

Education Bradford

Schools Linking Project 2005-06: Full Final Evaluation Report



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The Bradford Schools Linking Project Evaluation:

Final Evaluation Report – Full Report

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NB: In order to protect the confidentiality of contributors, quotes and references made throughout are not attributed to individuals or particular schools; this is essential for enabling openness and honest reflection amongst participants in the evaluation process.

1. Introduction

This is the final report drawing together observations and information gathered during the academic year 2004-05 of Bradford's Schools Linking Project. The project has been running for over three years in the District, and during that period has grown from a single pair of linked primary schools in 2001-2, to the current project involving 61 primary and 12 secondary schools; thus during the evaluation year 1,880 children of primary age and approximately 200 of secondary age participated in linking. The project facilitates contact between school children from different geographic neighbourhoods across the District, through shared cultural activities. The project structure recreates all conditions considered necessary or helpful, according to Intergroup Contact Theory¹, for achieving positive attitudinal change amongst participants. In this case the change sought is a reduction in mutual prejudice and wariness between groups of children based on cultural, religious or ethnic differences.

Teachers participating in the project are provided with training and ongoing support from a central team: one full-time co-ordinator, one part-time teacher/adviser, and one full-time administrator/web designer. The aim of developing the website has been to facilitate communication between schools, as the project has expanded, and to provide information on the project for the public audience.

The format for the links between schools supported through the project has a common basic structure for all primary schools, involving an initial day together at a neutral venue, followed by a minimum of two contacts per term, preferably supplemented by further shared activities. The range of activities promoted by the team as suitable catalysts for the linking process are all creative or sports-based activities, which enable facilitated contact and team work, although schools also often choose to share more ordinary lessons, such as literacy and numeracy, as part of a linking day.

The aims of the project are stated as:

1. Providing opportunities for children (and their families) from different ethnic backgrounds, who would not normally meet, because they live and attend schools in different areas of the district, to work and play together?
2. Providing opportunities for children and adults to work with creative partners and to work in the District's cultural venues, through the project's emphasis on enhancing the curriculum through creativity.
3. Providing opportunities for adults who work with the children, to meet to share ideas and broaden perspectives.

The project attracts considerable attention from government departments and the media, as there is clearly widespread concern about tensions in divided communities, and curiosity about whether this kind of work can actually have deep, meaningful and lasting positive effects. This is the first year in which an external evaluation of the project has been executed. Its purpose is to use a more objective and rigorous evaluation process than the team itself could conduct, to determine how effective the model is and how it might be developed or refined, in order to inform future decision making about support for this work.

¹ Allport's 'Intergroup Contact Theory' (1954) - conditions contributing to achieving change: Equal status between groups, Participants sharing common goals, Cooperation not competition between groups, Institutional support and sanction for the interaction. Subsequently broader 'Contact Hypothesis' names additional conditions considered by researchers Cook (1985), Pettigrew (1986) and others as facilitating attitude change: Serial contacts rather than a single contact, Opportunities for individual relationships to develop, Learning objectives aiming to 'encourage behaviour that disconfirms stereotypes'.

2. Focus of Study – Evaluation Framework

The Schools Linking Project evaluation seeks to determine any observable impacts amongst children, resulting from participation in the experience, that fall within the framework of the broadest aims of the programme. To this end, the following key evaluation questions form the basis of the research leading to this report²:

Can we, by bringing children together to take part, in an inclusive, creative and meaningful way, in normal activities that have been systematically co-planned by both teachers:

- **achieve increased understanding and trust between children separated by cultural or community differences**, and
- **improve the potential for longstanding relationships between groups who would not normally meet?**

The programme seeks to achieve this by using creative learning tools and techniques, which encourage cognitive dissonance in a safe environment.

Further questions:

- What factors can contribute to positive change, and what factors can inhibit positive change towards this aim?
- Is there an age at which attitudes become more fixed, and how readily can they be changed or developed?
- How robust, widespread and transferable is any change that is achieved?

To address these questions three fields of study, each with a set of sub-indicators (see Appendix 2), were agreed and used to make observations throughout the project. Conclusions are drawn in the final section of the report, based on data collected throughout the year. However, it must be acknowledged that *lasting* attitude change in any of the study areas could not be claimed as an impact unless the same groups were interviewed again in the future, and the resulting data were to offer a correlating picture.

The evaluation looked at the impacts from direct experiences of contact between culturally contrasting class groups of children, studying the effects of this contact on two very different aspects of how they view the world:

- On the one hand evaluation findings were sought in relation to changes in children's assessment of and response to **immediate and real situations and people**, which they encountered through the project.
- On the other hand findings were also sought in relation to changes in their responses to **generalised, imagined or abstract situations and people**, outside their real experience, in order to gauge any change in their underlying, generalised attitudes towards diversity in their world.

This produced, in effect, two levels of evaluation, studying two distinct aspects of attitude change; and findings on the performance of the project at these two levels are very different. To enable easier reading of the findings in this report, and to make the distinction between these parallel strands of research, impacts in responses to direct experiences are highlighted throughout as such: '**Impacts in responses to direct experience**'; while impacts on abstract and generalised attitude change are highlighted throughout as '**Impacts in deeper, transferable attitude change**'.

² This report details the full research findings from this evaluation.. Previous reports have focused on interim findings (January 05) or summarising headline findings (November 05).

3. Methodology, ground rules, sample

3.1 Methodology

This evaluation used combined participative and objective approaches to data collection, which encouraged the children to make their own judgements about their experiences within the project, whilst also allowing the evaluator to use objective assessments to further inform perspective on any attitudinal change.

The methodologies employed during evaluation sample contact sessions entailed the use of bespoke processes designed to function effectively with children aged between 5 and 11, which involved adapting models commonly used in attitude surveys. The designs drew on a range of well-respected attitude research models including *Semantic Differential*, *Stapel*, *Thurstone* and *Likert*³ itemised rating scales, as well as continuous rating scales – specifically visual analogue systems that allow children to place an object at a position between poles to indicate a response. These systems are designed for measuring affective, cognitive and behavioural ratings in response to statements - or indeed to real experiences in the child's life, both prior to and during the period of the study.

3.2 Data sources

Evaluation data, both qualitative and quantitative, was collected from the following range of sources:

- Sample group contact sessions conducted on non-linking days.
- Children's observations and comments collected throughout.
- Evaluator's observations during visits on linking days.
- Teachers' observations noted on response sheets.
- Teachers' responses from teacher evaluation activities.

All sources of specific comments or views remain confidential.

3.3 Validity and reliability

Creating a space for meaningful dialogue during sample group contact sessions with children aged 5-11 entailed using creative processes and group discussion to explore experiences or concepts. The sessions facilitated the individual selection of words, images or values on a scale to express opinions, attitudes or feelings; drawing and writing in response to stimuli and simple drama-based imagination and role-play activities. Time was spent ensuring that children understood the concepts being discussed or explored through the activities, in order to enable all children across the whole sample group to use a comparable language for articulating their opinions, attitudes and feelings. Activities were conducted under similar conditions with each evaluation contact group included in the sample, in order to obtain admissible data.

Whenever a numerical or abstract system of this kind was used, it was important with child participants to obtain more details on the reasons for the response given. So for example a score of 6/10 was broken down into its constituent positive and negative components, in order to understand what the response meant, to ensure that the child understood the meaning taken from their score, and to ratify the score as valid data.

At least two evaluation sessions lasting between 60 and 90 minutes were held with every group, one before they began the year's linking activities and one after their last meeting with their link group. Where the group size varied from one meeting to another due to pupil absence, only the responses from those pupils who attended both

³ Scales measuring attitude developed by leading researchers L.L. Thurstone (1928) and Rensis Likert (1932) and their followers in the fields of social science and social psychology

sessions are included. Most groups participated in additional mid-project sessions, which enables a deeper understanding of their responses overall. However, these additional sessions do not form the basis of any separate findings.

External issues, over which we have no influence, sometimes interfere with the reliability of any evaluation process, and there was a small number of such issues which arose during the evaluation year:

- Sometimes children from the evaluation sample group were not available to attend evaluation meetings, which meant the group dynamic was subtly different from meeting to meeting.
- Children's mood, the time of day, the point in the school week or school year and school events such as concerts or sports days were all factors which sometimes affected or distracted children.

The variations brought about by all of the above issues were managed as much as possible, to minimise their impact on data. However, the London bombings of 7 July were so dramatic and so acutely relevant that their influence had to be taken into account in the analysis of the research findings. The impact of the bombings on children's responses and attitudes are discussed at various points during this report.

3.4 Ground rules

The key ground rule in this form of evaluation is guaranteed confidentiality, and building trust that responses will not be shared with other people – especially not the children's teacher, the other children and adults in the link project, nor the artist if there has been an artist involved. This is essential, in order to minimise 'self-regulation'⁴ of responses, so that any more 'taboo' feelings and attitudes the children may have can be shared without fear of disapproval, punishment or any other repercussion. The evaluator must build confidence in her/his own neutrality, and hold safe the information shared. For this reason it is essential that the evaluator has no other kind of relationship or role in the lives of the children, nor any aim to educate, or to challenge what the children reveal in interview. What occurs within the evaluation interview will only be challenged on the basis of whether or not it truly represents the viewpoint of the children or child concerned. Various strategies are used to encourage an understanding of, and commitment to, these ground rules.

3.5 Evaluation sample

The study used a large sample of children drawn from across the project, incorporating a range of settings in which the process was experienced by different children. Of the 61 primaries involved in the Schools Linking Project this year, the evaluation has focussed on 28 schools, to include as many of the varying conditions that may affect the project's impact as possible (thus direct evaluation was operating in over 40% of contexts). Altogether, approximately 1,800 primary school pupils took part in this year's project, amongst whom 350 were in direct dialogue with the evaluator. Amongst these, 206 were able to take a full part in the evaluation process, meeting both before and after this year's project, which constitutes a participant sample of approximately 12%. (For a detailed breakdown of the sample group please see Appendix 1).

The team was interested in whether and how the project would impact on children who learn in classes where there is little or no cultural or ethnic diversity, where school itself does not offer them the chance to make friends and have meaningful contact with children from a different cultural or ethnic group than their own.

⁴ *The process whereby children may alter their responses to questions in order to present themselves in a certain way to figures of authority, or to their peers. According to a range of researchers this motivation begins to influence children's responses from approximately 8 years of age. (Rutland, Milne et al, 2003)*

There was also interest in observing the impact, if any, on children who currently learn in mixed settings, and a number of such children were included in the sample. This proved a valuable decision, as will be discussed later.

3.6 Variables and other research issues

Any study exploring the impact of experiences on a set of individuals is obviously fraught with complexities, dealing with the interplay of personal histories and psychologies in every participant's responses to the experience. Aside from these individual differences – which the evaluation must take in its stride – within this study a number of more general factors, and variations in context and conditions, make complex the picture of impacts suggested by the evaluation data. The more 'variables' of this kind there are within the research the more difficult it becomes to read and interpret its findings, and each of these variables, as well as the interplay between them, needs considering with regard to how it might be affecting the children's responses to the project and thereby its outcomes.

Key variables that are present within this study include⁵:

- a) the range of **socio-economic** conditions of each school's catchment community, and whether there is a clear socio-economic difference between linked children's backgrounds
- b) the difference in **geographic** distance between linked schools, and hence the likelihood of any sense of shared day-to-day experience or local identity, and the potential obstacles for maintaining contacts outside the framework of the programme
- c) the variety of **age and year groups** participating, and whether there is a difference in age between linked classes
- d) the variety of **faith-based and secular** schools participating in the programme, as well as the variety of religions and degree of religious diversity within each of communities served by participating schools
- e) the degree of **cultural diversity** within each school's catchment community, as well as the contrast between more mono-cultural linked schools linked through the programme
- f) the diverse **cultural or racial identities or religious faiths of teachers** involved in the programme
- g) whether or not schools, teachers or children have been **involved in linking prior to this year's programme**, or whether they are new to the programme.

By identifying the impact of particular variables on children's responses to the programme we can begin to address one of the key questions for this evaluation, especially important within the strategic and planning context:

'What factors can contribute to positive change, and what factors can inhibit positive change towards the programme's aim?'

This report focuses on the impact of variables and any findings emerging from this analysis in Section 6, p 43.

⁵ There were some children involved in the programme who have special educational needs, a factor which might greatly influence the impact of the programme for these children. However, it was felt that this study did not have the scope to adequately explore their experience of the programme on an equal basis with other participants, and the report cannot draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the programme specifically for this group.

4. Reporting Project Impacts⁶ against project aims

The following section collates evaluation data from all sources named at 3.2 above, to build a picture of the degree of success of the project in addressing its aims. The agreed evaluation framework designed to capture this picture forms the structure of this section, using the three fields of study and related sub-indicators: (Appendix 2).

1. *Observing improved relationships and increased openness to mixing:*
 - 1.1 *Readiness to broaden contacts beyond their own cultural community.*
 - 1.2 *Increased reciprocity.*
 - 1.3 *Increased confidence and trust.*
 - 1.4 *Enthusiasm to maintain links beyond the programme.*
2. *Observing increased teamwork and mixed – team / ‘mixed –community’ awareness, leading to a broader community identity:*
 - 2.1 *Greater cross-cultural co-operation and teamwork.*
 - 2.2 *A greater sense and ownership of a mixed Bradford community identity.*
3. *Observing increased awareness of/embracing of differences and diversity:*
 - 3.1 *Increasing curiosity/ confidence to discuss differences.*
 - 3.2 *Increasing awareness of/ respect for differences.*
 - 3.3 *Recognising learning opportunities presented by meeting people from a different background.*
 - 3.4 *Increased confidence/assertive with peers, to challenge prejudice.*

The following arrow symbol indicates a summary of findings against one of the evaluation criteria:



For a brief summary of all the project impacts, turn to p50. What follows in this section is a detailed analysis of each finding in turn.

4.1. Overall observations of ‘*improved relationships between participating children and their link group/school community, and increased openness to mixing*’

Impacts in responses to direct experience



Improved relationships	Dramatic impact indicated: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The project facilitated thousands of new relationships between individual children, and between adults.
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Across Bradford District 59% of primary school children (30,717 out of 51,335 total) attend primary schools that serve a community *predominantly* of a single cultural or ethnic identity – i.e. 90% or more (either mainly white British or mainly minority ethnic). The other 41% of children attend schools that are mixed⁷, and include pupils from a range of ethnicities.

⁶ *Impacts refer to the extent to which participating in the project has changed something for children, in a way that can be monitored or recorded by the evaluation. In this report impacts sought by the project are understood to be positive, and any impacts which run counter to the aims of the project are described as ‘negative’.*

⁷ *The pupil profiles of schools – especially those in inner city areas of the District – are changing all the time. This statistic is current at the time of publishing.*

Where children attend schools that serve a community predominantly of a single cultural or ethnic identity, opportunities to develop peer relationships which cross cultural differences are rare. The Schools Linking Project sought to bring diverse children together in class cohorts in the hope of improving the potential for such peer relationships to develop. In every case the paired schools were selected because there was no existing relationship between the participating children from either school and their link class.

The project performed well towards this aim. All cited new friendships⁸ that have resulted from links during the evaluation year – **2.6** on average per child in the sample, which indicates possibly **4,700** across the project – constitute improved relationships between linked groups.

Impacts in deeper, transferable attitude change

	<p>Openness to mixed friendship circle</p>	<p>Modest impact indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of increased openness transferable from specific individual friendships to a general openness in children's curiosity and interest in building friendships with peers from different cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds than their own, now or in the future.
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In examining children's attitudes to mixing with children from different cultural groups, the evaluation does not make a tally of specific friendships, but rather takes a measure of attitudes based on behaviour and feelings. It addresses whether the effect of making new relationships has been generalised to an openness to mixing⁹.

The pre-project baseline interviews and activities with children in the evaluation sample established that **56%** of children had *little or no interest*, prior to their involvement in the linking project, in developing a mixed circle of friends (left hand side, pie chart 1, p10). It is notable that amongst the 44% of children in the sample with some interest or enthusiasm for having a mixed circle of friends, almost half (20% of sample) currently attend mixed schools. Thus 24% of children who currently have little opportunity to develop cross-cultural friendships expressed, before participating in the project, that they would be keen to do so.

At the end of a year of linking with a class of children from a contrasting cultural or ethnic group, a significant number of children placed a greater importance on developing a mixed circle of friends in the future (chart 2). This can be seen by the increasing pale and bright green segments, and reducing blue segments on the right hand side of the second pie chart.

Overall, these results indicate a modest impact from the project on children's willingness, when the idea is proposed in the abstract, to mix with different children. The question was placed outside the context of friendships already made. This was an attempt to discover whether the project would result in an impact that was transferable

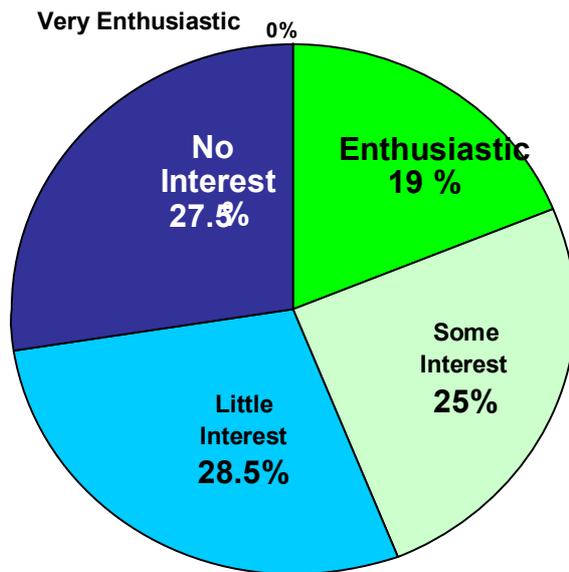
⁸ **'Friendship'** is here defined as a healthy interpersonal connection with a named child in the link class, established through the linking project and sustained by choice. Such friendships are characterised by a mixture of such sentiments as curiosity, excitement, happiness, respect, loyalty, kindness and care, displayed in the way in which children describe their friends and their shared experiences.

⁹ **'Openness to mixing'** is defined as the degree to which children express interest in finding or welcoming new friendships, now and in the future, with children who are different from themselves. The process leading up to this question was quite involved, as children had to explore the concept of 'difference' (using discussion, pictures, observation), determine how mixed their friendship circle currently is, and then express through a chart which kinds of children they would like to get to know and make friends with, if they had the chance.

from the specific to the general, affecting children's curiosity and interest in mixing with any peers from different cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds than their own, now or in the future. However the result can only be seen as possibly indicative of such an impact, since children find abstract ideas quite difficult to comment on, and the impacts recorded were only modest.

