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A Study of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Education in the Early Childhood Classroom

An Irish Perspective

A thesis submitted to
School of Education,
Trinity College Dublin
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2007

Lorraine M. Duffy

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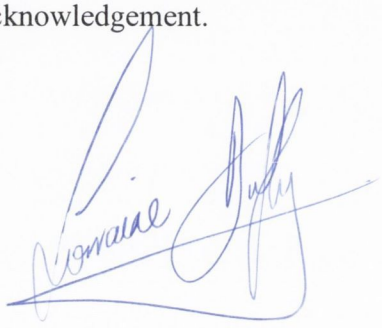

SUMMARY

This thesis examined the developments in cultural diversity in Irish society in conjunction with intercultural education in primary schools. A number of prominent themes emerged from the data which included: language, racism, stereotyping, religion, school policy, national policy and training.

Methodology: Following an extensive literature review, research questions were devised which resulted in the need for the design of effective and appropriate methodological tools. Keeping in mind the importance of validity a method of triangulation was adopted. This provided the possibility for the use of a variety of research tools which was suitable for providing variation and possible verification of data. After thorough investigation, it was decided that the majority of research would concentrate on qualitative data through interviews and observations, while the distributions of questionnaires contributed an element of quantitative data. Questionnaires were distributed to both school principals and parents to gain insight into the school and family life of the pupils. While the quantitative method focused on questionnaires, the qualitative method focused on observations of children at work and play in their learning environment, as well as the physical characteristics of the classrooms and schools. Interviews conducted with children, teachers, parents and other educational personnel provided an insight into different perspectives. Thus, the different phases of the research worked in collaboration with one another to provide an overall sense of cohesiveness to the data findings.

Findings: This research brought to the fore a number of significant themes relating to cultural diversity and intercultural education in Ireland. The study explored the theme of intercultural education in detail from a number of different perspectives, which included the education system as a whole, teachers, parents and children. The data revealed 'self-

identity' to be an important aspect of people's lives from a young age as both children and adults had different conceptualisations of their own identities and visions of who they were. Language and nationality, as a significant aspect of overall family identity and values was clearly prevalent. The data revealed a lack of supports, such as in-service training and school/classroom resources for intercultural education at the time of the research. The main finding from the data in relation to the Traveller Community was the existence of a need for continued support by schools and at Government level to ensure that Traveller identity is preserved. Racism as a theme was evident in research with children, parents and teachers and it was clear from the findings that racism was present in Irish society at the time of this study. The evidence of racism in Ireland emerged as a result of incidences of racism with parents and children as depicted by some Principals. Stereotyping was not a direct aspect of interview questioning, however it emerged as a theme as a result of replies given by teachers, parents and children. Religion too formed an important aspect of some respondent's family lives, however for others religion did not feature as a contributor to their family beliefs. The most significant finding to emerge in relation to school policy was around the issue of anti-racism policies and guidelines for the implementation of intercultural education as part of the overall curriculum. For the most part national policy in relation to intercultural education was viewed by interviewees in a positive manner however, some were critical of policy at the time of the research. Finally, training emerged as an aspect of the findings due to the significant lack of training, both in-service and pre-service for primary school teachers in the field of intercultural education. The thematic format used in the data analysis proved to combine the key findings of the research and to highlight analysis proved to combine the key findings of the research and to highlight important relationships between data.

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DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO MY LATE BROTHER DECLAN

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ABBREVIATIONS

CECDE	Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education
CERE	Centre for Educational Research and Innovation
CRC	Community Relations Council
DENI	Department for Education, Northern Ireland
DES	Department for Education and Science
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EEA	European Economic Area
ELS	English Language Support
EU	European Union
INTO	Irish National Teachers Organisation
NAPAR	National Action Plan Against Racism
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCCRI	National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism
NCO	National Children's Office
NEPS	National Education Psychological Service
NESF	National Economic and Social Forum
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OMC	Office of the Minister for Children
PE	Physical Education
PESP	Programme for Economic and Social Progress
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
RTT	Resource Teacher for Travellers
SENDA	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SESE	Social, Environmental, Scientific Education
SPHE	Social, Personal, and Health Education
UK	United Kingdom
UNCRC	United Nation Committee on Rights for the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Childrens Fund
USA	United States of America

INTRODUCTION

This study provides a comparative examination of the approaches and related theory to intercultural education in early childhood classrooms in the Republic of Ireland. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD, 2001: 14) "the early childhood period is commonly defined as birth to age eight". For the purpose of this thesis the age range has been limited to children between the ages of four and six years of age, which in essence concentrates on children in junior and senior infant classrooms in primary schools in Ireland. Cultural diversity is growing in early years settings in Ireland, primarily as a result of an increase in immigration in recent years, for instance statistics show that since 2002 a total of 170,600 immigrants are estimated to have arrived in Ireland (Central Statistics Office: 2005). Suitable approaches to assist the development of intercultural learning environments in early childhood classrooms in Ireland were explored as part of this research. Intercultural education is a pressing issue in Irish society as "we live in an increasingly culturally diverse Ireland and need to incorporate that diversity into the every day practice of our colleges of education and our early year settings." (Murray et. al, 2001: 13) The issue of the language used to describe immigrant children/adults proved to be one of confusion as at the time of the study. There seemed to be a lot of misunderstanding by teachers as to how they should refer to the immigrant population. A sample of the language used by interviewees was 'non-national', 'ethnic minorities', 'refugees' and 'non-English speaking' – all of which were quite derogatory in their meaning. A lack of understanding of the immigrant population, their reasons for travelling to Ireland – whether work-related or other and a sense of fear of difference resulted in the use of a number of offensive terms to describe the international population at both school and national/policy level. As a researcher I too was unsure of the most appropriate language to use, mainly because of the variety of terms used in the media, policies and

so on. Thus, after much consideration and discussions with other professionals it was decided for the purpose of this research to refer to children who spoke English as a second language or who were born in a country outside Ireland as 'international children'. However, more recently the term 'newcomer children' has been adopted by policy makers and the wider media to refer to children of nationalities other than Irish, for instance children of asylum seekers, immigrant workers or refugees (INTO: March 2006).

The study examined the education of intercultural children with a specific focus on the policies and provisions that exist in Ireland to encourage cultural inclusiveness in the early year classroom. In conjunction with this the study aims to give an overview of the comparative aspects of the education of such children in Ireland and other countries, such as the United States of America (U.S.A.) and the United Kingdom (U.K.). Prior to devising a suitable methodology a research review was conducted from which research questions designed to explore the issue of intercultural education early childhood classrooms were developed:

Government Issues:

- 1999 primary curriculum Explore the concepts of intercultural education, bilingualism, religion and teaching in a culturally diverse classroom from the point of view of the 1999 Primary Curriculum;
- What developments have taken place in relation to the NCCA early childhood curriculum?
- Explore the available Government guidelines on Traveller education;
- Anti-bias/anti-racist curriculum: What does this mean and give examples. Is it addressed in schools or the primary curriculum?
- Does the early childhood curriculum address issues of race/culture and explore the diversity of pupils in present day Ireland?
- Does the curriculum support and recognise local, national and global cultural diversity in a positive way?
- What training is available for primary school teachers in relation to intercultural education, for instance pre-service and in-service provision?

School Issues:

- What intercultural resources are available in schools, for example, are pupils exposed to multiethnic stories, poetry, folklore, music, art and dance of various cultural groups?
- Are all the first languages of children given a voice and are children given a chance to speak/write in their first language?
- Is intercultural education addressed at staff meetings?
- Have teachers received any in-service in the area?
- Is the school the meeting focus of the community?
- Religious tuition-what happens in a culturally/religiously diverse classroom.

Teacher Issues:

- Does the teacher present a classroom that reflects the appreciation of and respect for the ethnic and cultural differences of the pupils in his/her care?
- How do teachers 'teach'/ 'address' cultural diversity in their classrooms?
- What are teachers' attitudes towards cultural diversity?

Children Issues:

- What activities do children in early years classrooms take part in during their school day?
- What is their knowledge of intercultural issues such as race, culture, language, Travellers, other countries, languages and so on and does their age affect this?

Hidden Curriculum:

- Social aspects: friendships/school yard/play;
- Racism;
- Terminology (What is used in schools by teachers and pupils, e.g. 'non-national', 'ethnic minority', 'international', 'Travellers')

Parents:

- Survey parents in relation to their families' cultural values/their cultural heritage/religious preference, e.g. attitude to holiday activities in schools, country of birth;
- How involved are all parents in the school environment?

Chapter 1 sets the scene by providing an overview of cultural diversity in Ireland from the 17th century to the present day. Chapter 2 explores national and international policy that supports intercultural education, with special emphasis on early childhood education classrooms. Intercultural education related issues are examined: for instance

the concept of racism and its presence or absence in Irish society. It explains the terminology surrounding intercultural education and examines closely policy documents regarding the issue in Ireland, the U.K. and the U.S.A. The similarities and differences between these countries in relation to intercultural education in early year education are then outlined. The following chapter provides an in-depth look at available intercultural education guidelines for primary school teachers, both nationally and internationally. An analysis is also given of the increased level of importance placed on early childhood care and education in the twenty first century. Chapter four consists of an analysis of the social development of the child between the ages of three and six years. It outlines the social and emotional development of the young child in relation to his/her cultural background and how influences such as family or peers can affect a child's development. The role of children's school and teachers in the children's social development, taking into account cultural diversity, is also explored.

Chapter five gives an account of the research methods used to gather data. It demonstrates the suitability for a qualitative rather than quantitative method of research by using a cross-section of methodological tools, such as interviews, observations and questionnaires. Chapter six presents an analysis of school issues, such as national identity, culture and racism from the point of view of teaching personnel, parents and children. The following chapter focuses on issues that move beyond school culture alone, and which relate to the wider education system and policy matters, for example school policy and teacher training. The final chapter provides a summary of the key issues which arose from the data through an exploration of the themes identified in chapter six. This chapter also provides recommendations for future study in the area of intercultural education in primary schools in Ireland. These recommendations arose out of this study, and in particular as a result of interviews and contact with school

personnel, parents and pupils, and if implemented could assist in improving the current approach to cultural diversity and inclusiveness in Irish schools.

