furthermore, other teachers discussed additional commitments that they had at the same time as the research project:

I found it very challenging to be fully able to give ... myself wholeheartedly to the ... project because ... I had so many meetings and things coming ... because we had Read Write Inc. to be done at the same time and ... many things at the same time, I sort of thought 'I don't actually know what I'm doing most of the time' and I don't like to do things not meticulously and half-heartedly and that part of it I didn't enjoy, to be quite honest with you. (Teacher 8).

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Echoing the views of Teacher 3, this extract also shares the belief of the time pressures that the teachers were under alongside the requirements of the research project. The teachers appeared to have many other commitments at the same time as the project. However, the other commitments are likely to have had a higher priority as the research project was an optional, voluntary extra. This led to teachers missing some of the sessions because the teachers were double-booked. The extract suggests an inner conflict that this presented for the teacher as she wanted to do things meticulously, with full commitment, however, this appeared not to be possible leading to a belief of not knowing what she was doing most of the time. This potential inner conflict appeared to be an uncomfortable feeling which may have led to the teacher not enjoying all aspects of the project, potentially limiting their commitment.

3a.ii Research Project Provoked Reflection on Own Teaching Practices.

This subtheme was developed using the responses that being part of the research project appeared to provoke in the class teachers. Teachers shared beliefs of reflecting on and re-evaluating their practice as teachers because of their involvement in the research project:

The whole, the experience has been hugely humbling as an adult and as a teacher and as a professional, you know you can go through your career and ... think 'I've got so many years of experience, yeah, I know what I'm doing' and then it just takes a moment or a conversation or a realisation to think hang on, we've missed something massive here. (Teacher 5).

This extract suggests that taking part in the research project was a potential moment of realisation for this teacher. It could be assumed that very experienced teachers might expect to have a handle on their job, they have many years of

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experience, many years of training leading to a potential feeling of contentment in their role: 'I know what I'm doing'. However, the experience of being part of the research project, of considering representation within children's books as part of the curriculum in an ethnically diverse school appears to have rocked that sense of 'I know what I am doing'. The research project has therefore potentially challenged the teacher's understanding of herself as a professional, as a teacher and fundamentally as an adult.

Teachers also shared beliefs about the progress they have made in considering diversity within the school curriculum:

It's just been so thought provoking. ... It's helped me to see things from their point of view more. I thought I already did, but I don't think I did as much as I maybe do now and it's making me realise there's even further to go and I could see things even more deeply. (Teacher 5).

This extract builds on the idea that the research project may have opened the teacher's eyes to an issue which is challenging and thought provoking. The extract constructs a journey that the teacher has been on; the moment of realisation as described above appears to have allowed the teacher to potentially take on the perspective of the children and understand from their point of view. This is constructed as challenging the teacher's practice. Furthermore, it also appears to have opened the teacher's eyes to how long the journey is and how far they potentially still have to go in order to fully take on the children's perspective and potentially provide the education that meets their needs.

Although the research project was based in one school for one short period of time, teachers also shared beliefs about their practice in previous roles:

I used to work in London, ... and it was also ... very diverse and multi-cultural school um, and even I reflect back on my time there and think you know I should have done... something similar there, like it should have been a priority at that school as well. (Teacher 4).

This extract considers the practice of teachers in other schools with regard to including diverse and representative texts. It is suggested that this is not just an issue within the school which undertook the research project, but that it is potentially a wider issue in other areas of the country. Following involvement in the project, the use of diverse and representative texts is constructed as something that should be a priority. A sense of regret is also constructed in that the use of diverse and representative books may have been beneficial in the teacher's previous school and is something that the teacher should have used there.

3a.iii Research Project as a Positive CPD Experience for Teachers. This subtheme is constructed using the reflections from teachers who were part of the research project. Extracts highlight how the teachers' shared beliefs that they benefited from the project in terms of continuing professional development training, affecting their practice, including making text choices.

Firstly, involvement in the research project was constructed as increasing teacher engagement in planning reading lessons:

That excitement that I used to get ... from reading a book and from thinking 'oh my God, I can build my whole theme around this, I can build my whole topic around this. I love it, the children are going to love it and we're going to do this with it'. You just don't really see that so much in teachers now. But I have seen that more with the teachers because they've engaged with their text and they've thought 'what can I do with this' and 'where can I take this',

rather than things being given to them. So that ... autonomy that they've had, I think has been really... liberating ... for them. (Teacher 5).

This extract suggests that teachers, at the moment, appear less engaged in their planning than teachers of the past. It is suggested that teachers now are more reliant on planning 'being given to them', this potentially holds them back from planning creatively. However, this teacher constructs a better time when teachers were perceived to have the autonomy and engagement to build themes and topics around a particular book. The extract further suggests that if teachers fully engage in choosing a book, they are more likely to find inspiration when planning the learning activities for their class, as is constructed as being more common in the past. It is suggested that this was evident in the research project, where teachers were potentially forced to engage with the texts, because pre-written planning was not available to them. This construction gives the impression that the research project was liberating for teachers, potentially freeing them from static planning processes and a reliance on sourcing planning from others.

The research project introduced some teachers to diverse and representative texts:

I wasn't aware that there were books with Pakistani characters or other cultural characters. ... That's an eye opener for me because I've never ... thought deeply into it and I'm just like 'oh, okay, wow ... there's some amazing books that our children can relate to'. So, for me I think that's an eye opener for me that ... I can think out of the box and maybe get a book that they can relate to as a class text. ... I think I'd definitely like to use more of them in our reading lessons and our English lessons. (Teacher 2).

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It could be viewed that teachers cannot be expected to include diverse and representative texts in their teaching if they don't know that they exist. This extract suggests that the research project has opened this particular teacher's eyes to the existence of such books. Current text choices could be considered safe and predictable, but being made aware of diverse texts appears to have allowed this teacher to 'think out of the box' and potentially make less predictable text choices, including amazing books that the children can relate to. The construction of the impact the research project has had on this teacher's continuing professional development is clear, as is her aim is to continue using diverse and representative texts into the future, suggesting the research project potentially has a lasting legacy.

For other teachers, the training sessions appeared to have increased their awareness of the effect the lack of diversity in children's books potentially has on children who do not see themselves represented within the books available to them at school:

I think what's always useful is like the eye-opening stuff, almost like the smack bang in your face this is what is going on with literature ... and what children see and their experience of it. ... If you start by saying 'a child is more likely to see an animal in a book than ... themselves' then you can't help but just be like 'oh, this really matters, I've really got to do something about this'.

(Teacher 6).

The impact of the training sessions which formed part of the research project is constructed in this extract. Teacher 6 shares the belief that being made aware of the facts and figures related to the publishing of diverse children's books and then considering what that means for children's experiences of reading has led her to increase her understanding of the presenting issue. Furthermore, having her eyes

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opened to the facts and figures appears to have had a profound impact, they seemingly inspired the teacher to be allied with the cause and to potentially take action. Sitting back and carrying on with the status quo is constructed as not being an option: 'I've really got to do something about this'.

Involvement in the research project appears to have achieved more than just raising awareness, it has potentially challenged the book choices that teachers make, encouraging greater consideration of representation:

Currently in year 6 we're looking at migration. So, ... we were thinking about ones that are actually representative of a wider range. So, initially ... a lot of the books that we could find were Syria, Afghanistan and things. But then we were thinking about, 'no actually, right okay that is to do with migration, but we are leaving people out here' so then we looked at more Windrush. So, it is ... not always accepting the first thought that you have about it, but actually, how might someone else look at it. ... So having those considerations and not necessarily going with the first, or with the accepted, or with the previously done ... how can we change this or is this right for our children. (Teacher 3).

The extract again constructs book choices prior to the research project as being safe; it appears that teachers are used to going with the accepted book choices, the usual book choices or the first book that comes to mind. However, it appears that since the research project, teachers are putting more time and thought into their book choices and stepping away from the usual. Teacher 3 shared that the immediate thought for the topic of migration was stories linked to refugee migration from Syria and Afghanistan and that would be representative of some children within the school. However, as has been previously outlined, the school has children from many different cultural backgrounds and therefore one of the potential challenges

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they face is to find texts that are representative of all the children and all their backgrounds. It appears then that reconsidering the initial book choices to widen the representation potentially allows more children to experience a book as a mirror of their own lived experiences.

Furthermore, the research project has been seen to potentially influence more than just the book choices:

The diversity ... project that we've been involved in, ... has really made us all consider a little more carefully. ... I think everything that we listened to and learned and talked about with you has made us all just that little bit more aware, that we can do better, than we have. So, we've had video, we've had two different texts and ...we are using images, we're using videos, we're doing texts, we've obviously used music. It makes us just that little bit more aware. (Teacher 1).

It is constructed that becoming aware of representation in books through the research project has had the added impact of influencing teacher decisions with regard to other resources. The extract suggests the raising of awareness around diversity and representation in children's books has raised the teacher's own expectations of themselves. Echoing other teachers' desires to not carry on as before, this teacher shares the belief that she wants to 'do better'. In fact, it appears that their practice has moved on already, incorporating not just representative texts but diverse and representative videos, images and music. Furthermore, the impact appears not to be restricted to the individual teacher interviewed; the extract suggests that the project has influenced them all.

Discussion

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This study aimed to gain the perspectives of staff and children in a primary school about representative texts, having worked with a Trainee Educational Psychologist in a cycle of participatory action research to implement these books into their classes. Analysis of mean scores obtained in two staff surveys along with inductive, reflexive thematic analysis of the qualitative data generated in focus groups and interviews led to the development of three overarching themes: impact of including representative texts in teaching; future implications of including representative texts; and reflections on the process. In this section, links between the quantitative and qualitative findings will be made along with expounding how these findings relate to the existing literature and answer the research questions. Implications for schools, Educational Psychologists and Educational Psychology Services will be discussed along with limitations of the study and possible future research areas.

What impact does representation in children's books have on the children who read them?

This research question was answered in the overarching theme 'Impact of including representative texts in teaching'. The findings and analysis from this study suggested that using diverse and multicultural literature within classes appeared to have positive impacts on the children in the school. These positive impacts included the books acting as potential mirrors to the children's lived experiences allowing children to make connections to the books which may increase their sense of belonging. The positive impacts also extended to those not represented, as the books acted as potential windows into others' lives and experiences.

Books as Mirrors

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The analysis indicates that for the children who were represented in the books used in the study, the books acted as potential mirrors to their own lived experiences. Teachers constructed that the children could see themselves in the books and could relate to the content. This is the experience which previous research has suggested that children who do not experience representation in texts are missing (CLPE, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021; Gomez-Najarro, 2020; Mpike, 2020; Sims Bishop, 1990). The findings from this study indicated that representative images or illustrations within the books was not enough, teachers shared the belief that the children responded well to their lived experiences being included in the nuances of the books as well as when they featured in the main storylines. Having read books as part of the study which did represent their lived experiences, children were constructed as being able to reflect on this being different to their usual experience of reading books. The children shared the belief that they don't usually find characters that reflect their lived experiences, suggesting they experience erasure (Sehgal, 2016) of their culture in the books they read.

The study indicates that within the children's focus groups, it was the older children (aged 10 and 11) that could discuss the implications for not being represented in the books, suggesting it was unfair and could make children who are not represented sad. Quintana's (1994) development in children's understanding of ethnicity model suggests that it is not until level two, approximately 10-14 years old, that children develop a social perspective of ethnicity, including becoming aware of prejudice, bias and discrimination. This may explain why younger children in the focus groups were not able to discuss the implications of not being represented, despite appearing to recognise that they did not usually see themselves reflected in the books they read in school.

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This study aimed to primarily focus on the positive experiences of when representation did happen, rather than focusing on the negative experiences of erasure and the lack of representation in books. Previous research has suggested that erasure can impact on children's reading enjoyment and motivation (Gomez-Najarro, 2020; Hefflin and Barksdale-Ladd, 2001) the assumption could therefore be made that experiencing representation in books would increase children's reading enjoyment and motivation. This appeared to be the case within this study; within the staff survey, teachers rated the use of representative texts in teaching as important. This quantitative finding was expanded on through extracts in the teacher interviews; having used the books in the classroom, teachers constructed that children experiencing representative books as mirrors of their lived experiences is a need which allows them to connect with the books. Furthermore, enabling these connections was constructed as a way to increase children's love of reading, thereby potentially increasing motivation and engagement in reading. This is in line with Kirkland (2011) who identified that engagement improved when a student could see himself and his culture in the text he was reading. Further research has identified the importance of reading engagement for children's academic achievement (Becker, McElvany, and Kortenbruck, 2010; Ellis and Coddington, 2013).

Experiencing representation in texts also appeared to increase the children's understanding of what they were reading. Staff constructed that reading about familiar objects, activities and other lived experiences gave the children something to pin an idea on, breaking down barriers to learning. This corroborates Duke and Cartwright's (2021) Active View of Reading model which suggests that reading texts which match a child's cultural background aids comprehension of the text. It appears then that including representative texts in the curriculum could meet the

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requirements as set out in the English programmes of study for key stages 1 and 2 in England, which state that the books children read should allow them to develop “knowledge of themselves and of the world in which they live” (DfE, 2013, p.4).

Belonging and School Belonging

Staff in the study constructed that children who were represented in the books appeared able to make connections with them, relating what they were reading to their own lived experiences. According to some academics, a sense of belonging is concerned with connections to people, places and material objects (May, 2013). Therefore, if children are able to make connections to books which reflect their own lived experiences, it is possible that their sense of belonging could be enhanced.

As the representative books the children encountered were within the school context, creating these connections may also enhance a sense of school belonging which is thought to be an important factor in academic achievement (Reynolds et al., 2017). For a student to feel a sense of school belonging, they need to feel accepted and respected in school (Goodenow and Grady, 1993). Being represented in books appeared to give children in this study extra confidence to share their own experiences, staff shared the belief that this also appeared to increase their self-esteem. It was also constructed that using representative books also gave teachers information about different cultures. Teachers shared the view that this increased their knowledge which enabled them to effectively manage discussions about difference within the classroom.

It appears then, that incorporating diverse and multicultural books into the school day gave children from ethnic minorities greater opportunity to experience their own cultures being accepted and respected by both children and teachers in school. This is particularly important for children from ethnic minorities who have

been shown to experience less connectedness or belonging to school (Biag, 2016; Hernández et al., 2017; Walton and Cohen, 2011; Williams et al., 2020). Findings from this study would suggest therefore, that incorporating diverse and multicultural texts which represent and reflect the lived experiences of the children could improve children's sense of school belonging and in turn their academic achievement.

Books as Windows

The positive impact of including diverse and multicultural texts within school was constructed to be not limited to those who were represented in the texts. In providing windows into different experiences, diverse and multicultural books appeared to benefit all children, including those not represented within the text. Teachers shared the belief that using representative books opened up discussions, potentially allowing those represented to share their own experiences and those not represented to learn about difference in a contained and positive way. The staff survey, administered at the beginning and end of the study, indicated that teaching about cultural differences and respecting other cultures was very important to the teachers. Incorporating diverse and multicultural texts within the curriculum was shared as a seemingly effective way to learn about difference and to highlight otherwise unseen similarities.

Although this study focused on cultural differences in the books which were included in the classrooms, teachers appeared able to apply their experiences to other areas of diversity. For example, teachers shared the belief that topics such as gender identity and agoraphobia are areas which may benefit from being included in book choices in the future. Learning about difference in this contained and positive way was constructed as a step to building respect for different cultures and therefore potentially a way to reduce prejudice and discrimination. Stories have been found to

challenge stereotypes (Ginsberg and Glenn, 2019; Pesonen, 2013) and reduce prejudice in children (Cameron et al., 2007, 2006). Furthermore, incorporating multicultural texts in classes has been found to open up discussions about culture, race and religion (Glazier and Seo, 2005). Findings in this study indicated that using diverse and multicultural books as a window to explore difference appeared to change children's attitudes.

What perceptions and experiences do class teachers have in relation to representation in children's books?

This research question was answered in the overarching theme 'future implications of including representative texts'. Having been part of the research project, teachers constructed that they witnessed first-hand the children experiencing books as mirrors and windows with all the potential benefits which have been explored in answering the first research question. This appeared to impact on the staff who shared the belief that representative books are resources which should continue to be used in school by the staff involved in the study and more widely by other staff. It also appeared to lead the staff to question other practices within school. However, the study also identified potential limitations to teachers being able to include these books in their classes.

Diversity in Schools

It appears that as a result of being part of the research project, teachers started to question how their school manage diversity within the wider curriculum and school life. Teachers suggested that they were increasingly aware of the potential lack of diversity within their school, including their class names and role models they use in science, which were both constructed as being predominately white British men. Examples were also given for Maths and geography teaching which were

constructed as being white dominated in the examples being used in teaching. Abdi (2015) suggests that whiteness dominates in UK classrooms, and this appears to be the conclusion that staff in this study were coming to in relation to their own school and was potentially something of a revelation to the staff. Milner (2020) calls for a 'disruptive movement' to expose injustice and effect change, as a result of this study, the teachers constructed being keen to make further changes to potentially increase the equality of representation within their school. The belief was shared that this could also enable the parents and carers of children in school to feel part of, and therefore potentially increase their sense of belonging to, the school community.

Teacher Knowledge

The analysis of data suggested that in order for children to access books in school which represent their lived experiences, teachers need to have knowledge about the diverse and multicultural books which are available. Previous research has identified teachers as gatekeepers to these books within school (Bainbridge and Brenna, 2013; Evans, 2010; Kirkland, 2011; Milner, 2020; Taboada Barber and Lutz Klauda, 2020). Teachers within this study indicated the belief that they were the gatekeepers to children accessing the books in school. Within the staff survey, teachers indicated that the importance of using representative books within their classes was higher than their current actual use suggesting that a change is needed to incorporate more representative books in their planning.