Chart 1 (Includes 100% of sample responses)

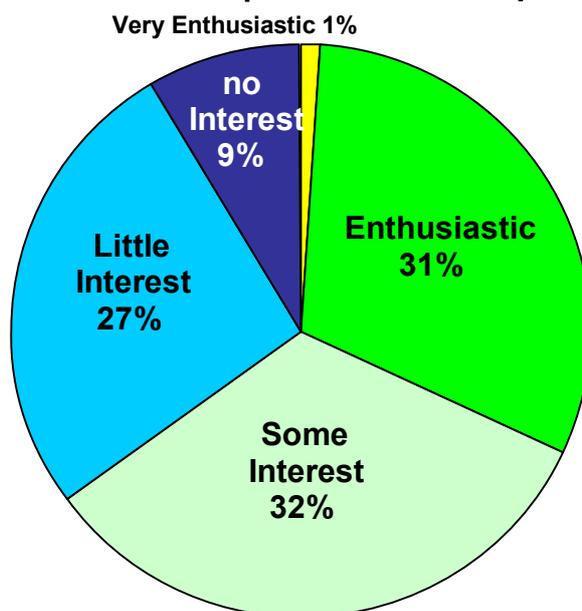
Baseline (pre-project) levels of openness to future cross-cultural friendships -individual responses



'Would you like it if some of your best friends (the 5 or 6 you would choose to invite to your birthday) could be different from you - for example in their religion, or their culture, or the colour of their skin?'

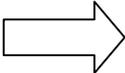
Chart 2 (Includes 100% of sample responses)

Post-project openness to future cross-cultural friendships - individual responses



'In 10 years' time, would you like it if some of your best friends (the group you might invite to your 18th/21st birthday) could be different from you for example their religion, or their culture, or the colour of their skin?'

Impacts in deeper, transferable attitude change

	<p>Emotional openness towards meeting</p>	<p>No clear impact indicated: Mixed picture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some apparent evidence of <i>increased</i> openness at the individual level transferring to a generally increased openness to meeting a new group of children from different cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds than their own. • Some apparent evidence of <i>reduced</i> openness at the individual level transferring to a generally reduced openness. • Much evidence of no transfer in attitude resulting from the project.
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Children's affective responses to the prospect of meeting new children – from a different cultural, religious or ethnic background than their own – offer an additional perspective on how open they are, initially and then subsequently, towards mixing. Children in the sample group were twice asked how they felt about meeting up with and sharing activities with children, from another school, who are different from them in the ways described. The first time was before they had met or seen their link class. The second time was after their last meeting with their link class, and referred to meeting *new* children, not their link friends.

Responses spread across the following five-band scale of affective ratings:

Open, enthusiastic – typically excited, happy and curious
Quite open – typically happy, curious, shy, nervous
Some cautiousness – typically shy, nervous, worried
Cautious or anxious - typically nervous, worried, unhappy, tense
Closed, angry or frightened – typically unhappy, tense, scared, cross

Typical pre-project responses in each band are shown by the following quotes¹⁰:

<p>'Its better if we're mixed up' 'I'd like some friends who are different'</p>
<p>'I'm quite suspicious and interested' 'There is a chance I <i>could</i> make friends with a Christian'</p>
<p>'But what if they pretend to be nice?' 'Nervous just in my tummy' 'I feel scared cos something bad might happen'</p>
<p>'I feel weird about meeting different sort of people from different communities' 'They might call us white freaks!' 'My friends said - you can't play with her, she's not Muslim'</p>
<p>'I'd prefer if my friends were more like me - white' 'I don't like Christians - they keep fighting wars with us' 'I don't want a Gori friend' 'They better not be Asians. I don't like P*kis.'</p>

¹⁰ All quotes in this report are verbatim; this selection, from hundreds of comments, typifies the wide spectrum.

The following table and charts show the pre- and post-project banding of responses:

Baseline position – individual responses	Project end position – individual responses
23% began open, enthusiastic	12% finished open, enthusiastic
41.5% began quite open	37% finished quite open
21% began with some cautiousness	21% finished with some cautiousness
13% began cautious or anxious	23.5% finished cautious or anxious
1.5% began closed, angry or frightened	6.5% finished closed, angry or frightened

The table above seems to indicate a drop in openness, enthusiasm and confidence amongst a number of children, between the first interview and the second.

Three factors are helpful in attempting to make sense of the difference between the positive impacts indicated by the previous graphs and the negative correlation here.

Firstly, it became apparent during the second interview that there was an intriguing separation between children's comments on their experiences of the project and their feelings about meeting new 'different' children. Below is a range of response quotes, each row offering an insight into an individual child's complex post-project feelings. Narratives are grouped, with brief comment.

No. of new friends	Response to sustaining project friendships, and/or how to sustain them	Final response to meeting new children who are different
5	'email, letter and text them'	'I'll make friends, I will know more about their culture'
5	'email, internet, phone'	'Excited, because you might meet another religion'

The above narratives demonstrate a positive linking experience, resulting in a number of valued cross-cultural friendships, and a post-project openness and confidence to explore diversity further. The first response correlates with the second.

5	'I want to stay in touch - send texts'	'I feel nervous because what if they be different from us'
4	'send letters, email them'	'Cross because they might swear at us and be unkind'
2	'get their number, write letters'	'Scared because I don't know them and they are all different colour'
1	'email, phone, walky-talky'	'I would be nervous because I would meet new religions'

This second group shows a negative correlation between their project experience – which was positive for them, and has developed an interest in sustaining the individual cross-cultural friendships they made – and their diffidence and lack of confidence to explore diversity further.

1	'letters, but don't want to see them again'	'Unhappy, because we have already met some people we didn't know and we felt very uncomfortable'
0	'(the link school) were a bit mean to me'	'Worried, because the others were mean to me, and the bomb in London'

This third group shows a positive correlation between a project experience which left these children with few friendships and without an appetite to sustain any contacts made, and a relatively closed (dark blue) affective response to exploring diversity further.

(2)	'not interested (in staying in touch)'	'Happy because I'll meet a new school'
(1)	'I'm not very bothered about staying in touch with my friend'	'Excited because I really like to meet new people'

The final group shows a *negative* correlation between what was a disappointing project experience, resulting in no friendships that these children wished to sustain, and a contrasting emotional response – open and confident – towards exploring diversity further.

This mixture of negative and positive correlations suggests that in many cases children are creating a separation, or making no specific connection, between their project experience and their immediate openness to encountering diversity again, with an apparent message that the project did not affect children's broader openness in this respect. The picture is in any case so mixed that we cannot draw out a clear message about the impacts of the project.

Secondly, some children expressed feelings which indicated that they would rather continue their current link than start a new one, and felt fatigued by the idea of starting again: **'why do we have to?'**; **'cross. What about my old friends?'**; **'bored...'**. It was clearly very difficult for these children to judge their feelings towards an imagined situation without reference to their immediate experience of linking.

Finally, there is a strong possibility that the second set of data may have been prejudiced by the events of 7 July 2005, when British suicide bombers killed and injured civilians in London, for the first time on British soil, publicly claiming to act in the name of Islam (see also Section 5, p 41). The second interviews took place after 7 July, and several children mentioned in interview that they suddenly felt more nervous of people with a different religion than their own. Some Muslim children told me they felt unsafe with Christians, in case they might be blamed for the bombs:

I feel scared. I don't know if they might be angry with us'.

Some white British children told me they felt **suspicious of brown people now'.**

It can be seen from tracing these and similar comments back to the links in which the children took part that such expressions of new fears occurred mainly in links where the project itself did not result in many friendships, and they were therefore poorly performing links.

Generally where there were more friendships resulting within a link, children told me (perhaps defiantly?) that the London bombs had not affected the scores they were giving me on attitudes towards meeting 'different' children. It was evident amongst some links that children felt heightened awareness of the implications of the London bombs, and empathy for those affected:

'I feel sorry for those bombers' family, because they might feel sad about their son dying, but they might not be able to tell anyone, and they might be scared in case somebody is angry with them' (9 year -old white British boy, attending non-mixed school).

'It's not right that people should blame them (other Muslims) - its got nothing to do with them!' (group of white British children commenting on the report that some Muslims are now feeling threatened).

Children’s feelings about the July bombings formed such a substantial and animated part of the final interviews in many groups that additional details on these responses have been included in Section 5 – The Wider Socio-political Context, p 41. In relation to the impact these events had on children’s emotional responses to the linking project, data seem to indicate that in the majority of cases whatever feelings were already evident on the day before the bombings became intensified by hearing about the event. Children who had generally positive feelings about their link partners were more attuned to the impacts of the bombings on cross-cultural relations, and these children’s openness to mixing was heightened accordingly. On the other hand, children who already had any fragile or negative feelings – doubts, fears, insecurity or hostility – towards their link partners found that these fears intensified their negativity or fragility, and their openness to mixing was diminished accordingly.

The data concerning the impact of the project on children’s emotional openness to mixing offer a very varied picture. Data indicate that the project overall did not achieve distinct, *affective* attitude change that was deep enough for children’s changed attitude towards a specific individual to transform their general attitudes towards a whole group or groups. *Affective* change is defined as a reduction in fears and anxieties that brings about a change in emotional attitude, for example, a greater openness and confidence to mix.

Overall however, the impact amongst the majority of children was to deepen their emotional responses to each other, and develop greatly increased openness at an individual level.

4.1.1 ‘Children demonstrating readiness to broaden contacts/ consolidate friendships beyond their own cultural community’

Impacts in responses to direct experience

	<p>Increased cross-cultural contacts</p>	<p>Dramatic Impact indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average 2.6 new cross-cultural friendships per child resulting from linking.
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A primary aim of the project is to facilitate the development of cross-cultural friendships¹¹. The importance of this aim is suggested by Thomas Pettigrew’s theory (1998) that a key process for reducing prejudice is through the development of ‘affective ties’¹², or friendships.

Evaluation data indicate that the Bradford Schools Linking Project has had a marked impact on the numbers of participating children’s cross-cultural friendships, particularly in the case of children attending primary schools that serve a community *predominantly* of a single cultural or ethnic identity – i.e. 90% or more (either mainly white British or mainly minority ethnic).

At this final stage of analysis it can clearly be seen that children attending schools where one cultural or ethnic grouping is extremely predominant, who participated for

¹¹ **‘Cross-Cultural’** is here defined as new friendships **‘between children separated by cultural or community differences, who would never normally meet’** – (see evaluation questions p1). New friendships between children from similar cultural/ethnic groups are not cited as success indicators of the project, though many did arise. ‘Friendship’ is here defined as on p 9.

¹² T F Pettigrew on Intergroup Contact Theory, in the Annual Review of Psychology (1998).

the past year, showed a dramatic increase in the number of cross-cultural friendships they can identify¹³.

Baseline: October 2004

- Before participating in the project half of all children interviewed were unable to identify a single friend from a different cultural group than their own. All of these children attend schools serving a community of a predominantly similar culture or ethnic group, to which they belong.

'I've never met someone who's brown before.'

'We don't get to meet different people very much.'

'You don't get to know any Asian children here.'

Only 5% of children interviewed who attend schools serving a community of a predominantly similar culture or ethnic group were able to identify more than one cross-cultural friendship, and these had all been linking for a year.

By Contrast:

- Before the project *all* children interviewed who attend schools where the pupil profile is culturally mixed, and children attending schools where they are in a small cultural or ethnic minority group, reported having a circle of friends from a mixture of different cultural or ethnic groups (between one and three cross-cultural friendships).

One year on: July 2005

- Following a year's involvement in linking with other Bradford children, on average 2.6 new cross-cultural friendships per child were identified by participating children, including those who attend mixed schools.
- The average amongst children who had previously had little or no contact with children from any other cultural or ethnic group was 2.5 cross-cultural friendships. Some of these children identified as many as six or more new friendships with children from a different cultural or ethnic group than their own.

In the two graphs overleaf, the appearance of larger, bright green and yellow segments and the substantial shrinkage of the navy blue segment in pie chart 4 show the development of new cross-cultural friendships, in comparison to the cooler blues in chart 3 (over).

Since the project itself, as well as our evaluation sample, included a number of children whose friendships were already mixed, it was important that the evaluation also looked at the real *impact* of the project on the diversity of participating children's friendships, taking a before and after picture of the make-up of their friendship circles. Numbers of new friendships brought about by the project are illustrated by a comparison between chart 3 and chart 4; however, project *impacts* are separately depicted in chart 5. This chart shows that 48% of participating children, who normally do not meet others who are culturally different from themselves, showed either a **significant or dramatic¹⁴ increase** in the numbers of named cross-cultural friendships in their friendship circle, resulting from participating in Linking Schools.

¹³ *'Identifying friendships' is an indicator of a child's openness and motivation to pursue a contact with another particular child. It was not possible to verify how often reciprocal interpersonal connections, similar to those described above, were reported by the named children, and different children make evidently diverse personal judgements for determining which of their new contacts they value, and will identify by name. However, reciprocity is not an indicator necessary for determining a child's interest in and curiosity about the friend they have named, and therefore for the purposes of this study it is not essential to demonstrate that all the named friendships are equally reciprocated.*

¹⁴ See key on p16 for definitions.

Chart 3 Pre-project baseline position:
Number of cross-cultural friendships

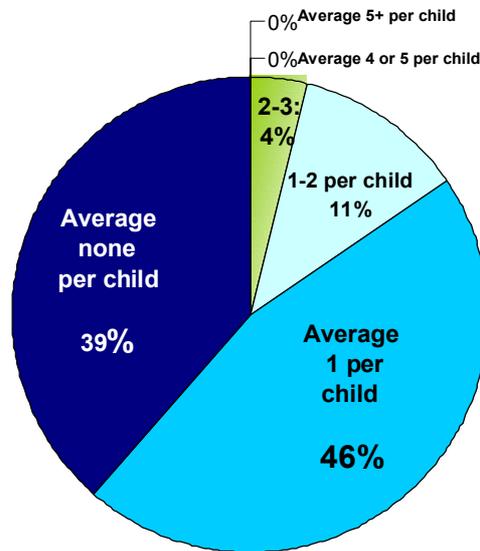


Chart 3 charts responses from all children who were interviewed as part of the sample group, including those attending mixed schools (100% sample).

Chart 4 Post-project: Numbers of new cross-cultural friendships made by sample children

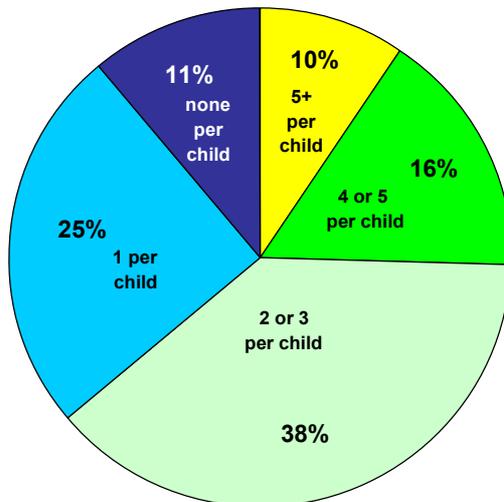


Chart 4 charts responses from all children in the sample who were offered the chance through the project to meet and form friendships with children from a contrasting cultural or ethnic group to their own (97% sample).

(Please see pages 28-30 and Box 6 p47 for specific impacts of the project on children in small minorities within their own school, and others who currently learn in mixed settings.)

Impact definitions

The following key explains the coding used in chart 5 overleaf:

anomalous	negative	zero	modest	significant	dramatic
Data in these cases was misleading, causing an anomaly	The project resulted in impacts counter to project aims	The project resulted in no discernable impact	Modest impacts were noted (a small or embryonic positive change)	Significant impacts were noted (a stable and substantial positive change)	Dramatic impacts were noted (outstanding positive change)

A similar coding is used throughout this report when discussing project impacts.

Chart 5 Post – project: impact of project on numbers of children's cross cultural friendships

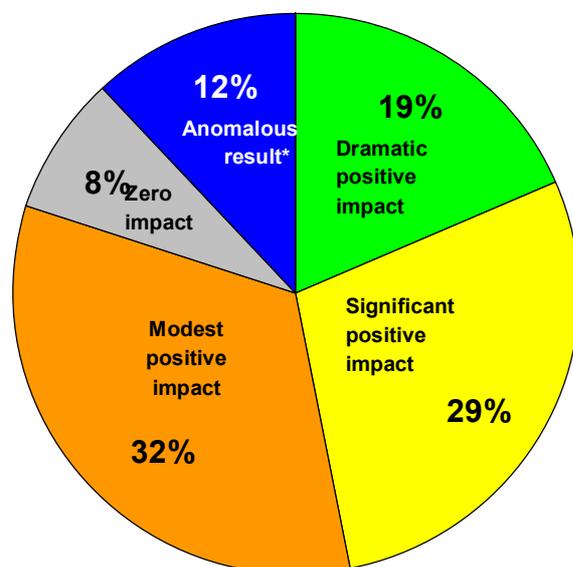


Chart 5 charts impact of the project on all children who were interviewed as part of the sample group, including those attending mixed schools (100% sample).

* impact readings for these children are misleading since all are already within mixed classes, or are in a small minority within their class, and began with highly mixed friendship groups. Please see notes.

The blue segment* (12%) on **chart 5** above includes a number of children for whom the project could not register an impact on the numbers of cross-cultural friendships they have, for one of two reasons:

- **Half of the anomalous 12% represents children who are already in mixed classroom settings and named a mixed circle of friends before the project began.** Therefore, although they made cross-cultural friendships through the project, these new friendships did not alter, by any recordable amount, how mixed their friendship circle is.
- **The other half of the anomalous 12% represents children who were only given the chance through the project to develop friendships with children from a similar cultural and ethnic group to their own.** These were:
 - White British children attending mixed schools, whose class was linked with a class predominantly of white British children, and
 - BME children of South Asian heritage, in a minority in their own school, whose class was linked with a class predominantly of BME children with South Asian heritage.

All of these children already experience a 'mixed' learning environment on a daily basis. Children already learning in mixed environments constitute almost 20% of the sample¹⁵. What they reported offered three clear learning points, arising from the comparison between their responses and those of other children.

¹⁵ The inclusion of these pupils in the sample sometimes adds a layer of complexity to the statistics, since their baseline position in key areas and their experience of the project is so different from the other children in the sample. However, their responses often offer an insight into the ultimate extension of the experience of this project – different children learning together on a daily basis – and their 'ordinary' experience demonstrates what is, in many ways, an ideal scenario that few children have the chance to share.