CHAPTER 1: AN OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN IRISH SOCIETY

Introduction

Chapter 1 sets the scene for the overall study, and signals the origins of the research questions, which in turn influenced the methodological design used to explore different aspects of intercultural education in early childhood classrooms in primary schools in Ireland from 2003 to 2005. The chapter begins by outlining the journey of cultural diversity in Ireland from the 1600s to the present day, which provides the reader with a picture of some of different cultural aspects of Irish society, as well as highlighting the cultural changes that have occurred during the past four centuries. In addition I will draw on relevant sociological issues and statistics that have had an effect on the nature and extent of cultural diversity in Ireland will be explored.

Throughout this study terminology will be used that can often be construed as contested due to the different meanings which people adopt. To try and avoid this ambiguity as far as possible, it is therefore imperative that definitions are given for such terminology in order to present to the reader an indication of the writer's understanding and viewpoint. Firstly, it could be stated that culture is the central theme in this study from which related sociological issues arise, for instance racism, discrimination and self-identity, which are all aspects of society because of the different cultural identities of individuals. York (1991) defines culture in terms as "things, customs, and values". In other words how people live their lives, what values they hold, family roles, childrearing patterns, holiday traditions or beliefs about human nature are all elements that can help identity and define a person's culture (ibid). This study will provide an overview of such aspects of cultural diversity as identified by York, through for instance a family history questionnaire, which was completed by a number of parents

of the school children involved in the research. This generated an insight into the families' place of birth, language, religion, and family traditions and also provided an opportunity for parents to give their opinions on cultural aspects of the Primary Curriculum (1999). As well as providing cultural contextualisation, the issue of racism emerged as a recurring theme throughout this study and is therefore an aspect, which is discussed in detail. The research into racism was influenced by a number of writers who have been involved in exploring identity and culture with young children, (see for instance, Siraj-Blatchford (1994); Derman-Sparks (1989, 1997) and Connolly (1998) to name but a few). As a working definition of racism I have conjoined the work of a number of writers, who appear to share a common position. For instance, Derman-Sparks (1989; 1997) and Brunson Phillips (1997) define racism as an "institutionalized system of power". Connolly (1998) provides an understanding of racism, which highlights the complexity of the issue. He suggests that racism is "more than just a set of beliefs used to justify one individual or groups' discriminatory actions against another" but "that racism, rather than being something external to the individual, is something that they come to internalise". In other words Connolly suggests that racism not only affects people's opinions of themselves and others, but can also influence their actions and behaviours.

Thus, the study will explore culture and its related issues with the young child (4-6 years) as the focus. While the child is central to the research, factors that affect the child's cultural development in school will be examined, for instance school ethos and policies, parents, teachers, peers or the child's personal values/traditions.

1.1 Cultural Diversity in Ireland-An Historical Perspective

Greene *et al.*, (2000) suggest that Ireland has moved from a society of homogeneity in the past to one of heterogeneity in recent times:

> is moving from one characterised by homogeneity, consensus and traditional religious values to one which is more heterogeneous-characterized by diversity and plurality of values-and more in thrall to the values of consumer society. While other industrialized societies are experienced these changes over a generation or, more.....Irish society is undergoing the same changes in a more condensed period of time.

However, such a viewpoint does not paint an accurate picture of the 'geneology' of Irish society. In order to come to an understanding of cultural diversity in Ireland it is essential to first examine what it means to be Irish in contemporary Ireland, and then try and place that within an historical context. I will begin to a brief historical analysis of cultural developments in Ireland beginning in 1600 up to and including present day Ireland will be outlined. From the 17th century on Ireland was awash with diversity, which varied from personal identity to political affiliations as Foster points out:

> In 1600, as later, Ireland was characterized by a fragmented polity: Varieties of people, defining their 'Irishness' differently, many of whom denied the legitimacy of the official state apparatus and lived indifferently outside its writ.
> (R.F Foster, 1988: 3)

Cultural diversity in Ireland can therefore be dated back to the early 1600s when the English colonial presence resulted in a divided population that had different definitions of 'Irishness'. Present in Ireland during this period were Gaelic Irish, Old English and New English, such groups clearly representing cultural diversity, for example religious diversity in terms of Catholicism and Protestantism. It is important to elaborate on this period in Irish history as it represents significant diversification and growth amongst its population. The Old English, who were descendents of the original conquerors of Ireland, were mainly concentrated around towns and the Pale (Dublin) and it was during this era that the position of this group within Irish culture began quite fragmented. The English in England were now beginning to view the 'Old English' as

Irish as the Old English were now adopting certain attributes of the Irish way of life and were even sending their children out to be fostered with Gaelic families. After 1603, government power shifted to Protestants only, which saw the 'New English' being offered land as part of a new plantation movement. It is reported that by 1622 there were approximately 12,000 settlers in the newly colonized Munster regions (Foster, 1988: 11-13). The New English were now divided from the rest of the population in terms of religion and their dedication to the Crown. The plantation period in Ireland was to set the scene for a new group in Irish society known as the Anglo-Irish (Ibid: 14). The eighteenth century brought with it a period of landlord culture, and the onset of nationalism, which became evident in the latter part of the century. The emergence of nationalism as an ideal in Ireland can be linked to the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1793 (ibid). Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Ireland brought with them the complex issue of the slave-trade as well as that of colonialism. Such an experience left feelings of 'wrong-doing', oppression for the Irish and as McVeigh (1996) indicates the slave-trade could be considered as one of the roots of the racism that pervades many European countries at the present time.

What it means to be Irish is now a common question amongst researchers and Irish citizens. In the past the stereotypical 'Catholic and Gaelic' definition were commonly used to describe a 'true' Irish person. However, the emphasis has shifted from this to a definition that it still quite unclear, and one which researchers often debate. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a distinction made in Ireland between 'us' and the 'other', the other being the coloniser, or the British. In a way, the term 'Irishness' reflected almost identically, the term 'Britishness', for example, Britons were understood to be Protestant and Irish people were understood to be Catholic.

Similarly, the Irish people were seen to be rural and the Britons urban (Haran *et al.*, 2002: 14). Gillespie tends to deviate from the above explanation of what it means to be Irish, and argues that the nation was formed around a common set of ideas, ethnicity, culture and race. The essence of these two views is dissimilar. According to the writers of the *Celebrating Difference Project*:

> ethnic nationalism is based on the assumption of a shared culture-an assumption that we have already seen does not make sense in modern societies such as Ireland, even if it ever did so. This suggests a logical, as well as moral inclusive sense of what it means to be Irish (ibid, 2002: 14)

Thus, the origin of Irishness is highly debatable, but it is clear that the meaning from the past needs to be adapted to suit the cultural diversity that is evident in modern day Ireland. Contemporary Ireland is closely tied to the European Union (EU) and thus, the issue of Ireland now having dual identities-both Irish and European- has been raised. It is even suggested that Ireland may have multiple identities, meaning local, national and European. A further development of this is the possibility of multiple identities, meaning that one could be both Irish and British at the same time, due in part to the number of people who have immigrated and emigrated to and from Ireland. As Bhatti (1999) argues the term 'ethnic minority' is a contested form as "everyone belongs to an ethnic group" (1999: 9). This is an issue that should not be overlooked. In the case of Ireland in the year 2005 the term 'non-national' seems to be a favoured term in many forms of legislation and related documents to describe migrants who for different reasons have come to Ireland. This form of discourse is by its very nature exclusionary; a crude way of marking off those who do not 'belong' from those who 'do'. Why should anyone be described as a 'non' anything? The term does not portray a very positive image of any person. As a result of discussions with professionals working in the area of education in Ireland (as part of this research), the term 'non-national' does not seem to be a favoured term by educationalists in Irish settings. The

term 'international pupils' is increasingly being used by primary schools to refer to migrant pupils, as was evident in research conducted in a number of primary schools.

It can be argued that present day Ireland is a multicultural society. However it is often assumed that this 'multicultural society' is a new phenomenon and that the so-called 'celtic tiger'[i] suddenly brought cultural diversity to our shores. It is true to say that the 'celtic tiger' was responsible for an increase in the level of cultural diversity in Ireland however, Ireland was a multicultural society long before the arrival of this phenomena. The presence of religious, racial and ethnic diversity and so on has long been part of Irish society. A pertinent example is the Traveller community, who have their own ethnic and cultural identity have been present in Ireland for centuries. Although a minority group in terms of numbers, the Traveller community are Irish but with a heritage and culture which is unique and different to that of the majority of Irish citizens. According to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2005) there are approximately 25,000 Travellers living in Ireland, a further 15,000 Irish Travellers living in the UK, and almost 10,000 Travellers living in the USA. The census of 2002 (Ireland) indicates that forty two percent of all Travellers in Ireland are less than fifteen years of age. The first group of Vietnamese refugee children arrived in Ireland in 1979-over a quarter of a century ago (NCCA, 2004: 2). Immigrants to this country also included the Celtic, Viking, Norman, English, Scots and Huguenots to our shores, who have also contributed to Ireland's cultural diversity in the past (NCCA, 2005: 12). Thus, historically Ireland was a country of cultural diversity, which in turn has contributed to our Irish heritage. In a similar way the diversity evident in contemporary Ireland will contribute to our culture of the future (ibid). However the ever-increasing level of cultural diversity is creating challenges for Irish society in such areas as educational provision, citizenship, and employment and so on. Whilst these

challenges are being addressed by Government and related bodies, positive change and provision will take time to achieve. As such it should therefore be realised that Irish society is currently going through a learning process in relation to its approaches to cultural diversity. This chapter goes on to briefly explores the high level of immigration into Ireland in recent years, the increase in cultural diversity in Ireland and the effects such increases in diversity have on certain aspects of Irish society, such as employment options of the adult population and the education of young children in primary school. It can be argued that this influx of people into Ireland has come in two main forms: 1) economic immigration and 2) asylum seeking.