Teachers also shared the belief that they lacked the knowledge of where to source suitable books which are representative of their classes as well as being age appropriate and fitting in with the existing curriculum. Results of the staff survey indicated that having enough appropriate resources was the biggest barrier to including representative books. Analysis of the interviews indicated that books in the

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school library should be more representative of the community the school serves and that the reading books children take home to read with parents potentially need to have greater diversity. It was constructed that choosing home reading books which are representative of the school community may enable greater engagement from parents in supporting their child learn to read, it could also be an indicator to parents that the school is taking diversity seriously. Some staff expressed a desire for greater support with choosing diverse and multicultural books which will fit in with their planned topics. Signposting to appropriate websites or bookshops which specialise in diverse and multicultural titles may aid school staff to overcome this barrier.

School Leadership

The findings of this study indicated that school leadership teams may have a role in potentially enabling or limiting the use of representative texts within schools. This supports Bainbridge and Brenna (2013) who state that school leaders' views on diverse and multicultural books impacts on their use within schools. School leaders, within the parameters dictated by powers such as the Department for Education, exam boards and Ofsted, appear to have the option to include or not include representative texts in their schools. In this case, individual teachers may take their own initiative to include them, but they may not be able to give all the children in the class the chance to be represented by the texts chosen. Also, there is the potential that other children may go through the school without this experience which has been constructed as something which is important.

If school leaders decide that this is a venture of importance for the school, then the findings of this study suggest the need to plan suitable books into the curriculum, this would potentially allow a range of texts across the year groups

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ensuring that the vast majority, if not all, children may have the experience of reading at least one book which is representative of their lived experiences at some point during their primary education. Mapping suitable, diverse and multicultural books across the curriculum is likely to be a big task which would need the full commitment of the school leadership team in terms of time to do the research and finance to purchase the necessary resources. In creating a plan of this scale, the findings indicate that teachers value some autonomy in their book choices whilst suggesting that school leaders need to commit to the school incorporating diverse and multicultural books across the curriculum and the school.

Furthermore, it is suggested that school leaders would need to ensure that their staff are trained so that they understand why the decision to incorporate diverse and multicultural books has been made and how to implement the books which represent the children. The experiences of teachers in taking part in the study, including the impact of the training sessions, will be explored more fully in the next section.

What facilitates teachers in primary schools to increase their use of representative books?

This research question was answered by the overarching theme 'Reflections on the process'. This section is concerned with the constructed experiences of teachers in taking part in the study, the training they received, the impact it had on them as professionals and barriers to taking part in research. This section includes potential implications for schools who wish to increase their use of representative books.

Training

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As participatory action research, teachers who took part in this study had the opportunity for training alongside them incorporating at least one book which was representative of their class in their teaching. Despite not all teachers being able to attend the training sessions, data from the staff surveys identified an increase in mean score for staff having had sufficient training on representation in children's books and in the curriculum over the course of the study. The qualitative data from staff interviews was aligned with this with staff sharing beliefs of their increased knowledge of diverse and multicultural books and the facts and figures of representation within children's books. Lewin's (1947) change theory states that individuals need to experience the need for change before adopting new behaviour which is then stabilised as the new norm. Within the context of incorporating diverse and multicultural books in a school, this would suggest that teachers need to experience the need for change in book choices if a lasting change to incorporating diverse and multicultural books within the curriculum is to take effect. Following involvement in the study, staff appeared motivated to take action, suggesting that the training element of the study had the effect of 'unfreezing' the teachers' attitudes and practices, the first stage of Lewin's (1947) change theory.

As a participatory action research study, the teachers had potential ownership of how and when they implemented the representative books in their classrooms whilst being supported by and receiving training from a Trainee Educational Psychologist. The second stage of Lewin's (1947) change theory is the moving stage, where new behaviours and values are adopted. It is suggested that the teachers' ownership meant that they had to engage with the representative books in order to incorporate them into their work. It is likely that this is what would be

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expected of them if they were to continue using representative books in their teaching and so potentially formed a supported first step in making the change.

Directed Time

Analysis of the staff interview data constructed teacher workload and therefore the time teachers could give to the project as a barrier to their full participation in the study. This is in line with findings by Forrest et al. (2019) who identified that time was needed to reflect on and discuss changes as well as the time needed to make the change. They suggest that directed time may be needed in order for change to be supported. Teachers in this project were not using directed time, rather, participation in the study was additional to all the demands of their working day at a busy time of year. For change to be fully embedded, the study suggests that school leaders need to give teachers time to select representative books, time to incorporate those books into planning, time to reflect on their impact and time to discuss the implementation with their colleagues.

Participation in the study was constructed by the teachers as being a positive experience which has raised awareness, been thought provoking as well as humbling. Analysis of the staff survey data identified that taking part in the study increased the teachers' confidence in planning learning which includes positive representations and/or representative books as well as their confidence in talking about different cultures, discrimination and racism within their classes. The teachers also shared the desire to continue using representative books in their work, potentially suggesting a lasting legacy from the study and a realisation of the emancipatory potential of participatory action research (Kinsler, 2010).

Implications for EP practice and service delivery

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Although this study has employed mixed methods, with a heavy emphasis on qualitative data, this does not reduce the possibilities of generalisation, transferability and application to wider society (Watts, 2014). This study has demonstrated the impact of changing teachers' practice and this is something which can be generalised to other teachers and could be considered by Educational Psychologists and Educational Psychology Services.

The apparent positive impact of the training for the teachers supports previous research which has shown that Educational Psychologists can effect change in schools when working in collaboration with the staff (Ackerley & Bunn, 2018; Douglas-Osborn, 2017; Forrest et al., 2019).

Findings from this study indicated that teachers valued working with a Trainee Educational Psychologist. The Cycle of Experiential Learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2009) states that learners need to experience, reflect, think and act in a cyclical process in order to learn. This model fits with the action research cycle used in this research. It is suggested that staff had concrete experiences along with structured space to reflect on their current classroom practice in relation to representative books. As such, it appears that they were able to take actions which challenged their thinking around the use of diverse and multicultural books in their teaching.

The British Psychological Society's Division of Educational and Child Psychology has produced a position paper concerned with inclusive education (DECP, 2022). The paper highlights a broad view of inclusion which considers the inclusion of all, including considering ethnicity, culture, gender and sexuality and intersections between these characteristics. The guidance links inclusive education with children's sense of belonging and states "psychologists can use research findings to support the development of educationalists as reflective practitioners who

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promote a sense of belonging and full participation for all students in their school”

(p.3). As such, in light of this study, Educational Psychologists and Educational Psychology Services are encouraged to promote the inclusion of multicultural and diverse books into the curriculum as a way of potentially increasing children's sense of belonging, their engagement in the curriculum and working to develop an inclusive society in which respect is increased and discrimination is reduced.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was limited in that it was with 8 members of staff covering 6 primary school classes in one school. Furthermore, not all key stages within the school participated. This study was limited to one cycle of action research due to time constraints. Future research could therefore pick up further cycles of action research; within the same school, research could look at how the school move forward from this initial cycle. The teachers constructed the importance of representative books in school and appeared keen for other teachers to incorporate them into their planning, a further cycle of action research could evaluate the sharing of good practice across the school or more widely across the Multi Academy Trust. Another aspect which could be focused on is the implementation of representative books in other phases of education for instance the Early Years Foundation Stage or secondary schools.

A further finding from this study was that teachers shared the belief that diversity in other areas of the school should be addressed, such as renaming classes and reviewing the curriculum. Further research could evaluate the impact of any changes made; alternatively, a further cycle of action research could review the wider curriculum, implement and evaluate changes.

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Further research could also study the views of parents about representative books for children, one possible focus could be on the reading books which children bring home from primary schools. The effect of these home reading books on a sense of connection or community with the school and therefore the impact on parental engagement with the school would be another possible focus.

This study was conducted in a school which is highly diverse in ethnicities and therefore focused on books which represented the children's ethnicities, cultures and religions. Other areas of diverse literature such as books which include gender diverse characters, LGBTQI+ characters, rainbow families (i.e. non-nuclear families) and characters with disabilities could also be incorporated into the school curriculum and the effects measured in further research. Research in less diverse schools could also be carried out to see what impact representative books have in schools with mainly white British students.

Additionally, staff used the representative books for just two weeks in each class due to the demands of the school curriculum. As such, this was a short-term intervention, incorporating the books for longer may have enabled the staff to engage even more with diverse and multicultural books, it would also have allowed the children to have longer exposure to the books. This is a further consideration for future research in this area, including the need for longitudinal research.

The data collection method of remote focus groups with the children may have limited their contribution. Although in this study, this data collection method was necessary due to Covid-19 restrictions, future research could employ more creative data collection methods with the children.

One of the aims of this research was to hear the voice of the children about their experiences of reading books which represent their lived experiences; this

necessitated a qualitative approach. However, this limits the conclusions that can be drawn about the effectiveness and impact of the participatory action research.

Further research could employ quantitative methods to measure the impact using a larger sample and inferential statistics.

Conclusion

Through collaboration with teachers in a participatory action research study, this research has suggested benefits of incorporating diverse and multicultural books within schools. Children who were represented by these books appeared to benefit from being able to see their lived experiences reflected in the books. These apparent benefits took the form of being able to make connections with the books, improving engagement and motivation to read, potentially increasing their academic achievement and sense of school belonging. Furthermore, children who were not represented by the books also appeared to benefit from hearing and learning about other people's lived experiences, potentially changing their attitudes, with the hope that this will build respect and reduce discrimination.

As a result of being part of the study, teachers' confidence in planning learning using diverse and multicultural books was increased. Furthermore, they indicated they were keen to incorporate more diverse and multicultural books into their teaching and wanted this practice to spread to other teachers. Considering diversity and representation also appeared to lead teachers to question other practices within school where diversity work could be improved. The study also constructed the importance of school leadership teams enabling staff to have adequate resources to be able to implement the books, directed time to select and incorporate the books, and training to allow staff to be informed about representation and diversity.

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Overall, the study indicated the change that is possible within schools who take part in participatory action research studies, and the role that Educational Psychologists (and Trainee Educational Psychologists) can have in this to the benefit of the staff and children in UK schools.

**Including Representative Children's Books
in Primary Schools:
A Participatory Action Research Study**

**Chapter 3:
A Critical Reflexive Account**

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The process of completing a piece of empirical research is inevitably shaped by the past experiences, ideas, decisions and interpretations of the individuals undertaking the research (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Nadin & Cassell, 2006). For this reason, a reflexive journal has been kept throughout the research, recording questions asked and decisions made. The purpose of this chapter is to draw on this journal to reflect on the process of undertaking the research from the shaping of the initial ideas, through the experience of working with a school, to interpretation of the data generated. The dissemination plans for the research will be discussed. This chapter will be written in the first person as it based on my own personal experiences of undertaking research.

A Personal Reflection on Identifying a Research Area

I have grown up as an avid reader, devouring series of books throughout my childhood and early teenage years. As a middle to late teen I, for some reason or other, lost this enjoyment of books for a few years. However, when I rediscovered reading for pleasure in my second year at university, I remember noticing how much easier it was to write essays having immersed myself in literature again, even though the books were not related to my essays. Since this time I have been a firm advocate of reading and a champion of its benefits, including the impact on writing.

I was a primary school teacher for ten years, and my love for children's literature blossomed during this time; I enjoyed selecting books to use in my teaching. When teaching in nursery and Reception I had a different book each week to base the whole week's teaching on. One of my aims as a teacher was for the children in my classes to love books as much as I did. I found ways to teach grammatical concepts through stories and books making the lessons which could have been dry more engaging.

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In the 2017/18 academic year, I undertook five days training with The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) entitled 'The Power of Reading'. The training was concerned with using high quality texts to engage children with reading and encourage their development as writers. This was my first encounter with the work of CLPE. At the end of the training we were introduced to the first Reflecting Realities report (CLPE, 2018). As a white British woman I had not ever considered representation in children's books before, I have always been able to see my lived experiences reflected in the books I have read from *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* as a young child, through *The Lion*, *The Witch and The Wardrobe* as an older child, *Harry Potter* as a teenager and, as an adult, any number of novels written for women where I am typical of the target audience. The thought that children could be growing up and not seeing themselves reflected in the books they read shocked me.

When it came to choosing an area of interest for my thesis, the Reflecting Realities report (CLPE, 2018) came to mind, by this time the second report had been published (CLPE, 2019). The second report was illustrated with short quotes from children e.g. "In my imagination, when I read chapter books a lot of the people are white" (CLPE, 2019, p.9). However, the views of the children did not feature in the actual research which was quantitative. This led me to consider whether my research could give a voice to children with regard to their experiences of representation in children's literature through a qualitative methodology.

Through my initial reading and on speaking to the researchers at CLPE, it appeared that there was a dearth of published research incorporating children's voice in this area. This then guided the design of my research study.

Is this my Place?

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Issues of representation are focused on characteristics which place an individual in a minority e.g. ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, gender identity, disability and could also include rainbow families. As a white, British, heterosexual, cis-gender, Christian woman I have little experience of being in a minority. As I was considering my position to carry out this research, I read a quote from children's author Swapna Haddow:

"I think it's tricky because whichever way you do it [talk about a lack of 'diversity'], if it comes from a white voice it's patronising. If it comes from a brown voice it sounds like we're shouting so loud. It's uncomfortable to hear either way" (Ramdarshan Bold, 2019, p.42).

I was forced to question whether I was the right person to carry out research about representation, whether it was my place to get involved. However, given the lack of published research, I also questioned who would carry the research out if I didn't. Therefore, could I use my privilege to be a 'disruptive movement' (Milner, 2020), carrying out research which highlights the injustice of a lack of representation in children's books and effect change?

Ontological and Epistemological Position

Critical realism was taken as the ontological and epistemological position for this study. As has been explored in the empirical paper, this position is aligned with participatory action research and mixed methods approaches along with reflexive thematic analysis. Taking a critical realist position has allowed the study to take account of the underlying structures which are impacting on the use of representative books in primary schools.

An alternative approach could have been to take a social constructionist perspective to ontology and analyse the data using discourse analysis (Potter &

Wetherell, 1987). This would have involved analysing the focus group data as a social text, examining how the speakers construct their reality. However, this would not have led to the identification of shared experiences and themes as was possible with inductive, reflexive thematic analysis. Additionally, it would not have allowed for the exploration of factors underpinning the use of representative books in primary schools. Furthermore, the mixed-methods approach in including quantitative survey results would not have fitted with a social constructionist position.

Conducting the Literature Review

The purpose of conducting a literature review is to situate the current piece of research within the research which is already published in the area (Bell & Wtares, 2018). Before embarking on the literature searches which would lead to the review, I needed to decide on a suitable theoretical framework for the study. I was very aware that researching children's literature could be based in a number of disciplines. However, as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I needed to situate the study within a psychological theoretical framework.

My initial thoughts for a theoretical framework were to focus on the impact of representation within children's books on the individual's identity. However, as ethical considerations of discussing race, culture and identity with children along with Covid-19 restrictions were going to make working with individual children difficult, attempting to study the impact on individual children's sense of identity seemed inappropriate. Furthermore, as the study was going to be based within a primary school context studying the possible links with children's sense of belonging, and in particular school belonging, seemed more achievable.

Searching for relevant literature required the identification of search terms, this was challenging as this study touched on several different disciplines, some of

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which had different labels in different countries. Therefore once a relevant academic article had been found, the references of that article were examined to identify further academic articles. It should be acknowledged that this process was likely not to have been fully objective and that there could be other literature which would have been relevant to the study which was not included.

Designing the Research

The overwhelming impression I got from my early reading was that a lack of representation in books had a negative impact on the children and young people who read them. However, in line with the British Psychological Society's (BPS's) code of human research ethics, I needed to protect my participants from harm (BPS, 2021), therefore focusing on the negative experiences didn't seem appropriate. I therefore wanted to find a way to focus on the positive experiences of when children do experience representation in books.

Teachers are the gatekeepers to children accessing books which represent them in schools. If I was to research children's positive experiences of representation then I needed to work with staff in schools to either capture the impact of the positive experiences they were already having, or to create opportunities for children to experience representation in books which I could then capture in the research.

The idea of working with staff to effect change led to the decision to use a participatory action research design. Action research can be emancipatory (Kinsler, 2010) this therefore fitted with the concept of the research being a 'disruptive movement' (Milner, 2020), raising awareness of the lack of representation in children's books with the gatekeepers who could effect change. It also worked to minimise the risks identified in working with children and young people in a sensitive

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area. This is achieved because rather than the children being part of a single focus group with a researcher who they haven't met before, discussing potentially difficult topics, the children would be part of a longer piece of work, incorporating representative books in their lessons, furthermore, staff who are familiar to the children could help facilitate the focus group discussions and be available to discuss any difficulties with the children afterwards.

I was also aware that being a white, British, female researcher could affect how participants share their experiences with me and was therefore keen to find ways to minimise this effect. Again, having familiar school staff helping to facilitate the focus groups would hopefully enable the children to be more open and honest about their experiences.

Using action research meant that I could not make all the decisions about the design of the research as elements of the design were dependent on the school who became part of the project. For example, if the school were already using representative books in their work, then the design could have taken an appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) approach, examining what is already working well and building on that. However, if the school had not considered using representative books then an appreciative inquiry approach would not be suitable and a cyclical action research approach (McNiff, 2017) would be more suitable. This felt quite uncomfortable at times as I could not nail down the details and at times the process felt out of my hands.