These children had all formed mixed friendship circles naturally:

'I don't care about religion, I just make friends with different people!'

Children attending mixed schools began to voice how lucky they feel that they learn in a mixed class and can form mixed friendships. The project enabled them to meet children who have a different experience (learning in a class where everybody shares a similar cultural identity) that none of them would choose. They felt everyone should have their experience of attending a mixed school:

'Nearly all that school is Muslims. There was no place for me in that school, but I'm glad!' (Muslim child)

'It's good to mix because when we grow up we'll be with different people all at the same time, we won't be with our religion people.'

'It's good because I wouldn't have any of the friends I've got now if I wasn't at a mixed school, because they're different from me.'

'I thought they'd (the link group) be from different religions like us. A mixture is good. They don't have that.'

These children had a relatively sophisticated understanding of culture, 'race' and religions and were already, at eight years of age, learning to negotiate friendships that accommodate, not avoid, their differences. They were aware that they had less to learn from the project than their link partners, from schools that serve communities predominantly of a single cultural or ethnic group:

'I think it makes people more racist being in a non-mixed school, because they're not used to mixing. Like in our link school.'

On impacts in deeper, transferable attitude change

Overall, the impact seen here in the numbers of actual mixed friendships formed between children is considerably more dramatic than the positive shift in attitudes towards welcoming mixed friendships in the abstract, outlined on page nine. This is to be expected, since actual contact with real people under equal, safe and friendly conditions is a direct personal experience. Such experiences are more meaningful to the children than the abstract ideas and imagined scenarios explored in the study of attitudes to mixing.

A similar discrepancy between actual contacts and generalised attitudes is also found in adults who express generalised racist views of a group or community, but make exceptions of people they personally know.

This raises a challenge for the project to determine how much actual contact is required, and the nature of the contact, in order to effect a more dramatic change in attitude; reducing generalised prejudice and closed attitudes, expressed towards unknown groups based on cultural, ethnic or religious difference. Such change is likely to be a gradual process, facilitated by repeated positive experiences, rather than a sudden change. If relationships are to develop and deepen to the point where children's attitudes towards an individual or small number of individuals will transfer to how they feel about a broader community group, it will take time.

4.1.2 'Increased reciprocity* between children from linked schools (*defined as readiness to mix with each other; to share resources; to exchange ideas and views; to relate stories and experiences from their own lives)'

Impacts in responses to direct experience



Significant Impact:

- **Considerable degree of facilitated reciprocity,**
- **modest degree of independently occurring, proactive reciprocity resulted from the project.**

We have already seen that the project achieved increased readiness amongst children to mix at an individual level. Teachers noted countless examples of children comfortably sharing resources during classroom activities, as well as during shared trips and off-site activities. Evaluation visits also enabled independent observation of children at play, where unstructured time offered the opportunity for children to choose to spend time with each other, talk more personally and play together, purely out of a curiosity about or a liking for one another.

Throughout the evaluation sample numerous examples of such reciprocity were observed, such as sharing playground game ideas, comparing family profiles, discussing feelings in one to one pairings, comparing likes and dislikes including subjects at school, sports teams, and even sharing lunch snacks occasionally. The degree of reciprocity between children varied between links, and three different trends were noted, as follows:

Firstly, they were evaluation visits during which very little reciprocity was observed, except between a tiny minority of children, and where the general tide was towards separateness unless given no choice but to work or sit together. Interaction between children in these groups was often marked by mutual disinterest, irritability, competitiveness and occasional disrespect. However only a minority of sample links (**23%**), indicating up to a quarter of settings across the whole project, and where there was resistance to cross-cultural friendships generally, performed so poorly in this area. In two sample links there was initial reciprocity, which dwindled as the project continued.

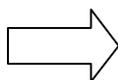
Secondly, the largest number of links – **46%** of the sample – demonstrated sporadic reciprocity which was not very proactive. Children in these groups mixed well when encouraged to do so, and shared information about themselves readily when activities required this of them. However, they mostly chose to sit and play separately in their unstructured time, and reciprocal interaction was not the norm. When children in these linked groups did choose to interact of their own volition, reciprocity was occurring between small groups of children rather than on an individual level. Interaction between these children was almost always positive, though rather passive.

Thirdly, a considerable proportion of the sample groups - **31%** - demonstrated proactive interaction between children, and reciprocity which seemed to escalate during the project. In these groups most children seemed intrigued by their link partners. They took opportunities to play and sit together wherever they could – both during classroom activities and in unstructured time. Reciprocity within these links was the norm, and interaction between children occurred at all levels – spontaneous interaction between individuals as well as small and larger groups.

Overall the project resulted in a considerable degree of facilitated reciprocity, and a modest degree of independently occurring, proactive reciprocity.

4.1.3 'Evidence of increased confidence and trust between peers (from link group)'

Impacts in responses to direct experience



Dramatic Impact indicated:

- **Dramatic increases in confidence and trust resulted from the project**

A key indicator of increasing confidence, trust and reciprocity is the number of friendships which developed during the project (see 4.1.1, pages 14-16 above). The development of friendships could be seen as the vehicle driving the process of achieving these other desirable outcomes; however this process must be seen against the background of children's initial trepidation about making friends – in short, there was not a neutral base on which to build positive experiences and burgeoning trust. The baseline interviews revealed fears of bullying, or of problems arising from intolerance of difference. The following quotes demonstrate some of these fears:

Baseline Position:

'What if they don't like me because my skin is a different colour, or because my culture or my religion is different?'

'Uh-oh.... why are we going?'

'Are you sensible and kind?'; 'There might be gangs'

'What if someone beats me up and makes me cry?'

Fears were mentioned very widely before the project began; however, it is interesting that most of these comments make reference to fears in an oblique way, with little direct mention of feared violence:

'I feel worried in case something happens...', 'anxious...', 'nervous...', 'worried...'

Research suggests that anxiety that persists during contact time can perform as a mediating, negative factor in inter-group contacts (Stephans, 1985, 1992) and furthermore, that inter-group anxiety can mediate any positive effects of contact on racial attitudes.¹⁶ This claim is broadened and restated by Pettigrew and Tropp: *'the potentially positive effects of contact may not be achieved unless negative factors are diminished in the contact situation.'*¹⁷ Since there was anxiety present for many children before the project, the work of teachers in addressing and countering these feelings with positive experiences during contact days has been a crucial factor in maximising the positive impact of the project. Direct references, prior to involvement in the project, to fears of violence were only articulated five times across the whole evaluation sample, three times by one group about to meet children from a school in a neighbourhood with a reputation for intolerance. No child interviewed before the project spoke openly and directly about fears of racism.

Post-project position: developing trust and confidence

Comments made after the project were of a different order. There is a stark contrast following the project end between comments amongst those who enjoyed their project experience and established friendships, and those who did not enjoy their experience, and established few friendships.

¹⁶ Stephan et al., (2002). *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 28.

¹⁷ Pettigrew & Tropp, (2002).

Poorly performing minority of links

It is evident from the data that a small number of links did not function successfully, not only in how few friendships children established, but also in the poor quality or negative nature of children's contact with each other, so that trust did not develop between them. Amongst these children's post-project reflection comments there were:

- Seven written references and numerous verbal references to the racism of the link group: **'they are so racist,' 'they say racist things to you, like 'P*k*s' '**
- Four written references to children being **'nasty'** or **'mean'**
- Ten written and many verbal references to extreme feelings such as **'hate'** / **'very angry'**
- Three references to feeling violent, one child suggested **'have riots with them'** as well as a range of comments signifying breakdowns in trust:
- **'I don't trust them. When people take the mickey out of your religion, I don't trust them.'**

These comments were all made by children within three links (six schools), and these groups also account for almost all of the 11% of children mentioned at 4.1.1 pages 15-16 who made no cross-cultural friendships through the project. In the case of the three poorly performing links we will look later (4.3.2, page 34) at whether the children's attitudes towards their link class appeared *more* prejudiced following the project, and the possible reasons for this. It is notable that the children expressing the greatest fears of violence before meeting their link group were not amongst the three links highlighted, which indicates that those children's initial fears did not result in ongoing anxieties, and were indeed proven unfounded by their contact experience. Teachers leading this link should be congratulated for successfully managing and reducing children's powerfully expressed anxieties.

Strongly performing majority of links

The majority of links within the sample, however, were positive and productive, and amongst these links with a high occurrence of new cross-cultural friendships, confidence and trust between children also developed. **Seventy-five percent** of the sample reported that they were keen to stay in touch with their new cross-cultural contacts (see 4.1.4), and these children's comments included 29 references to wanting or planning to meet up separately from the project or school. Ideas on what they might do together included eating, playing, talking, football, ice-skating, driving, playing on bikes, going to youth club, and home visits. All of these gestures and ideas show both confidence and trust, and enthusiasm to invite these new friends into their own, personal lives.

On impacts in deeper, transferable attitude change

It is widely noted by researchers that emotions play a central role in the formation or reformation of attitudes. However, emotional outcomes, such as 'affective ties' – friendships – do not always transfer to cognitive outcomes, such as changed beliefs about different groups. *'Emotion emerges as pivotal. The mean contact effects for affective indicators of prejudice are the largest, while stereotype indicators are among the smallest. It appears that contact can lead to liking without significant shifts in the images held of the out-group.'*¹⁸

¹⁸ Pettigrew & Tropp, *A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory* (2002). 'mean contact effects'= average impacts from contact. 'out-group'= the people who are different from the majority. In the context of this project both linked groups will be the 'out-group' for each other.

Young children are less likely to have strongly held stereotypes about different groups than the adults involved in the quoted research, and any less emotional and more cognitive responses to 'different' children may also be more mutable at primary school age. In section 4.3 we will look at where any cognitive outcomes resulted from the project, and how they compare with the significant affective outcomes.

4.1.4 Evidence of enthusiasm to maintain a link beyond the programme

Impacts in responses to direct experience



Significant Impact indicated:

- Considerable evidence of interest in maintaining the links resulting from the project.

Evaluation data shows that overall, 75% of the sample stated they had made cross-cultural friendships that they were keen to sustain beyond the lifetime of the project, offering a range of suggestions for how this might be achieved.

A further 14% of the sample made cross-cultural friendships during the project that they were not interested in sustaining beyond the lifetime of the project.

The remaining 11% of participants had not established a cross-cultural friendship through the project.

Reasons given amongst the cited 14% for feeling less interested in maintaining friendships were typically:

'I don't want to stay in touch, but he is sorted. He's my mate.'

'I don't want to keep in touch but I still like my friends. Some of the people swear'

'I'm not very bothered about staying in touch with my friend'

'You get angry, they make you sick'

'I only want to speak to one person & that is it'

'Angry - I don't want to stay in touch with them'

The latter three responses demonstrate that children were clear that their new contacts were not positive; because of behaviour they had witnessed or suffered. The former three comments are more ambiguous, and possibly draw attention to children's scepticism about managing to maintain contact, and awareness of how difficult it might be for them, unaided.

Suggestions made, by children who were more enthusiastic, for maintaining friendships with named children from their link class included the following ideas:

'Email, internet link'

'I will get her phone number'

'Phone my friend'

'Stay in touch, send letters to each other, and visit them every month'

'Online games, text, letters, hotmail'

'I would play with her and talk to her'

'We can talk on the phone and meet them somewhere outside'

'Go see him a lot, ring them first'

'Go to the school'

'Go ice-skating'

'Drive through Ilkley'

'Ring them. And play with them. Go have chicken and chips and burger'

**'Ring them, go to their house, and plan some trips to the park'
'Ask where his house is, phone, see him on me bike, at youth club, coming out of school'**

The children's enthusiasm for maintaining contact with their friends was generally emphatic. They could often consciously sense the personal value of linking for their own growth and development: **'this is helping me.'**, and appeared hungry to continue the journey. Many times children expressed a desire to continue linking in the same way as they had been, and disappointment that it was not the intention of their teachers to propose that they continue to be involved in the project, because the following year it would be the turn of another class. Those who were daunted by the prospect of taking responsibility for sustaining their friendships independently were probably realistic, since children of 7 or 8, and even those of 11, would have little control over their transport, family plans, or their family's attitudes towards out-of-school contact with these new friends. It will be interesting to see whether any children manage to sustain their new friendships, with or without the support of their school.

4.2 Overall observations of:

'...increased or improved teamwork and mixed team or 'mixed community' awareness, leading to children claiming a broader community identity'

The task of broadening the horizons of a child's sense of identity is a complex and sensitive one, and any development that might be achieved through involvement in this project can only be the early part of an ongoing journey of self-definition that may last a lifetime. Indeed considering the amount of contact time and length of involvement children have in the linking project, this aim is extremely ambitious, and should be seen as aspirational. However, amongst the indicators below some much smaller steps towards the aspirational goal can be observed.

4. 2.1 'Children demonstrating greater co-operation and teamwork during sessions, in a way that crosses cultural divides'

Impacts in responses to direct experience



Distinct Impact indicated:

- **Considerable evidence of cross-cultural co-operation and teamwork occurring during the project.**
- **Some evidence of unsuccessful cross-cultural co-operation and teamwork.**

Teamwork between children from different cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds was a regularly occurring feature of the Linking Project, since teachers built collaborative activities into all link days. During evaluation visits team games and co-operative activities were often observed, and children participating in the arts and cultural activities made efforts to work together to create beautiful artwork and inspiring performances in dance and music. The sports activities observed seemed to encounter some extra hurdles, whilst remaining very popular with children.

In sports activities children identified strongly with the concept of their own class or school as the natural team – a tendency which had to be overcome in order to build mixed teams. In some cases this was never comfortably accepted by some children, who demonstrated frustration at playing in a team with children from their link class, against friends from their own class. For many groups' football and football teams are a key area for observing any developing cross-cultural teamwork.

- In one school there was talk of mixed football teams, though none had yet occurred. Children spoke about picking the best players, some of whom were from the other school.
- Many groups spoke about gentle rivalry between schools over football.
'The best thing was beating them at football 5.1. They thought they were so good til then!'
- In one school, boys managed to use the excitement about competing to bulldoze through their initial alienation or fear of each other. However towards the end of the year some boys still used the football and sporting skills of their own class to differentiate themselves from their link class, and to claim a general superiority.
- Sometimes the rivalry was less gentle! **'They cheat!'; 'They play rough.'; 'He dived and pretended to hurt his leg. So I said in a really brave voice - "get up, there's nothing wrong with you!" and he did.'**
- Girls often commented on football as a specific point of focus; several girls felt that the 'rules' were different in their link school, so that they were in some cases *more* and in some *less* welcomed by boys and by staff to play football than usual.
- It seems likely that some girls, normally (by their friends' and their own admission) little interested in football or playing with the boys, identified that the football game was where the most dynamic linking interface was taking place, and were keen not to be excluded.
- Informal football at playtimes was almost always reported as having reverted to school teams, which could easily undermine the work in mixed teams during structured activities.

Planned and led paired warm-ups and athletics activities where the team concept is looser worked more co-operatively than games such as football, which tended to occur informally at playtimes. Where teachers intervened in playtime and lunchtime team games there was more evidence of co-operative activity. Some groups held organised sports activities during which mixed teams are engineered, and these have been enjoyed: **'Its good, cos you don't how good they're going to be. We all know about each other'**

Teachers cited many examples of successful teamwork during link days, and a great deal of collectively created work has been produced. The extent of teamwork or co-operation actually taking place during these processes has varied, depending on the skill and attentiveness of teachers. However, clear examples are in abundance:
'children held hands and helped each other all day'
'both classes encouraged each other during the more difficult activities..'
'we made some fantastic pictures together'.

Evaluation visits observed that teamwork in pairs was challenging for some children and they seemed shy, with little verbal interaction despite working closely together on problem solving, making or designing something. Paired classroom activities often demanded co-operation and verbal interaction; though even in these activities some children did not manage to make an easy collaboration. Many children appeared not to enjoy being paired with one individual to work, preferring a wider range of new peers with whom to build a team.

Wider group work, where the relationships between individual children could be more relaxed with less need for one-to-one intensity, produced some interesting interactions. In creating large scale banners some children were keen to guard their artistic space, and became frustrated by attempts to collaborate too closely, while others enjoyed the playfulness of collaboratively improvised design.

The most successful teamwork and co-operation was taking place where children had little time to concern themselves with the make-up of their team, as their shared goal of a high profile performance or completed work of some kind was paramount. Two schools wrote a song together, and went on to perform the song to an audience of hundreds at an event. This experience demanded strong teamwork, since it was extremely challenging:

'It was very very very very scary! Even more scary than falling off a building as tall as a hotel!'

In these situations the familiarity of working hard with a previously unknown team mate created a natural pattern of cross-cultural collaboration. In a number of dance teams the children worked together on a single piece, often sharing a small space. This work was demanding of high concentration, and physically exhausting. Occasionally children became irritated by others not concentrating, but the team spirit – assisted greatly by the participation of teachers in the dance routines – was strong. In all performance-based activity there was shared pride in the whole team's achievements. In these wider group work activities the co-operation was between classes, rather than co-operation between individuals.

A question remains as to whether the team spirit fostered during these performance activities developed to form a lasting sense of team spirit between the groups. In one link a successful and intense team performance in the early part of the project did not sustain the children through subsequent tensions, and by the end of the year the relationship between these groups was not healthy.

Observing at playtimes how often children choose to play together in mixed groups is a good indicator of teamwork, bonding and mutual respect. During visits, strong and weak mixed-team bonding was observed in different places. For the children this was also a key indicator of barriers being broken down:

'The best thing was when we played tig at lunchtime'

'The best bit was when my partner helped me on the spider web – he was very kind, and held it still, he didn't shake it like people usually do.'

For some groups though, there was disappointment about how seldom children choose to play in mixed groups at playtimes. This was the source of some of the greatest sadness amongst children themselves observed during the evaluation, and must eventually be seen as a key indicator of the failure of a link:

'They just abandon us at playtime.'; 'They can't be bothered to play with us'; 'Why won't my partner be with me except in class?'

Sometimes this disappointment was only evident in one of two linked schools, and was therefore not simply down to the whim or personality of individual children, but more a general sign of unease, or a feeling of inequality between the children. Teacher preparation ought to have been used to address this situation, but in these cases teachers either did not pick up the unease, or did not succeed in dispelling it.

In a small number of schools within the sample teamwork was not so skilfully facilitated by teachers, so that activities enabled children to avoid interacting with each other altogether, or else they encouraged competitiveness at such an early stage that children's initial barriers were reinforced.