1.2 Racism in Ireland: Fact or Fiction?

As Carter *et al.,* (1987: 176) indicate 'Races', do not exist in a biological sense but are socially constructed. However, human beings do display a clear range of physical variations or 'unchangeable characteristics', which are in some way representative of their race (Ibid). Many physical differences are inherited, but why do some differences and not others become matters of social discrimination and prejudice? According to Giddens (2001: 246), "racial differences should be understood as physical variations singled out by the members of a community or society as socially significant". It is from such an understanding that racism emerges, which as well as being a form of prejudice is also 'an organising principle of popular consciousness' (Carter *et al.,*: 177). Dalal (1993: 277-293) gives an insight into a possible origin of how racist views came to be so widespread around the world:

> We live in a historical era that began in the sixteenth century, during which Imperial Europe colonized the rest of the world. The colonizer used various myths, phantasies and ideologies to maintain a division between the colonizer and the colonized.

It could be argued then that racism originated in the direct suppression, discrimination and prejudice of natives by colonizers as a means to maintain their newfound power and conquests. Dwivedi (1996:6) indicates that racial discrimination and prejudice are referred to as 'racism' and that a prejudiced person is someone who 'pre-judges' and "holds views of another an individual, or group of people, which are not based on knowledge, and is unwilling to change these views even when presented with clear evidence that they are factually wrong". One could therefore state that some individuals take the irrational path of being racist towards other individuals even when they have all the facts about a person or group of people and that they cannot see beyond or accept differences in human characteristics, which constitute racism such as skin colour, religion and so on. Eytarn (1996) defines racism as:

> an unjust situation, in which a group because of its unequal place in society, suffers from a persistent pattern of prejudice, exclusion, injustice, discrimination, and disadvantage which are slow to change and rooted deep in the institutions and structure of society and in people's psyches.

Chinwangu (1996: 2) outlines a number of issues that make the analysis of racism in Ireland complicated. Firstly, Irish racism is most frequently analysed in comparison to other European countries where minority groups form a much higher proportion than in Ireland. It could be stated that this point, although prevalent at the time of the study, may now be less of a factor in the analysis of racism in Ireland due to the increase in minority groups in Ireland as outlined in chapter one. Chinwangu's second point refers to the fact that in 1996 most members of minority groups stayed in Ireland on a temporary basis (e.g. as students, tourists, or on fixed term job appointments). This point is true to a certain extent, however many minority groups in Ireland are seeking refuge here on a longer-term basis, for example asylum seekers (refer to chapter one). Finally, Chinwangu correctly refers to the "widespread generalisations about the overt

friendliness of the Irish towards foreigners overshadows any impression of insecurity and fear in the presence of foreigners" (Chinwangu, 1996: 2).

Studies by Fanning *et al.,* (2001) and Amnesty International (2001) demonstrate that racism, as indicated by the definitions outlined earlier is in fact experienced by different cultural, ethnic and social groups in Irish society. In 2001, an Amnesty International study conducted by Loyal and Mulcahy examined the expereiences of a total of 622 'Black and ethnic minorities living within Ireland' (language used in report). The key target groups in the research were defined as: Irish Travellers, 'Black' Irish, Work Permit holders/students from overseas, asylum seekers and refugees. These groups were selected on the basis that they would be 'more likely than others to be subject to racial discrimination and/or prejudice based on such markers of identity as: skin colour, dress or language'. A questionnaire was administered by interviewers to a representative sample, and the analysis produced a 96% level of reliabilty (Amnesty International, 2001: 82-87). The findings showed clear evidence of racism in Ireland as the following results indicate. For instance, 78% of the sample stated that they experienced some form of 'racism or discrimination' . The 25-44 year old age group made up the majority of the sample (330 in total) and 79% of these people stated that they experienced some form of racism or discrimination while living in Ireland. There were a total of twelve 0-14 year olds surveyed and 75% has experienced racism or discrimination. A question was asked to ascertain how often people had heard or seen others making insulting comments about their skin colour, or ethnic background, including the way they dressed. 69% of respondents indicated a 'frequently' or 'occasionally' reply to this question, with the majority (36%) stating 'frequently'. The study asked respondents to choose from a list of choices where, and

how often racism or discrimination occurred, even if it was only on one occasion. The main sources of racism or discrimination in rank order from highest to lowest included:

- On the street;
- From pub owners or their staff;
- From bus or taxi drivers;
- From owners of discos/clubs or staff;
- From the Gardaí;
- From employers;
- From hospitals and medical services;
- From other ethnic minority groups;
- From religious organisations

Fanning *et al.,* (2001) examined the experiences of child poverty and social exclusion amongst dispersed asylum seekers in Ireland, based in Cork, Ennis and Limerick. The research methodology consisted of interviews with forty-three households, a number of interviews with asylum-seeking children and asylum-seeker parents and workshops with children and adults. A questionnaire administered to an adult member of each household, which focussed on six thematic sections; family background and characteristics, accommodation, income and social welfare, education, health of family, diet and nutrition (ibid: 78). In relation to racism Fanning *et al.,* found that a vast majority of respondents stated that they had experienced some form of racism since arriving in Ireland. A number of examples of the type of racism endured by children and families are outlined in the report. For example, some described racism in accessing services, which involved language barriers or hostile body language by health workers (ibid: 62). The fear of racism by some parents resulted in them not allowing their children outside to play (ibid). The findings state that some black parents described how their children were called names such as 'nigger'. Although a few parents described how school staff addressed the issue of racism once it was brought to their attention, a number of respondents indicated that more should be done to address racism in education (ibid: 62-630), for example:

Teachers need awareness of cultural difference

Children at school should be lectured on how to deal with children from other countries. They are the same it is only the colour that is different

African people should be employed to help in schools. This would mean someone on staff knows the issues and can help children and raise awareness of teachers.

The NCCRI have a voluntary racist incident reporting system in place, which records incidents of racism from members of the public. The purpose of this record is to chronicle the trends and types of racist incidents that take place in Irish society (Philip Watt, Spectrum, Issue 9, Dublin 9. An example of the number of incidences reported between 2001 and 2004 are listed below (ibid):

Table 1: Racist Incidents in Ireland Between 2001-2004

REPORTED DATE OF RACIST INCIDENT	NUMBER OF REPORTED RACIST INCIDENTS
May 2001-October 2001	4
November 2001-April 2002	40
May 2002-October 2002	67
November 2002-April 2003	48
May 2003-October	46
November 2003-April 2004	42
May 2004-October 2004	70

Such studies as those above demonstrate that racism is an issue in Ireland, and that there is a need for anti-racism to be a key aspect of school policies. It is clear from the studies and evidence of racist incidents in Ireland outlined above that racism is problem in Irish society. After all although the NCCRI record incidents of racism in Ireland, it is a voluntary system and therefore it is unclear to know the exact extent of the magnitude of the problem. It is note worthy that studies show that racism in Ireland is significant enough for researchers to write about and to stress the need for the Government to address the issue.

1.3 Population-Relevant Statistics

The total population of Ireland at the end of April 2004 was estimated to be 4.04 million, an increase of 64,900 on the previous year. The population in Ireland is now the highest since 1871, when the estimated population for that year was 4.05 million. There has been a steady population growth in Ireland over the past number of years mainly due to the 'boom' in the Irish economy, which has naturally attracted work migrants. The estimated number of immigrants into Ireland in the year to April 2004 was 50,100 (http://www.cso.ie).

1.4 Employment Issues

Historically, Ireland has been a country of emigration rather than immigration however a major shift has occurred in recent years that has seen the influx of ethnic, cultural and language minorities. At present, citizens of the European Union are permitted to move freely from one EU country to another. Ireland has seen a vast increase in immigration over the past ten years or so, For example Poland (one of the newest EU members) became a member state of the EU in 2004, and there are approximately 37,000 Polish people living and working in Ireland at present (http://www.rte.ie/tv/mono/prog5.html: accessed May 20th 2005). High unemployment in Poland has led to the influx of Polish people to Ireland who have emigrated in an effort to financially support their families back home. There are clear similarities between the present migration of Polish people to Ireland and the migration of Irish people to the United Kingdom during the 1980s recession in Ireland. Thus, the economic success experienced by Ireland as a result of the 'Celtic tiger' has attracted a new immigrant population, especially those seeking employment. The table below (NCCA, 2005: 10) outlines the estimated immigration to Ireland of people of EU nationality over the past number of years:

Table 2: Estimated Immigration to Ireland of People of EU Nationality

Estimated immigration to Ireland of people of EU nationality		
Year	**UK**	**Rest of EU**
1996	8,300	5,000
1997	8,200	5,500
1998	8,300	5,800
1999	7,900	6,800
2000	7,100	7,100
2001	7,000	5,800
2002	5,100	6,100

Although a high number of EU nationals have immigrated to Ireland during the economic boom years of the 'celtic tiger', a labour shortage developed which meant that supply was below the demand needed. In order to be permitted to legally work in Ireland people are issued with either a work permit or a work visa/authorization - i.e. non-EEA nationals (King, 2005: 24). Thus, the Irish Government issued work permits to non-EU citizens to alleviate the labour shortage in certain areas of employment. The permits were issued to citizens from countries such as Czech Republic, Russia, Romania, the Philippines and South Africa. According to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Ireland) the number of work permits issued to non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals increased dramatically from 6,250 in 1999 to 47,551 in 2003 (King: 25). This is an increase of 760% in five years, a colossal increase by any measure. The total number of work visas/authorizations issued between 2000 and 2002 was 7,742. It is clear from these figures that labour migration into Ireland has increased on a colossal scale in the past five years or so. These migrants have families and children that need care and education and therefore increased pressure and challenges are placed on social systems already in place, for example schools.