Formulating the Research Questions

Once the fundamentals of the research design had been decided, the research questions could be finalised. Although the initial aim of the research was to give a voice to children concerning representation in the books they read, in deciding

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on an action research design, the research questions needed to reflect the work undertaken with the staff in the school to implement representative books.

Additionally, the final design of the study would depend on teachers' experiences with representative books, this therefore needed to be gauged at the beginning of the study in order to shape the research around their experiences to date.

The research questions were therefore centred on these three different strands of the research study. Firstly, the children (What impact does representation in children's books have on the children who read them?), secondly, the staff (What perceptions and experiences do class teachers have in relation to representation in children's books?) and finally, the participatory nature of the research (What facilitates teachers in primary schools to increase their use of representative books?).

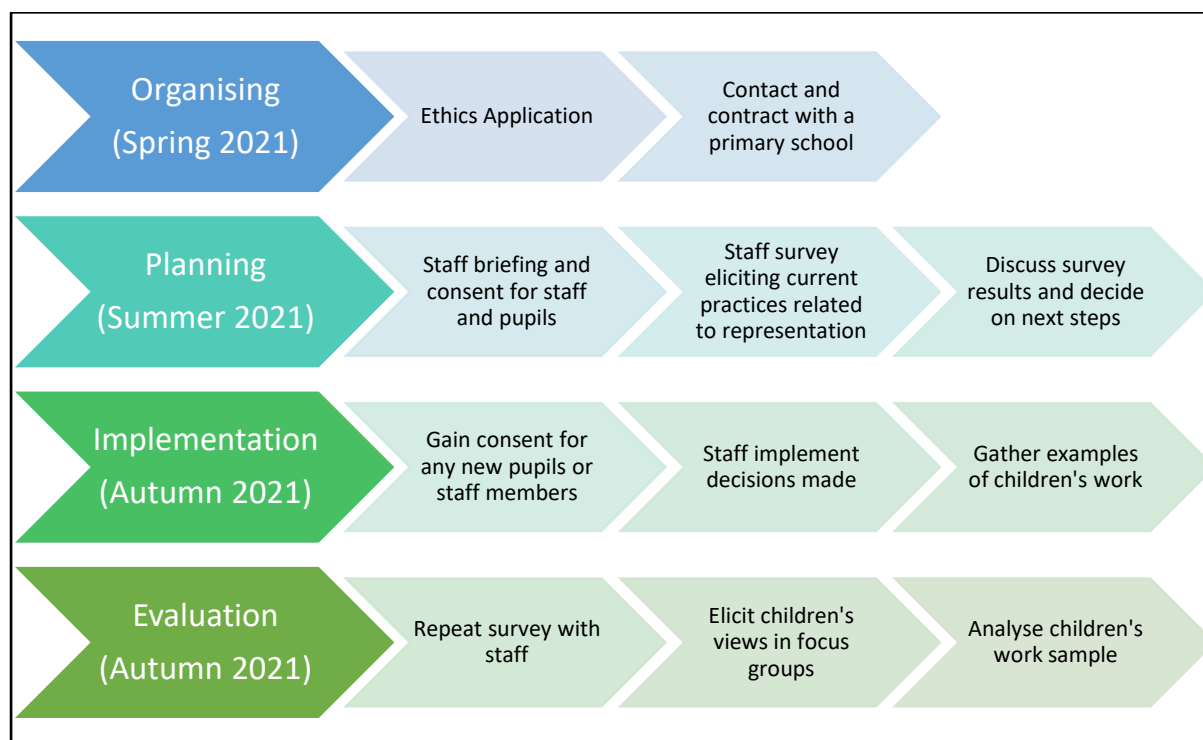
Conducting the Research in the School

Timescales

The original timeline (figure 3) for the study involved contracting during the spring term of 2021, carrying out an initial staff survey and deciding on next steps in the summer term. This would give staff the summer holiday to plan their work including representative books ready to implement them in September. Leaving me the rest of the autumn term to carry out focus groups, interviews and the staff survey for the second time.

Figure 2

Original Timeline for the Study



Many of the questions concerning the design of the research depended on the nature of the school recruited for the study. The advert was sent out to all heads by the director for education in the local authority where I am on placement. This was another moment of the research feeling out of my control, I was assured that the advert would be sent out but the wait for this to happen felt endless, I was torn between chasing up and trusting that it was all in hand. However, within a few hours of the advert being sent out, I had three expressions of interest from schools.

Within a few days I had met virtually with two members of staff at the first school to email me, they gained approval from their head teacher and were committed to taking part in the project. My dream was to have an entire school taking part in the project, for the senior leadership team to embrace being part of a research study and to dedicate a whole inset day and several staff meetings to taking part. This was wholly unrealistic, particularly as I was contracting at the end

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of the school year. I had set the minimum number of staff taking part at four, with involvement across the key stages. What was offered to me was three class teachers, in years 2, 4 and 6 plus the two senior leaders I had spoken to. What was not clear was why these particular teachers had been selected, and if other teachers had had the opportunity to take part if they had wanted to. The senior leaders who I was liaising with had become gatekeepers to the teachers and consequently, the study felt out of my control again, I put this down to the nature of participatory research. Furthermore, as this was nearing the end of the summer term and was much later in the year than I had originally planned for, I was grateful for any participants.

I met virtually with all five teachers at the end of the summer term, explained the project, shared the information sheets and links to the online consent form. Once the consent form was returned, I sent out the link to the anonymous staff survey. Again, this took much longer than I had planned for and we entered September 2021 without all the consent forms in, let alone the staff surveys. What this did mean was that new members of staff had the opportunity to join the study; three teachers new to the school gave their consent in early September, taking the participant numbers to 8, I was thrilled! Two of these new participants did not complete the initial staff survey; I was very aware that this research was top of my priority list but in a busy school, the voluntary participation in a study was not likely to be a high priority for the teachers, especially for those finding their way in a new school. Therefore, I was mindful of sending chasing emails to the teachers, whilst trying to keep the research within a manageable timescale.

Recruiting Children to Participate

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All parents of children in the classes with teachers taking part in the study were sent the information sheet and consent form for their child to take part. Given the diverse nature of the school and the lack of parental engagement the school tends to achieve, the information was sent out via email with the thought that another approach may need to be taken if there was a lack of response. However, within a few days, I had consent for 28 children to participate, and the school had a phone call from a parent of a child in a different year group who wanted their child to take part.

The response of the parents led me to wonder if this topic area is particularly important to parents and whether their voices also need to be heard. I briefly considered adapting the design of the study to incorporate the views of parents. However, on reflection, this study was already quite ambitious and adding another aspect did not seem sensible at this time. However, this is something which may be interesting to follow up in another research study.

I created two PowerPoint presentations for staff to share with the children, rather than using child information sheets. In making them, I created one with Year 2 children in mind and a second more suitable for older children. I sent both through to the school staff who requested that all children had the younger version. Teachers reported that having seen the PowerPoint children were very keen to help in the research. Some children did not consent to being audio recorded which meant that on this occasion they could not take part, had we used work samples as originally planned, their work could have been included. Other children were absent on the day of the focus groups. This meant that of the 31 children who had parental consent, 18 took part in the focus groups. Unfortunately, further focus groups to

catch those children who were absent could not be arranged as it was difficult for staff to be released to facilitate them in school.

Participatory Action Research?

Participatory action research is a “collective self-reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves” (Baum et al., 2006, p.854). Using this definition this research study was participatory action research as the teachers were undertaking a self-reflective inquiry with me. However, their workloads and busy meeting schedules meant that their participation was limited, either by the number of sessions they could attend, the amount of time they could give to selecting and using representative books or the time they had available to complete questionnaires and keep in touch with me.

There was a limit therefore to how much participation all the teachers had in terms of shaping the study. For instance, the meeting to discuss the initial survey results and decide on the next steps the teachers would take to implement the books had to be cut short due to staff needing to be at other meetings. Consequently, these decisions were made by a select number of staff meaning that other ideas or directions could not be pursued. It also meant that those staff members who could not stay for the whole meeting were being told what actions were being taken rather than being part of the process to decide, this could lead to some teachers feeling a lack of autonomy over the study leading to questions as to whether this action research was truly participatory.

Training

The initial staff survey indicated that staff would like more training related to representation in children's books and in the curriculum. I delivered two training

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sessions to as many members of staff could attend (Appendix J and K), this was not the full group of eight teachers on either occasion. Taking on the training of staff as well as being involved with the teachers as a researcher did raise some concerns about my dual role within the school (HCPC Competency 2.8). However, the benefits of the staff receiving the training outweighed any conflicts of interest that I may have had in delivering it. This was particularly true as the school were not sure where to turn to get the training from anyone else, particularly when there was no budget allocated for this. Results from the staff surveys indicated that the training was beneficial to those who attended with the highest mean score increases seen in relation to training.

Data Collection

Data was going to be collected in a number of ways as part of the study. Through staff surveys at the beginning and end of the study, focus group interviews with children and paired or individual interviews with staff and through the analysis of a work sample from the children. There was a possibility of conducting staff focus groups rather than interviews, however, it was difficult to get enough staff together at the same time to run a focus group. Conducting individual and paired interviews did enable every voice to be heard and more detail to be gained from each teacher and therefore increased the richness of the data.

Questions for the staff survey were informed by questions identified by Verkuyten and Thijs (2013) in their studies measuring equality as part of multiculturalism in schools. These were adjusted in some cases so that the phrasing became 'it is important to me to...' rather than 'it is important for me to...', this subtle difference was a deliberate choice so that a truly personal response was gained. Responding to 'it is important for me to...' could elicit a response of 'yes, it is

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important for me to do it because my boss tells me to' and does not get to the personal thoughts of the individual. Teachers were asked to respond using Likert and ten-point scales to allow comparison of scores between the two surveys, with the knowledge that more detailed responses could be gained in the interviews to be analysed qualitatively.

Open-ended questions for the staff interviews were written to elicit the impact that the project had on the children in their classes and their own teaching practices, along with the experience of being part of a research project. The questions for the second staff survey mirrored the first survey, however, as the survey was sent out after the staff interviews, text boxes were added so that staff could add in any further thoughts or ideas which they had not shared in the interviews for whatever reason. Had the staff been in focus groups I think these would have been used more, however staff generally seemed content that their interviews had covered all that they wanted to say.

Questions for the children's focus groups were informed by Chambers' (2011) 'Tell Me' approach, along with further questions to elicit the children's views about representation in books. There were also going to be questions around a work sample from the children. I had envisaged pictures or extracts of extended writing which demonstrated the impact that the representative books had had on the children. In the actual event, this was not possible. The books in year 2 were used as end of the day class readers and as such didn't generate any work. The books in year 4 and year 6 were used in reading lessons and so the work carried out in relation to the books tended to be comprehension questions rather than extended writing. The comprehension questions were not really a suitable stimulus for the focus groups, so this part of the questioning was omitted.

Data Analysis

A mixed methods approach was taken to the data analysis with quantitative analysis of the staff surveys and qualitative analysis of the children's focus groups and teacher interviews. The quantitative analysis allowed the impact of the study on the teachers to be measured through statistical comparison of scores gained in the staff survey. The qualitative analysis allowed the voices of children and teachers to be heard with respect to representation in children's books. This was the aspect of the study which I was particularly keen to incorporate, however the addition of the quantitative measure allowed for triangulation between the different data types.

Caution was needed around the quantitative and qualitative data collected as the participants were involved in all stages of the research and were fully aware of the aims of the research and my views as the researcher. This may have led to the participants answering questions in a way which was perceived to be desirable to me or to the research aims. This was unavoidable within a participatory action research study with emancipatory aims, which was being carried out by one researcher.

Quantitative

Only six of the eight teachers completed the initial staff survey, as explained above, this was despite several prompts to complete it. However, it was possible to get all eight teachers to complete the second survey. Survey responses were matched using the demographic data to allow a comparison of the two data points. As only six teachers completed both surveys, only these were used for the comparison of means. Given the small number of participants, it was decided not to use tests of difference on the data as the power of any such tests was likely to be small and therefore not necessarily detecting a true effect. The comparison of means gave an indication of where there had been changes for the teachers who

were part of the study which were then able to be explored further using reflexive thematic analysis.

Thematic Analysis

As outlined in the methodology section, inductive, reflexive thematic analysis was utilised using Braun and Clarke's (2022) six phase model. Using this phased model allowed me to be methodical and consistent in my analysis of the data as is deemed to be important in qualitative research (Watts, 2014).

Reflexive thematic analysis was chosen to analyse the qualitative data as there was the potential to have many different experiences described by the children and teachers participating the study. Therefore, identifying themes across these experiences would give an insight to the use of representative children's books in that school. An alternative, quantitative approach could have been to measure the children's sense of belonging using an established questionnaire. However, this would not have fitted with the desire to give children a voice which has been lacking in previous research into representative books in the UK. The validity of such questionnaires with young children could also be questioned, impacting on the rigour of the study.

Given the aim to give a voice to the children and teachers, an inductive approach to reflexive thematic analysis was taken, this allowed them to describe their experiences. I needed to be led by their responses to the study as their experiences are likely to be different to my own, therefore an inductive approach was needed.

Through transcribing the interviews and focus groups, checking and re-checking the transcripts, I was very familiar with my qualitative data. I was therefore ready to start ascribing initial codes to the transcripts (Braun and Clark (2022) phase

2) (Appendix L). To do this I used Watt's (2014) what/how system, for each part of the transcript I identified what the participant was talking about and later added how they were saying it. This allowed me to be systematic and consistent in my approach as I worked my way through from the beginning of the first transcript to the end of the last. It also allowed me to stay close to the data, meaning that my codes reflected the participants views of the topics discussed (Watts, 2014).

Following the generation of the initial codes, the full transcripts including these codes were sent to the teachers giving them the opportunity to check that my coding fitted with their viewpoint. None of the teachers expressed any concerns about the coding, enabling the analysis to begin. Unfortunately, it was not possible to check the initial codes with the children's focus group transcripts and initial codes, but this is something which I would wish to consider in future research.

Braun and Clark's (2022) next phases incorporated generating initial themes (phase 3), developing and reviewing these themes (phase 4), before refining, defining and naming them (phase 5). This involved taking an overview of all the codes and the associated extracts, grouping, expanding and collapsing codes to generate themes. I found this much easier to do on paper rather than on screen (Appendix M). Throughout this process I endeavoured to continue to stay close to the data, in that I was continually considering what message the participant was giving in that particular extract, rather than taking extracts out of context and interpreting them from my own, possibly different, perspective. This was a long, iterative but exciting stage of the research as my findings were starting to take shape in front of me. It felt at times as though I was going round in circles checking extracts against possible themes and possible themes against the data set as a whole. There were also times when I had to check that my process was staying true

to being inductive and driven by the data in nature. This was particularly true when extracts within the initial theme of 'representative texts as positive' was split into 'representative texts as positive for the reader who was represented' (mirrors) and 'representative texts as positive for the reader who is not represented' (windows). However, over time, the iterative process did lead to the grouping of themes into overarching themes, main themes and subthemes, and I was confident that the analysis was inductive.

For the analysis of the extracts within the themes, I chose to stay close to the data in the findings section. This meant expanding on what the participants had said without drawing on existing literature or theories. Theories and existing literature were brought into the discussion enabling the triangulation between the quantitative and qualitative findings and the existing literature.

Limitations

Teacher workload

As has been touched on already, the workload of the teachers involved was prohibitive to them taking a full participatory role in the study. Workload was also recognised by the teachers themselves as being a barrier to choosing suitable books which were representative of the children in their classes. On reflection, staff may have wanted greater support from me at that stage. My assumption was that they knew their curriculum and classes best and would therefore be best placed to choose the books having been signposted to some suitable book websites. Furthermore, I wanted the staff to engage in this part of the process as it is key to them choosing books in the future. However, it may have been better had I done some research for the teachers and given them shortlists of books for them to

choose from. This may not have altered the outcomes of the study, but it may have made the research less of a burden to the teachers involved.

Remote working

University of East Anglia covid-19 restrictions on in-person research meant that the study had to be conducted remotely. This was understandable given the nature of the pandemic, however, it also presented challenges to conducting the study.

Remote working meant that all our meetings had to be held over Microsoft Teams. Parts of the school had weaker internet connections so if staff joined from those parts of the school, they were not able to have their cameras on, making it difficult to pick up on non-verbal cues. Furthermore, there were occasions when there were multiple people socially distanced in one room which made it difficult for the microphone to pick up what everyone was saying, this inevitably interrupted the flow of discussion as points needed to be repeated for my sake.

Fundamentally, the necessity of remote working affected the connection between myself as the researcher and the teachers as collaborative participants. Within a participatory action research approach this was particularly challenging. I wonder how different the teachers' involvement would have been had we been able to meet in person. It may have been possible for staff to complete the consent and initial survey there and then on iPads, enabling a more comprehensive quantitative analysis and less waiting time to get started. The discussions we had may have been richer had I been able to more effectively facilitate the meetings and pick up on the non-verbal cues in the room. Furthermore, I wonder if the staff would have had a greater commitment to the study had that connection been stronger. This may have affected attendance at the meetings and training may have been higher had I been

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physically in the school, it is much easier to decline a virtual meeting than an in-person meeting.

Remote working may have also affected the focus groups with the children. I facilitated the focus groups on a Teams call, with a member of school staff in the room with the children. Video calls take some getting used to and although most of the children seemed happy to take part in the discussions some were more hesitant, I don't know whether that was due to their own personality and disposition or the remote circumstances. Again, had I been able to be in a room with the children, looking at the books together and facilitating the sharing of their experiences, the data I gathered may have been even richer.