Two teachers shared frustrations about apparent unwillingness on the part of their link school counterpart to properly support the process. In one case a teacher was suspected of projecting his/her own fears of mixing onto their own class, and of engineering closed, mono-cultural groupings during activities. There were also echoing comments from a small number of teachers that they felt their counterpart was 'over-

protective' of their group, not allowing them to 'get stuck in' to linking properly, or 'pandering too much to nervous parents'.

Four sample groups of children told the evaluator they would like to suggest, as an improvement to the programme, much more unsupervised (teacher-free) contact time between the link groups.

'The teachers get in the way': 'They're stealing our precious time for getting to know each other!'

Overall the project built up a repertoire of cross-cultural co-operation and teamwork models, the individual strengths and weaknesses of which will need to be researched in more detail. Teamwork and co-operation of some kind was certainly widely in evidence in most sample links.

4.2.2 Children demonstrating greater sense of, and belonging to/ownership of a broad and mixed Bradford community identity

Impacts in deeper, transferable attitude change



No Clear Impact:

- **No clear impact on children's sense of, and ownership of, a broad and culturally mixed Bradford identity resulted from the project.**

A number of factors, predetermined through geography and community, as well as all other more personal factors, affect how much impact linking can have in the area of belonging and identity. The linking project uses cultural venues as neutral spaces to help moderate some of these factors. However, during swap days, when children visit each other's schools, factors relating to geographic locations begin to arise.

With brief reference to community, children living in an area with a settled demography or long local family roots, or in a small or isolated community, a close-knit community or a community which feels 'under threat' for some reason, may have a stronger sense of how their local or community identity can be part of their personal identity. On the other hand, living in an area with a transient population, where the community is very spread out or dispersed, or very mixed but without real cohesiveness or interdependence, where there is little emphasis on a local identity, or where people/neighbours have little need to interact with each other, a child may have no sense of a connection between their locality, their 'community' and their personal identity.

In the latter stages of the evaluation a further factor began to emerge as significant; most of the teachers involved in the project during the evaluation year are not Bradford residents, and few, if any, who live within the wider district, live in urban or culturally diverse neighbourhoods. This became apparent when teachers were asked to discuss their own experiences of cultural interface, and Bradford's ethnic mix. A surprising number of teachers responded that they knew little about Bradford, and rarely come to the city or its surrounding area, except to work. This highlighted a difficulty for these teachers in encouraging a sense of a Bradford identity amongst their children, since their own identity, local pride and belonging is vested elsewhere, and therefore their personal 'stake' in the future of a cohesive Bradford community may be negligible.

With reference to geography:

- If two linked schools are geographically close, building a sense of shared identity will be easier for children to make sense of ('we are neighbours').
- If children are likely to see each other outside school this may help to consolidate shared aspects of identity.
- If visits between schools are more likely to continue, or additional visits can take place because schools are quite close this will help to speed up any developments.

Twenty percent (three pairs) of the sample group were geographically quite close, with less than 1.5 miles separating linked communities.

A further 26% (four pairs) had between 2 and 4 miles dividing them, and the majority, 54% of the sample, were travelling between 5 and 15 miles to visit their link partners.

- If two linked schools are geographically distant in this way, it will be harder for children to understand why they might think of themselves as sharing an identity ('on top of all other differences between us we are not even neighbours!').
- Equally, if children are unlikely to visit the same shops and leisure or other facilities and, therefore, are unlikely to bump into each other outside school, and if extra visits to each other's houses or schools can never be a possibility due to distance, there is less shared experience on which to base a shared identity.

The observations reported in the evaluation must be understood within this context.

Amongst the sample groups some interesting examples emerged of children attempting to make sense of their identity with reference to their new link friends:

- Boys attending a mainly Asian school tried to make a connection with two mixed-heritage boys at their link school, saying 'You're like us!'. This seems to have come from assumptions based on skin colour and other visual characteristics. These approaches were queried by white friends of the mixed-heritage boys, who found the association strange. At first it appeared to be a little unsettling to the two boys concerned. However, after a number of meetings these initial, superficial connections based on appearance were superseded by more natural connections based on compatible personalities.
- In another link, a mixed heritage child (with some Caribbean heritage) attending a predominantly white British school repeatedly attempted to join an established friendship group of Pakistani British boys from his link school, in preference to playing with his class mates.
- There is a difficulty locating shared identity factors if one group identifies their religion as a key identity component and the other does not. This has led to some set-backs and minor misunderstandings between children several times during the project this year. Most common is an assumption by Asian children who have a strong religious identity (whether Muslim, Sikh or Hindu) that a group of white children will identify themselves as Christian. In many cases, the white children do not consider a religious label a key factor in defining who they are, and may not have an awareness of a family religion. However, they may feel, when asked, that they must be Christian, since they are sure that they are not Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, and no other category seems to be an option.
- This behaviour is borne out by recent research into religion and identity which claims that where one group in a society or community defines itself clearly by a formalised set of beliefs and values (such as a religion), this can push others – whether or not they would normally identify themselves by any religion or obvious value/belief system – to take a position, simply in order to make sense of their own identity in the terms chosen by the first group¹⁹.

¹⁹ Sarfras Mansoor, BBC Radio 4 broadcast 'Don't Call Me Asian!' (2005).

- Conversely, white children often assume that any darker-skinned child who does not appear African Caribbean to them must be Muslim – the largest religious population in Bradford after Christians.
- There is often confusion between the identifiers of *basic skin colour, race, culture, heritage, religion, community*. One group supplied a fascinating list of what they thought were different religions, found at the end of this transcription of part of a baseline evaluation discussion, when religion had already arisen in discussion:
(Evaluator) *'What religion do you think I am?'*

"Christian."

'maybe...'

"Jewish?"

'maybe...'

"No faith!"

'Kind of. I just haven't made my mind up yet. Why did you say Christian?'

("Are you a half-caste?")

"Because you look Christian"

'how?'

"Most Christians have pale skin and white hair!"

'Do they?'

"Mostly."

"I once saw a woman and her skin was totally white! Like A.....'s scarf!"

"Sometimes people are Muslims, but they have pale skin."

'What other religions are there?'

"Bengali..."

"Jamaican..."

"Chinese..."

"English..."

"Pakistani..."

"Russian..."

- Rarely, but occasionally, children used 'English' and 'Asian' to identify different people, including themselves.
- Several separate individuals, when asked what they had meant by saying somebody's 'culture' is different, could not find a way to describe the concept they had in their mind. One child tried **'just... the way they live? They way they are.'**
- Comments in groups from outlying village communities sometimes referred to Bradford as a place distinct from themselves by stating alarmingly naïve misconceptions:

'In Bradford most people are Muslims'

'Most people in Bradford have brown skin'.

In reality the percentage of black or ethnic minority people living in Bradford is less than 20% of the population.

Mixed communities

In the more culturally, racially and religiously mixed schools the identity dialogue functions differently (see pages 15-19). Data from the evaluation process has indicated that classes from mixed schools (11.5% sample), when linked with a class from a predominantly mono-cultural school, might suffer setbacks in their internal classroom dynamics, once they come into contact with the stark and oversimplified categorisations of 'difference' which are prevalent in many mono-cultural schools.

- In their own mixed school communities, depending on their age, they appeared to have either no concept at all of what 'difference' might mean or how it might be identified, or else they had negotiated an acceptance of a spectrum of some kind

with each child inhabiting their own slot. In discussions with the evaluator, children were occasionally taken by surprise by how their peers referred to them – some felt suddenly more visible:

- **'Her skin was very dark brown - I mean like I'm....'** (Referring to another child in the discussion group. This child is shocked!); and some seemed to feel invisible or ignored: **'we don't have anybody who's white:'** (another child in the discussion group says :) **'Yes we do - what about me? And D..... and S.....?'; 'Oh yeah, I forgot!'**
- Although children in mixed schools happily began to build friendships, there seemed to be some unsettled responses during the second and third evaluation visits. In one mixed school the average mood dropped from an open attitude to a cautious and almost closed outlook by the time of the final interview, and all the mixed groups in the sample showed a generally more cautious attitude than prior to the project.
- Amongst the 10% sample children attending outlying, mainly white schools which were linked with mixed community schools, more than half chose to name either *only* or *mainly* the white children they had met at the mixed school as their new friends.

There weren't as many brown children as I thought there were going to be, they were more mixed. I was glad about this because it was easier to make friends and we could pronounce their names a lot easier'.

All of the above throws into doubt whether mixed schools benefited from involvement in the linking model in place during 2004-05. Participating mixed schools certainly require resources to adequately support some of their children through the potential process of disorientation that may result from the experience. The linking model is currently being developed in new ways to be useful and effective in mixed schools.

By the time of the final interview many children were comfortable defining 'culture' as a concept, with a range of slight variations on the statement: 'your culture is how you live, what you do, what is normal for you.' However, during these interviews some interesting new allusions were made by children to aspects of identity:

'Our religion is important, people's religion is important'

'My religion is black'

'They're the same colour as me, but I'm not a Muslim or owt. My friend calls me a P*ki sometimes. I feel like punching him'

'Coloured people - that's culture: my culture is white:'

'I didn't ask to be born this colour' (white child).

These complex references are further signals that children are confused about how to define their own and other people's identities, or what value judgements are attached to any of the labels they are trying to use. Involvement in the project did not seem to lead to any increasing clarity for children in this area – if anything the project catalysed a deeper questioning of identity labels, without offering any resolution. This finding is no surprise, since adults – including the teachers involved in this project, as evidenced during the project training sessions – also struggle with definitions of their own as well as other people's identities.

Perhaps the most useful data in gauging the impact of the project on developing an inclusive Bradford identity can be seen in the responses from those who were involved in the project over the longest time span. Developing a sense of identity and *community* identity is such a lengthy process that the study looked where schools in the sample group had been linking for the longest for some sign of development towards a 'shared sense of a broad and mixed Bradford identity'.

The two groups of children linking for their third consecutive year, which happen also to attend schools that are geographically close, began to show some processing of the concept of a Bradford identity:

'It doesn't matter if you're Christian or Muslim, you should be friends: in Bradford - everyone.'; **'It's a good idea to try to make Christians blend with Muslims'**
'This project helps Bradford: if adults see the kids, they might think "If they can do it, we can!"';
'When I'm an adult, it will help me that I did this project'
'I'd choose to go to a mixed secondary school now'.

Overall the issue of developing ownership of a culturally mixed Bradford identity needs more time and is a key area for future research, particularly as it is a driving aspiration for the programme, and extremely difficult to achieve through any kind of intervention. Any positive impacts evidenced in this area, amongst teachers and others in local leadership roles as well as amongst the city's children and young people, might prove to be of immeasurable value for the future of the District.

4.3 Overall observations of:
'...increased awareness of/embracing of differences and diversity (cultural, racial, faith-based differences)'

Children attending schools throughout Britain in which one cultural, ethnic or religious group is very predominant or indeed exclusive, increase their awareness of differences and diversity largely through story-based stimuli and inanimate cultural artefacts, with few direct experiential learning opportunities. It seems ironic that in Bradford District, where the local community is culturally rich and diverse, children can still find themselves learning about diversity in abstract ways, with little directly experiential learning taking place. The result is that children's awareness of differences and diversity is patchy and abstract – and they are rarely sure of themselves when outlining what they already know. Through the Linking Project children who attend largely mono-cultural schools have encountered diversity in a direct, healthy and ordinary way, and many children have begun a dialogue, in their own minds, about diversity that is real for the first time.

4.3.1 Children demonstrating increasing curiosity about, and having the confidence to take part in a debate about other people, and their values and points of view – specifically those from a different cultural background than their own.

Impacts in responses to direct experience



Mixed Impact indicated:

- **Considerable evidence of curiosity and a more vigorous debate about differences occurring as a result of the project,**
- **Little evidence that children feel more able to discuss these issues openly.**

Key to any learning process is the element of reflection, questioning and consolidation, in order to accommodate new ideas. In the context of the Schools Linking Project the element of curiosity – questioning – is clearly seen in the enormous range of unanswered questions children named before they began linking.

The following is a small sample, with all 'curiosity questions' framed as if directed towards link partners:

Baseline quotes:

- 'Why do people build Mosques in England?'
- 'Why do your boys and men wear dresses?'
- 'Do you believe in Jesus?'
- 'What country were you born in?'
- 'I've seen some women in town with headscarves on, and they look like Ninjas. What's that about?'
- 'What different languages can you speak? What do you speak at home?'
- 'What food do you eat?'
- 'Do you like going to prayers?'
- 'Do you enjoy fasting?'
- 'Will we understand each other? Or will we have misunderstandings?'

The evaluation collected many verbatim quotes from children which display the kind of debate they were beginning to have, either privately within their own minds, between their peers, or sometimes with their class teacher, as a result of linking. As the project progressed, the extent of children's curiosity deepened, so that they could begin to articulate more complex questions as well as exploring new areas of inquiry. To capture these developments, children in the evaluation sample were asked during the year to think about four aspects of their experience:

- a) Observations relating to differences.
- b) Anything they had been surprised by.
- c) Anything they had learnt.
- d) Anything they were still curious about.

The following quotes give examples of children's enquiry deepening.

a) Observations:

- 'Before, I didn't want to do it! I wouldn't have been friends with them without the project.'
- 'I will remember this project when I'm older..'
- 'A...s got a new baby and so have we!'
- 'I have noticed that they are not different from us, well not really different...'
- 'Some Christians are racist. These children were mostly not racist. You have to get to know people'
- 'Everyone's names are different..'
- 'They're all such different personalities'
- 'The language was funny. They looked funny: the Sikh children - he had a funny lump thing on his head..'
- 'I'm not being rude, but their faces are a different colour'
- 'All their hymns are in Punjabi!'
- 'The jewellery was 3D and had a little chain from the ear that hooked into the hair'

b) Surprises:

- 'That I could understand them. Thought they'd speak another language'
- 'That I liked the people. I thought there'd be a few bullies but there weren't'
- 'I wouldn't have guessed I'd be friends with those people! They were friendly'
- 'When they turned into friends so soon!'

'Their parents looked different than I thought'
'I thought they would call me blackie or nigger, but they didn't'
'I thought its good to get on with people who are different, but they're not that different: most of them like the same things as us!'
'One Gori (white person) knew some Punjabi!'
'E.... didn't ask me about my scarf - I was surprised about that!'
'The accent in their voices'
'That they weren't as brown (dark) as I thought'
'That they were exactly like me - I thought they wouldn't be.'

c) Learning:

'O.....'s uncle is in the Pakistan army'
'That people aren't how they look - you can be wrong.'
'Learnt how to get on with other friends. These are my first non-Muslim friends'
'That they wear shalwar kamise'
'They aren't allowed to have boyfriends. They have to have arranged marriages. It's their religion'
'Their lives are just like ours!'
'It would be better if our two schools were mixed up together.'
'I'm not shy to speak to an English person now. I was before.'
'Their place of worship have domes on the top'
'I felt really worried because they might be offensive, but they weren't'

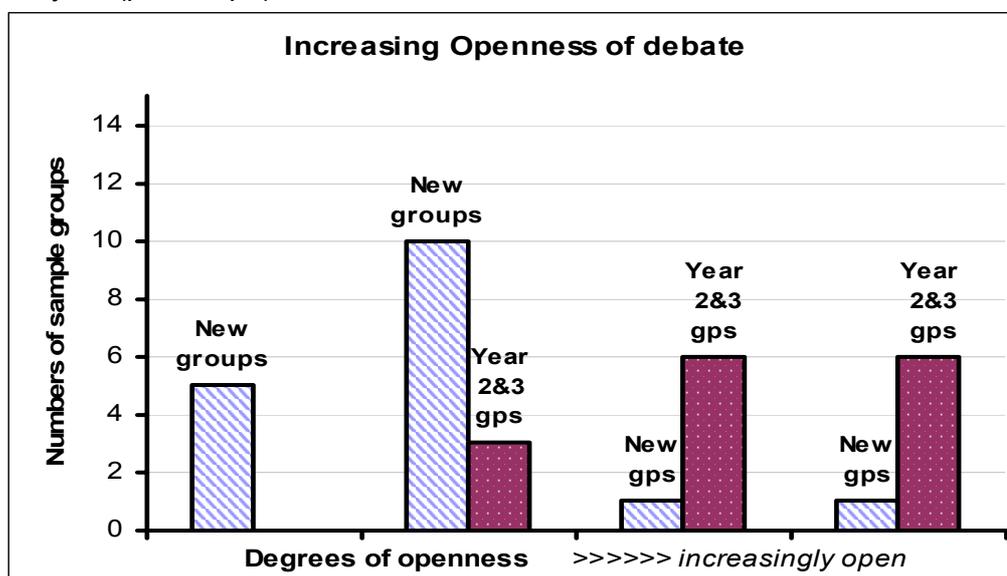
d) Curiosity:

'Why do you all have brown skin?'
'Do you get bullied because you're a Muslim?'
'Do you go to MacDonald's - is it rude to ask that?'
'Why do you like sausages - is it just the way you were brought up?'
'Are all your teachers Muslim?'
'I'm more curious now - because we don't live in a place like Bradford, we don't get to meet different people very much' (lives in outlying village)
'I still want to know more about different religions....'
'Curious about loads - about everything! There's stuff I don't know that I'd like to know'
'I wish we had more time for questions. I want to know more about my friends'
'I would like to know what they like and what they believe in'

The above quotes express what was, for many children, an inquiry occurring behind the closed doors of confidentiality in the first half of the year; the beginnings of an internal debate that they seldom have confidence or clear permission to voice. The Linking Project aimed to offer a vehicle for opening up the debate.

Chart 6

Displaying the comparative openness, at this year's baseline point, between groups involved in previous years (dark purple) with those involved for the first time this year (pale stripe).



At the end of the year there was a very great increase in the openness amongst children to discuss the issues arising from differences, and views about different kinds of people, as long as it was guaranteed that their comments would remain confidential, or unattributed. Children made frequent checks as to whether the microphone and recording equipment used to gather evaluation data were functioning, and assurances were sought that teachers would not hear the recordings. This indicates that once prodded, the issues of identity, diversity and feelings about differences are ripe for discussion, whilst at the same time suggesting that teachers might not be the easiest people with whom children could debate these issues. Teachers of course varied in their perceptiveness and experience in this area. However, as seen in the teacher evaluation responses referred to at 4.2.2 on page 26, and in the additional uncertainties and discomfort in discussing issues relating to racial identities and faith-based tensions and divisions, expressed by a significant number of teachers in the final teacher evaluation, many felt ill-equipped – particularly those who have little connection with Bradford outside work.