The second form of immigration into Ireland comes from those seeking asylum from situations of persecution in their home country. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations: http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html) protects people who are being persecuted in their country of origin by granting them permission to seek asylum in another country (NCCA, 2005: 11). Once a person is granted asylum he/she is then known as a refugee. Ireland is obliged by the 1951 Geneva Convention, of which it is a signatory to accept and process applications for asylum made within the state. Asylum applications in Ireland have started to decrease in the past number of years, for example, in 2002 there were 11,634 applications, while in 2003 this figure had dropped to 7,900 (King: 26). Asylum applications in 2004 showed an even more dramatic decrease from the 2003 figure by amounting to 4,766 (NCCA: 2005, 11). The NCCA *Intercultural Guidelines for Primary Schools* (2005: 11) indicate the level of employment migration to Ireland as follows:

Table 3: Employment Migration to Ireland from Outside the EU and the Number of Work Permits Issued

EMPLOYMENT MIGRATION TO IRELAND FROM OUTSIDE THE EU: NO. OF WORK PERMITS ISSUED	
2000	18,000
2001	36,000
2002	40,000
2003	47,500
2004	34,054

Legislation in Ireland, which allows people the opportunity to challenge discriminative or racial behaviour, includes the *Equal Status Act* (Ireland 2000) and the *Employment Equality Act* (Ireland 1998). These acts prohibit discrimination on nine grounds:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Disability

- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Religion
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller community

(Government of Ireland, 2000 cited The Equality Authority, 2003: 1)

The Government of Ireland has also developed National Action Plan Against Racism in Ireland (NAPAR), whose objective is to promote intercultural practices in all aspects of Irish society, from education to the workplace. Included in the NAPAR is an education action plan against racism (NCCA, 2005: 17). As such it is presumed that through legislation and action plans people are protected from forms of discrimination. Ten new member states joined the EU in 2004 which has resulted in the possibility of millions more people moving freely to travel, live or work in any of the twenty five EU states. Appendix 1 lists the current EU states and the year they became EU members (At present Turkey, Romania, Croatia and Bulgaria are candidate countries of the EU).

It has been argued that people often plan to emigrate to a country for a certain length of time. However this plan is often put on hold from year to year. This refers to the intention of many migrants to return back to their 'home country'. Bhatti (1999) cites Dahya (1974, cited by Bhatti, 1999: 7), Khan (1974, ibid), Anwar (1979, ibid) and Helweg (1979, ibid), who all found that due to a number of complicated reasons the final decision to return home was abandoned indefinitely by many families. There have been some examples of families who return home to their native country to start up a business but then ran out of money and had to return to Britain for work again. The 'myth of return' also gives people an excuse in a way for not returning back home 'just yet'. People wait in their migrant country and hope that their lives will improve,

that they will make the financial gains they long for; hence the waiting inevitably postpones the return home repeatedly (Bhatti, 1999: 7).

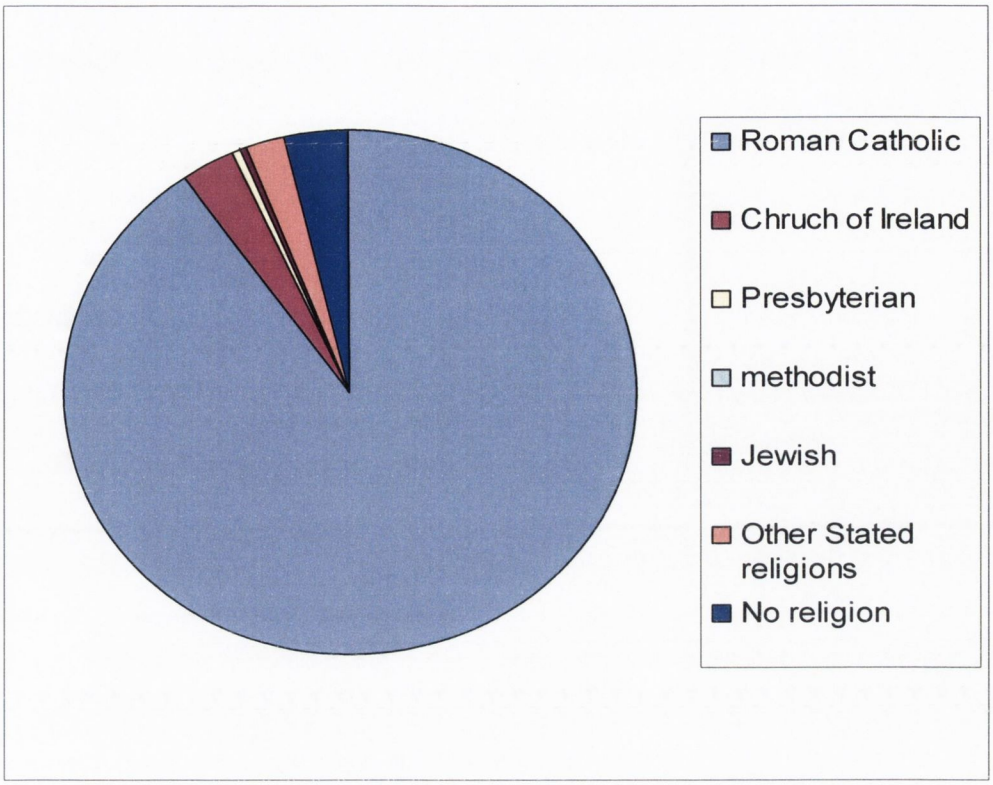
1.5 Linguistic Diversity

Linguistic diversity also plays an important role in Irish society. The two official languages as per the Constitution of Ireland are Irish and English. For some, Irish is a first language (with English usually being the second language), and for others Irish is a second language (usually learned and spoken in school but not in the home environment). Every Irish child is entitled to experience both Irish and English. There are also other native languages spoken in Ireland, such as Cant (used by the Irish Travellers), Ulster Scots and Irish Sign Language (NCCA, 2005: 12). However, many other languages, such as Lithuanian, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino are also spoken due to the increase in immigration as outlined earlier. Thus, modern day Ireland represents a society rich in linguistic diversity, which is part of, and contributes to its cultural diversity.

1.6 Religious Diversity

Religious diversity is also a significant feature of Irish society. Figure 1 outlines the population of religious groupings (as percentages of the total population) in Ireland as shown by the 2002 Census in comparison to 1991 figures (Deegan *et al.,* 19):

Figure 1: Religious Diversity in the Republic of Ireland **(2002 Census)**



Although the religious profile of Ireland has changed in recent times, religious diversity has long been an aspect of Irish society for example, both the Protestant and Jewish populations in Ireland would have been much larger in the past than in recent times (NCCA, 2005: 12). As with linguistic diversity, religious diversity is a central part of a multi-faceted modern day Ireland.

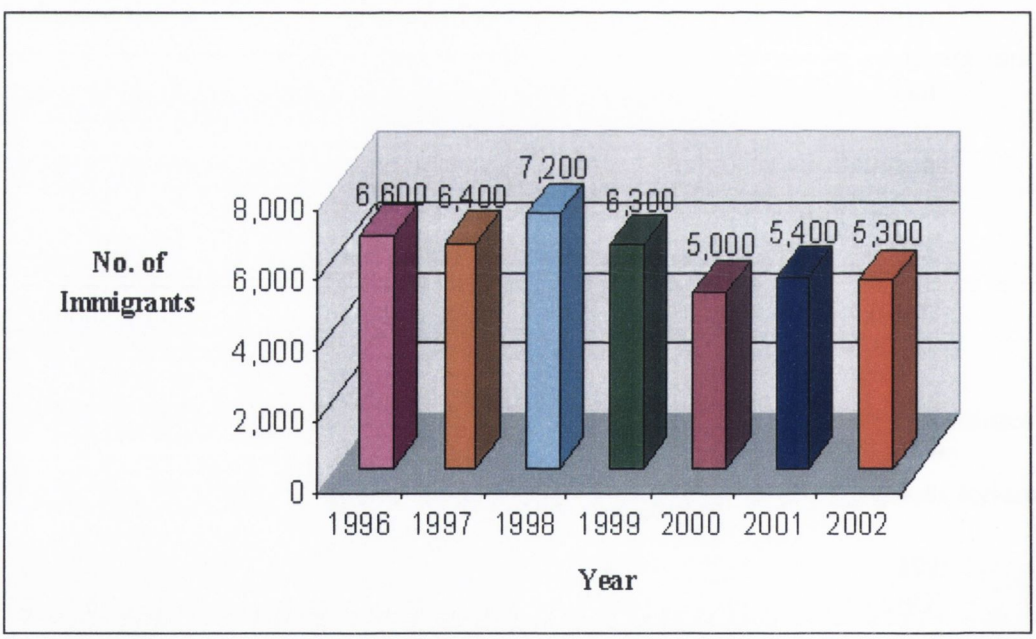
1.7 Education Issues

One of the more difficult questions concerns the effect that the new immigration and population increase have on the level of diversity in primary schools in Ireland? It is necessary to consider the current situation in Ireland with regard to cultural diversity and the path that lies ahead. Greene *et al.,* (2000: 21) demonstrate what it's like to grow up Irish in the beginning of the twenty first century as follows:

> Irish society is moving from one characterised by homogeneity, consensus and traditional religious values to one which is more heterogeneous-characterized by diversity and plurality of values- and more in thrall to the values of consumer society. While other industrialized societies are experienced these changes over a generation or, more.....Irish society is undergoing the same changes in a more condensed period of time.