Proposed Dissemination

This study has the potential to be published in a series of journal articles, with scope for each research question to be an article in its own right. Given the British Psychological Society's (BPS's) Division of Educational and Child Psychology's commitment to supporting research into inclusion (DECP, 2022), publication in BPS journals, such as the British Journal of Educational Psychology, may be explored. Alternatively, the British Journal of Educational Research or Educational Psychology in Practice may also be possible outlets.

The findings of the study indicated that teachers felt that the use of representative texts was something which should be shared with other staff within their school. The findings will therefore be disseminated to the wider school staff as well as to the parents and children who expressed an interest in the results of the study. Given that the school is part of a Multi Academy Trust, the findings may also be shared at a Trust level, therefore impacting on more schools.

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There is also scope for the development of a training programme for teachers, based on the training sessions given during the study along with the incorporation of the results. This could be delivered by the local authority Educational Psychology Service and would meet the brief of sharing research with teachers to increase inclusion within schools (DECP, 2022).

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Appendix A

Staff Survey 1

Representation definition: children being able to see a character that represents themselves in a book they read (their ethnicity, race, disability, gender identity etc.).

Training

- I have had training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in the curriculum.
(Yes/No)
- I have had sufficient training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in the curriculum.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- I have had training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in children's books.
(Yes/No)
- I have had sufficient training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in children's books.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Planning

- Attending to cultural differences in my planning is important.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- How would you rate your confidence in planning learning which includes positive representations? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- I use books in my teaching which are representative of the children in my class.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- It is important to me to use books which are representative of my class in my lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- How would you rate your confidence in planning learning which use books which are representative of your class? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Classroom resources

- Fiction books in my classroom are representative of the children in my class.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Non-fiction books in my classroom are representative of the children in my class.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Poetry books in my classroom are representative of the children in my class.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

- I have enough resources (books, puzzles, toys, games, art materials) in my classroom to plan learning opportunities which are representative of the children in my class.

Library resources

- Fiction books in the school library are representative of the children in our school.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Non-fiction books in the school library are representative of the children in our school.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Poetry books in the school library are representative of the children in our school.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Different cultures in the UK

- I talk about different cultures in the UK in lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- How would you rate your confidence in talking about different cultures in the UK in lessons? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- In which subjects do you teach about cultural differences?
 - English, Maths, Science, Geography, History, Languages, Art and Design, Music, RE, PSHE, DT, PE, Computing, Citizenship
- Children in my class spontaneously talk about different cultures in the UK in lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Children in my class will participate in an adult directed discussion about different cultures in the UK in lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Children in my class talk about different cultures in the UK at non-structured times (break/lunch).
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- It is important to me to teach about cultural differences in the UK.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- It is important to me to teach about respecting other cultures.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Discrimination and racism

- I talk about discrimination and racism during lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- How would you rate your confidence in talking about discrimination and racism during lessons? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- In which subjects do you teach about racism and discrimination?
 - English, Maths, Science, Geography, History, Languages, Art and Design, Music, RE, PSHE, DT, PE, Computing, Citizenship

- It is important to me to teach about racism and discrimination.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Other

- The anti-racism protests of 2020 have led to changes in education?
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- The anti-racism protests of 2020 have led to changes in my classroom practice?
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- The anti-racism protests of 2020 have increased my awareness of issues of race in the UK.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Participant details

- Ethnicity (What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)
 - White
 - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
 - Irish
 - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
 - Any other White background, please describe
 - Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
 - White and Black Caribbean
 - White and Black African
 - White and Asian
 - Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background, please describe
 - Asian/Asian British
 - Indian
 - Pakistani
 - Bangladeshi
 - Chinese
 - Any other Asian background, please describe
 - Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British
 - African
 - Caribbean
 - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please describe
 - Other ethnic group
 - Arab
 - Any other ethnic group, please describe)
 - Prefer not to say
- Gender (Male, Female, Other, Prefer not to say)
- Length of time since qualification (Less than 2 years, 3-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, more than 21 years, prefer not to say)
- Age (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 and over, prefer not to say)
- Role in school (class teacher, teaching assistant, senior leadership team, prefer not to say) Tick as many as are appropriate.

Appendix B

Children's Focus Group Questions

Responding to the book used in the unit of work

Questions will be revised based on the teaching materials used.

- Tell me about this book.
- Book Talk:
 - Likes: What caught your attention? What was your favourite part?
 - Dislikes: was there anything that put you off?
 - Puzzles: was there anything you found strange or surprising?
 - Patterns and connections: were there any patterns you noticed? Did it remind you of anything?
- What do you think the author was trying to do in this book?
- Has this book given you any new ideas or changed any of your ideas?

Responding to work sample stimuli

Questions will be revised based on the stimuli used and will follow the pattern:

- Tell me about this piece of writing/picture.
- Tell me about the characters in this piece of writing/picture.

Reflecting Realities in books

- Do you find characters like you in the books you read?
- How does that make you feel?
- Do you find characters like your friends in the books you read?
- Do you think it matters? Why?
- Is it important for you to find characters like you and your friends in books? Why?
- How do you think it would be if you couldn't find characters like you in the books you read?

Home and school differences

- Do you read different books at home and at school?
- Do you feel differently at home and at school?

Appendix C

Staff Focus Group Questions

Experiences of the research

1. Tell me about a positive experience of using representative texts in your teaching?
2. What negative experiences were there when using representative texts in your teaching?
3. What impact on the children have you seen?
4. Was there anything you found surprising?
5. What has been the best part of being part of the project?
6. What was the trickiest part?
7. How has the project affected how you plan for your class?
 - In English
 - In other curriculum areas (if so which ones)?
8. Has the project affected how you choose and use other resources?
9. How will the project affect your classroom practice going forward?
10. Are there any barriers to including representative books in your work?
11. Is there anything you would like further training on?
12. Is there anything else you would like further support with?
13. What would you want to share from the project with other staff in your school?
14. What would you want to share from the project with other schools?
15. What do you think the next steps for the school should be following the project?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about the project?
17. Word round-up: Can you share one word summarising your experience of being part of the project?

Appendix D

Staff Survey 2

Representation definition: children being able to see a character that represents themselves in a book they read (their ethnicity, race, disability, gender identity etc.).

Training

- I have had training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in the curriculum.
(Yes/No)
- I have had sufficient training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in the curriculum.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- I have had training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in children's books.
(Yes/No)
- I have had sufficient training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in children's books.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Text box: Is there anything else you wish to share about your training experiences during the project?

Planning

- Attending to cultural differences in my planning is important.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- How would you rate your confidence in planning learning which includes positive representations? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- I use books in my teaching which are representative of the children in my class.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- It is important to me to use books which are representative of my class in my lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- How would you rate your confidence in planning learning which use books which are representative of your class? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Text box: Is there anything else you wish to share about planning and teaching experiences when using representative texts following the project?

Resources

- I have enough resources (books, puzzles, toys, games, art materials) in my classroom to plan learning opportunities which are representative of the children in my class.

- Fiction books in the school library are representative of the children in our school.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Non-fiction books in the school library are representative of the children in our school.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Poetry books in the school library are representative of the children in our school.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Text box: Is there anything else you would like to share about resources following the project?

Different cultures in the UK

- I talk about different cultures in the UK in lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- How would you rate your confidence in talking about different cultures in the UK in lessons? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- In which subjects do you teach about cultural differences?
 - English, Maths, Science, Geography, History, Languages, Art and Design, Music, RE, PSHE, DT, PE, Computing, Citizenship
- Children in my class spontaneously talk about different cultures in the UK in lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Children in my class will participate in an adult directed discussion about different cultures in the UK in lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- Children in my class talk about different cultures in the UK at non-structured times (break/lunch).
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- It is important to me to teach about cultural differences in the UK.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- It is important to me to teach about respecting other cultures.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Text box: Do you have any further comments about talking about cultural differences in your class and in your school following the project?

Discrimination and racism

- I talk about discrimination and racism during lessons.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- How would you rate your confidence in talking about discrimination and racism during lessons? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- In which subjects do you teach about racism and discrimination?
 - English, Maths, Science, Geography, History, Languages, Art and Design, Music, RE, PSHE, DT, PE, Computing, Citizenship
- It is important to me to teach about racism and discrimination.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

Text box: Do you have any further comments about discrimination and racism in schools in relation to the project?

Other

- The anti-racism protests of 2020 have led to changes in education?
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- The anti-racism protests of 2020 have led to changes in my classroom practice?
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
- The anti-racism protests of 2020 have increased my awareness of issues of race in the UK.
(Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)

EDU ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER 2020-21

APPLICANT DETAILS	
Name:	Helen Capron
School:	EDU
Current Status:	EdPsyD
UEA Email address:	H.capron@uea.ac.uk
EDU REC IDENTIFIER:	2021_04_HC_AH

Approval details	
Approval start date:	18.05.2021
Approval end date:	31.07.2022
Specific requirements of approval:	
<p>Please note that your project is only given ethical approval for the length of time identified above. Any extension to a project must obtain ethical approval by the EDU REC before continuing. Any amendments to your project in terms of design, sample, data collection, focus etc. should be notified to the EDU REC Chair as soon as possible to ensure ethical compliance. If the amendments are substantial a new application may be required.</p>	

Victoria Warburton EDU Chair, Research Ethics Committee

Helen Capron
Trainee Educational Psychologist
14th July 2021

Faculty of Social Sciences
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Lifelong Learning

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The Impact of Representation in Children's Books: A Participatory Action Research Study

STAFF INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about representation in children's books. Recent research has shown that children's reading books in the UK are not representative of the society children are growing up in. The aim of this research is to support a school to increase the use of books with representative representations in a unit of work/intervention and then gain children's perspective into the impact that this has on them. You have been invited to participate in this study because you will be working with me to plan and implement the unit of work including books with representative representations prior to seeking the children's views. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the study. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By giving consent to take part in this study you are telling me that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.
- ✓ Have received a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

Helen Capron (BSc (Hons), PGCE), Trainee Educational Psychologist

Dr Andrea Honess, Educational Psychologist/Associate Professor

There are no financial benefits to the researchers, institution or participants taking part in the research.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

You will be asked to complete an anonymous online staff survey which will ask about any training or experience using books with representative representations in your work with children. The survey also includes questions about resources in the school and attitudes to teaching about different cultures, discrimination and racism.

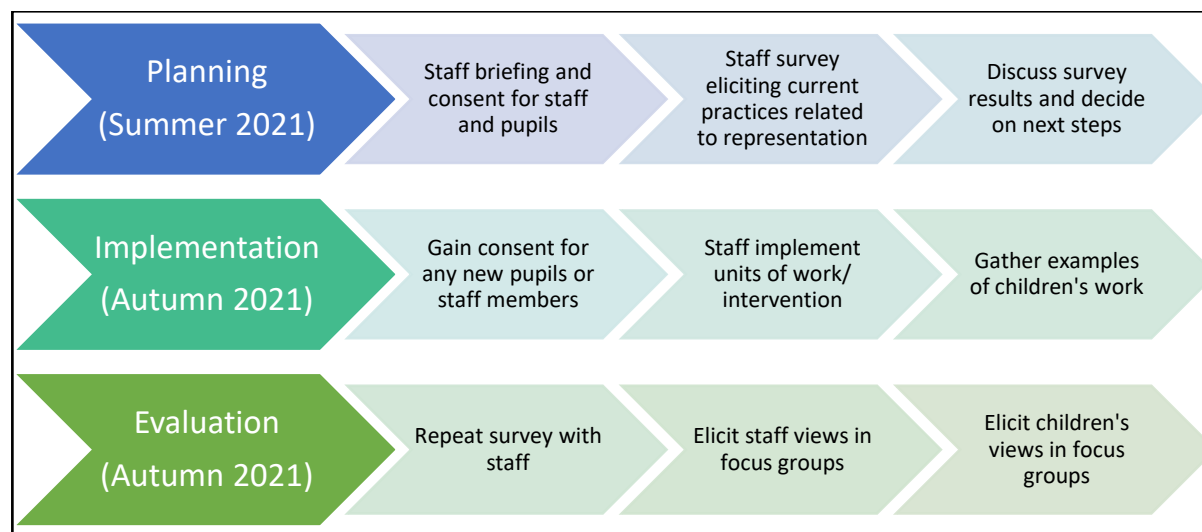
The survey results will be shared with you in a staff meeting and together we can plan the next steps for the research. The research is participatory and so will be carried out *with* you at all stages rather than being '*done to*' you.

The next steps will involve planning a unit of work or intervention, such as a book group, to be carried out in the first half of the autumn term 2021 incorporating books with representative representations. The unit of work will be incorporated into your teaching and will not require additional teaching time. An intervention may require the setting up of a book club if this does not already exist.

You will teach the unit of work during the first half of the autumn term 2021 and collect samples of work from the children which show how the book has impacted on the children's learning.

Following the unit of work you will complete the anonymous online staff survey for a second time and will take part in a focus group discussion about your experiences of the research. These discussions will be audio recorded and subsequently transcribed by the lead researcher. You will also be able to see the initial coding of the focus group transcripts prior to the full analysis so that you know I have fully understood the discussion.

The table below shows a timescale of the research:



(4) How much of my time will the study take?

Taking part in the research will involve:

- online survey (around 15 minutes)
- one twilight meeting to learn about representation in children's books and the psychological impact of using them for children (90 minutes)
- one twilight meeting to discuss next steps (90 minutes)
- time to plan the unit of work/intervention (as per your usual planning)
- delivery of the teaching (as per your usual timetable)
- repeating the online survey (around 15 minutes)
- participating in a focus group (60 minutes)
- reviewing initial coding of transcripts (60 minutes)

(5) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by contacting Helen Capron (H.Capron@uea.ac.uk). However, it will not be possible to withdraw your survey responses as these are anonymous.

If you take part in a focus group, you are free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any of the questions. However, it will not be possible to withdraw your individual comments from the records once the group has started, as it's a group discussion.

(6) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Discussions around race, discrimination and representation in books may be uncomfortable for some, this is acknowledged and the option to not answer a question or participate in the discussion is always there. The research is taking place in a supportive and inclusive way and participants who do experience discomfort will be fully supported by the research team.

Aside from this and from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any other risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(7) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

Taking part in this research will provide you with CPD in representation in children's books and the psychological impact representation has for children. It will give you opportunities to consider your own practices and further your own professional development.

The research will give the school the opportunity to improve inclusive representative practices across the whole school, benefiting the whole school community and lasting long after the research has finished.

The research may lead to the development of a training programme for other schools.

Current research into representation in books in the UK is mainly focused on the negative impact that a lack of representation has. In contrast, this research will look at the positive impact that engaging with books which have representative representations in them can have on children and will therefore add to the research literature in this important area.

(8) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise. Data management will follow the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation Act and the University of East Anglia Research Data Management Policy (2019).

Personal information collected about you in the study will be your ethnicity, gender, age, length of time since qualification and your role in school. These are questions within the anonymous online staff survey and therefore you should not be identifiable from the information. Nevertheless, there is an option "prefer not to say" available for these questions.

Audio recordings of the focus group will only be used for analysis. The transcriptions will be anonymised. You may use a pseudonym during the focus group if you wish to.

Your information will be stored securely and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published. Although every effort will be made to protect your identity, there is a risk that you might be identifiable due to the nature of the study and/or results. In this instance, data will be stored for a period of 10 years and then destroyed

The research results will be published in my doctoral thesis and may go forward to be published in an academic journal.

(9) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Helen Capron will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Dr Andrea Honess (Educational Psychologist/Associate Professor) A.Honess@uea.ac.uk.

(10) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell me that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the relevant box on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a one-page summary. You will receive this feedback at end of the study (approximately Autumn 2022).

(11) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved under the regulations of the University of East Anglia's School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Committee.

If there is a problem please let me know. You can contact me via the University at the following address:

Helen Capron
School of Education and Lifelong Learning
University of East Anglia
NORWICH NR4 7TJ
H.Capron@uea.ac.uk

If you would like to speak to someone else you can contact my supervisor:

Dr Andrea Honess, A.Honess@uea.ac.uk

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the Head of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Professor Yann Lebeau at Y.Lebeau@uea.ac.uk.

(12) OK, I want to take part – what do I do next?

You need to fill in the electronic consent form. Please keep the information sheet for your information. I will give you a copy of the consent form once it is completed.

This information sheet is for you to keep

Helen Capron

Trainee Educational Psychologist

26th March 2021

Faculty of Social Sciences

School of Education and

Lifelong Learning

University of East Anglia

Norwich Research Park

Norwich NR4 7TJ

United Kingdom

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The Impact of Representation in Children's Books: A Participatory Action Research Study

PARENTAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

Your child is invited to take part in a research study about representation in children's books. Recent research has shown that children's reading books in the UK are not representative of the society children are growing up in. The aim of this research is to support a school to increase the use of books with representative representations in their teaching and then gain children's perspective into the impact that this has on them. Your child has been invited to participate in this study because their school is working with me to plan and implement teaching including books with representative representations. Following the teaching, the children's views of these books and their impact on them will be gained. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to let your child take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By giving your consent you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree for your child to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your child's personal information as described.
- ✓ You have received a copy of this Parental Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

Helen Capron (BSc, PGCE), Trainee Educational Psychologist

Dr Andrea Honess, Educational Psychologist/Associate Professor

There are no financial benefits to the researchers, institution or participants taking part in the research, however the participating school will receive appropriate books with representative representations in order to take part in the research. These books will become the property of the school to enable this work to continue beyond the timescale of the research.

