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## Inspecting the inspectors: race equality and equality in initial teacher education

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### Background

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRAA, 2000) requires public sector organisations to transform institutional cultures and practices by shifting the emphasis of race equality policies from passive 'anti-discrimination' to active promotion of race equality. This is particularly significant for schools, given their role in shaping social and cultural attitudes and values.

Teacher educators therefore have a key role in preparing students for addressing race equality and diversity issues, and the government's Professional Standards for Teachers, the framework by which new teachers are assessed as competent and suitable for teaching, makes explicit reference to their understanding of these issues.

However, there is a dilemma for teacher educators presented by the way their work is monitored by the government (via the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) and Ofsted, the inspectorate). The reach of schools inspection has widened and deepened with the introduction of a self-evaluation framework for the inspection, a framework that can be viewed as a Foucauldian self-surveillance mechanism, in which school managers act as 'the inspector within' to ensure the strategic priorities of the state are met (Ball, 2003; Perryman, 2009). The introduction of a similar inspection framework to initial teacher education (ITE) (Wilkins & Wood, 2009) suggests that providers will find it difficult to take challenging racism seriously unless this goal is seen as a priority in the inspection process.

### Research Questions

This study will explore how Ofsted ITE inspection reports evaluate, and make recommendations on, aspects of provision relating to race equality and diversity. It will draw upon publically accessible data about provision to explore how this data features in inspection outcomes.

#### *Key research question*

What judgements and recommendations do Ofsted make when reporting on ITE provision in respect of race equality and diversity?

### Methods

This study will involve analysis of three areas of documentation and performance data:

#### *1. Policy context:*

- Ofsted framework for inspection of ITE;
- TDA Guidance on self-evaluation;
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000).

#### *2. Performance data:*

- TDA Performance Profile data for 3 year period 2005-07 on progression/attainment levels of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students

- TDA Newly-Qualified Teacher Survey data for 3 year period 2005-07 (focusing on NQTs' perception of how well their training prepared them for issues of race and diversity).

### 3. Ofsted ITE Inspection Reports:

- Judgements made about effectiveness and recommendations for improving performance in respect of issues of race and diversity.

The sample will review inspection reports for individual providers in order to examine the relationship between judgements/recommendations relating to race equality and diversity and patterns emerging from different aspects of Performance Profile data.

### Frame

The study will employ two theoretical strands of literature; *Performativity* and *Critical Race Theory (CRT)*.

*CRT* (Ladson-Billings, 1998) has been used to critique the implementation of the RRAA as focusing on 'interpersonal' and 'micro-institutional', rather than 'structural' racism. Some have argued that this has caused schools' race equality policies to concentrate on intentionality rather than effect (Osler, 2009: 95), reinforcing a racialized discourse in which a 'colour-blind' perspective is perceived as 'neutrality' rather than 'normalising' structural inequality (Gillborn, 2005).

Where the structural racism is not acknowledged, legislation may be seen as an imposition, a compliance issue rather than one of challenging deep-rooted patterns of inequality (O'Connell, 2003); Ofsted have been criticised for this approach in the inspection of schools (Osler & Morrison, 2002).

From the perspective of *CRT*, the focus on intentionality and the minimising of structural inequality creates a contradiction between policy, rhetoric and practice, and not simply marginalises race equity, but places race injustice at the centre (Gillborn, 2005: 499).

*Performativity* describes the processes by which neo-liberal, performative states (Ball, 2003), regulate and manage the public sector through 'techno-bureaucratic managerialism' (Apple, 2000). The self-evaluation inspection model will be analysed by reference to the ways in which performative systems 'colonise' professional cultures and impose externally-determined strategic priorities (Ball, 2003, Wilkins & Wood, 2009), and draw conclusions regarding the place of race equality in these priorities.

### Research findings

This study is intended to develop understanding of the ways in which the performative model of regulating and inspecting the work of teacher educators intersects with social justice. Whilst there is some published research considering the impact of schools' inspections using a data-driven, self-evaluation framework, this process is relatively new in respect of teacher education, and so little research has been carried out so far.

Some research has examined the way Ofsted's approach to schools' inspections downplays the centrality of race equality issues, and focuses on procedural compliance rather than outcomes (Osler & Morrison 2002). Osler and Morrison's research was carried out just after the introduction of the RRAA, but despite the fact that the act is almost ten years old, there has been little or no research on its impact in teacher education carried out since then, and so this study should contribute to our understanding of the longer term impact of the RRAA.

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