According to Greene et al there are dramatic social changes that are occurring at a rapid pace in Ireland at present. Children from families affected by these changes are part of Irish society and are therefore part of the Irish education system. According to the I.N.T.O. (1998) the arrival of non-EU ethnic minority communities has "implications for every sector of Irish society, including education" (Gaire *et al.,* 2005: 206). Figure 2 lists the number of children in the school-going age that immigrated to Ireland between 1996-2002 as represented in the 2002 census:

Figure 2: Number of Immigrants into Ireland Age 0-14



The numbers of immigrants between the ages of 0-14 years (1996-2002) range from 5,000 to 7,200, which clearly resulted in an increase in the level of cultural diversity in primary schools in those years. This diversity should be acknowledged and respected by all schools, both intercultural and mono-cultural alike, with the necessary support, such as professional development, and educational resources to be supplied by the Department of Education and Science. Issues related to equality and diversity is essential to the overall experience of a child's primary education (Lodge and Lynch 2004: 2). International and national policies have spurred the increased protection and respect of all children worldwide in recent years, and Ireland is no exception. This protection and respect refers to all aspects of children's lives including diversity issues such as culture and race (Deegan, Devine and Lodge, edited, 2004: 8). Education is central to the concept of diversity and its relevance in a child's life. The most significant international policy to have influenced policy making in relation to the lives of children is the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)* (1989). The UNCRC refers to the principles of diversity and anti-discrimination in several of its articles. For example, in Article 29 it states that the education of the child should be directed to

> "the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for the civilisations different from his or her own"

and

> "the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin."

In Ireland the *National Children's Strategy "Our Children/Their Lives"* is a significant document, which clearly identifies diversity as a key aspect of a child's education (Barnardos, Schonfeld (edited), 2002: 5). Objective K of the Strategy states: "Children will be educated and supported to value social and cultural diversity so that all children including Travellers and other marginalized groups achieve their full potential."

Detailed analysis of policies and provision that support cultural diversity and intercultural education in Ireland will be explored in a later chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter gives a broad overview of different characteristics of Irish society, which are representatives of a considerable and ever increasing culturally diverse society. The facets explored include population, employment, language, religion and education. All aspects are key sociological issues, which naturally mirror changes in any society, for example, in this case cultural diversity. The exploration of cultural diversity in Irish society sets the scene for the remainder of this research. The key question, which arises from this chapter and is central to the overall study, is to ask why the concept of cultural diversity is important in the education of young children, and how does Ireland ensure cultural inclusiveness in its classrooms, particularly in early childhood classrooms? According to Schonfeld (Barnardos, 2002: 4), there are two reasons for the importance of diversity in early childhood. Firstly, "children are not just individuals but are members of distinct cultural groups" and secondly "is the need of civic society to promote each child's comfortable, empathetic and respectful interaction with people from diverse backgrounds."

Societal changes, such as population growth or immigration result in implications for the education of all children. Devine cites Gillis (2002), Hendrick (1997) and Jencks (1996) by stating that 'socio-historical analyses point to the evolving nature of childhood and how children's lives change in line with economic and social development" (Deegan, Devine and Lodge, edited, 2004, 110). It is the role of education in creating a culturally inclusive learning environment for young children that will be the central focus of this study. According to Kenny *et al.,* "education is inclusive when it contributes to pupil's opportunities and skills to function in a just and pluriform society, which ideally, is characterized by social cohesion and room for different perspectives on the world" (Kenny and McLaughlin, 2004: 11). Although significant changes and challenges have faced the society of Ireland in recent years, it is important to remember that Ireland has a long history of diversity, which includes linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity. It is clear that Irish society was never homogenous. Religious diversity and immigration have long been an aspect of Irish society as shown earlier in this chapter. Even within Irish society itself, social diversity has been prevalent for generations. The religious and political traditions in Ireland have provided diversity within the 'indigenous' society. Kenny and McLaughlin (2004: 7) provide some insight into the longstanding social diversity in Ireland by stating that "historical records show that the persistent Traveller-settled divide is ancient. There are divergences between Gaelic and English-speaking populations and between urban and rural areas".

CHAPTER 2: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY THAT SUPPORTS INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION- A FOCUS ON EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

Introduction

This chapter explores national and international policy and provision in relation to intercultural education from the perspective of early childhood education settings. Section 1 sets the scene by focusing on significance of the importance of early year's education in a child's life. The next section examines the concept of intercultural education and related issues. The issue of racism in Ireland is analysed first, with reference to Irish studies that have been conducted. Next, anti-racist and anti-bias approaches to education are explored as part of an overall intercultural context. The meaning of an inclusive school concludes the final part of the first section. The next section analyses early childhood education in Ireland with a focus on policy and provision from 1960 to the present day. Section three goes on to discuss intercultural education policy in Ireland, the UK and other European countries and in North America.

2.1 The Importance of Early Childhood Care and Education in the Twenty First Century

It was during the seventeenth century that people became aware of the importance of early childhood as a period of child development. Prior to the seventeenth century, children's developmental and educational needs were not considered in the overall scheme of life. According to Hayes (1993), "philosophers such as Locke and Rousseau and educators such as Pestalozzi *et al.,* were all influential in raising the awareness of

the importance of early experiences to later development". Gutek (1992: 237-238) states that the pioneers of early childhood education:

> Identified stages of development and sought to develop educational activities and experiences appropriate to them. In varying degrees, the criterion of appropriateness was defined as what was necessary to the child's stages of development and readiness, rather than what was expected by society.

The accepted national and international age span covered by early childhood education is from zero to six years however for the purpose of this study the age span examined is three to six years.[ii] Early childhood education involves the study of the development and growth of young children, and examines the factors that influence that development (Lerner *et al.*, 1991: 4). Wilson states that early childhood education is concerned with "creative play, social skill development, pre-academics, (i.e., basic skills in English, maths and science), and the development of basic understandings about the natural and built environment" (Wilson, 1998: 4). Early childhood environments take the form of many settings such as Kindergarten, nursery, preschool and even infant classes in the primary school. Research has shown that preschool education has a positive effect on the child's overall development regardless of their home background, for example according to Osborn *et al.*, "one study of 9,000 children found that all who attended some form of pre-school provision had better cognitive skills, were more successful at school and had fewer behavioural problems than those who did not" (ibid). Thus, early childhood education can be valuable to a child's overall educational and personal development if implemented in the most positive way.

The social setting of the early childhood classroom differs from the preschool to the primary school level, with preschools varying from Montessori's to Kindergartens. Preschool is often a child's first experience of the education system and is often the

first important environment for socialization with peers, outside the home at this stage, therefore a milestone in a young child's life. According to Santrock (2001: 518), "preschool children have little concept of the classroom as an organized social system, although they are learning how to make and maintain social contacts and communicate their needs." Thus, a child's first entry into early year's education is an important milestone in their life and sets the scene for their future education. In Ireland, children enter primary school at four/five years of age, and are part of the early childhood education system while attending junior infants and senior infants. The primary school is more socially directed than the preschool, and there is an increased emphasis on friendships and group belonging at this stage. Children begin to learn social roles from their peers in the primary school, and often have a desire to achieve at school (Ibid: 519). Therefore, the child has to mature, and develop once he/she enters the primary school in order to 'fit in'. It is the function of every school to facilitate this development in a positive way.

Children develop in different ways and at varying stages during early childhood, for instance, emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically. As part of classroom planning early childhood educators should cater for these developments in their daily classroom techniques, in particular because they spend a lot of time interacting with the child on a regular basis (Edwards *et al.*, 1994: 1). Early childhood practitioners are also responsible for providing "the ground works from which children learn how to learn and become useful and valued adults" (ibid). It is accepted internationally that early childhood education is an important aspect of the education system, and the child's future adult life (http:/www.cecde.ie). From a very young age children have the need to feel love, attention and respect. They crave social interaction with other children,

and with adults, and it is important that they are present in an environment that facilitates these needs (Hayes: 1993: 26).

As outlined in chapter 3 young children are influenced by the people and resources in their classroom, thus early childhood educators should always be aware of their actions, as they tend to have significant effects on children's learning patterns. Regular self-evaluation is an important aspect in the education of young children, as it is essential that educators "look at what a situation demands, take action and constantly evaluate the usefulness of those actions" (Edwards et al., 1994: 2). Care is an important part of the early childhood worker's job, and providing a safe, friendly setting that allows for social interaction, communication and self-expression facilitates the development of the child. Early childhood education provides an essential foundation for the child's development into middle childhood, adolescence and eventually adulthood. *Ready to Learn: The White Paper on Early Childhood Education* (1999: 8-12), addresses the significance of early childhood education as part of the education system as a whole:

1. Early childhood education prepares children for the transition to formal primary education.
2. Studies have shown that children that participate in quality pre-school education are more likely to finish secondary school, and to benefit positively from the experience in the long-term.
3. Early childhood education can be beneficial to parents as they develop improved relationships with their children.
4. Society benefits from investment in education as it results in a better educated workforce, and a rise in economic growth. In turn, the Government benefit as an improved educated society leads to a reduction in spending on unemployment, healthcare and crime.
5. Research demonstrates that children from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit enormously from early intervention programs.
6. The higher the quality of early childhood education the better the benefits for the children, their parents and society as a whole.
7. It is important that educational intervention begins as early as possible because the early years are a vital part of a child's education and development.
8. The parents' role in the education of their children is very significant. It is important that any early childhood education policy takes parents' needs

> into account. Parents can provide the care and additional educational needs that children require during the early years as part of their development.

It could be stated that a young child's education can have an effect on their overall development, as they grow older. According to Hayes (1993: 26), "childcare and early education should aim to ensure that children experience a healthy and safe environment that respects the child and encourages self-confidence and an interest in learning." In other words children should be encouraged to develop at their own pace, and to become confident, self-respecting individuals. Research demonstrates that high-quality early childhood care and education can contribute to "young children's early learning and future social and academic outcomes, particularly so for less-advantaged nursery-aged children, though there is some evidence for benefits to children from a variety of backgrounds and aged below three years" (Aubrey *et al.*, 2000: 12). In essence, quality early years education can have a possible overall positive effect on a child's life in later years, and could eventually have an affect on future generations by contributing to "a strong and capable society" (Mc Guinness, 2000: 11).