(3) What will the study involve?

Your child will take part in learning activities as part of their normal curriculum, their teachers will have planned these activities to include books with representative representations. There may be opportunities to join a book club which will also include these books.

Samples of your child(ren)'s work will be collected to see the impact the teaching has on their work.

Your child will have the opportunity to take part in a focus group discussion about the learning activities, using the work samples as a stimulus for discussion. The focus groups will also discuss if the books have had an impact on how your child views themselves and others. The focus groups will be audio recorded and subsequently transcribed by the lead researcher. The initial coding (looking for patterns) of the focus group transcripts will also be done with the children to make sure the discussion has been fully understood.

The focus groups will take place during the school day and will take place at an appropriate time during the school day so as not to affect their learning, such as during a reading session or English lesson.

(4) How much of my child's time will the study take?

Your child will participate in their normal learning activities, as such, this part of the study will not take any additional time. The focus group will last for 20-30 minutes.

(5) Does my child have to be in the study? Can they withdraw from the study once they've started?

As the planned learning activities will be part of the normal curriculum you cannot withdraw your child from these. However, if you choose for your child not to take part in the study then their work will not be included in the work sample and they will not take part in a focus group discussion.

Being in this study is completely voluntary and your child does not have to take part. Your decision whether to let them participate will not affect your/their relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia, their school or school staff, now or in the future. If you decide to let your child take part in the study and then change your mind later (or they no longer wish to take part), they are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You can let the school know in writing or your child can let their teacher know at any point. Your child's work can be withdrawn from the study up until the point that it has been anonymised ready for the focus group discussions.

If your child takes part in a focus group, they are free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any of the questions. However, it will not be possible to withdraw their individual comments from our records once the group has started, as it is a group discussion.

(6) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Discussions about representation in books are likely to include topics such as race, disability and discrimination and this may be uncomfortable for some, this is acknowledged and the option to not answer a question or participate in the discussion is always there. The focus groups will be small (no more than four children) and there will be an adult in the room at all times. As such, the study is taking place in a supportive and inclusive way and children who do experience discomfort will be fully supported by school staff and the research team.

(7) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

The research will give the school the opportunity to improve inclusive representative practices across the whole school, benefiting the whole school community and lasting long after the research has finished.

The research may lead to the development of a training programme for other schools.

Current research into representation in books in the UK is mainly focused on the negative impact that a lack of representation has. In contrast, this research will look at the positive impact that engaging with books which have representative representations in them can have on children and will therefore add to the research literature in this important area.

(8) What will happen to information that is collected during the study?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about your child for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise. Data management will follow the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation Act and the University of East Anglia Research Data Management Policy (2019).

Audio recordings of the focus group will only be used for analysis. The transcriptions will be anonymised.

Your child's information will be stored securely and your child's identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published. Although every effort will be made to protect your child's identity, **there is a risk that they might be identifiable due to the nature of the study and/or results**. In this instance, data will be stored for a period of 10 years and then destroyed

The research results will be published as a doctoral thesis and may go forward to be published in an academic journal.

(9) What if we would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Helen Capron (H.Capron@uea.ac.uk) will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Dr Andrea Honess (Educational psychologist/associate professor) A.Honess@uea.ac.uk.

(10) Will I be told the results of the study?

You and your child have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can access feedback by reading the summary sent to the Head teacher of your school. This feedback will be in the form of a one-page summary]. You will receive this feedback at end of study (Approximately Autumn 2022).

(11) What if we have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved under the regulations of the University of East Anglia's School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Committee.

If there is a problem please let me know. You can contact me via the University at the following address:

Helen Capron
School of Education and Lifelong Learning
University of East Anglia
NORWICH NR4 7TJ
H.Capron@uea.ac.uk

If you would like to speak to someone else you can contact my supervisor:

Dr Andrea Honess, A.Honess@uea.ac.uk

If you (or your child) are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the Head of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Professor Yann Lebeau at Y.Lebeau@uea.ac.uk.

(12) OK, I'm happy for my child to take part – what do I do next?

You need to fill in one copy of the consent form and return it to the school office. Please keep the letter, information sheet and the 2nd copy of the consent form for your information.

This information sheet is for you to keep

PARENT/CARER CONSENT FORM (1st Copy to Researcher)

I, [PRINT PARENT'S/CARER'S NAME], consent to my child
.....[PRINT CHILD'S NAME] participating in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

- ✓ I understand the purpose of the study, what my child will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
- ✓ I have read the Information Statement and have been able to discuss my child's involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.
- ✓ The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
- ✓ I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and my child does not have to take part. My decision whether to let them take part in the study will not affect our relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia, their school or the school staff now or in the future.
- ✓ I understand that my child can withdraw from the study at any time.
- ✓ I understand that my child may leave the focus group at any time if they do not wish to continue. I also understand that it will not be possible to withdraw their comments once the group has started as it is a group discussion.
- ✓ I understand that my child's work may be included in a work sample and I can withdraw this from the study up until the time of the focus groups.
- ✓ I understand that personal information about my child that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about my child will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
- ✓ I understand that the results of this study may be published. Although every effort will be made to protect my child's identity, they may be identifiable in these publications due to the nature of the study or results.

I consent to:

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • | Audio-recording of my child | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • | My child's participation in a focus group | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • | My child's work being included in a work sample | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signature

PRINT name

Date

PARENT/CARER CONSENT FORM (2nd Copy to Parent/Carer)

I, [PRINT PARENT'S/CARER'S NAME], consent to my child
[PRINT CHILD'S NAME] participating in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

- ✓ I understand the purpose of the study, what my child will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
✓ I have read the Information Statement and have been able to discuss my child's involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.
- ✓ The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
- ✓ I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and my child does not have to take part. My decision whether to let them take part in the study will not affect our relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia, their school or the school staff now or in the future.
- ✓ I understand that my child can withdraw from the study at any time.
- ✓ I understand that my child may leave the focus group at any time if they do not wish to continue. I also understand that it will not be possible to withdraw their comments once the group has started as it is a group discussion.
- ✓ I understand that my child's work may be included in a work sample and I can withdraw this from the study up until the time of the focus groups.
- ✓ I understand that personal information about my child that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about my child will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
- ✓ I understand that the results of this study may be published. Although every effort will be made to protect my child's identity, they may be identifiable in these publications due to the nature of the study or results.

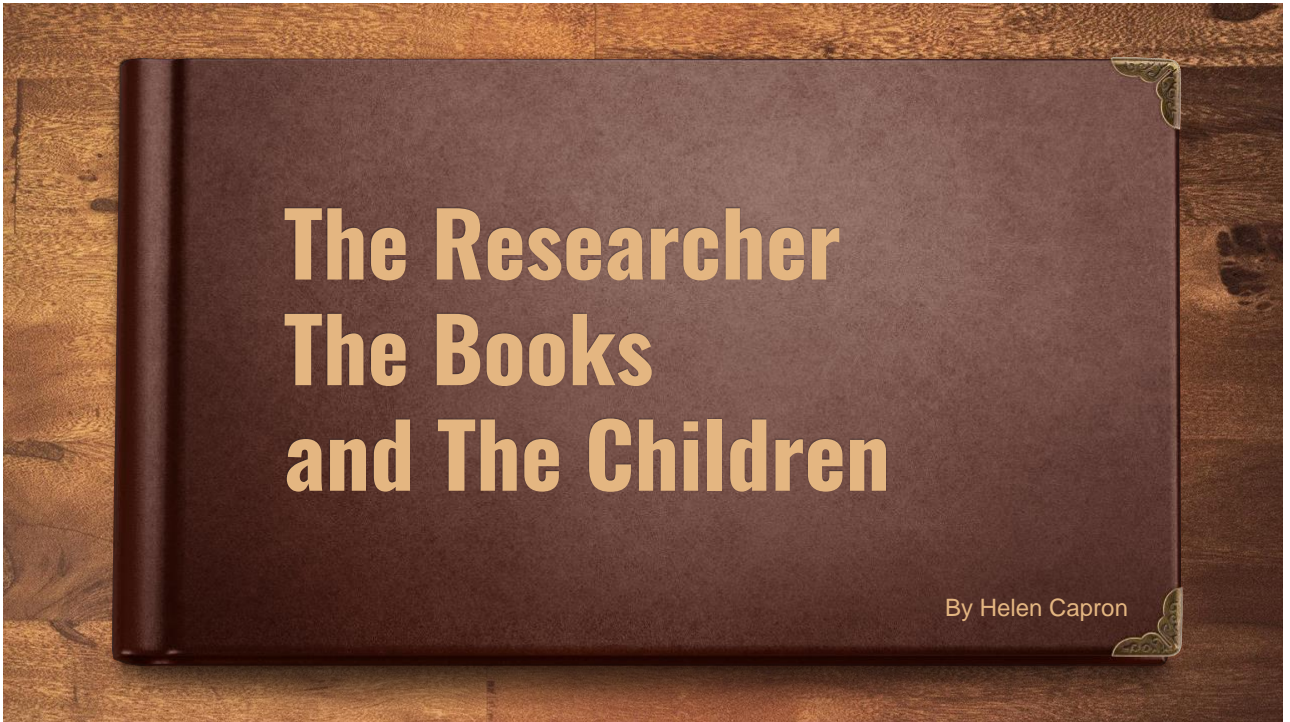
I consent to:

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • | Audio-recording of my child | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • | My child's participation in a focus group | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • | My child's work being included in a work sample | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signature

PRINT name

Date



1



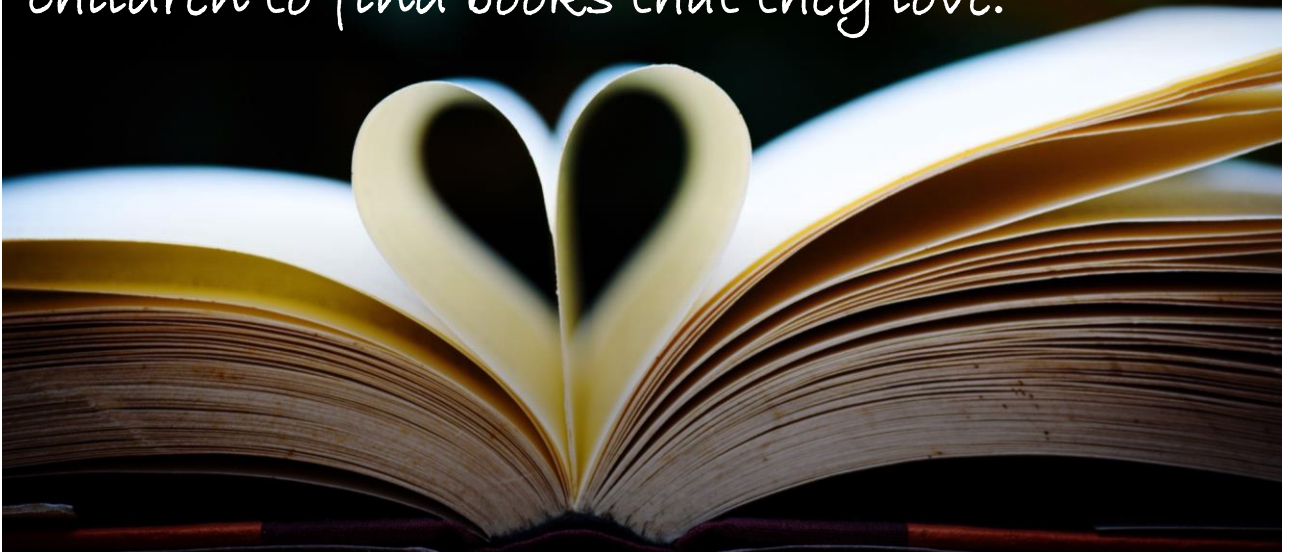
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Helen used to be a teacher. One of her favourite things about teaching was introducing new books to her class.



3

Helen thinks that it is important for all children to find books that they love.



4

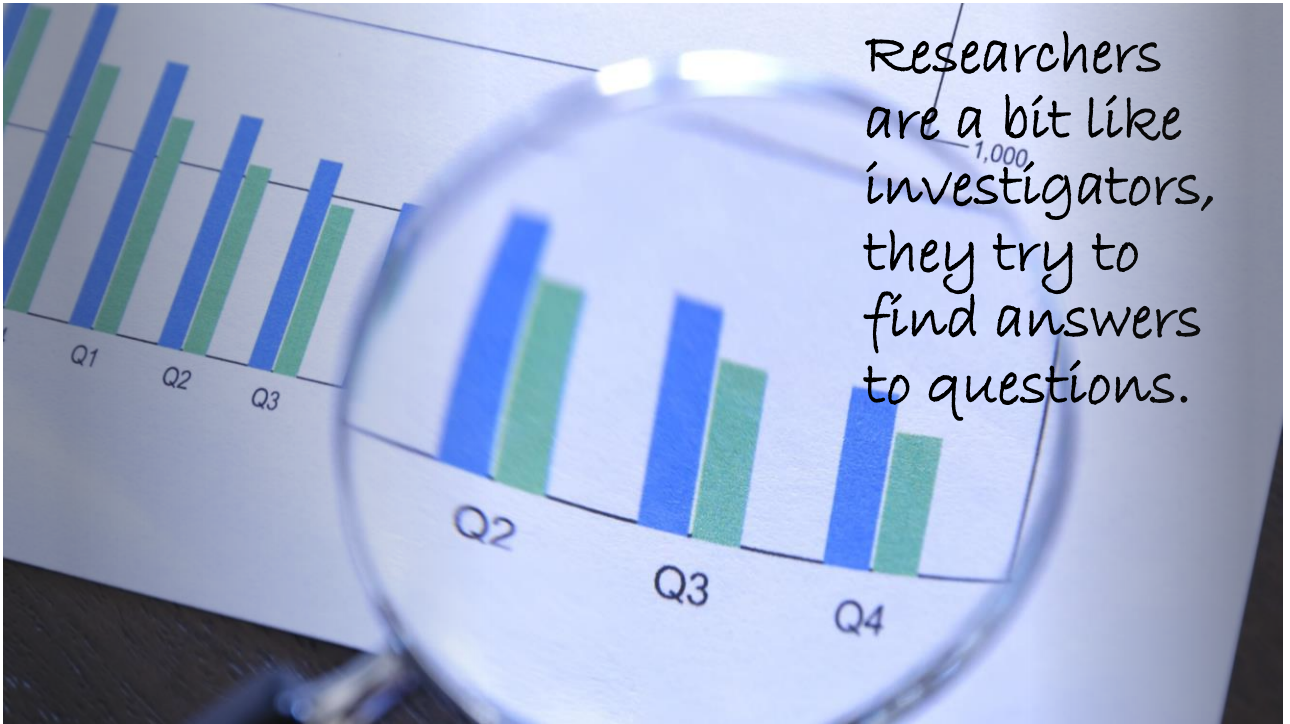
Helen doesn't teach anymore, she works with children, parents and teachers to help schools be the best they can be for everyone.

5

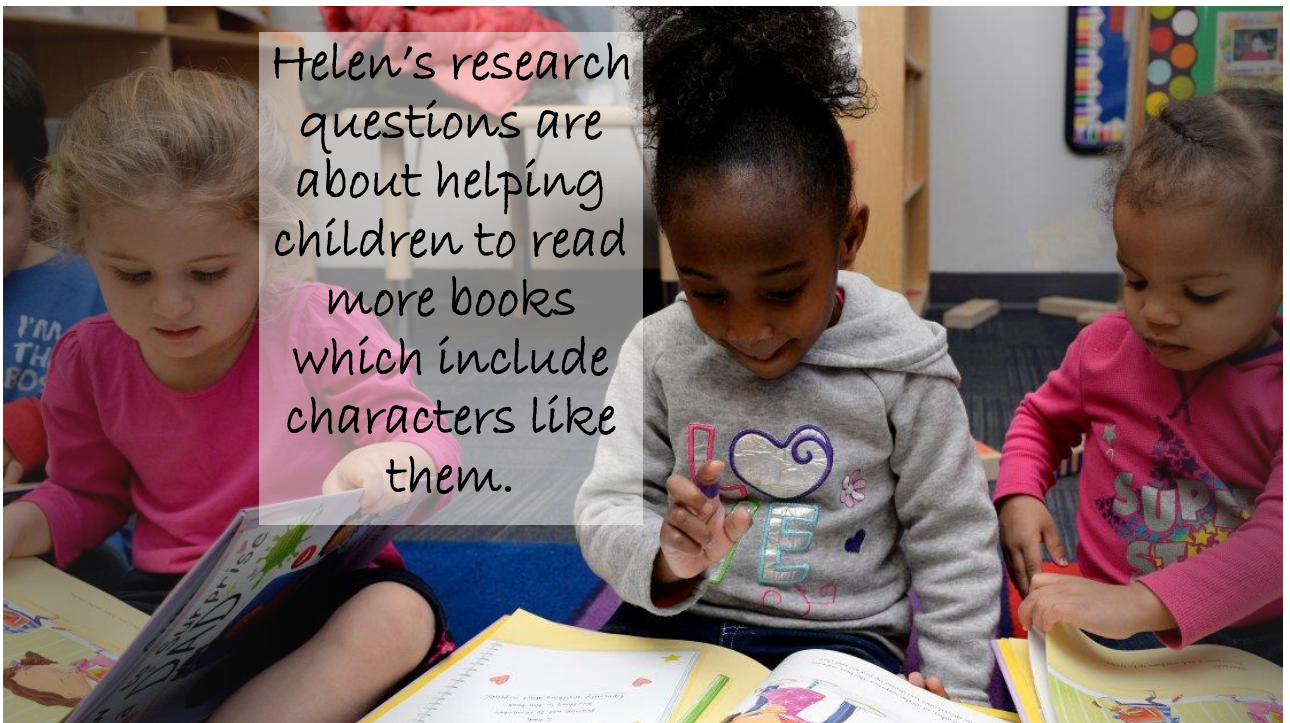


Helen still wants to help children find books that they love, including books with characters like themselves, so she is doing some research about it.