The context within each school, for example the degree of experience, amongst the children, in mixing with different communities and cultures, and any local or family politicisation regarding attitudes to different people; as well as the skills and confidence levels of teachers in facilitating such a complex debate, are key factors which have played a significant role in the limited success of the project itself in the area of openness of debate. In the words of a Year 6 child, disappointed by how much s/he felt the opportunities of the project had not been maximised for their group: **'I think the project's a good idea, but some teachers have been too defensive, they didn't allow any criticisms of the other children, or discussion of any negative things.'**

These are examples of two ways in which debate can become stifled: either because of the fears children have that their thoughts are unspeakable in public, or because teachers fear that such a debate might unleash too many negative feelings. It is very important to find a way to make space for the debate children have told us they want to have.

4.3.2 Participants demonstrating increasing awareness of and respect for other people, and their values and points of view, especially those from a different background than their own

Impacts in deeper, transferable attitude change



Modest Impact indicated:

- **Some evidence of children increasing their awareness of diversity and different values.**
- **Some data suggesting positive attitudes towards different people became more widespread.**
- **Some evidence of disrespect hardening in a minority of groups.**

Determining children's level of awareness (knowledge) of different cultural or religious practices and perspectives is easier than gauging the degree of their respect (attitude) shown towards other people and their values. Often a *lack* of respect was easier to identify, through casual banter, declared opinion or observed interaction. Hence the data below tends to focus on whether apparent *disrespect is reducing*, rather than respect increasing.

Baseline Position:

Before beginning the project attitudes were gauged from discussions and responses to activities during the baseline interviews. Amongst groups in the sample, in every case any disrespectful comments were made by only a small number of children, and the response of other group members to such comments was taken into account in determining the group position:

- Twelve (46%) sample groups began with very low awareness of diversity and different cultural perspectives, and some explicit disrespect:

'I don't like Christians - they keep fighting wars with us'

'I don't want a Gori (white) friend'

'They better not be Asians. I don't like P*kis.'

In one case children who have known each other from linking last year were still disrespectful:

'Their names just sound like Bluurrrbalubbadubbbssss...!'

At the interim interviews some of these same children persisted in their disrespect:

'They smell... The dinner hall smells like pooh'

'Their language sounds like shlabibullallaa..!' (Putting hands over ears).

- Eight (31%) sample groups began with moderately low awareness, and some disrespect evident.
- Five (19%) sample groups began the project with some awareness, and no disrespect evident.
- The remaining 4% of the sample began the project with relatively high awareness, and explicitly positive attitudes, due to these pupils attending a mixed school.

Final position:

During the final interviews the following picture was recorded, and shows an escalation in disrespectful commentary, voiced however in a smaller number of groups.

- In 19% of sample groups (five) significant explicitly racist attitudes emerged – both directly witnessed and reported.

Of these, four are white schools and one is mixed.

- In 8% of sample groups (2) a small number of explicitly racist comments were made, and were not challenged by classmates.

- In 42% of sample groups (11) no racist comments were made and an open attitude prevailed.
- In 31% of sample groups (8) significant explicitly positive attitudes emerged.

In seven sample groups children still expressed personal fears based on differences, despite a broadly open personal attitude to difference.

In all the final interviews there was a moderate increase in awareness of diversity and diverse cultural perspectives.

Charts seven and eight show these findings, but cannot be directly compared, since the context of the interviews was not identical, taking into account the 7 July London bombings and its impact on children²⁰. The format was also slightly different each time.

However, an analysis of attitudes, based on the comparative content of the interviews and comments by children, shows two contrasting results:

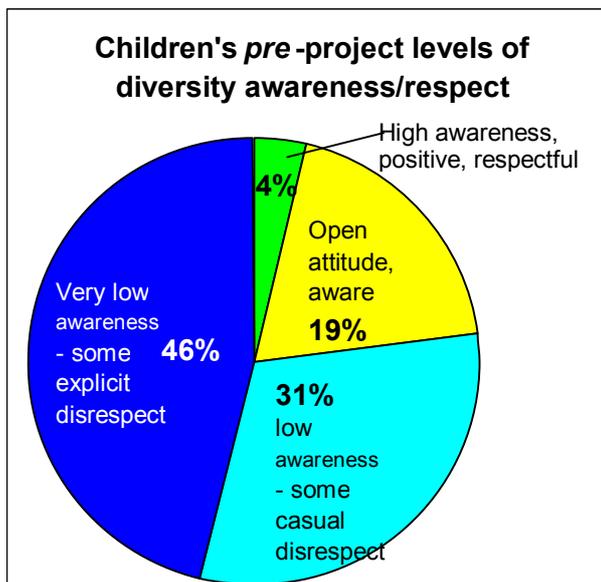
On the one hand -

- a significant increase in the numbers of children wishing to communicate respect for the differences they have encountered through the project.

On the other hand -

- a significant increase in the degree of disrespect voiced by a number of children in a small number of groups.

Chart 7



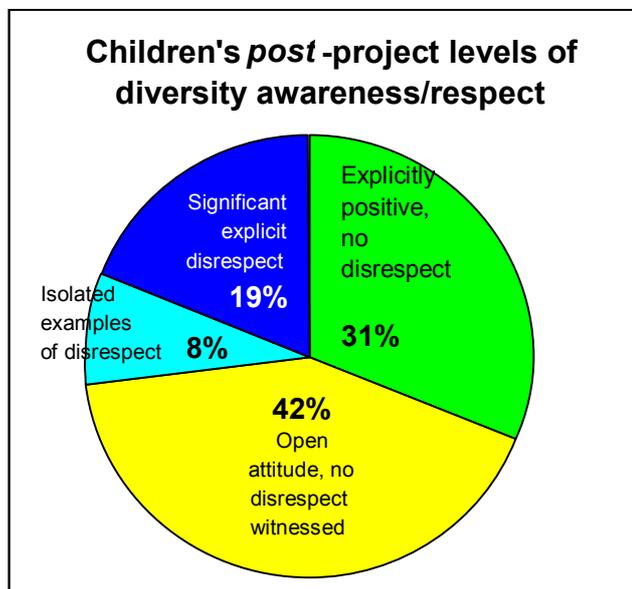
It should be noted that the quality of the disrespectful comments was different before and after the project. Where disrespect did prevail, the comments became more hostile than before the project, and some were clearly influenced by recent experiences as well as by children's interpretations of the London bombings.

What began in some groups before the project as casual, disrespectful joking about physical features and imitations of other languages – often aimed to raise a laugh from peers in the group – became, after a year linking, more serious, grim fantasies about projected behaviours, insults and sweeping personal declarations based on a rejection of particular differences – mostly religious or ethnic. Teachers were unaware of any of this kind of exchange between their pupils; this was a subculture, shared between children, out of the earshot of any adults.

²⁰ Please see section 3.3 p 5, and Section 5: The Wider Socio-political Context, p 41.

There was now no tendency for peers to laugh at these comments, which may be a further reflection of their awareness of the deepening seriousness of the wider political debate regarding community and religious divisions.

Chart 8



The most extreme examples of comments showed persisting stereotypes or prejudice:

- 'Christians, they knick your money'
- 'Muslims - some of them stab people. Some are good and some are bad'
- 'They (white people) might be drunk or something'
- 'They (bme people) might pretend to be your friend and get your house address and rob your house.'
- 'I don't like other people being in our country'
- 'People their skin colour - I don't like 'em.'
- 'They cause trouble, they bring machetes and that, and fight people, and they mug all the white lads, they take their phones off them.'
- 'Scared because they are all a different colour'
- 'Normal skin is white'
- 'I don't really like Muslims now. I've never really liked them.'
- 'If you walk alone at night the Christians'll jump you.'
- 'I think fighting them is the right way, because if you say 'please stop that' they won't listen because they're idiots.'

Examples of reported racism and the impacts of racism:

- 'They called us P*kis and gays. They said P*kis stink. There was racist graffiti in the toilet'
- 'You get angry, they make you sick'
- 'They're all racist, so what's the point in writing about them?'
- 'The white children in their school were racist about their school. They said they wished they didn't go to that school'
- 'They were making fun out of the Sikh boy in our class, they always did that, and teasing people because of their scarves, like 'scarfhead!''
- 'People were spitting and kicking, fighting'

By contrast there were also several examples of children keen to communicate increasing awareness, and the value of the project:

'Don't be angry about other people's religion or their skin colour, that's what I learnt from this project'

'Don't be shy because you never know, they might be nice people! - they *are* going to be nice people'

'I'm excited to be meeting a new religion and knowing things about them'

'I'll make friends, I will know more about their culture'

'We think their names are strange, but they probably think our names are strange!'

'I definitely wouldn't be worried now, because we've already met B..... (Link school)'

'I'd be ok, meeting different children, because I've just experienced it!'

'It's worth it, even though it's scary!'; 'Each time I feel worried but each time it's ok again. It's getting gradually better.'

'It's useful to have friends who are different; it helps when we get worried about things...' (The London bombings).

As already highlighted in earlier sections, most of the examples of negative project impact occurred in a small number of links; those where few friendships were established. Children who primarily displayed negative feelings towards the *behaviour* of children in their link class, and developed, from these experiences, generalised negative attitudes towards others from a similar cultural, religious or ethnic group, are all from these links that did not work well. However, there were some exceptions to the rule in this area of the study:

- In one group where few friendships arose, negative comments were limited specifically to the children in the link class, and did not become transferred into broader sweeping attitudes.
- By contrast, in two links where friendships did arise, and where one partner group demonstrated positive post-project attitudes, prejudiced attitudes and stereotypes about different people still persisted amongst children from the other group.

Overall it seems that there is not an obvious correlation between cross-cultural 'affective ties' resulting from the project, and a resulting transfer to changed cognitive attitudes; although significant numbers of children appear to have increased their awareness of and respect for different people to some degree through participating in the project, not all children have changed their attitudes, and where prejudice was originally the strongest is where it has remained the strongest.

4.3.3 Participants recognising that they can learn from other children, and from adults within those children's communities, especially an openness to learning from those from a different background than their own

Impacts in deeper, transferable attitude change



Distinct Impact indicated:

- **Strong evidence of children enjoying learning from adults from different backgrounds.**
- **Some evidence of children recognising they can learn from each other.**

This was a field in which the study gathered only anecdotal evidence, and the picture is therefore too patchy to make an overall judgement about any change resulting from the project. However, some opportunities did arise for children to recognise independently that they can learn from each other, or from other adults, because of their differences.

Amongst the evaluation sample there were teachers from a range of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Through the project 50% of the evaluation sample had a new, or for them unique, experience of being taught by a teacher from a different cultural, religious or ethnic group than their own. This aspect of the project was recognised at the interim evaluation point as a particularly valuable experience for many children. There were countless positive comments from children about how much they liked their link class teacher and non-teaching assistants, and not a single example of children questioning the leadership role of these teachers. There was much interest in these adults as different role models.

The evaluation highlighted some clear instances of children recognising that their counterparts in the link class had different experiences or knowledge, from which they could learn something. For example:

- One rural group was very enthusiastic about a French lesson they had had the chance to take part in with their (predominantly Asian and already bi-lingual) link class members, on a linking day. There was much exchange and learning between the children as a result of this ordinary classroom experience, and pride on all sides.
- During a local history project some children of South Asian heritage were able to explain to their link partners what many cultural artefacts such as cooking utensils and household items were for, since they have similar utensils at home.
- During a World War II joint project involving war veterans of South Asian heritage, the bi-lingual skills of some pupils were helpful in facilitating contact between the veterans and other children. Seeing his peers moving easily between their mother tongue and English one boy remarked:

'I'm so impressed by S..., wow, she's amazing! I can't believe she can do that.'

Other children, however, seemed to feel uncomfortable if their link partners were more knowledgeable about something than they were. Instead of seeing an opportunity to learn some words in another language, many children felt threatened by bilingualism, and resented the opportunity for privacy it offered the other children.

'It would help if they were white because sometimes they speak in their language and we don't know what they're saying.' **'They might be swearing at us!'**

Overall there was evidence of children recognising learning opportunities presented by being in contact with children and teachers from different backgrounds, though there were also children who resisted the notion that they might have anything to learn from 'difference', and people's different experiences of growing up in Bradford.

4.3.4 Participants demonstrating increased confidence and assertiveness with peers;
(eg ability to recognise – and resist peer pressure to voice – bigoted views, and willingness and ability to challenge disrespectful attitudes or behaviour)

Impacts in deeper, transferable attitude change



No Clear Impact indicated:

- Little evidence of children challenging casual racist comments and exchanges.
- Minimal evidence suggesting children becoming increasingly sensitive to racist behaviour by others.
- Possible minimal evidence suggesting children resisting peer influence, and increasingly proactive in challenging racist incidents.

Baseline Position:

During baseline discussions, a number of groups demonstrated a readiness to join in with and contribute to disrespectful or racist chat and jokes about people from different cultures. No discomfort was displayed by other children in these situations, and, as suggested in 4.3.2, it is possible that a culture of such casual racist chatter was the norm outside the orbit of teachers.

A discussion activity conducted within groups where there was enough quiet focus to debate such a sensitive issue threw up a diverse baseline picture. Children were asked – using guided imagination of two everyday situations – to place themselves overhearing racist behaviour towards somebody they do not know. In the first scenario (in a shop) all parties are unknown to them. In the second scenario (in the school playground) they are asked to imagine that their own friends were making racist remarks about another child or other children, for example visitors. Their levels of personal unease or discomfort with each scenario were recorded confidentially, and the two compared to indicate (using group averages) whether peer influence could make racist behaviour feel more acceptable in these groups.

Four groups felt that witnessing racist teasing, exclusion or bullying perpetrated by their own peers or friends on somebody else would make them feel **greater discomfort** than if they didn't know those involved, however the difference was rather minimal; the degree of rise in discomfort ranged from **3%** to **29%**. The group with the greatest increase in sensitivity to racist behaviour when it is perpetrated by their friends actually showed the least sensitivity across all groups, to overhearing racism amongst strangers. In each case children suggested proactive solutions including challenging their friend, offering support to the victim, and telling a teacher.

Four groups felt the opposite, that racist teasing, exclusion or bullying perpetrated by their own peers or friends on somebody else, would make them feel **less discomfort** than if they didn't know those involved. Amongst these groups, the degree of drop in their discomfort, or the 'peer influence factor' (degree to which peers and friends can influence children's own judgements about a situation) ranged from **12%** to **61%**.

The average levels of comfort or discomfort in response to witnessing racism, across all sample children interviewed before the project, were as follows:

- On average children felt 24% comfortable (76% uncomfortable) overhearing racism amongst strangers, with a range from 13% - 49%.
- On average children felt 34% comfortable (66% uncomfortable) overhearing racism perpetrated by their friends, with an enormously wide range from 5% - 85%.

- Thus the average peer influence factor was +10%, though the range was again very wide.

It should be noted that, although the results are interesting, this was a rather imperfect activity, as children had little time for unpacking the scenarios discussed. More discussion time may have altered their responses.

Several groups (particularly the boys within some groups) communicated 'fighting talk' – feeling steeled against potential problems in the playground, bullying and racist tensions. Their suggested solutions to such situations were often physical. Sometimes others in the group would query or challenge the wisdom of these solutions. It was also significant that all but one of these were groups involved in the project for their first year, and some seemed to be responding to rumours of problems from a previous year.

Final Position:

Thirteen groups participated in the same activity at the end of the project, six of which were the same groups who had taken part before the project began. These interviews were conducted after 7 July 2005, and some children had described incidents of racism towards them personally or family members – on the street, especially in the town centre – resulting from inflamed negative opinions amongst some people following the London bombings. This fact lends the following results greater poignancy, since recent experiences outside the project were brought to bear on their responses. However, it also renders a comparison with the earlier results, made in order to determine an impact resulting from the project itself, potentially misleading. With this in mind, the following summary shows the project end responses.

Six groups felt that witnessing racist teasing, exclusion or bullying perpetrated by their own peers or friends on somebody else would make them feel **greater discomfort** than if they didn't know those involved, however the difference was mostly minimal; the degree of rise in discomfort emerged as ranging from **1%** to **16%**. In each case, as before, children suggested proactive solutions including challenging their friend, and offering support to the victim, though telling a teacher was now rarely a solution suggested by children, as they claimed that teachers do not deal with such situations effectively, or at all!

Seven groups felt that racist teasing, exclusion or bullying perpetrated by their own peers or friends on somebody else, would make them feel **less discomfort** than if they didn't know those involved. Amongst these groups, the degree of drop in their discomfort, or the 'peer influence factor' (degree to which peers and friends can influence children's own judgements about a situation) emerged as ranging from **2%** to **34%**.

- On average across the project children now felt 21% comfortable (79% uncomfortable) overhearing racism amongst strangers, with a range from 0% - 43%. This might indicate a slightly increased sensitivity to overhearing racism.
- On average children now felt 28% comfortable (72% uncomfortable) overhearing racism perpetrated by their friends, with again a wide range from 0% - 54%. This seems to indicate a generally increased sensitivity towards witnessing friends perpetrating racist behaviour.
- The average peer influence factor was +7%. The range here was smaller than before the project, with most groups possibly resisting peer influence more successfully than before the project. Across all project end interviews children recorded much more similar responses; whether they imagined witnessing racist behaviour by their friends or by people they don't know.

During these project end interviews there was an increased amount of casual racist comments and references in five groups, as noted at 4.3.2 (page 34), which offered more opportunities for peers to challenge each other. However, in these five groups no challenge was made, and children seemed to take their cues from each other to continue making comments.

In reality only a handful of racist incidents were reported by staff during the project, though children in a number of groups indicated at their final interview point that incidents had occurred, often out of sight of the teachers, for example at playtimes. Where playground teasing occurred it was often older children from a different class who were teasing visitors. In several cases children reported that their link class had challenged older children in their own school who were making their new friends feel uncomfortable or threatened. However, there were a number of incidents of intolerance or racist name-calling between linked groups, occasionally resulting in fights, and perpetrated by a small minority of pupils. These incidents, occurring in three or four links, carried great weight in influencing how other children in these groups felt about the project and their link group generally. Teachers were sometimes, though not always, told and incidents dealt with.