Clearly recognition of the importance of early childhood education has increased both nationally and internationally, for instance the Cecde established in conjunction with the Department of Education and Science at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin is working tirelessly publishing research to highlight the need for a quality early years education in Ireland (http://www.cecde.ie). The NCCA (2005) have also recognised the need for a change in early childhood education in Ireland, which is evident from their recent publication *Towards a Framework for Early Learning* (2005). Internationally, the OECD's recent publication (2006) on early childhood care and education has suggested changes that could improve the current system, which would in turn impact positively on the lives of young children, for instance, the OECD

recommends free childcare for children from 0-3 years. An analysis of early childhood education provisions that exist in Ireland and in other countries around the world will be addressed in later chapters.

In summary the theories of early childhood educators, philosophers and psychologists, from the time of Ancient Greece up to the 1980's played a vital role in the developments in early years education over time. Their research has paved the way for the early childhood education programs and theories that exist today, and their work is reflected in modern day approaches to early childhood education. The theories analysed, all have implications for early childhood education practice, and demonstrate the advancements and improvements that have occurred in the field of early childhood education over time.

The relevance of early childhood education is clearly evident in 21st century education. The work of early childhood theorists and educators has had implications for early childhood education practice, and demonstrate the advancements and improvements that have occurred in the field of early childhood education over time. In conclusion, it is clear that:

> There is a growing recognition of the importance of lifelong learning and the idea that children learn from the earliest moment and continue to learn throughout their lives. Education is concerned with all the phases of life, including the very early childhood phase.
> (DES, 1999: 3)

Education is important at all levels, but research has shown that early childhood education is of significant importance with regard to the child's future well being. In a sense, it is during the early years that the seeds are sown for the child to grow into a unique individual in later life, with his/her own personality, social skills and so on.

Briggs *et al.,* (1999: 4) reiterate the significance of early childhood education by stating:

> The early years of school represent one of the greatest influences in children's lives. If children feel alienated from learning in their early years of schooling, their negative feelings can be lifelong. In other words, if schools, teachers or parents' 'get it wrong' at this critical stage, the child's life trajectory can be compromised.

2.2 What Is Intercultural Education?

It can be argued that education is one of the elements that helps to create a culturally inclusive society, and that it is vital to begin the process of positive cultural awareness as early as possible in a child's life (Gillborn, 1995, 1996; Kinchloe *et al.,* 1997; May 1999). Short *et al.,* (1996, 1999) conducted research with children aged eight to eleven years to discover the best possible methodologies to address racism through education. Their research showed that children of this age are already developing an awareness of racism, and that it is through education that anti-racist education, in conjunction with a critical multiculturalism approach that children learn to "reflect upon their attitudes and misconceptions and to understand the open, fluid and complex nature of identities". (Paul Connolly, in Vincent, edited, 2003: 167). There are many aspects of a school, which determine its success or failure to equip its pupils with the necessary skills, and values they need to become active citizens in a society and to be respectful of themselves and others. As the Parekh Report (UK, 2000) suggests:

> A country's education system is a gateway to employment and to participation in political, social and cultural affairs. It also equips children and young people-or fails to equip them-with the essential understandings, skills and values they need to play a substantial role in the building and maintenance of Britain as a community of citizens and a community of communities. (ibid: xviii)

A key element of culturally inclusive learning environments is equality for all involved in the educational process, such as pupils, teachers and parents, regardless of ethnicity or race.

According to the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO), "education holds the key to developing an inclusive society where social diversity and cultural differences can be respected, promoted and practised" (INTO, 2002: foreword). Intercultural education is therefore about respecting individuals from other cultural backgrounds and supporting anti-racism (INTO, 2002: foreword). Siraj-Blatchford states, "in modern, diverse societies, it is essential children learn social competence to respect other groups and individuals, regard less of difference. This learning must begin in the earliest years of a child's education" (Siraj-Blatchford, 2000: 96). Social competence then is a learning process for all individuals that according to researchers working on a social competence project at Dundee University involves, "possessing and using the ability to integrate thinking, feeling and behaviour to achieve social tasks and outcomes valued in the host context and culture" (http://www.dundee.ac.uk/fedsoc/research/projects/socialcompetence/). Educational settings act as a platform from which social competence can be promoted by the school community through the different mediums, for instance "accessing the school curriculum successfully, meeting associated personal social and emotional needs, and developing transferable skills and attitudes of value beyond school" (ibid).

Thus, early childhood education can play an important role in lifelong development and learning. Diversity encompasses many different facets and spans across many domains in life such as society[iii], education, family and so on as indicated by Fu *et al.,* (1998: 10):

> Diversity in an educational context goes beyond regional/geographic, ethnic, and racial distinctions. It also includes language, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, and age, as well as physical, mental, and emotional exceptionalities.

Diversity in itself is therefore an extensive topic with many variants. This study focuses on the issue of cultural diversity, and more specifically cultural diversity in early childhood education.

Two varying approaches to cultural diversity education include the *Multicultural* approach and the *Intercultural* approach. Both of these terms are often used in reference to cultural diversity in schools, however there is a significant difference between the two. It is worthwhile therefore to define and explore these approaches in some detail. Multicultural education "is best understood as an overview and framework for creating an educational environment where opportunity is equal for people from diverse backgrounds" (Murray *et al.*, 2001: 59). This approach celebrates difference, but it tends to see children from minority cultures as the less important group. According to Murray *et al.*, (2001: 73) the multicultural approach tends to "ignore the critical issue that children of the dominant ethnic group also need to develop an awareness about themselves in relation to people from different cultural and other backgrounds." Leicester (1989: 23) places emphasis on the word '*multicultural*' instead of 'education' and goes on to define multicultural education in several ways:

1. Education through many cultures.
2. Education in many cultures.
3. Education for a multicultural society.

Multicultural education tends to view minority cultures in an exotic light, and thus creates a distance between both the majority and minority cultures.

Murray *et al.,* (2001) indicate that intercultural education (which is relevant to children from both the majority and minority cultures) "aims to develop understanding among children and adults from different cultural and ethnic origins" (ibid: 60). In the NCCA's intercultural guidelines for schools (2005) some of the benefits of intercultural education include the following:

- It encourages the child's curiosity about cultural and social difference;
- It helps to develop and support the child's imagination by normalising difference;
- It helps to develop the child's critical thinking by enabling the child to gain perspectives on, and to question, his/her own cultural practices;
- It helps to develop sensitivity in the child;
- It helps to prevent racism.

(NCCA, 2005: 21)

2.2.1 Anti-Racist Education

Chapter 1 set the scene for following chapters by examining cultural diversity issues in Ireland, such as racism and immigration from a sociological perspective. This chapter explores intercultural education from the perspective of teaching methods and educators. Intercultural education promotes the teaching of anti-racism and equality issues in a more intense way than the multicultural approach and is currently the most concise teaching methodology to address the issue of diversity in the classroom (for example see INTO, 2002; Jandt, Fred E., 2001; Lodge and Lynch, 2005 and Siraj-Blatchford) Mac an Ghaill (1999: 105) suggests that anti-racism like racism is a term with many varying definitions and is a highly contested term. He explores the development of anti-racism in Britain since its emergence in the early 1980s from both the left and right wing perspective. Mac an Ghaill (1999) goes on to suggest that there are many different levels of meaning such as policy and practice, theoretical and

political and the individual experience as well as the experience of society collectively (ibid: 106).

According to Alladin, (cited in Kilbride, 1997: vii), "anti-racist education is based on the common experience that the hardest bias to overcome is that against people of different races, particularly people who are called "black". Anti-racist education is therefore an educational approach, which aims to tackle the issue of racism through the promotion of anti-racist practices and methodologies. The NCCA (2005: 169) define anti-racist education as education that "questions and opposes any opinions and/or actions that serve to disadvantage groups on the grounds of perceived difference, within which there is an assumption of inferiority". Therefore, in addition to challenging inequalities, anti-racist education seeks to celebrate cultural diversity, make visible issues of power and inequalities and help children come to an understanding of how to deal with prejudice and stereotyping (http://www.antiracisttoolkit.org.uk/html/040105.htm, accessed 09/11/2005). Through the discussion of issues of power and inequalities children come to the realisation that racism is part of society, which is an important aspect of the anti-racist approach. It is through the acknowledgement of racism, the celebration of cultural diversity, difference and the encouragement of the challenging of all forms of racism that the anti-racist approach is promoted as part of any classroom-learning environment (ibid). As Haran *et al.,* (2002: 18) point out, the main concept of antiracism is that it identifies and tackles racism. Thus, an anti-racist approach does not shy away from the existence of racism or racial discrimination but "actively challenges their expression and effects" (Ibid). How then can racism be addressed in an educational setting and more specifically how can racism be addressed in an early year's educational setting? Siraj-

Blatchford (1994: 72) suggests that and anti-racist curriculum could display some of the following features:

- Develop an understanding that people come from a range of backgrounds and cultures and offer children a secure environment in which to explore their own culture;
- Offer opportunities for children to explore that no culture, language or religion is superior than others;
- Depict a range of families;
- Show people from a range of ethnic backgrounds doing everyday things, e.g. in the park, at meal time, on a family outing or shopping;
- Use the children's interests in planning, and to extend their learning;
- Find appropriate resources and examples from a range of cultures for each topic over and above the everyday multicultural toys, posters etc;
- Depict a range of child rearing practices from different cultures;
- Help children to talk about and challenge stereotypes;
- Promote social and emotional development, and teach about caring and sharing;
- Involve parents and community groups in visiting and talking/working with the children;
- Illustrate through the curriculum that human achievements are universal and not just western;
- Expect high standards of achievement from all the children.