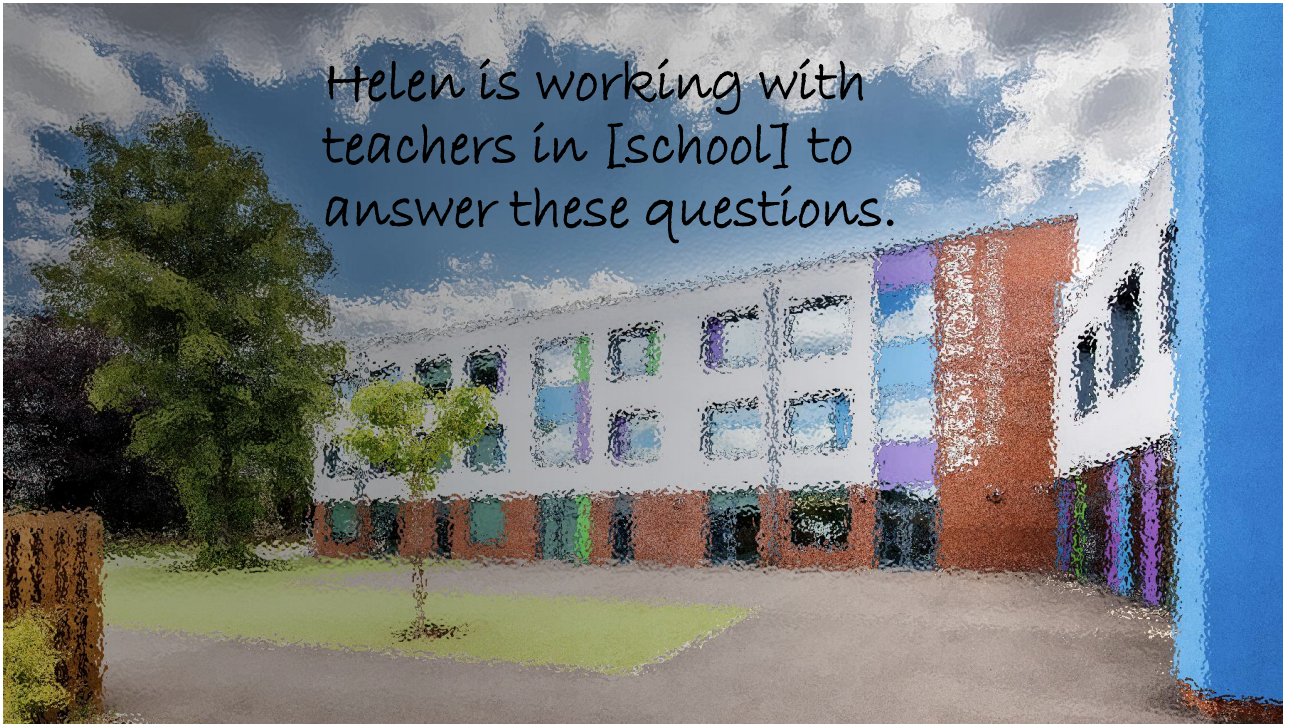
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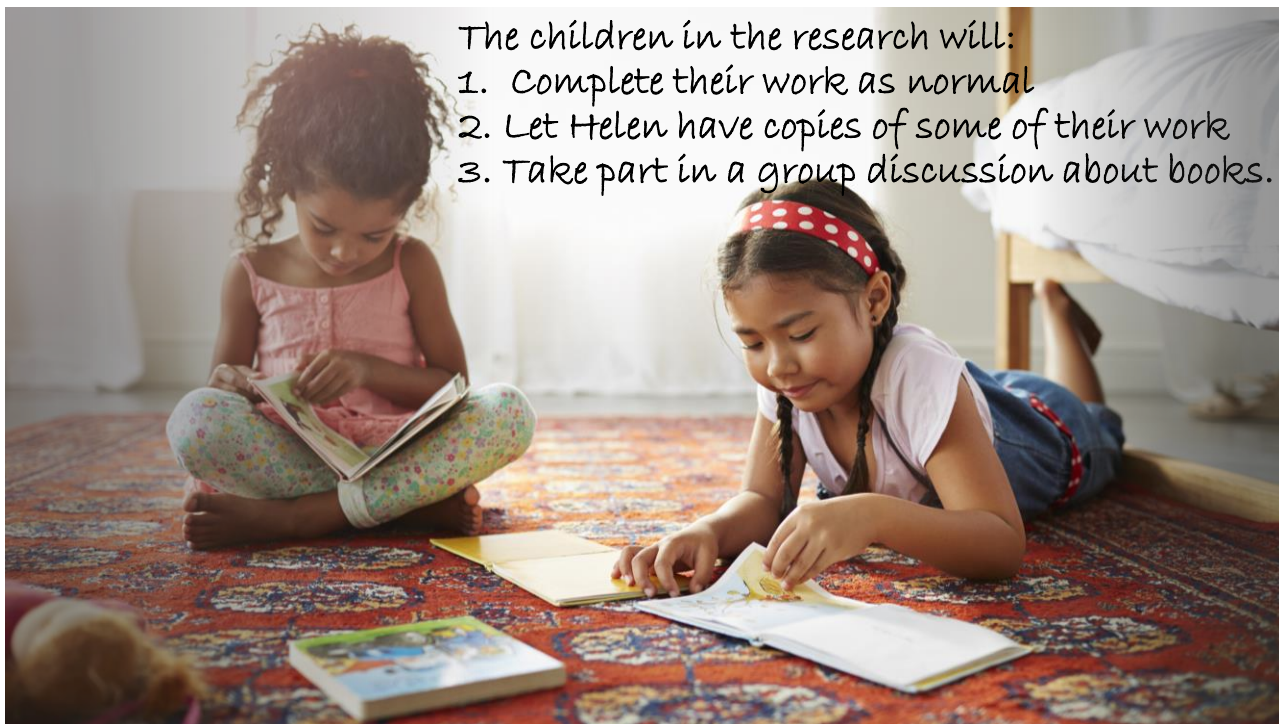
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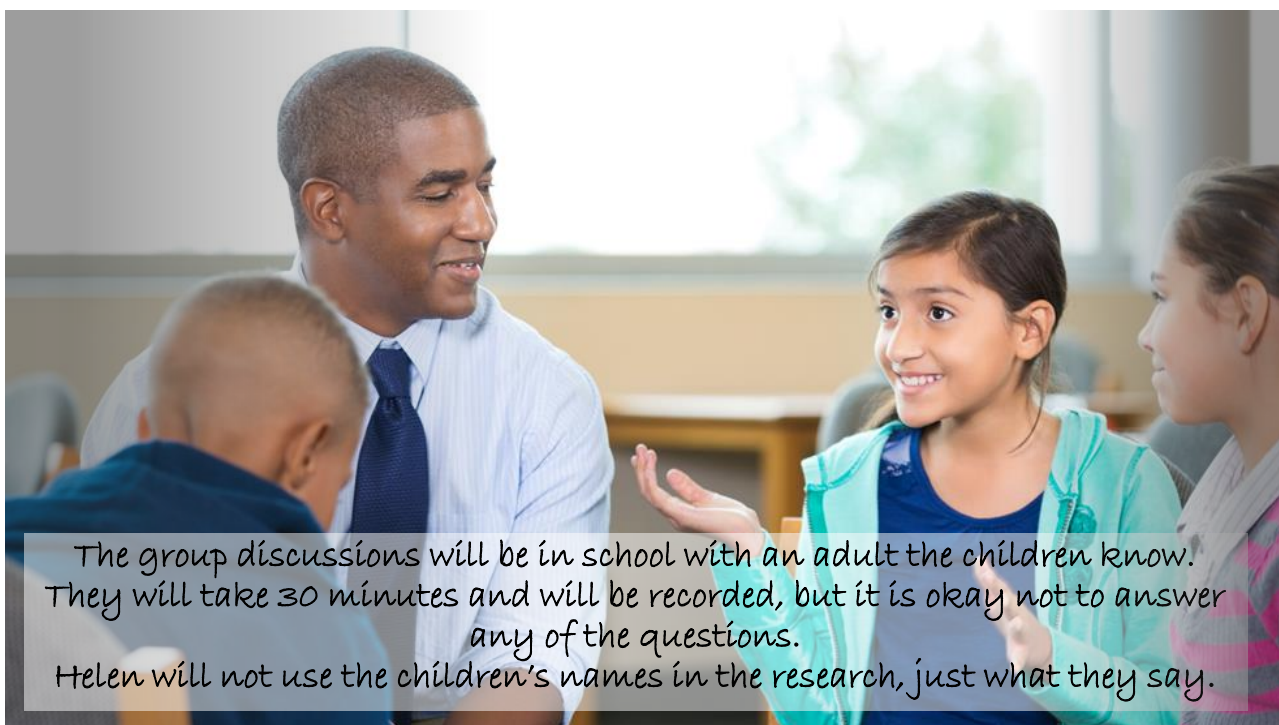
10



The children in the research will:

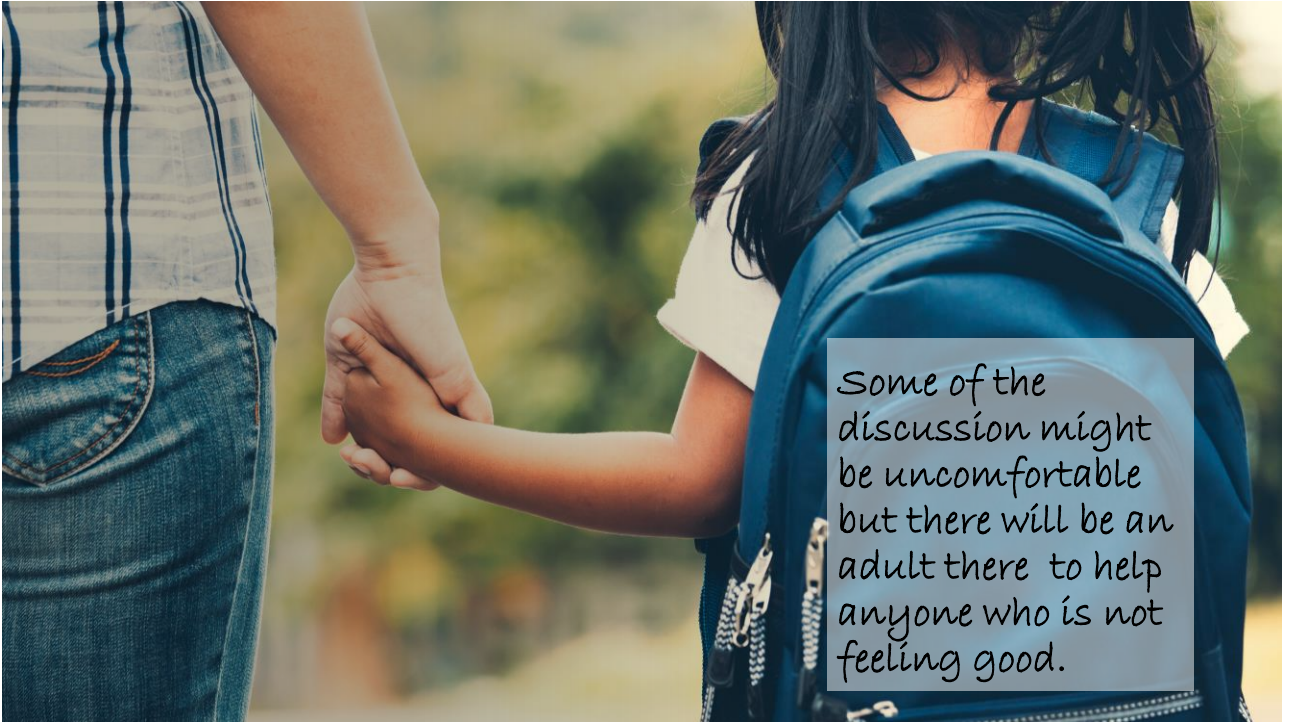
1. Complete their work as normal
2. Let Helen have copies of some of their work
3. Take part in a group discussion about books.

11



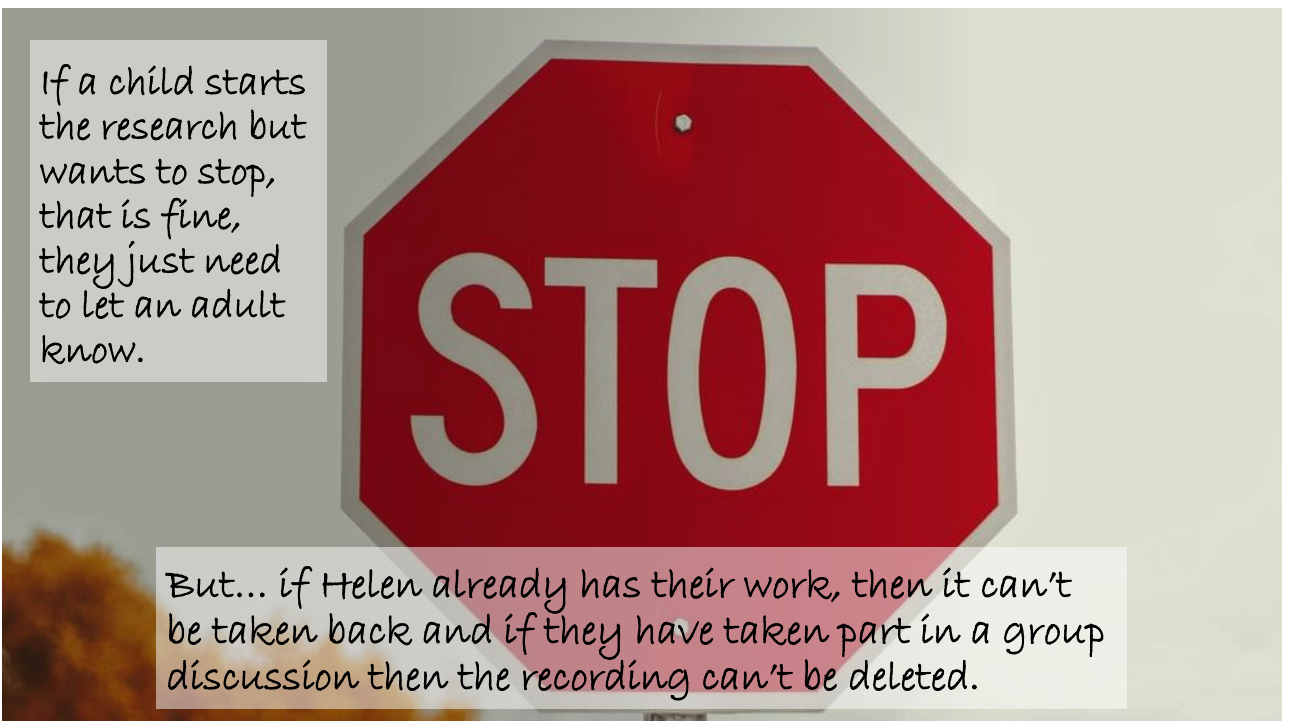
The group discussions will be in school with an adult the children know. They will take 30 minutes and will be recorded, but it is okay not to answer any of the questions. Helen will not use the children's names in the research, just what they say.

12



Some of the discussion might be uncomfortable but there will be an adult there to help anyone who is not feeling good.

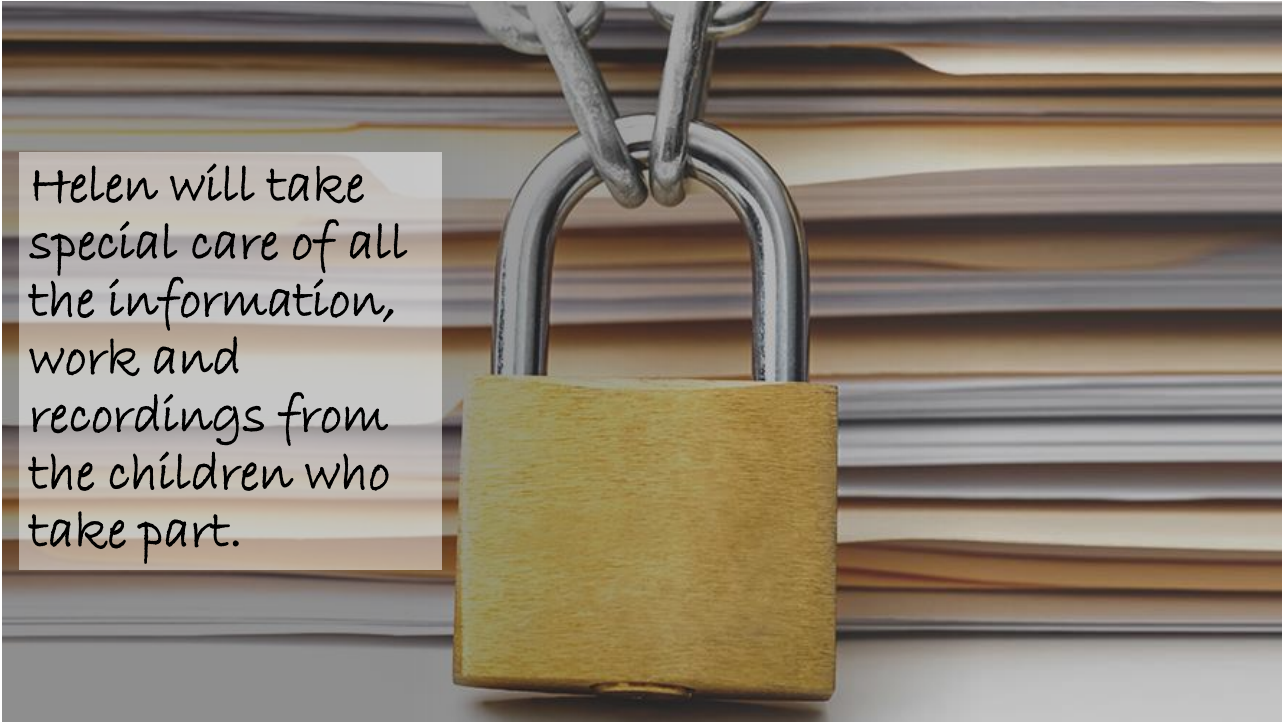
13



If a child starts the research but wants to stop, that is fine, they just need to let an adult know.