5. The Wider Socio-political Context

The Schools Linking Project must be seen in the wider context within which it has taken place, in terms of local, national and even international affairs. During the project there was a general election, during which Keighley and Worth Valley ward was heavily targeted by the British National Party's national campaign team. The leader of the BNP chose to stand for election in this ward, and fought a campaign which involved slandering the local Asian community. BNP meetings were staged in the predominantly white outlying rural areas within the ward, to which families with young children were invited. Households also received election campaign DVD's, posted to their homes. In view of this local context, it is very significant that almost all of the schools where apparently intransigent racist attitudes arose during the project evaluation were in Keighley and the Worth Valley; this points to external political influences on families in the area, creating a local climate of intolerance of diversity, and setting too great a challenge for the project.

The 7 July London bombings in the summer of the evaluation year triggered a wealth of complex responses from children interviewed through the evaluation in mid-July. Children reported a number of troubling experiences and discussions since the bombings which show how international and national politics impact on their own lives even at such a young age (all the following comments were made by seven and eight year- old children):

'People are starting to blame Muslims - saying 'terrorists are doing this because of you lot', and some other nasty things like 'look at those P*kis, those are the people that's caused those deaths in London'. It hurts me. Why should we be scared to go to town? That's not fair!'

'I went to town and this man was saying to a boy, on his own, 'Osama Bin Laden's a traitor, why do you like him?' I walked away.'

'People think Muslims shouldn't be here. I think they're daft!'

'It's frightening for me because the people blame Muslims and I am one.'

'The bombs are spoiling our lives!'

'My auntie says that the London bombers are Muslim people so they might kick us out of the country. I think they might. But it's not fair – the people that did it, they're nothing to do with us, they're not our cousins or our sisters...'

'When they kick us out, we'll have to go to Iraq – there's more bombs there!'

Children also reflected on ways in which they felt the bombings might affect how different groups in Bradford view and behave towards each other, including repercussions for their own feelings:

'It's made people suspicious. '; 'It's made me *very* suspicious!'

'It makes it harder to meet other children who aren't Muslims, because they'll say – *ahh, come on, let's get them, they're P*kis*'

'It's changed what it feels like to be meeting different children.'

(All above responses are from BME children; the six that follow are from white children)

'The bombs have changed how I feel about Muslims: I don't really like them now'

'It's made me not like them more.'

'I thought that the different religions would have been kind of the same as us, but....the bombs...'

'Because they think it's brown people it's made me feel a bit scared of meeting up with different people'

'It's made me more scared of black and brown people'

'The bombs in London changed how we feel about people who are different from us'.

Some children and some teachers responded to the bombings by wanting to write letters of solidarity to their link class, which highlights their awareness of possible new fears and anxieties developing, and their desire to ensure new friendships were not damaged.

Children's analysis of why the bombings happened and who might be responsible was sometimes maverick but often insightful:

'I think some Muslims try to be friends with Christians, and other Muslims don't like it, so they try to hit or kill the Muslims who make friends with Christians'

'My friend said Tony Blair did it!'; 'I think it's the Americans... or the Germans. Or the Russians...'; 'I think its Indians'.

'They're trying to make Muslims look bad, the Americans. It was a set-up. They're torturing Muslims – its all part of the same thing'

'Osama Bin Laden is bombing all the white people because he doesn't like them'

'The people that went and bombed in London they might not have wanted Christianity in the world' (Six comments above are from BME children, the comment below is from a white child)

'It's religions fighting. I think that one religion doesn't like the English or something'.

These comments highlight a dimension to the Linking Project which, though mostly distant and retrospective, added a degree of indirect threat to children's cross-cultural interaction. The existence of threat and associated anxieties has been seen to reduce the impacts of inter-group contact, as was discussed in section 4.1.3, p20, and hence the London bombings on 7 July must be seen as a factor instrumental in mediating the positive impacts of the project for some children (see also page13 under trust and emotional openness to mixing).

In the current socio-political landscape, with concerns raised daily about the most dire consequences of a lack of integration between different cultural, ethnic and religious communities in Britain, France and elsewhere, and in view of speculation about the role that community divisions might play in the development of the kind of fanaticism that can lead to suicide bombings such as those in London, all positive impacts resulting from this project are timely and of resounding relevance.

In the local context of Bradford, where CRE Chair Trevor Philips recently pointed to what he sees as an increasing 'Hard' and 'soft segregation'²¹ between communities, finding ways to maximise contact and increase understanding between groups is a continuing priority. Philips states:

'I believe that it is in ensuring greater interaction that we face the hardest challenge and the most urgent need.... We cannot simply stand by and see the next generation schooled to become strangers. We need to think of creative solutions.'

With all from national policy makers and commentators to local community leaders searching for creative solutions, this model may with justification be judged amongst the most effective and useful in operation, in the light of the short term attitudinal change it has achieved, and the fact that many new cross-cultural friendships were established. Any longer term impacts will of course require time and further research to ascertain.

6. Variable Factors

A number of variable factors, outlined in section 3.6 above, have been identified within the Schools Linking project research. The evaluation sample was selected to include children across the range of key variables as far as possible, and to observe any variation in the findings which appears to correlate with specific variable conditions. By identifying the impact of particular variables on children's responses to the programme we can begin to address one of the key questions for this evaluation, especially important within the strategic and planning context:

'What factors can contribute to positive change, and what factors can inhibit positive change towards the programme's aim?

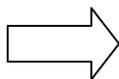
The following section is a summary of any indicated impact of variable factors on the success of the project, where the impact appears specific and reliable enough to draw comment. Since some groups fall within more than one of the variable categories, and since there is not a range of schools within each category, the causal link of any variation in impacts is often ambiguous. The following findings should be seen as trends, at most *possibly* indicative of a causal link.

a) There were of course gender and ethnic differences between children, which may have led them to experience the project differently, and to respond in a specific way because of these differences:

- The sample was almost exactly evenly distributed between girls and boys, and between black or minority ethnic (BME) children and white children.

²¹ 'After 7/7: Sleepwalking to Segregation' – Trevor Philips, CRE, 22.9.05. 'In Bradford 13.3% (it was 4.3% in 1991) of people of Pakistani heritage live in places where more than 2/3 of residents belong to a single ethnic group.' Philips states that such communities are 'hardening in their separateness'.

Trends: Box 1.



There is a strong indication that there were generally greater impacts from the project amongst BME children than white children:

- Within almost every link except those involving a mixed school, and under almost every evaluation field, all the schools with the predominantly BME pupil profile demonstrated stronger impacts than their white link partners; however significant the overall impacts resulting from each link, in the majority of strands of analysis the BME children within the link demonstrated stronger average impacts;
- BME girls responded more dramatically to the project than any other group, with stronger average impacts in many areas of the project;
- there was little difference in the impacts resulting from the project amongst white girls and white boys;
- BME children generally indicated stronger average impacts partly because of the exceptionally dramatic response amongst BME girls. However, BME boys also appeared to demonstrate slightly stronger average impacts across all indicators than both white boys and white girls;
- The possibility must be considered that the ethnic identity of the evaluator may have affected children's responses to some extent. The evaluator was white and female, however, it is not possible to interpret with any confidence in what ways and to what extent any child's responses were affected by who she represented to them; for such an analysis further research would be needed;
- The further relevant consideration here is the fundamental power dynamic inherent within British society, which ensures a more powerful social position for the 'in-group' (white children) than for the 'out-group' (children from any minority ethnic group). The impact of this reality for the project is likely to be that 'in-group' children may resist a change in their perceptions of the 'out-group', more than 'out-group' children may resist reassessing how they see the 'in-group'. Thus since the project seeks directly to challenge this underlying power dynamic, its effects might feel generally more threatening for white than for BME children;
- It is also worth noting that this trend is an important counter-indicator to the suggestion, often claimed in the media and in other research that BME communities are reluctant to mix with the indigenous white community. It is sometimes suggested that BME communities seek to create their own, exclusive quarters, or so-called 'ghettos' and 'no-go-areas', within urban districts, or that they are responsible for some areas developing concentrated populations from a single region of the South Asian subcontinent. The trend occurring in this evaluation research, however, chimes with an opposing argument, that such mono-cultural areas often occur partly through the exodus by white families reluctant to live in mixed communities; the so-called 'white flight' syndrome. Other causes, including some public policy trends, particularly in housing policy, the availability of cheap housing in some concentrated areas, and the socio-economic conditions for many immigrant families which restrict choices and opportunities for these groups are likely factors.²²

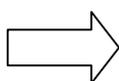
²² David Robinson, 'The Search for Community Cohesion: Key Themes and Dominant Concepts of the Public Policy Agenda' (2005)

b) There was a range of **socio-economic** conditions in schools' catchment communities, and within some links there was a clear socio-economic difference between linked children's backgrounds.

Schools were coded into three categories: *high deprivation indicators*, *lower deprivation indicators* and *relative economic privilege*.

- 63% of the samples were from catchment communities with *high deprivation indicators*.
- 23% of the samples were from more mixed catchment communities, or those with *lower deprivation indicators*.
- 14% of the samples were from catchment communities with *relative economic privilege*.
- Approximately 40% of the samples were linked with others from a school serving a community with *similar socio-economic indicators*.
- The other approximately 60% were linked with others from a school serving a community with *different socio-economic indicators*.
- One third of these - 20% of the sample - were linked with others from a school serving a community with *starkly contrasting socio-economic indicators*.

Trends: Box 2



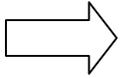
There was no indication that children's socio-economic background alone affected how much the project impacted on them, across all evaluation fields;

- The six sample groups showing consistently the greatest average impacts across the range of evaluation indicators all but one were from schools serving a predominantly deprived catchment community. However, all but one were also from schools with a predominantly BME pupil profile, which may play a more significant role in this finding (see box above);
- These six groups were all in links where the two classes were from schools serving catchment areas with differing socio-economic indicators;
- Only one group which appears consistently in the top half of the range of sample group responses was linked with another from a similarly deprived neighbourhood;
- A cluster of five schools serving more deprived communities appeared to demonstrate consistently lower impacts from the project – four of these were groups within the three links which, throughout the project and across all indicators, achieved less success than all other links – the so-called '*poorly performing links*'.

c) There was a difference in **geographic distance** between linked schools, and hence a difference in the likelihood of any sense of shared day-to-day experience or local identity; there was also a wide range of **geographic locations** where linking schools were based.

- 20% of the sample were schools in close geographic proximity to their link school (within 1.5 miles);
- 26% of the sample were schools moderately distant from their link school (2-4 miles apart);
- 54% of the sample were schools at a distance of more than 5 miles from their link school (between 5 and 15 miles apart);
- 63% of sample schools were in urban neighbourhoods;
- 9% of settings can be described as semi-urban;
- 28% of sample schools were in rural settings.

Trends: Box 3



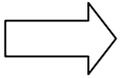
There is no indication that the proximity of linked schools to each other affected the impacts of the project on children, across all evaluation fields:

- There may be a indication that children attending urban schools tended to respond more actively to the project than those in rural settings, demonstrating greater impacts overall. However, this finding may be linked to the greater numbers of BME children who attend urban schools (see Box 1).

d) There was a variety of **age and year groups** participating, and in some links there was a difference in age between linked schools:

- 13% of sample were in Year 6;
- 43% of sample were in Year 5;
- 36% of sample were in Year 4;
- 8% of sample were in Year three;
- One year 1 class and one Year 1/2 class were also interviewed, but were not included in the final evaluation core group;
- 30% of the samples were linked with children one year group ahead of or behind them.

Trends: Box 4



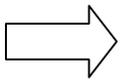
There appears to be some indication that children's age or year group affected the degree of impact resulting from the project:

- Year 1 and 2 children seemed least affected by the project, and appeared to process the whole experience differently from the older children;
- Year 6 children indicated generally less powerful impacts than others in the project in almost all study fields – even those who had been linked for 3 Years;
- There is evidence to suggest that by the end of Year 6 children's focus became fixed on their future life at secondary school. The secondary schools to which our sample groups would be transferring do not have culturally mixed pupil profiles, and thus the focus of the linking schools project seemed to be felt as a diversion, and not worthy of much personal and emotional investment, or specific attention, towards the end of the year. This factor almost certainly affected the end of project evaluation responses from Year 6 children;
- Year 5 children indicated significant impacts across the range of evaluation fields;
- Year 4 children appeared to indicate the strongest impacts from taking part in the project, though Year 5 children demonstrated similar outcomes in most evaluation fields;
- The links between different age-groups of children demonstrated poor impacts from the project for the older children. However there may be another variable factor at play here – see Box 6.

e) There was a variety of **faith-based and 'secular'** schools participating in the programme, and a variety of religions and degree of religious diversity within each of communities served by participating schools. This diversity was captured in the sample:

- Three schools (11% sample) were Christian denominational – one Catholic and two CE. The other 89% of sample children attend secular schools.
- In one CE School the majority of pupils were Muslim – hence there was a contrast between the school's religious denomination and the catchment community.
- Three schools had a number of pupils from different religious traditions.
- The other 77% of sample children attend a secular school in which one religious tradition is very predominant.
- One link included a Catholic school and a secular school serving an almost exclusively Muslim catchment community.
- One link included the two CE Schools, with very contrasting catchment communities.

Trends: Box 5



There is no indication that whether schools were faith-based or secular affected the impacts of the project on children, across all evaluation fields;

- There is furthermore no indication generally that the degree of religious diversity in the communities served by the school, and therefore amongst pupils within each school, affected the impacts of the project on children.

There was a variety in the degree of **cultural diversity** within each school's catchment community, as well as the contrast between more mono-cultural linked schools linked through the programme;

- 11.5% of sample pupils attend ethnically and culturally mixed (multicultural) schools;
- 88.5% attend schools which serve a community of a predominantly (90+%) similar cultural or ethnic identity;
- 9% attend schools in which they belong to a small minority ethnic or cultural group within the pupil profile;
- 80.5% attend a school in which they belong to the cultural or ethnic majority group (90+%) within the pupil profile;
- 10.5% attend a school in which they belong to cultural or ethnic groups that are relatively equal in numbers to other groups in their class;
- 77% of sample groups were linked with a directly contrasting school, while the other three links involved a school serving a community of a predominantly similar cultural or ethnic identity linked with a mixed school.

Trends: Box 6



There are indications that the degree of diversity within each school may have affected the impact of the project on participating children:

- There is a strong indication from the responses of the three schools in the sample with a more broadly diverse pupil profile, that the impact of this project on mixed schools was much less encouraging than the impact amongst schools without a significantly mixed pupil profile. These three links were the only cases in the sample in which the predominantly white link partner group demonstrated greater impacts from the project than their partner group (see Box 1); this was the case across all evaluation fields, and is a clear indication of a different experience occurring within these links;
- This picture may be echoed in the responses of some of the white children who were linked with a mixed school. Impacts here were often smaller than those of other predominantly white groups in the sample;
- By contrast, schools with very minimal ethnic or cultural diversity and those with a small minority of culturally different children all demonstrated similarly varied impacts in most areas, though the latter schools demonstrated greater insight, awareness and sensitivity at the baseline point;
- It should also be noted that the three sample links which included a mixed group were also those in which there was an age difference between groups (See Box 4).
- Nevertheless, there is positive evidence that the greatest impacts occurred within both schools in links where the schools had more clearly contrasting cultural or ethnic profiles.

g) Teachers involved in the programme were from diverse ***cultural or racial identities or religious faiths***

- 42% of samples were white children with a white class teacher;
- 16% of samples were black or minority ethnic children – mostly Muslim – with black or minority ethnic teachers, who were from a range of religious faith groups;
- 34% of samples were BME children – mostly Muslim – with a white class teacher;
- 8% of samples were white children with a BME class teacher.

Trends: Box 7



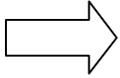
There is no indication that the cultural, racial or faith identities of teachers affected the overall impact of the project on children in any definable way: however, it was noted that children were intrigued by encountering teachers with a contrasting identity to their own, wherever this was not their previous experience.

h) There was variety in whether or not schools, teachers or children had been ***involved in linking prior to this year's programme***, or whether they were new to the programme.

- 8% of sample children had been linking for two years before the evaluation began;
- 11% of the sample had been linking for one year before the project began, and among these three groups of children one was linked with a group who had not linked before;
- the remaining 81% of the sample were linking for the first time, and all but one group were linking with other children who were also new to the project.

- The range of variations between those teachers or schools that had or had not linked previously was, in combination with all other variables too complex to consider.

Trends: Box 8



There is some indication that the length of time children spend involved in linking affected the impacts of the project on their attitudes:

- Sample children involved over a longer period demonstrated greater impacts, even just over the time span of this their 2nd or 3rd year of linking, than many others, in some areas of the evaluation; they made more friends on average than first year linkers overall, and showed a slightly increased interest in having a mixed circle of friends in the future.
- Two of these groups were Year 6 children, and (see Box 6) the specific demands of transfer to secondary school almost certainly reduced the apparent impacts of the project, because of the timing of the end of project interview. It seems likely that the underlying impacts of the project on those involved over a longer period may be stronger than this evaluation was able to observe. Future research may be able to determine the longer term, deeper impacts of their involvement.

These specific findings attempt to pinpoint which links might have maximised the impacts of the current project delivery model and for what reasons. In Section 8.2 on recommendations, this report will unpick aspects of the model which might need adjusting to accommodate specific variable conditions for participating children, in order to offer them the best learning outcomes from their involvement.

7. Summarised Findings

The following section summarises all findings emerging from the Schools Linking Project evaluation. Findings address the agreed success indicators, and are banded according to the degree of impact observed or determined across the whole project, through the evaluation process.

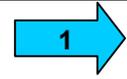
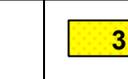
Degree of impact	Negative	None	Modest	Distinct	Significant	Dramatic
Coding of bands						
Description of degree of impact observed across the project	Children's behaviour and responses developed counter to project aims	No impact was noted in children's behaviour, responses or attitude	Modest or indistinct positive shift noted in children's behaviour, responses and attitude	Distinct though still modest positive shift noted in behaviour, responses and attitude	A significant positive shift was evident in children's behaviour, responses and attitude	A dramatic positive shift was evident in children's behaviour, responses and attitude
Number of areas achieving	0	4	2	2	3	3

Chart 9 Degree of Overall Project Success - across all evaluation fields

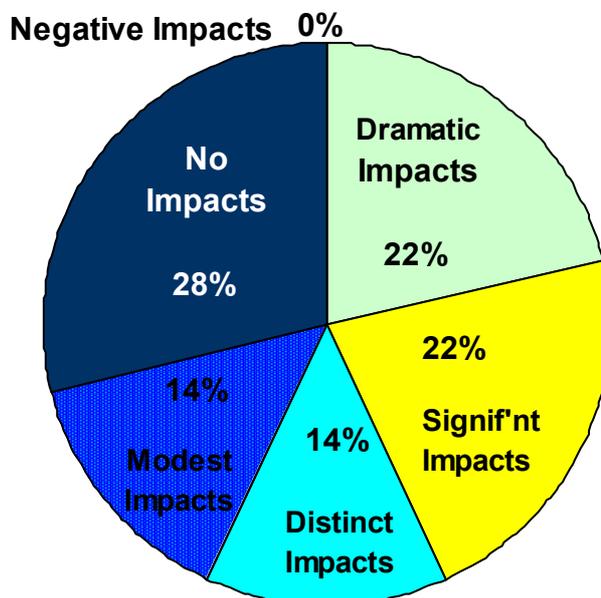
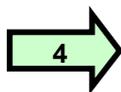


Chart 9 shows that the overall success of the project in meeting its aims was relatively high, with distinct, significant or dramatic positive impacts shown in over half of the areas studied by the evaluation, and no areas in which an overall negative impact resulted. The few examples of negative responses from children were in a small minority of settings, where the project overall did not run as successfully as hoped.