The checklist above is fairly lengthy and it may not be possible for a teacher to act on all aspects, as full implementation of such approaches often depends on available resources in the school, the ages of the children and school's policy on the subject in question (ibid: 73). It is also fair to say that any implementation of teaching methodologies, anti-racist or otherwise also depends upon the willingness of the teacher to adopt, believe in and incorporate such approaches into his/her teaching. As Carter *et al.,* (1987: 182) indicate, it is important to remember that although education provides teachers and other educators with the opportunity to "modify discriminatory practices at both individual and institutional levels" and although such efforts should be supported, "this is not the abolition of racism". In other words education is only one aspect of the wider societal and political community that is struggling against racism.

Derman-Sparks *et al.,* (1997) co-taught an anti-racism course to undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a university in California over a period of ten years and have documented the challenges for both teacher and pupil in learning about racism and becoming anti-racist in *Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism.* The issue of racism and anti-racism education is central to Derman-Sparks *et al.,* research, and is examined from the perspective of both teacher and student. Derman-Sparks and Philips define racism as "an institutionalised system of economic, political, social, and cultural relations that ensures that one racial group has and maintains power and privilege over all others in all aspects of life" (1997: 2). For example in the United States White people tend to be regarded as the dominant group, while others such as African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans are more likely to be considered to be members of the dominated group (ibid). Once again we see that racism involves the dominance of a particular group in society (usually a majority racial group) over other members of society. As a result of stereotyping of minority groups and the balance of power of the dominant group over the dominated group in society it is possible for an individual to act in a racist way unintentionally. In other words, the rules and stereotypes society often presents to its population and the misunderstanding of other cultures can influence an individual's perception of and respect for different groups in society. Once certain behaviour reinforces the cultural relations, as outlined in Derman-Sparks *et al.,* definition above, individual racism occurs (ibid, 1997: 2).

The steady increase of racist incidences in Ireland as mentioned in chapter 1 demonstrate that it could be worthwhile for schools to educate children in issues relating to anti-racism and to have anti-racism policies as part of their school ethos. An inclusive/intercultural school will view anti-racism education as an important aspect of their school planning and curriculum. Anti-racism education is an on-going process

and "is not an end in itself but rather the beginning of a new approach to thinking, feeling and acting" (Derman-Sparks *et al.*,, 1997: 3). In other words according to Derman-Sparks *et al.*, an anti-racism education programme evokes different feelings and awakens new thoughts among pupils, which can lead to a new respect and understanding for their peers. Racism is a sensitive issue and is one, which affects all societies in one-way or another, and so too does anti-racism education. However, anti-racism education benefits people's lives positively as opposed to racism, which has a negative impact on people's lives (ibid).

2.2.2 Anti-Bias Education

Derman-Sparks (1989) promotes the use of another diversity approach to education, known as an *anti-bias curriculum* for young children. She refers to anti-bias as:

> An active/activist approach to challenging prejudice, stereotyping, bias, and the "isms". In a society in which institutional structures create and maintain sexism, racism, and handicappism, it is not sufficient to be non-biased (and also highly unlikely), nor is it sufficient to be an observer. It is necessary to actively intervene, to challenge and counter the personal and institutional behaviours that perpetuate oppression (ibid, 1989: 3).

This approach clearly indicates the importance for teachers of examining their own attitudes before implementing an anti-bias, intercultural curriculum with young children. The Australian website "Racism No Way" states that early childhood education promotes an anti-bias approach which incorporates anti-racist education. An integration of an anti-bias and intercultural approach in early year's classrooms promotes an environment of cultural inclusiveness. According to Kilbride (1997) bias-free education encompasses more than just culture and it does not in any way support prejudice toward or stereotyping of people. Thus, bias-free education "takes seriously its responsibility for presenting pictures in books and on the walls that include all kinds

of people, not just white middle-class families with a mother, a father, two children, and a pet or two (as did the readers that so many of us grew up with)" (ibid, 1989: vi). One could argue that it can be difficult or almost impossible to prevent the stereotyping of all kinds of people and families, for example, white middle class, non-white middle class and so on. Bias-free education supports the use of symbols, pictures, photographs and so on of all kinds of people and families regardless of colour, ethnicity or race. It is one approach that can help to prevent stereotyping; unfortunately it is impossible for any one educational approach to eradicate stereotyping completely from society. To reiterate the point of Carter *et al.,* (1987) education can only modify, not abolish racist or discriminatory practices from society. Thus, the responsibility for addressing stereotyping in society lies with the whole community and not just the school (clubs and other local community groups) as well as individual citizens should be accountable for and work together towards the creation of a community that views stereotyping as having a negative impact on their day to day lives.

Through the exploration of the educational approaches mentioned above, it could be stated that intercultural education is a combination of all of the methods-multicultural education, anti-racist education and anti-bias education. It is clear that each educational approach to cultural diversity feeds off or incorporates aspects of the other, and it could therefore be argued that all are valuable in respect of dealing with cultural diversity in schools.

2.2.3 The Inclusive School

Both 'integration' and 'inclusion' are terms, which contribute significantly to contemporary education and are very different concepts. According to the Oxford English Dictionary integration means 'to desegregate', especially racially, for example

a school, while inclusion means 'to regard or treat as part of a whole'. The term inclusive education was not used until the late 1980s. Prior to that, the term integration was widespread (Thomas *et al.*, 1998:10). Hegarty, cited by Thomas et.al (ibid: 11) acknowledge the connection between integration and assimilation, which require the minority community to conform to the majority culture. This is not the case with inclusion, which respects all cultures and individual differences.

The majority of literature, for instance (Daniels *et al.*, 1999; Hull *et al.,* 2002 and Thomas *et al.,* 1998) refers to *inclusion* in a particular way, i.e. in reference to children with disabilities and developmental delays in mainstream classrooms. This is a very narrow view of the term inclusion as it ignores many other reasons why children may experience exclusion, for example, race, class or ethnicity (Felicity Armstrong in *The Inclusive School*, INTO, 2004: 25). It is important therefore to recognise that people working in schools, researchers and so on interpret 'inclusion' in different ways. According to Armstrong, "inclusion involves a project of mutual exploration and collaboration between schools and communities, as a means of challenging and overcoming exclusionary attitudes and practices in education" (INTO, 2004: 26). This is a critical definition as it clearly points out the broadest possible description of inclusion. Thomas *et al.,* (1998: 6) refer to inclusion as the way in which mainstream schools include and teach all children equally. The reference to *all* children is key in the Thomas *et al.,* (1998) definition as it eliminates the restricted view of inclusion in educational terms referring only to the inclusion of children with 'special needs' in mainstream classrooms. However what is the purpose of inclusion in society itself? Inclusion in society involves school, local community, and society as a whole. Each has its role to play when a society claims to be truly 'inclusive' (ibid). It can be argued then that the term *inclusive curriculum* includes children with different abilities,

children who are at risk of leaving school, children from minority groups and cultures, children who are socially disadvantaged, and children with basic or no English skills. Why should schools develop and incorporate an inclusive curriculum as part of their overall school ethos? Firstly, the school curriculum itself is important, as it "should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life" (http://www.qca.org.uk). The curriculum is therefore subject and child-centred and is a valuable instructional and inclusive tool for teachers and schools as it "sets out not only what is to be taught, but how, and how learning in the particular subject area is to be assessed" (http://www.ncca.ie). In the United Kingdom the *National Curriculum for England* values an inclusive curriculum in the prevention of racism. It also sets out three principles that teachers and schools should follow when developing an inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

(http://www.qca.org.uk)

In the Republic of Ireland the Primary Curriculum (1999) seeks to be inclusive by responding to and incorporating the elements of The Equal Status Act (2000), which prohibits discrimination on nine grounds[iv], as outlined in chapter 1.

If a school professes itself to be culturally inclusive it is important that the educators in the school teach in a culturally relevant way and that the school environment welcomes cultural diversity in a respectful and opening manner as Pang (2001: 192) indicates below:

> Culturally relevant teaching is an approach that responds to the socio-cultural context and seeks to integrate cultural content of the learner in shaping an effective learning environment. Cultural content includes aspects like experiences, knowledge, events, values, role models, perspectives, and issues that arise from the community… Culturally literate teachers develop an insider perspective of cultural community. They understand that cultural elements operate simultaneously and respond in congruence with their students.

Some research (Kenny and McLaughlin, 2004; Tomlinson, 1983; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994) shows that before a teacher can teach in a culturally relevant way he/she needs to examine his/her own cultural values, and to learn to respect the cultural values of each child in his/her care, which clearly indicates the anti-bias model should be understood and accessed by both teacher and pupil if it is to be implemented in a successful manner. The examination of intercultural issues can bring to light a range of strong emotions, such as anger. The NCCA (2005) recommend that teachers, children, parents and other community members examine their own attitudes and values and learn how to deal with their emotions, thus developing their personal, social and educational attainment. Staff development is therefore a key element in educating teachers to examine their own attitudes towards other cultural groups. According to Crowley (The Equality Authority and the I.N.T.O., 2004) the inclusive school "has a particular commitment to staff development and supporting staff to develop understandings, skills and awareness to effectively respond to pupil diversity and to the objectives of learning and participation of all pupils". Kenny and McLaughlin (2004) who conducted a two-year research project in schools in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to ascertain the difficulties facing teachers and children in areas of conflict, tension and misunderstanding on both sides of the Irish border, for example racism (2004: i) found that teachers in the study felt that their initial teacher education did not prepare them for current Irish classrooms (ibid: iv). As a result of its research

the study recommends "promoting teachers' awareness of their own attitudes and the reality of racism, sectarianism and other forms of exclusion" (ibid) through the means of "an experimental approach involving self-reflection as well as exposure to diversity on teaching practice" (ibid). Tomlinson (1983: 133) in her review of literature into ethnic minorities in British schools between 1960 and 1982 found that teachers lack knowledge about the minority children they teach and that their own attitudes towards and expectations of these children is low and inappropriate. Tomlinson relates this lack of knowledge to a lack of preparation in teacher-training institutes for teachers to work in culturally and racially diverse societies (ibid: 134). This is a similar finding to that found in the Kenny and McLaughlin study outlined above. Siraj-Blatchford correctly points out that teachers are not 'objective, value-free beings', but are in fact subjective, value-laden individuals (1994: 150).