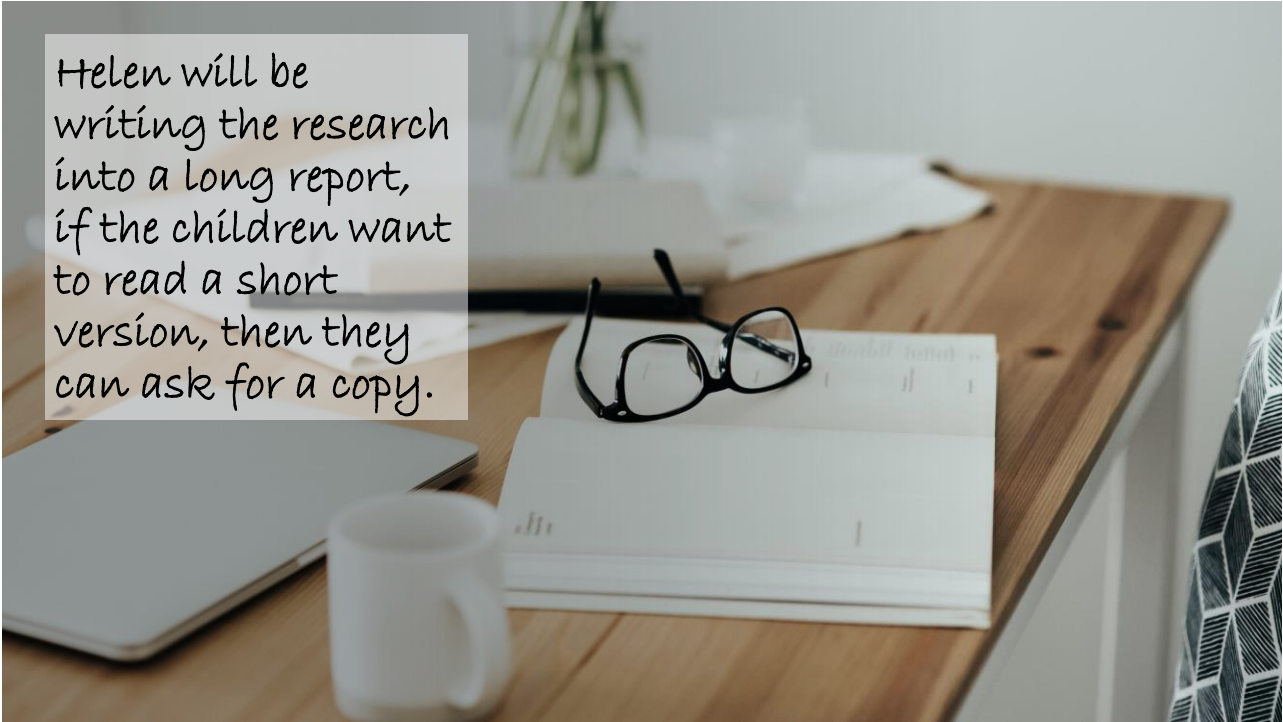
But... if Helen already has their work, then it can't be taken back and if they have taken part in a group discussion then the recording can't be deleted.

14



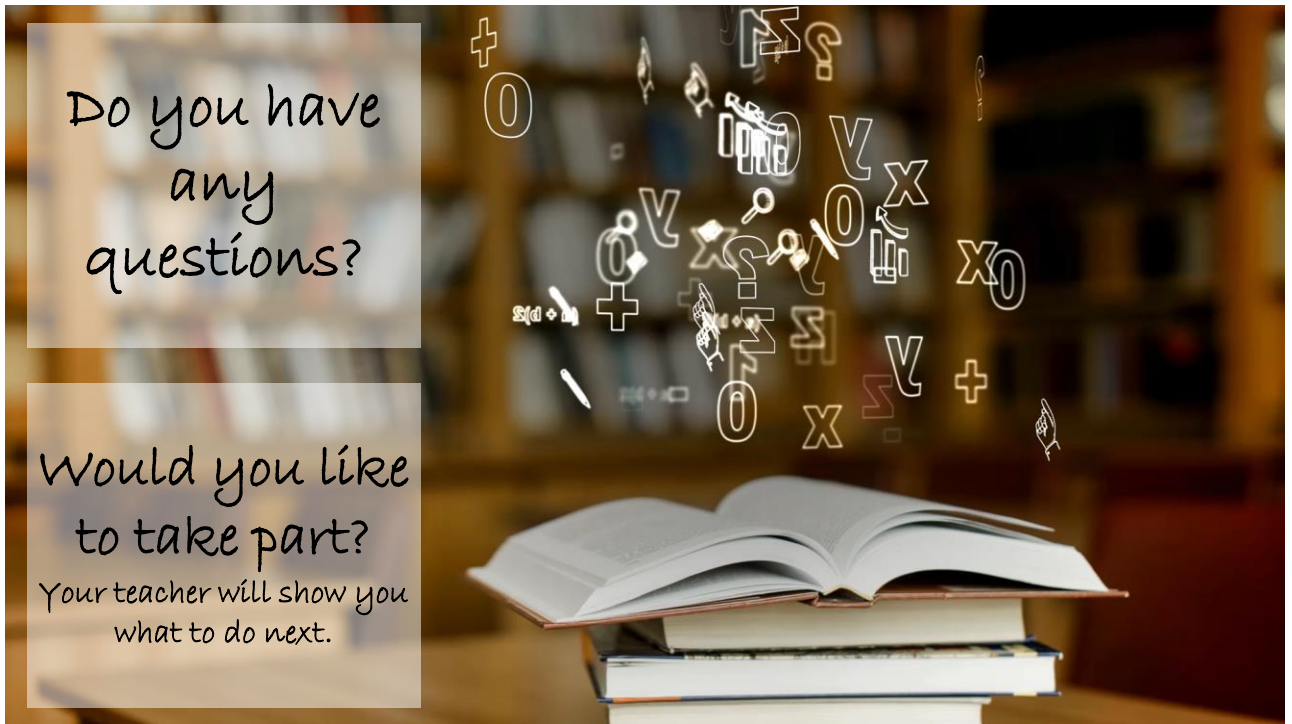
Helen will take special care of all the information, work and recordings from the children who take part.

15



Helen will be writing the research into a long report, if the children want to read a short version, then they can ask for a copy.

16



Do you have
any
questions?

would you like
to take part?
Your teacher will show you
what to do next.

17



Thank You!

18

Staff Survey Results

I have had training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in the curriculum

	Before	After
Yes	2	5
No	4	1

I have had sufficient training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in the curriculum.

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	1
Agree	2	3
Neutral	2	1
Disagree	1	1
Strongly Disagree	1	0
Total	17	22
Mean	2.83	3.67

I have had training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in children's books.

	Before		After
Yes	2		5
No	4		1

I have had sufficient training (initial teacher training, INSET or other CPD) related to representation in children's books.

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	1
Agree	1	3
Neutral	1	2
Disagree	3	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0
Total	14	23
Mean	2.33	3.83

Attending to cultural differences in my planning is important

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	1	2
Agree	4	4
Neutral	1	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	24	26
Mean	4	4.33

How would you rate your confidence in planning learning which includes positive representations? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)

	Before	After
Average	6.33	7.5

I use books in my teaching which are representative of the children in my class

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	2	3
Neutral	2	3
Disagree	2	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	18	21
Mean	3	3.5

It is important to me to use books which are representative of my class in lessons

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	1	3
Agree	5	3
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	25	27
Mean	4.17	4.5

How would you rate your confidence in planning learning with uses books which are representative of your class? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)

	Before	After
Average	6.5	7.5

Fiction books in my classroom are representative of the children in my class.

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	0	0
Neutral	2	3
Disagree	4	3
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	14	15
Mean	2.33	2.5

Non-fiction books in my classroom are representative of the children in my class.

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	0	1
Neutral	2	2
Disagree	4	3
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	14	16
Mean	2.33	2.67

Poetry books in my classroom are representative of the children in my class

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	0	1
Neutral	2	2
Disagree	4	3
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	14	16
Mean	2.33	2.67

Fiction books in the school library are representative of the children in our school

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	1	2
Neutral	2	2
Disagree	3	2
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	16	18
Mean	2.67	3

Non-fiction books in the school library are representative of the children in our school

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	1	2
Neutral	2	2
Disagree	3	2
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	16	18
Mean	2.67	3

Poetry books in the school library are representative of the children in our school.

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	0	1
Neutral	3	2
Disagree	3	3
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	15	16
Mean	2.5	2.67

I have enough resources (books, puzzles, games, art materials) in my classroom to plan learning

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	0	0
Neutral	0	1
Disagree	6	4
Strongly Disagree	0	1
Total	12	12
Mean	2	2

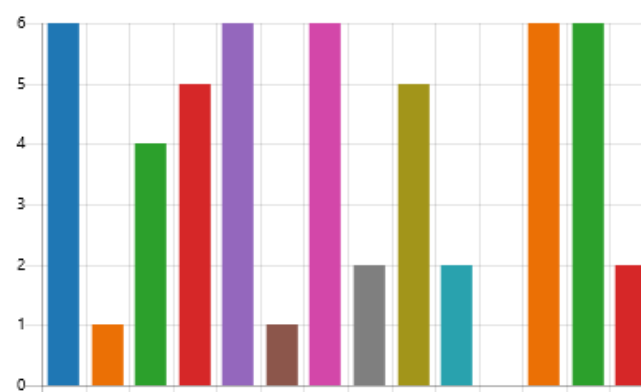
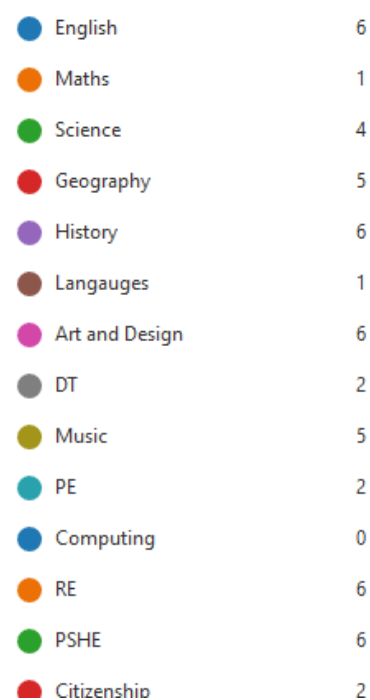
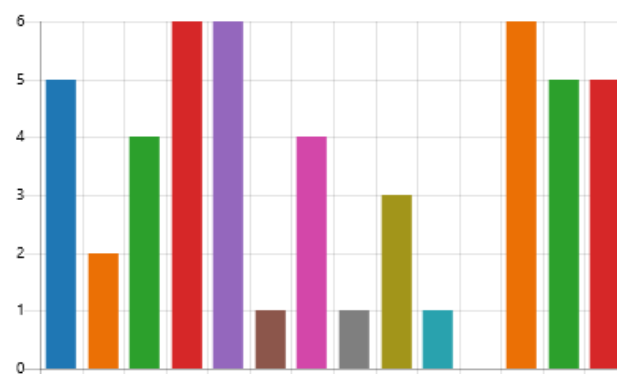
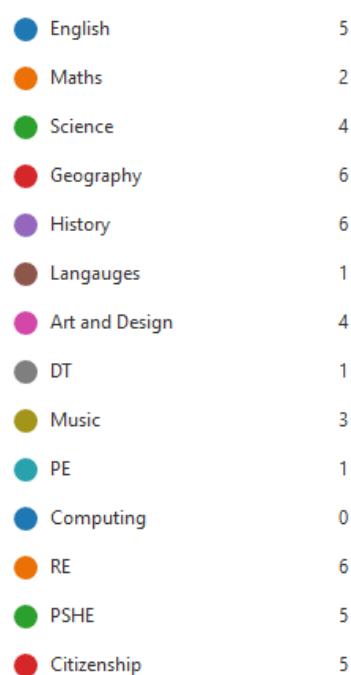
I talk about different cultures in the UK in lessons

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	2	2
Agree	4	3
Neutral	0	1
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	26	25
Mean	4.33	4.17

How would you rate your confidence in talking about different cultures in the UK in lessons? (1 being not confident, 10 being very confident)

	Before	After
Average	7	8.17

In which subjects do you teach about cultural differences?



Children in my class spontaneously talk about different cultures in the UK in lessons

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	3	4
Neutral	2	2
Disagree	1	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	20	22
Mean	3.33	3.67

Children in my class will participate in an adult directed discussion about different cultures in the UK in lessons

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	2
Agree	5	3
Neutral	1	1
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	23	25
Mean	3.83	4.17

Children in my class talk about different cultures in the UK at non-structured times (break/lunch).

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	1	1
Neutral	4	4
Disagree	1	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	18	18
Mean	3	3

It is important to me to teach about cultural differences in the UK

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	3	5
Agree	3	1
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	27	29
Mean	4.5	4.83

It is important to me to teach about respecting other cultures.

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	6	6
Agree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	30	30
Mean	5	5

I talk about discrimination and racism during lessons

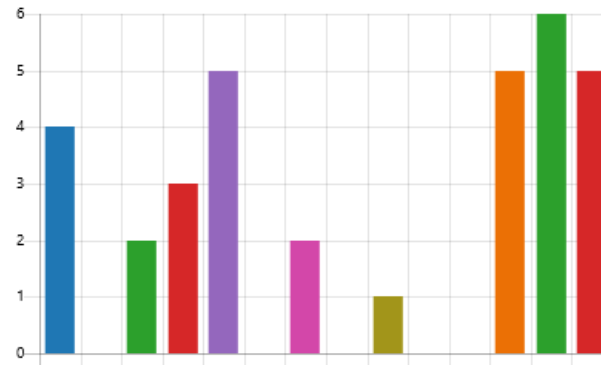
	Before	After
Strongly Agree	1	1
Agree	4	2
Neutral	1	3
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	24	22
Mean	4	3.67

How would you rate your confidence in talking about discrimination and racism during lessons?

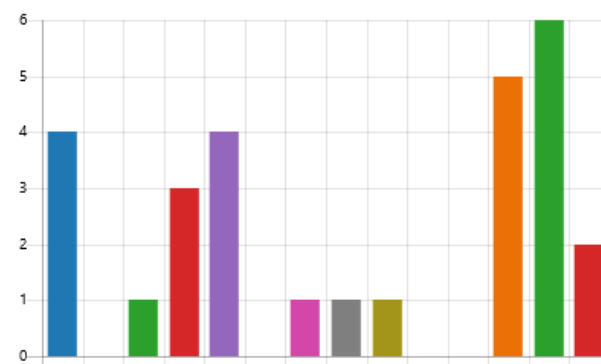
	Before	After
Average	7.17	7.67

In which subjects do you talk about racism and discrimination?

English	4
Maths	0
Science	2
Geography	3
History	5
Languages	0
Art and Design	2
DT	0
Music	1
PE	0
Computing	0
RE	5
PSHE	6
Citizenship	5



English	4
Maths	0
Science	1
Geography	3
History	4
Languages	0
Art and Design	1
DT	1
Music	1
PE	0
Computing	0
RE	5
PSHE	6
Citizenship	2



It is important for me to teach about racism and discrimination.

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	4	5
Agree	2	1
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	28	29
Mean	4.67	4.83

The anti-racism protests of 2020/2021 have led to changes in education.