7.1 Detailed impacts breakdown

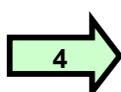
'Improved relationships between participating children and their link group/school community'



Dramatic impact indicated:

- The project facilitated thousands of new relationships between individual children, and between adults.

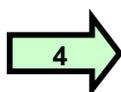
'Children demonstrating readiness to broaden contacts/ consolidate friendships beyond their own cultural community'



Dramatic Impact indicated:

- On average 2.6 new cross-cultural friendships per child resulting from linking.

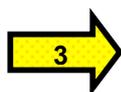
'Evidence of increased confidence and trust between peers (from link group)'



Dramatic Impact indicated:

- Dramatic increases in confidence and trust resulted from the project.

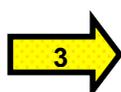
'Increased reciprocity between children from linked schools'



Significant Impact indicated:

- Considerable degree of facilitated reciprocity.
- modest degree of independently occurring, proactive reciprocity resulted from the project.

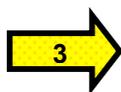
'Evidence of enthusiasm to maintain a link beyond the programme'



Significant Impact indicated:

- Considerable evidence of interest in maintaining the links resulting from the project.

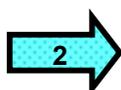
'Children demonstrating increasing curiosity about other people, and their values and points of view – specifically those from a different cultural background than their own.'



Significant Impact indicated:

- Considerable evidence of curiosity and a more vigorous debate about differences occurring as a result of the project.

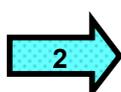
'Children demonstrating greater co-operation and teamwork during sessions, in a way that crosses cultural divides'



Distinct Impact indicated:

- Considerable evidence of cross-cultural co-operation and teamwork occurring during the project.
- Some evidence of unsuccessful cross-cultural co-operation and teamwork.

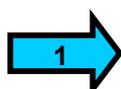
'Participants recognising that they can learn from other children, and from adults within those children's communities, especially an openness to learning from those from a different background than their own'



Distinct Impact indicated:

- Strong evidence of children enjoying learning from adults from different backgrounds.
- Some evidence of children recognising they can learn from each other.

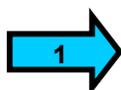
'Increased openness to a mixed friendship circle'



Modest impact indicated:

- Some evidence of increased openness transferable from specific individual friendships to a general openness in children's curiosity and interest in building friendships with peers from different cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds than their own, now or in the future.

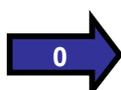
'Participants demonstrating increasing awareness of and respect for other people, and their values and points of view, especially those from a different background than their own'



Modest Impact indicated:

- Some evidence of children increasing their awareness of diversity and different values.
- Some data suggesting positive attitudes towards different people became more widespread.
- Some evidence of disrespect hardening in a minority of groups.

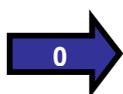
'Children demonstrating the confidence to take part in a debate about other people, and their values and points of view'



No Clear Impact indicated:

- Little evidence that children feel more able to discuss these issues openly.

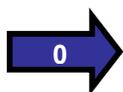
'Increased emotional openness towards meeting each other'



No clear impact indicated: mixed picture

- Some apparent evidence of *increased* openness at the individual level transferring to a generally increased openness to meeting a new group of children from different cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds than their own.
- Some apparent evidence of *reduced* openness at the individual level transferring to a generally reduced openness.
- Much evidence of a nil transfer in attitude resulting from the project.

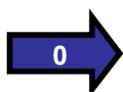
'Participants demonstrating increased confidence and assertiveness with peers; (eg ability to recognise – and resist peer pressure to voice – bigoted views, and willingness and ability to challenge disrespectful attitudes or behaviour)'



No Clear Impact indicated:

- Little evidence of children challenging racist banter.
- Minimal evidence suggesting children becoming increasingly sensitive to racist behaviour by others.
- Possible minimal evidence suggesting children resisting peer influence, and increasingly proactive in challenging racist incidents.

'Children demonstrating greater sense of, and belonging to/ownership of a broad and mixed Bradford community identity'



No Clear Impact indicated:

- No clear impact on children's sense of, and ownership of, a broad and culturally mixed Bradford identity resulted from the project.

7.2 Impact of variables

The following paragraph lists to what extent the evaluation suggests that a range of variable factors identified within the evaluation sample resulted in a different project experience, or different impacts on children affected by them. This deeper analysis helps to answer the evaluation question:

'What factors can contribute to positive change, and what factors can inhibit positive change towards project aims?'

A star indicates a variable factor that impacts on children's experience of linking.



- There is a strong indication that there were generally greater impacts from the project amongst BME children than white children.



- There are indications that the degree of diversity within each school may have affected the impact of the project on participating children:
- there is a strong indication that the impact of this project on mixed schools was much less encouraging than the impact amongst schools without a significantly mixed pupil profile.



• There is some indication that children’s age or year group affected the degree of impact resulting from the project; Years 4 and 5 achieved the greatest impacts.



• There may be an indication that children attending urban schools tended to respond more actively to the project than those in rural settings, demonstrating greater impacts overall. This finding may be linked to the greater numbers of BME children who attend urban schools.



• There is some indication that the length of time children spend involved in linking affected the impacts of the project on their attitudes; longer linking leads to greater impacts in some areas.

• There is no indication that children’s socio-economic background alone affected how much the project impacted them, across all evaluation fields.

• There is no indication that the proximity of linked schools to each other affected the impacts of the project on children, across all evaluation fields.

• There is no indication that whether schools were faith-based or secular affected the impacts of the project on children, across all evaluation fields.

• There is furthermore no indication generally that the degree of religious diversity in the communities served by the school, and therefore amongst pupils within each school, affected the impacts of the project on children

• There is no indication that the cultural, racial or faith identities of teachers affected the overall impact of the project on children in any definable way;

7.3 Key project successes

The following section outlines the main successes of the project, with examples.

Cross-cultural friendships – summary comparing pre- and post-project findings	
Pre-project baseline numbers	Post-project numbers of cross-cultural friendships: individual children’s responses ²³
<p>October 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In none of the sample groups (0%) did children report having more than five cross-cultural friendships. 	<p>July 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After linking, 10% of sample children now report more than five named cross-cultural friendships.

²³ Children attending mixed schools, or in a minority within their own school, who were linked with a group of children culturally and ethnically similar to themselves cannot be included in the data on new cross-cultural friendships, as the project did not offer this possibility to them. The friendships they made were with children culturally and ethnically similar to themselves. In the ‘post-project’ boxes, ‘sample’ refers to the other 97% of children.

<p>October 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No groups of children in the sample (0%) reported having on average four or five cross-cultural friendships 	<p>July 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After linking, 16% of sample children now report four or five named cross-cultural friendships.
<p>October 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4% of the sample reported having on average two or three cross-cultural friendships – this was one group of children who attend a mixed school. 11% of the sample (three groups of children) averaged between one and two cross-cultural friendships Two of these groups (7% of the sample) were from mixed schools. The other group (the remaining 4%) had been involved in linking during the previous year, and the named friendships were from their link group 	<p>July 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After linking, 38% of children now report two or three named cross-cultural friendships.
<p>October 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before linking, 39% of groups in the sample could name not a single cross-cultural friendship amongst their circle of friends. 	<p>July 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite a year linking, 11% of children still feel unable to name a cross-cultural friendship they have made. A small number in this bracket (4% of sample) are white British children who, when linked with a culturally and ethnically mixed school, only established friendships with the white British children amongst the range of children they met. They named no cross-cultural friendships

Quotes: before the project

'I've never met someone who's brown before.'

'We don't get to meet different people very much.'

'You don't get to know any Asian children here.'

Quotes: after the project

'I think it's really good – it's good to get on with people who are different.'

'It's wicked! Cos you get to meet a new kind of different people.'

'These are my first ever non-Muslim friends. That's cool.'

'I will keep in contact with him somehow, and try and meet up with him.'

'I've learnt that you don't need Asian people around you to feel ok.'

Post-project Impacts ²⁴ on numbers of children's cross-cultural friendships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 8% of the participating sample children demonstrated a zero recordable increase in their cross-cultural friendships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32% showed a modest change (an increase of one new cross-cultural friendship) 29% showed significant change (an increase of between two and four named cross-cultural friendships in their friendship circle):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19% showed dramatic change (an increase of four or more cross-cultural named friendships in their friendship circle):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thus 48% showed either a significant or dramatic increase in the numbers of named cross-cultural friendships in their friendship circle, resulting from participating in the Schools Linking Project.

Quotes: Impact

'I'm surprised - I wouldn't have thought I'd be friends with those children.'

'I've never had friends who were their religion. Thought that might be a problem.

But I've learnt that it doesn't matter what religion you are.'

'I felt nervous before but now it's cool.'

'I didn't think we'd get along, because we're Asian and they're English. But we did.

My buddy and I have the same thoughts!

Openness to mixing with peers from contrasting communities or cultures: Summary comparing pre-project and post-project attitudes	
Pre-project baseline attitude	Post-project attitude
<p>October 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A considerable number, 27.5%, stated they had no interest at all in mixed friendships at this stage. These children were spread across 12 different classes within the evaluation sample. 	<p>July 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A much smaller number of individuals (9%), now spread across only six different linking groups in the representative sample, stated at this post-project point that they have no interest in developing a more mixed group of friends in the future
<p>October 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very significant 56% stated they had <i>either</i> 'little' or 'no interest' in mixed friendships prior to the project 	<p>July 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those stating, after a year involved in linking, that they have <i>either</i> 'little' or 'no interest' in developing a mixed circle of friends in the future had dropped from 56% to a smaller 36% of the sample children

²⁴ Impacts here refer to the extent to which participating in the project has changed the cultural or ethnic mix of children's circle of friends: how mixed were their friendships before and after participating in the project for a year.

October 2004	July 2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the other end of the spectrum, 19% of individual children within the sample group showed enthusiasm for developing more cross-cultural friendships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The number of children enthusiastic to have a more mixed circle of friends rose from 19% to 32% of the sample, including a tiny percentage showing even greater enthusiasm.

Quotes: Before the project...

'I feel weird about meeting different sorts of people from different communities.'

'I'm nervous because they will be different...'

Quotes: Afterwards.....and in response to the questions 'What do you think now? What do you hope will happen next with your new friendships?'

'These are my first non-Muslim friends!'

'I am very happy!!!! I would like to stay in touch by email, phone, letters.'

'I wish we could carry on doing the link project, write letters, phone, meet each other out of school.'

'I give linking 10/10, and I wish I could see you again. I like you all!'

8. Conclusion, with Recommendations Arising

The Bradford Schools Linking Project demonstrates, in line with Allport's 'Intergroup Contact Theory', that repeated contact between classes of children from different cultural, religious or ethnic groups, where the children are of equal status²⁵, share common goals, engage in non-competitive activities, and are supported by their schools²⁶ can indeed achieve a reduction in mutual wariness and prejudices at an individual level.

The evaluation study examined to what extent this project offered an answer to the key research question:

'Can we, by bringing children together to take part, in an inclusive, creative and meaningful way, in normal activities that have been systematically co-planned by both teachers:

- *achieve increased understanding and trust between children separated by cultural, ethnic or religious differences, and*
- improve the potential for longstanding relationships between groups who would not normally meet?'*

The evaluation statistics and outcomes suggest that the project can, even within the short timescale of a single academic year, and comprising a minimum of seven (mostly whole day) contacts between linking classes, achieve considerable increases in understanding and trust amongst a majority of participating children 'separated by cultural, ethnic or religious differences.'

In response to the evaluation, 'Further questions:

- *What factors can contribute to positive change, and what factors can inhibit positive change towards this aim?*
 - *Is there an age at which attitudes become more fixed, and how readily can they be changed or developed?*
 - *How robust, widespread and transferable is any change that is achieved?'*
- further conclusions, below, are drawn from the evaluation findings.

²⁵ 'Equal status' is here defined as neither group having greater power than the other (for example by group size, age, privilege – such as favoured position within activities, or other control within the situation) see p11 Challenges.

²⁶ Allport, 1954 (see page 1)

Contributory Factors

Specific and controllable factors which this evaluation observed contributing to positive change were:

- Teacher conviction, confidence, perceptiveness, openness and leadership.
- Strong support from the central project team.
- Allport's conditions for Intergroup Contact Theory in place.
- Time for children to explore their experiences and questions in between contact days.
- A long period of involvement in a linking programme.
- The absence of these factors inhibits positive change, as outlined at 8.1.

The Age Factor

Evaluation findings have pointed to primary year groups 3, 4 and 5 (7-10 years of age) as the most productive age for this project. However, none of the older primary age children who took part (Year 6) showed signs of holding fixed attitudes which could not be developed. In Year 6 children's focus is absorbed by their transition to secondary school, but their attitudes are still in early development. This evaluation did not help to determine an age at which attitudes become more fixed.

It is important to recognise that all children should have the right to access the learning process offered by the Linking Project, and we should not believe that they will arrive at positive outcomes instinctively. Trevor Philips states, in relation to achieving a society without segregation:

*'Integration is a learned competence – like maths or driving a car. It is not instinctive.'*²⁷

It therefore seems wise to keep open the possibility of enabling pupils of any age to take part in a linking initiative, in order to enable as many as possible to benefit from this learning process. However, the linking model as it is would require adaptation for secondary pupils.

The Robustness of Change Achieved

Children's responses indicate an improved *potential* for the 'longstanding relationships' sought by the project. As one child asks: **'Will you be my friend forever?'**

In order to be realised and not lost, this *potential* will need continuing support and facilitation. If the new learning that facilitates change is not refreshed and supported, attitudinal change can remain unstable and vulnerable to reversal. As children get older, and may mix with new classmates who have not shared their formative linking experiences, peer pressure might be more powerful than the impact of the project. A child's memory of their positive link with a culturally different friend, but whom they no longer see, will likely fade unless they have regular chances to continue exploring the territory this project has opened up. The research conducted this year cannot draw conclusions about the likelihood of longstanding relationships becoming a reality, and further research will be proposed, to explore the longer term impacts of the project on children's cross-cultural friendships.

The Breadth of Change Achieved

The project's achievements, evident amongst a substantial number of participating children were, however, not universally widespread. Some children showed little sign of the impacts demonstrated by others, and a small number within the sample group demonstrated an adverse reaction; a closing down in affective responses to the prospect of diversity and encountering children from different backgrounds. Some appeared to demonstrate a hardening of prejudices, although this may in reality have been an increased confidence to express prejudiced views. These persisting attitudes amongst a minority of children in the sample posed a threat to the wider success of the

²⁷Trevor Philips, Public address, 22.9.2005 'After 7/7: Sleepwalking to Segregation'.

project in their classes and schools, since their attitudes seemed to be accepted by and not challenged by classmates. However, the reasons for the failure of the project to impact on this minority of children's deeper attitudes are not so elusive. Many of the inhibiting factors outlined at 8.1 were at play for these children.

The recommendations at 8.2 will address strategies for minimising the numbers of children either unaffected or adversely affected by the linking experience, as well as how to stabilise any positive attitude change that did result from the project.

The Transferability²⁸ of Change Achieved

All of the relatively weaker impacts resulting from the project relate to the capacity for children's changing attitudes within real situations to carry over into changing attitudes towards imagined situations. Children's increasing openness towards their contrasting link class, incubated during direct and sustained contact with individual children with whom they were building new friendships, did not transfer well, for many, into a more generalised change in attitude towards other people, known or unknown, from 'different' groups. As explained under various sections on pages 9-10, 18 and 21 this jump, from the specific and known to the general and unknown, is particularly difficult for children, who live in the present, and react in relation to real experiences more easily than to abstract concepts.

8.1 Challenges – Factors inhibiting positive change

The aims of this project were and are extremely ambitious, and the project itself faced numerous challenges. The evaluation observed a number of factors which tended to inhibit positive change resulting:

- The adverse influence of political groups, or a local climate of intolerance towards people from different ethnic or religious communities:
 - Where a neighbourhood had been targeted by intolerant or extremist political parties or groupings children found it difficult to open up to the project, and some carried a heavily prejudiced outlook with them throughout.
- The adverse influence of family members and friends who do not agree with the project aims, and the limited period for which children are involved:
 - To achieve positive attitudinal change amongst all participating children within ten months, irrespective of the attitudes of their parents, siblings and other family members or close friends, would certainly be an unrealistic objective. Some children were receiving contradictory messages from teachers and parents. Most would need longer to come to their own independent view of cross-cultural interaction.
 - Some children within two sample groups – neither of which was subject to organisational problems or a lack of strong leadership – who appeared to enjoy their linking experience and make some friends, were still comfortable at the end of the year in continuing to make racially prejudiced generalisations and disrespectful comments about different religions or ethnic groups. These are the groups which demonstrate that their ingrained prejudice – in all likelihood the norm for these children at home – was not affected by the project during the evaluation year. Some of these children appeared to be beginning a journey of acceptance of difference. However, it will take more than a year of linking, and more proactive time exploring the issues, to really affect their attitudes.
- Teachers unable or unwilling to commit fully to the project, and/or teachers not giving children enough class time to process their learning:

²⁸ 'Transferability' here refers to how well children transfer changes in their attitude occurring towards known individuals, into generalised changes in attitude towards a broader group of unknown people.