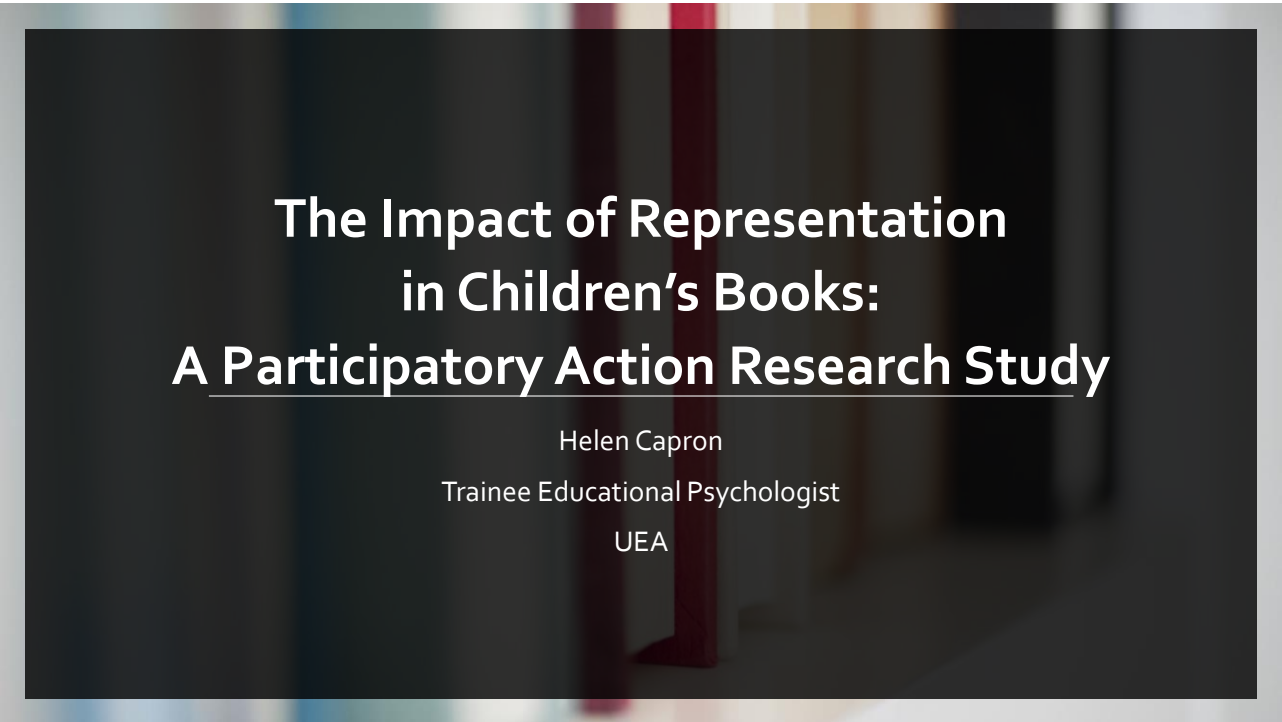
	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	1	2
Neutral	4	3
Disagree	1	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	18	19
Mean	3	3.17

The anti-racism protests of 2020/2021 have led to changes in my classroom practice.

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	1	1
Neutral	5	4
Disagree	0	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	19	18
Mean	3.17	3

The anti-racism protests of 2020/2021 have increased my awareness of issues of race in the UK

	Before	After
Strongly Agree	2	1
Agree	2	4
Neutral	2	0
Disagree	0	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	24	23
Mean	4	3.83



1

Training Aims

- To understand what “representation in children’s books” means
- To have an insight into the psychology of belonging
- To explore how representation may affect reading
- To identify representative books to incorporate into your planning.

2



**Books
should be
mirrors,
windows and
sliding glass
doors**

Sims Bishop (1990)

3

Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors

Can you name 3 books from your childhood?



4

Reflecting Realities 2017 (CLPE, 2018)

- DfE(2017) 32.1% of pupils of compulsory school age were of minority ethnic origins
- 9115 children's books published in the UK in 2017, 391 (4%) featured ethnic minority characters
- 1% of the children's books published had an ethnic minority main character
- 25% of the books submitted only featured ethnic minority presence in the form of background characters

Reflecting Realities 2018 (CLPE, 2019)

- DfE (2018) 33.1% of pupils of school age were of minority ethnic origins
- 11,011 children's books published in the UK in 2018, 743 (7%) featured ethnic minority characters
- 4% of children's books published in 2018 had an ethnic minority main character
- 27% of the books submitted only featured ethnic minority presence in the form of background characters.

5

Reflecting Realities 2019 (CLPE, 2020)

- DfE(2019) 33.5% of pupils of compulsory school age were of minority ethnic origins
- 6478 children's books published in the UK in 2019, 680 (10%) featured ethnic minority characters
- 5% of the children's books published had an ethnic minority main character



6

"I feel like it's a vicious cycle. It's like, you don't have brown people in children's books, so brown people don't grow up reading children's books or enjoying children's books, so they don't make children's books, and so on and so forth"

Aggs in Ramdarshan Bold (2019)



7

Not seeing oneself represented in fiction books sends a message to the reader of invisibility and denial of being part of society.

Mpike (2020)



8



'Several of the children were adamant that the black prince, in my version of Cinderella, kneeling at Cinderella's feet to try on the glass slipper, was the servant. That shocked me and convinces me that the work we do as authors and illustrators is vital to children's self esteem.

Jane Ray, Illustrator

9

"I think there is a very significant message that goes out when you cannot see yourself at all in the books you are reading. I think it is saying "well you may be here, but do you really belong?""

Malorie Blackman (2014)



10

The Psychology of Belonging

Belonging has been long thought of as a basic human need e.g. Maslow's hierarchy of need



11

School Belonging

- A student feeling that they are "personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others" within the school setting
- An important factor in school achievement
- Students from ethnic minorities have been found to experience less connectedness or belonging to school



12

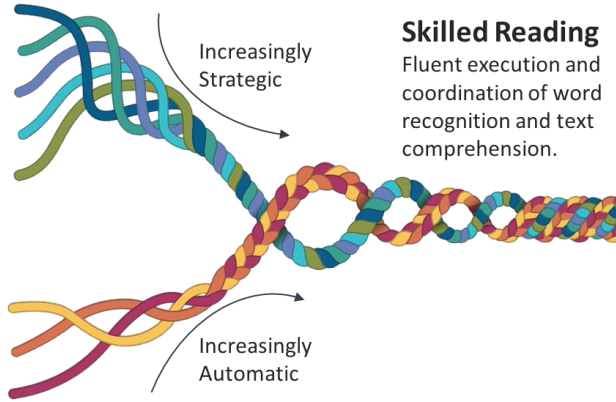
Reading

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



Skilled Reading

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Scarborough, H. 2001. Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. Pp. 97-110 in S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.) *Handbook of Early Literacy*. NY: Guilford Press.

13

Motivation

Benefits of engaged readers:

- wider vocabularies
- better verbal reasoning powers
- wider general knowledge and understanding of the world



14

The Reading Framework

“Literature is probably the most powerful medium through which children have a chance to inhabit the lives of those who are like them. All children need to imagine themselves as the main protagonist in a story: celebrating a birthday, going shopping, being ill, having a tantrum, having their hair cut, worrying about a new sibling, being the superhero, going camping, visiting the seaside and having adventures.

Children also need to learn about the lives of those whose experiences and perspectives differ from their own. Choosing stories and non-fiction that explore such differences begins to break down a sense of otherness that often leads to division and prejudice.”

15

Your challenge

Find a book in the library which fits your planning and at least one of the following criteria from the Reading Framework:

1. has illustrations which are engaging and reflect children from all backgrounds and cultures
2. helps children connect with who they are
3. helps children to understand the lives of people whose experiences and perspectives may be different from their own



16

What did you find?



The Impact of Representation in Children's Books: A Participatory Action Research Study

Helen Capron
Trainee Educational Psychologist
UEA

1

Anti-Racist Practice in Schools Training Aims

To understand what race, racism and anti-racist practice means within a school context.

To consider our unconscious biases

To discuss terminology and vocabulary related to anti-racist practice

To begin discussions about a shared vocabulary for your school.

2

Check in

- ▶ This topic is highly emotive and can be difficult to discuss.
- ▶ This is a safe space, listen to each other actively and respectfully.
- ▶ Acknowledge that you and others may have moments of discomfort and that is okay.
- ▶ Please look after yourselves and each other.

3

An Exercise on Culture

From Sewell (2009)

- ▶ Imagine you are an unseen observer in a training course in a country with a cultural heritage very different to your own. In this course a lecturer attempts to describe to the locals how people from your country or continent behave. In their description they refer to:
 - ❖ Eating patterns
 - ❖ Preferred diet
 - ❖ Typical social life
 - ❖ Major cultural preoccupations (e.g. typical conversations amongst acquaintances)
 - ❖ Specific tell-tale mannerisms or behaviours that distinguish your cultural group.
- ▶ First, note down what you feel you might hear the lecturer say.
- ▶ Second, note down on a scale of 1 to 5 the closeness of the descriptions to your own behaviour or experience with 1 representing the closest match and 5 the furthest.

4

Race, Culture and Ethnicity

	Characterised by	Determined by	Perceived as
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Physical appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Genetic ancestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Permanent (genetic/biological)
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">BehaviourAttitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">UpbringingChoice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Changeable (assimilation, acculturation)
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sense of belongingGroup identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Social pressuresPsychological need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Partially changeable

From: Fernando (1991, p.11)

5

White Privilege



From: The school that tried to end racism (Channel 4, 2020)

6

What is unconscious bias?



7

Exercise

- ▶ What three steps have you taken in the past to educate yourself and raise your race-consciousness?
- ▶ What three steps have you taken with other people to raise your race-consciousness?
- ▶ What three steps could you take right now to educate yourself and raise your race-consciousness?
- ▶ What three steps could you take right now with other people to raise your race-consciousness?

“

Being an anti-racist
is not just a destination,
it's a journey”
-Lettie Shumate-

Adapted from: Singh (2019, p.86)

8

What does it mean to be anti-racist?

- People who are actively seeking not only to raise their consciousness about race and racism, but also take action when they see racial power inequalities in everyday life

(Singh, A. 2019)

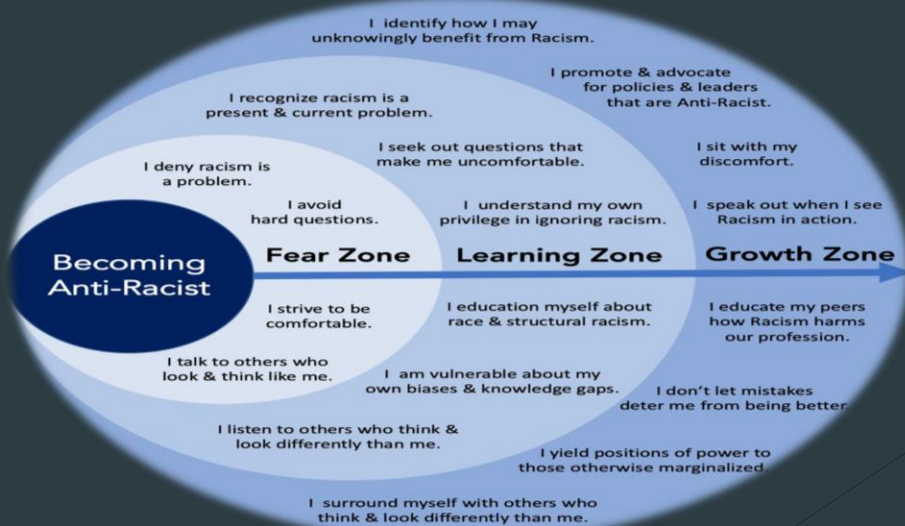
- It is a journey NOT a destination

“What’s the problem with being ‘not racist’? It is a claim that signifies neutrality: ‘I am not a racist, but neither am

I aggressively against racism.’ But there is no neutrality in the racism struggle. The opposite of ‘racist’ isn’t ‘not racist.’ It is ‘antiracist.’”

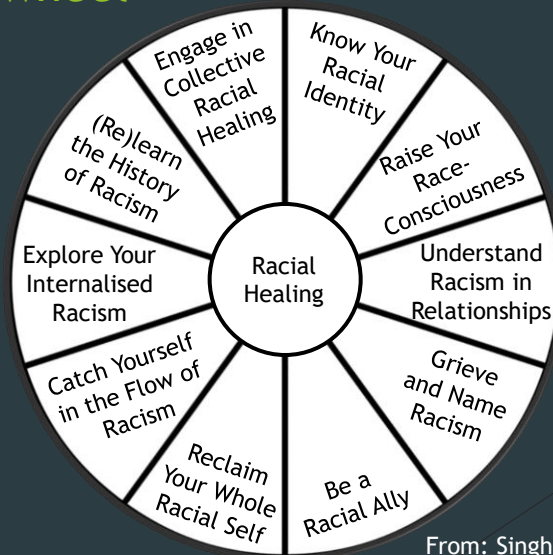
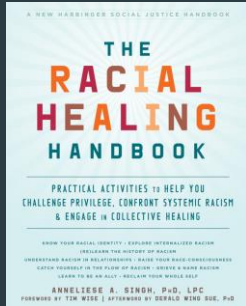
9

What is anti-racist practice?



10

Racial healing wheel



From: Singh (2019, p.7)

11

A Word on Language Use

Ally *Privilege/Supremacy*

Oppositional terms?

Solidarity *Structurally Embedded Advantage*

12



Paired Exercise

In pairs, create a list of words/terms which you think are important to include in a list of shared vocabulary for your school.

Be prepared to share your list!

13



Thank You!

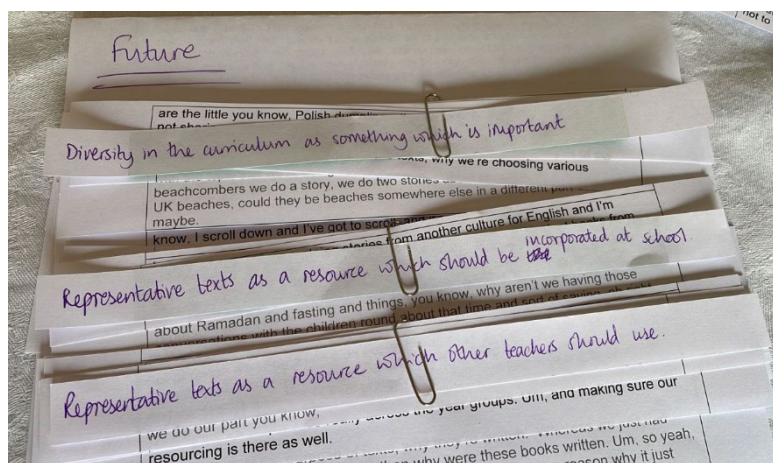
14

	H	And the first question is tell me about a positive experience of using representative texts in your classes.
Positive experience using representative texts Familiar activity (food, dress)	7	I think the children really enjoyed seeing books, 'cos we use picture books as well, I think they really enjoyed seeing those picture representations of themselves as well as hearing the stories that are linked more to their own culture, both books were focused on like the Pakistani, um, community that we went for. But I think they really enjoyed, you know, hearing about mosque reflected in the story or like it was, one of them was around the festival of Ramadan
	8	Ramadan, yeah
Positive experience using representative texts	7	And I think they just really enjoyed that. And yet, the children who it didn't represent I think they still really enjoyed it because it was a different type of story to what they would normally hear anyway so even though it didn't represent them, they were still really intrigued and engaged with it because it was just a very different type of story to the normal picture book we would read with them.
	H	Brilliant
Children as experts Familiar activity (food, dress) Books give opportunities to share cultural information	8	And because it was um, it was taught by other children, you make a fair point to say actually, even if the children didn't perhaps celebrate Ramadan, a few children particularly when we talked with T7 in her class, perhaps are a bit, usually a bit more you know, shy and don't really necessarily come forward, you could tell in their faces, I do Ramadan oh, I've got.... And, and, and they knew, and, and, and the children that perhaps don't celebrate Ramadan or don't know enough, um, yet, at this stage about it, just because they haven't experienced it, coming from children from the class they were very receptive.
	H	Mmm, super, were there any pictures in particular, thinking about the picture book...
Familiar activity (food, dress)	8	One of the pictures with the lunch box was really good wasn't it, like when you looked at... I'm trying to remember the, exactly what the picture represented, but um, it, one of them was a picture of the dinner hall, I think, oh I can't remember, yeah, one of the pictures inside had the lunch box and it really, it was really valuable and it really, you know, what's the word, related to the children because it 'oh this is what we experience at school, this is what we experience'
	H	Holds up picture
	7	Yes
	8	Yeah, that one, yeah.
	7	And the letter, the little note that the girl had writ..., like the mum had written and that she was afraid to give, one of those was quite powerful because even though it shows how even if it comes from an adult sometimes the child still feels quite affected by it, as in, they're still afraid, oh I know Mum said it's okay and this is a letter but oh, oh
Curriculum/planning	8	And it linked nicely to our PSHE lessons, didn't it, when we talked about you know being worried about something. It linked, not only to cultural diversity but also to our PSHE lessons, and regardless of their religion.



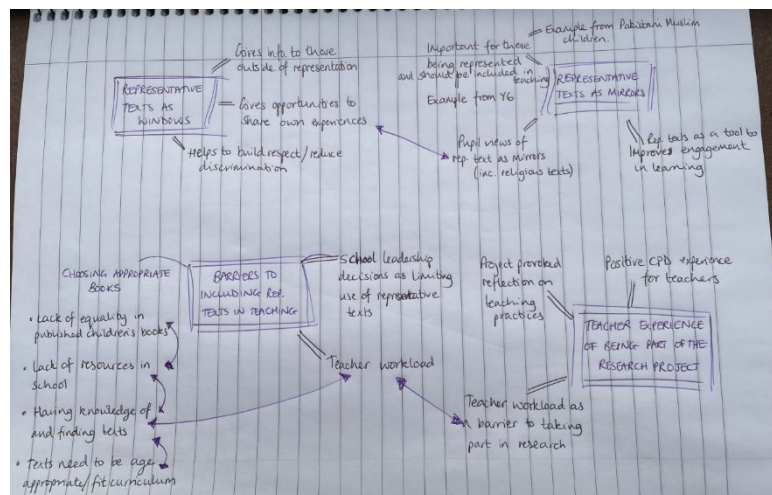
Phases 3 and 4

Generating initial themes
Developing and reviewing
these themes



Phase 5

Refining, defining and
naming themes



Initial theme map