- It was clear from observations during linking activities that schools and teachers varied in the commitment they were able to give to the project. The schools where more time was dedicated to supporting the development of children's learning, in between as well as during link days, unsurprisingly achieved greater results.
- Teachers' attitudes demonstrating insufficient commitment to the core aims of the project:
 - Some teachers led with a lack of conviction, which was reflected in the level of children's confidence and openness.
 - Teachers varied in the depth of their understanding of the aims of the project, which led to unclear objectives for activities, or teachers sometimes making unhelpful leadership decisions.
- Inequality between groups, competitive instead of co-operative conditions, a lack of awareness of the shared goals children were expected to achieve, or a lack of parental (or teacher) sanction for the project:
 - In schools where less learning appeared to result from the project it was sometimes apparent that one or more of the prerequisite conditions outlined in Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory were not in place, for example:
 - Where there was an age difference between groups there was not true equality of status; the equality of status might also be queried in terms of the backgrounds of some linked children, for example where one group might have the advantage, in relation to their partners, of a greater sense of their own identity and belonging, or another group has more self-confidence than the partner group.
 - Where - in place of non-competitive cultural activities - competitive sports activities were used, or where sports games were in action during playtimes and lunchtimes, if children competed in school groups this was less likely to enhance trust and relationships across the school divide.
- Groups not remaining consistent, or too many children involved at a time:
 - Some schools were not able to ensure that the same children were meeting each time, or had so many children linking simultaneously, that proper friendships could not form.
 - Some children were rotated around different small groups, so that partners did not have long enough to establish trust with each other.
- Long gaps between visits, and little evidence of classroom discussion or linking via email during the gaps, making friendships difficult to form or sustain throughout the year.
- Challenging behaviour, and other distractions:
 - All but two of the groups displaying the most extremely disrespectful attitudes were those involved in links in which other obstacles absorbed the teachers' attention, or tended to undermine relationships between children, such as repeated challenging behaviour on the part of individual children, requiring extraordinary behaviour management and the full attention of teachers.
- Relationships between teachers being uncomfortable or strained:
 - Where adult relationships were strained children were inhibited from accepting the leadership of their link school teacher.
- The size of the project, and variation in teachers' skill and experience:
 - The project was very large, with the inevitable result that there was considerable variation in the delivery methods, and levels of adults' confidence, skills and experience across the spectrum. Since every link had its own individual plan and narrative, the detailed management as well as overview of the project was extremely difficult. Teachers did not always raise issues or concerns with the project team, which exacerbated this challenge.

- The diversity of settings in which the project was running:
 - The project had to accommodate an enormous range of variable conditions, which stretched the model in many directions and in some areas defeated the effort to ensure every child could achieve equal and optimum learning outcomes.

All of the above specific challenges faced by the project account for much of the variation in the degree of its success from one group or one child to another. Wherever the project appeared to result in a smaller degree of learning, one or more of the above issues could be considered a mediating factor. Therefore, the overall challenge for the future is to plan ways of reducing the variability in the conditions of the project, in order to maximise the positive impacts for all children.

8.2 Recommendations Arising from Research Findings

Linking Process:

- 1 **Schools and teachers should be completely aware that Schools Linking is not primarily a series of worthwhile activities**, but rather a serious and important learning process which uses activities as a catalyst for further exploration. All adults should remain aware that the process can result in adverse attitude change (hardening of prejudices and fears) if handled without appropriate care.
- 2 **Schools and teachers wishing to participate in linking must be able to demonstrate the utmost commitment, time and energy** to prioritising the linking process within their school community, and wherever possible raising the local profile of the project; only by showing public and strong leadership on this issue, and by taking these extra steps towards whole community involvement, will schools ensure positive learning outcomes for their children.
- 3 **Whole school preparation prior to beginning** linking should be a basic requirement of all schools taking part. As well as preparation on the issues (see project aims) teachers and children across the school should engage in discussions about how to make linking visitors feel welcomed, and empathise with how they might feel in this different environment, especially in the playground. Staff and any mentors will also require support and training in how to deal confidently with incidents or tensions which may arise during visits. Staff should discuss strategies for encouraging proactive interaction and engagement across cultural divides, especially when on duty during the all important lunchtime and playtime sessions.
- 4 **As well as ensuring thorough preparation with their link partner, teachers should be required to prepare their children, prior to meeting**, with open class discussion sessions looking directly at children's fears (almost all sample children were very fearful before they began). Teachers need to use strategies to encourage honesty within a safe space, and should not censor or 'correct' false preconceptions of different people. Troubling feelings or opinions shared might offer a cue to ask children why they believe or fear these things; however, children should be encouraged to challenge their own beliefs, since this gives them control over a difficult learning process.
- 5 **Children are naturally, although often only privately, curious about each other**. Holding a class discussion of curiosity questions, collected at the beginning of the linking process and tracked throughout the year, would encourage teachers to facilitate all-important safe and appropriate ways for children to ask each other about these areas of curiosity. It is essential that curiosity questions are not censored, (see **1 above**). Tracking the progress and

development of curiosity questions – for example collecting and sorting questions, preparing a journalistic investigative team, keeping a mind map, recording a narrative in strip cartoon format, or the dialogue script of a play – could form a part of the structure of continuous classroom discussion and reflection, occurring in between visits.

- 6 **Teachers should ensure that they encourage ongoing open debate** on issues of culture, and ethnic and religious differences, and how these issues affect everybody; ideally agreed ground rules of mutual respect, listening, and constructive comment should be used. A culture of such discussion and debating should be developed in the children's own classroom, then introduced into the link day plans, to involve children from both classes. Teachers will need to work hard to counter children's self-censorship in their presence.
- 7 **Some awareness of one's personal, individual identity is a fundamental aspect of acceptance of others:** the project would benefit from a greater emphasis on understanding what identity is, and enabling children to explore the layers of a personal identity (e.g. 'Who am I? Who can I be? Who do you think I am? Who do I want to be?') This exploration should take place both during and between visits, and should include discussing the broad and richly diverse Bradford District identity, shared in common by all participating children.
- 8 **Teachers should find opportunities to discuss friendship circles** using the friendships developing during the linking experience as a springboard. This might help more children to feel open to, or to proactively pursue, building cross-cultural friendships in the future – for example at secondary school.
- 9 **The linking project offers catalytic activities** for children to work together, making links across cultural divides; however, teachers will need specifically to set children the task of discovering as much as possible about diverse customs, languages and perspectives through meeting their link partners, and suggest ways in which they might achieve this (reporters, sleuths, fact-exchange games etc) since this evaluation has provided evidence that otherwise such learning does not often result from the links.
- 10 **Where sports activities are used as the catalyst for contact** every effort should be made by teachers and sports facilitators to create mixed teams, and to build team spirit within these teams. Consistency of team personnel between activities might help this, rather than the more common approach of ever-shifting teams.
- 11 **Following children's involvement in linking,** class teachers should conduct a survey similar to the one carried out with the sample groups at the end of the evaluation, to ascertain which children have friendships they would like to maintain, and how they would imagine staying in touch. These children's future class teachers should use this information to continue to support children in maintaining contact, for example by letter, by email, sending group taped messages, inviting friends to events at school, or other means. In this way, the single year of involvement in linking can become the beginning and foundation of a longer lasting individual link for children.

Dealing with Variables:

- 12 **Extra efforts to engage boys in non-competitive approaches to linking** would be worthwhile in helping to increase project impacts for boys.
- 13 **Teachers at predominantly white schools must be encouraged to accept that they will need to work harder** than their partner teacher at deepening the debate on differences and aspects of shared identity, and at facilitating open attitudes, in order to achieve similarly positive learning outcomes for their children.
- 14 **Primary schools with a culturally mixed pupil profile should consider a different linking model**, for example linking with another mixed school to celebrate the range of cultures each brings together as a school community.
- 15 **Linking should be aimed at Year 4 and Year 5 children**, possibly be open to Year 3 groups, but not be run with Year 6 groups. The exception to this for Year 6 groups would be to link with other feeder primaries as a specific project focusing on the transfer to a mixed secondary school.
- 16 **Groups should *always* be in the same year group as their link class.**
- 17 **Children who show interest in maintaining their friendships should be proactively supported to do so.**
- 18 **Schools participating in linking should involve their older children**, who linked in previous years, as linking mentors and advocates, to raise their ongoing awareness of the importance of their linking experience, and to rekindle their interest in cross-cultural activity at every available opportunity.

This Schools Linking project is undoubtedly of enormous significance to those who have the opportunity to take part. This full final evaluation report has offered a detailed and intensely researched picture of a year of linking. All recommendations outlined above are carefully considered and based on strong evidence. The outlined measures will undoubtedly enable this innovative project to achieve in future even greater levels of positive learning, in a field that could not be more crucial for children in Bradford and other multicultural Districts, in current times.

A. Raw, 12.2005

Appendix 1: Summary of Evaluation Sample group, and Evaluation Process

The Bradford Schools Linking Project involved 1880 primary school pupils last year, attending 61 (one group of three) different primary schools across the district. A representative evaluation sample was selected from across the project, and included over 206 participants, drawn from 26 (13 pairs) of the 61 participating schools. The sample represents approximately 10% of the total number of participating pupils.

The sample group comprised the following sub-groupings:

Ethnicity:

- 103 BME children (= 50%), mostly of South Asian heritage
- 103 white British children (= 50%)

Gender:

- 105 girls (= 51%)
- 101 boys (= 49%)

Children's ethnic or cultural identity in relation to their classmates:

- 18 children (= 9%) attending schools in which they belong to a small minority ethnic or cultural group within the pupil profile
- 166 children (= 80.5%) who attend a school in which they belong to the cultural or ethnic majority group (90+%) within the pupil profile
- 22 children (= 10.5%) who attend a school in which they belong to cultural or ethnic groups that are relatively equal in numbers to other groups in their class

Ethnic or cultural diversity within the school:

- 182 children (= 88.5%) attending schools which serve a community of a predominantly (90+%) similar cultural or ethnic identity
- 24 children (= 11.5%) attending ethnically and culturally mixed schools. (Among these 24, two also belong to a particularly small minority cultural group within the mixed pupil profile of their school, and are included in the 9% above)

Length of time involved in Schools Linking:

- 167 children (= 81%) who had not been involved in linking before participating in the evaluation
- 27 children (= 13%) for whom the evaluation year was their second year involved in linking
- 12 children (= 6%) for whom the evaluation year was their third year involved in linking (with the same link class)

To enable a deeper layer of analysis, children were also allocated a code to reference their school class in relation to the following variable factors:

- school year group (ranging from Year 3 to Year 6)
- socio-economic indicator from the school's pupil profile
- geographic area (rural, semi-rural, urban)
- geographic distance from link school
- faith designation of school (if any)
- ethnic or cultural identity of the class teacher

Evaluation process

The evaluation process involved intensive small group sessions, lasting between one and two hours depending upon the size of the group. In order to preserve confidentiality the sessions were held without other pupils, teachers or adults present. During each session the evaluator established the ground rules of confidentiality, then engaged the sample group in a number of activities to enable children to express themselves and their thoughts and feelings openly and without judgement from anyone in the session.

This report is drawn from over 120 evaluation visits and interviews, conducted throughout the academic year 2004-05.

Appendix 2: Full Evaluation Framework

The following evaluation questions, fields of study and indicators form the basis for the investigation and research informing the full evaluation report:

'Key evaluation focus:

Can we, by bringing children together to take part, in an inclusive, creative and meaningful way, in normal activities that have been systematically co-planned by both teachers:

- **achieve increased understanding and trust between children separated by cultural, ethnic or religious differences, and**
- **improve the potential for longstanding relationships between groups who would not normally meet?**

The programme seeks to achieve this by using creative learning tools and techniques, which encourage cognitive dissonance in a safe environment.

Further questions:

- What factors can contribute to positive change, and what factors can inhibit positive change towards this aim?
- Is there an age at which attitudes become more fixed, and how readily can they be changed or developed?
- How robust, widespread and transferable is any change that is achieved?

To address these two main and three further questions, the following three fields of study, each with a set of sub-indicators, were used to make observations throughout the project:

1. Observing improved relationships between participating children and their link group/school community, and increased openness to mixing:

1.1 Children demonstrating readiness to consolidate friendships/broaden contacts beyond their own cultural community

1.2 Increased reciprocity between children from linked schools (*defined as readiness to mix with each other; to share resources; to exchange ideas and views; to relate stories and experiences from their own lives)*

1.3 Evidence of increased confidence and trust between peers (from link group)

1.4 Evidence of continued enthusiasm amongst participating communities to maintain a link beyond the programme

2. Observing increased or improved teamwork and mixed team or 'mixed community' awareness, leading to children claiming a broader community identity

2.1 Children demonstrating greater co-operation and teamwork during sessions, in a way that crosses cultural divides

2.2 Children demonstrating a greater sense of, and belonging to/ownership of a broad and mixed Bradford community identity

3. Observing increased awareness of/embracing of differences and diversity (cultural, racial, faith-based differences)

3.1 Participants demonstrating increasing curiosity about, and having the confidence to take part in a debate about other people, and their values and points of view, especially those from a different cultural background than their own

3.2 Participants demonstrating increasing awareness of and respect for other people, and their values and points of view, especially those from a different background than their own

3.3 Participants recognising that they can learn from other children, and from adults within those children's communities, especially an openness to learning from those from a different background than their own

3.4 Participants demonstrating increased confidence and assertiveness with peers; (e.g. ability to recognise – and resist peer pressure to voice – bigoted views, and willingness and ability to challenge disrespectful attitudes or behaviour)

Appendix 3: Teachers' Project End Feedback Summarised

Schools Linking Project – Teacher feedback and evaluation

Biggest Challenges

(Bracketed numbers indicate how often the same comment was made, if duplicated.)

Organisation/logistics issues (x11)

Time issues, timetabling, money (x7)

Pressure to succeed/wanting to succeed (x2)

No continuity – like starting again each time/views go back as before in between (x2)

Momentum/energy needed

Advocacy at school, getting colleagues on board

Distance/ travelling

Developing suitable climate for communication to take place (x3)

Getting the children to mix (x4) - no inclination to mix in social or free time

Children's preconceived ideas, getting past the 'image' (x4)

Teachers breaking down barriers, and being able to play as well! (x2)

'Respect issues' in the playground (x3)

Trying to help pupils with racist views from both schools to communicate

Discipline during meeting times/ visits (x3) (excitement makes this more difficult!)

'Managing' friendships – which is a mistake! What's artificial doesn't last.

Parents attitudes, their worries/ preparing parents (x5)
Pupils' fears and worries/ fear of not picking up children's fears, and not supporting them
Fear of a colleague making racist comments, not knowing how to handle situation
The relationship with the link teacher

Most Useful Advice and Important Factors

Attitude/Approach

Get on well with other teacher! (x6) Regular communication absolutely vital (x4)
Support from colleagues and the school/SMT vital (x2)
Patience, perseverance (x2), optimism (x2), enthusiasm all vital
Think broadly/openly, 'outside the box' (x4)
Equal energy and commitment from both teachers crucial
A suitable link is vital (between schools, between staff)

Practical/ planning

Don't allow too long in between visits
Thorough organisation is key/ preparation and planning vital for every link day (x9)
Beware tricky transport!
Involve the children in the planning
Keep the plan/activities simple (x2)
Must link it to curriculum, not just a social time
Prepare the children
Give lots of time and thought to the linking theme/focus

Organising day/ Teaching & learning style

Allow children to play out before activities
Paired /small group work is how friendships develop
Don't try to manufacture/manipulate friendships (x5)
Friendships take time to develop (x3)
Listen and don't jump in.
Children need lots of time to chat and play (x3), days best not over-structured (x2)

Overall planning

Start young (KS1) since more easily influenced
Year 3/4 ideal age
Year 5/6 too late to start – difficult
Must be open to all children, not selected by behaviour (especially bad if selected in one and not in other)
Avoid competitive sports! vs football/sports work well
Arts good
Trips were very useful
Use the EB support and training

Could Have Greater Impact If..

Children were meeting each other more often (x4) and for longer stretches
More time spent 'playing' together (x2)
More time for planning (x4) and discussing issues and ideas with colleagues
Supply cover for planning time

More use of the website and online linking
More sport and team games

Training in how to deal with racist/respect issues arising (x2)
Training in how to support children to mix, and take risks (outside their comfort zones)
More support for new linking teachers (x2) – as quite overwhelming role!
Less complex funding

More classes involved (x4) and/or whole school involvement (cascade)
More commitment and involvement from staff, and cultivation of a real learning opportunity
More work with parents (and time spent persuading and securing agreement of parents)
Very careful selection/vetting /matching of link teachers!
Less geographical distance

Guest speakers for parents/governors/teacher colleagues and visits to Mosques etc
Fewer 'events'
Continue linking with the same children (x3)
(vs. Limit involvement to 1 year)

Why it's worth it! – teachers have observed, as a result of their class linking:

Increased tolerance and acceptance
Increased confidence – children (x6) and teacher
Increased confidence in speaking (x3)
More discussion of race issues (x2)
Dramatically improved literacy, art and communication skills
Good curriculum opportunities
Real friendships developing between individuals (x7)
Real friendships developing between adults (x2)
Children showing that friendships are more important than race/religion/colour (x2)
Children using new friendships as a reference point to challenge preconceptions
Children discovering that finding matching personalities was more important than colour or culture
Changed perceptions of other cultures (x10) – amongst teachers too
Barriers between different (cultural) groups reduced (x3), children less insular (x3)
"real breakthroughs here!"
More relaxed meeting new people (x2)
Children making a real effort to get on

Valuable outcomes

Teachers felt the following outcomes were the most valuable to them:

Seeing how much the children were enjoying each other's friendship (x9)
Having the chance to focus on relationships (x5)
Fun and enriching to be released from national curriculum (x2)
The drama input (x2) and its powerful message
Seeing the similarities between the children (x3)
Feeling own professional development, and personal learning (x5)
Discussing sensitive issues with new colleagues
Feeling so welcomed, open relationship, working together, teamwork (x4)
Appreciating the link school, feeling how different it is, realising the great opportunities when linking with another school (x2)

Teachers felt the following outcomes were the most valuable to their children:
Sharing experiences with children from a different cultural group/who they would never normally meet (x11)
Making new friendships, with children from a culture new to them (x10) and breaking down barriers for themselves
Being challenged – venturing outside their comfort zone (x5)
Seeing their own life in a wider context/ broadening horizons (x5)
Experiencing the wider world, moving outside their local area (x7)
Making real relationships with individual children (x3)
Seeing the similarities between themselves and link partners (x3)
Experiencing teachers from the link school (x2)
Pairs and small group work
The arts and drama opportunities in the project (X2)
The status attributed to bi-lingual children
The openness that shy and vulnerable children showed towards new link partners

Appendix 4: List of References

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NB: Other references contained in footnotes can be found in the above texts.