2.3 Early Childhood Care and Education in the Republic of Ireland

As this study concentrates on intercultural education in the early childhood classroom in Ireland, it is essential to explore the policies and structures that relate to, and support the development of this sector in Irish society. There is an increasing worldwide awareness of the importance of early childhood education, and research in the field is becoming more widespread. According to *Starting Strong* (OECD, 2001: 14), a thematic review of Early Childhood Care and Education in twelve countries:

> Early childhood education and care has experienced a surge of policy attention in OECD countries over the past decade. In part, policy interest has been motivated by research showing the importance of quality early experiences to children's short-term cognitive, social, and emotional development, as well as to their long-term success in school and later life.

According to the NESF (2005) it wasn't until the 1990s that Ireland began to pay significant attention to the early childhood education sector. This was due to "increasing research and knowledge on the significance of early childhood care and

education, wide ranging socio-economic and cultural change in our society and the example of other developed countries" (NESF, 2005: 9). Prior to examining the more recent changes that have taken place in the early childhood education sector in Ireland, the main policy development from the 1960 to1990 will be briefly explored.

As suggested by the Report on The National Forum for Early Childhood Education (1998: 7) issues relating to early childhood education have traditionally received very lack-lustre attention in Ireland. There were a number of reasons for this, For example, early childhood education and care was viewed as the responsibility of families, in particular mothers, and the State's legal obligation to families was to provide primary education from the age of six years old (ibid). Thus it could be stated that once increasing numbers of mothers entered the workforce, more children needed to be educated and cared for by another source, i.e. the State. The OECD (2004: 21) is critical of early childhood education provision and developments in Ireland over the past three decades or so, most notably during the 1970's and 1980's, as during this period "while other countries were broadening access to 4-year olds, and then progressively to 3-year old children, access levels in Ireland remained virtually at a standstill" (ibid). The Department of Education and Science's main involvement in early childhood education up to the mid 1990's included provision for infants in the primary school and pilot interventions for children with special needs or who were disadvantaged and curricular developments (DES, 1999: 7).

Some of the pilot interventions implemented by the DES are worth mentioning, as they have been positive developments in the early childhood sector in Ireland, (See Appendix 2). For the purpose of this study an outline of preschool provision for

Traveller children will be given below, as it directly relates to the issue of intercultural education/cultural diversity in schools:

2.3.1 Preschool Provision for Travellers

There are 660 traveller children attending fifty-four pre-schools in Ireland. The aim is to prepare the children before they enter in to the primary school system. The State provides 98% of the tuition costs for a maximum of three hours tuition per day. Management of the preschools is undertaken mainly by voluntary groups, such as St. Vincent De Paul, Barnardos and Traveller support groups (DES, 1999: 101). It could be stated that from an early age the Traveller child experiences segregation from other children in society in terms of education. Once the child enters primary school he/she is integrated with children from a multitude of backgrounds, however the Traveller child still attends a Resource Teacher for Travellers (RTT) who only assists Traveller children in their educational attainment. It is recommended that the RTT integrates into the classroom environment and does not withdraw Traveller children from the classroom, however it remains to be seen whether this practice is occurring in primary schools. Although one could view preschools for Travellers as a form of segregation, it seems to be a form of education, which is preferred by Traveller groups and is viewed as a means to help to ensure the Travellers' individuality in Irish society.

Therefore, it could be stated that a significant importance was placed on addressing the issue of educational disadvantage in the early childhood education sector up from the 1960s onwards. Initially focus on educational disadvantage and possible approaches to its solution became a focal point in Europe in the early 1960s. It was in 1967 that Ireland followed suit by establishing a committee on educational retardation, which

was established by the Minister for educational. As a result of committee discussions it was decided to make special arrangements for schools in disadvantaged areas. The earliest proposal to be put into place was the Rutland Street project as outlined earlier. Another area, which has seen change in the past number of years, is the primary curriculum. The National School Curriculum of 1922 was revised in 1971 and was referred to as The New Curriculum. Walsh (2004: 7) points out "there was a shift in emphasis in the 1960's from education as being a social expenditure to one of investment in the individual and society as a whole". In other words, education became valued as a medium from which a skilled and well-educated population could be produced to contribute to the workforce and society as a whole in the future. The 1971 curriculum placed a special emphasis on the child as an individual, an emphasis, which was lacking in the previous primary curriculum (ibid: 8). During the 1990s the DES envisioned a more 'democratic' and 'participatory' Primary Curriculum than the 1971 curriculum. This resulted in the publication of the 1999 curriculum, which will be outlined later in this section.

Since the early 1990s there has been a major shift in Ireland, which sees a greater emphasis being placed on public policy and attitudes towards children. The OECD (2004: 22) attributes much of the surge of interest into the education and care of young children in Ireland to "a buoyant economy, the increasing participation of women in the labour market, and slowly changing society beliefs about the importance of early educational experience in group settings". Policy and provision for early childhood care and education is continuously being reviewed and updated across Europe, and Ireland is no exception. Much of Ireland's review of children's policy, provision and research is being undertaken by Government departments such as Department of Health and Children and the Department of Education and Science, as well as other specially

devised units such as the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) devised in 2001 and the National Children's Office. There is now a clear view among policy makers, such as DES, OECD and researchers, for instance Hayes (1993); Pugh (2001); CECDE (http:///www.cecde.ie) in Ireland that a high quality early childhood education and care sector leads the way towards the achievement of the goals of lifelong learning (NESF, June 2005: ix). A number of factors such as developments at national and international levels had an influence on the renewed interest in early childhood services in Ireland in recent years. According to O'Flaherty, 1995: 26-27) these developments include the following:

- The Summit on Children in 1990 at which the Taoiseach stated the governments' intention to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This was in turn ratified in September 1992.
- The European Council, which agreed the Recommendation on Child Care in March 1992. This meant that care should be provided for children at all stages, while parents are working, or attending a course of education and so on. There should also be special leave for employed persons with responsibility for the upbringing of children. All member states are expected to meet the criteria outlined in the proposal.
- The Child Care Act (1991), which is concerned with the welfare and protection of children (especially children who are at risk).
- The Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP), which caters for the needs of children, in particular those who are at risk.
- In 1992, a Minister of State at the Department of Health was appointed, to facilitate the implementation of early childhood services.

Some of the most significant initiatives and reports in the Republic of Ireland to date that clearly support the holistic development (social, emotional, physical and intellectual development) of the child in the early years include the following: Ireland's ratification of the *United Nations Convention on Children's Rights* (1992), the publication of the preschool regulations (1996), *Strengthening Families for Life* (1998), *Report on the National Forum for Early Childhood Education* (1998), *White Paper on Early Childhood Education* (1999), *National Childcare Strategy* (1999), *National Children's Strategy* (2000), National Children's Office (2000), *Children's Act* (2001), *Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme* (2001), Children's Ombudsman (2003),

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's (NCCA) *Towards a Framework for Early Learning* (2003), OECD's review of ECCE Policy in Ireland (2004), Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education's (CECDE) *Insights on Quality* (2004) and *Making Connections* (2004) and the National Economic and Social Forum's *Early Childhood Care and Education Report* (2005). It is clear that prior to the early 1990s in Ireland there was very little legislative regulations in relation to the ECCE sector. A number of contemporary issues with regard to early childhood education have been addressed by these reports and initiatives, which include children who are disadvantaged, children with special needs, early childhood education in primary schools and cultural diversity.

A number of the aforementioned documents clearly reflect a commitment to the holistic development and learning of the young child by focussing on the overall needs and interests of the child. There is an increased awareness of the whole child perspective as is clear in the National Children's Strategy which recognises all the many dimensions of childhood development and learning, for example, the physical, cognitive, emotional, social, moral and spiritual (Walsh *et al.,* April 2004: 8). Over the past few years the Irish Government has showed an interest in establishing a comprehensive policy for early childhood care and education. Why the increased interest in the early childhood sector in Ireland in recent years? Firstly, the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* brought into legislation in 1989 promoted the right to education for all children. The European Commission Network on Childcare (1996) highlighted that across most of Europe provision for preschool or kindergarten education was high with the exception of Ireland, which was reported to be low. Thus there was a European dimension and impact on the surge in interest in early childhood education in Ireland around the mid 1990s. In 1998, the Minister for Education and Science,

Micheál Martin (1999) addressed the National Forum[v] on Early Childhood Education. It was as a result of the discussions that took place, and the findings of this Forum, that the *White Paper on Early Childhood Education* (1999) was published. The aim of the *National Forum on Early Childhood Education* was to:

- record and clarify viewpoints;
- foster multi-lateral dialogue;
- promote mutual understanding;
- identify areas of agreement;
- foster consensus;
- explore new ways of doing things;
- elicit recommendations for policy.

(The National Forum Secretariat, 1998: 5)

The National Forum on Early Childhood Education set the scene for the future development of new policies in early childhood education in Ireland. In his opening address to the Forum Minister Martin stated, "The National Forum for Early Childhood Education is an initiative of major significance in the move towards developing the governments' policy on early childhood education". The most significant interest in issues relating to early childhood education in Ireland began in March of 1998 at the National Forum for Early Childhood Education.

Ready to Learn: The White Paper on Early Childhood Education (1999: 3) clearly indicates the value of early childhood education as part of the overall educational process:

> There is a growing recognition of the importance of lifelong Learning, and the idea that children learn from the earliest moment and continue to learn throughout their lives. Education is concerned with all the phases of life, including the very early childhood phase.

A number of contemporary issues with regard to early childhood education are addressed in the *White Paper on Early Childhood Education*, for instance, children who are disadvantaged, children with special needs, and early childhood education in

primary schools. The *White Paper* goes on to state that the Irish Government is "committed to developing a national framework for early childhood education" (1999: 6), which signals an important future for early childhood education policy and provision in Ireland. Although an important document through its reference to many issues relating to early childhood education, the *White Paper on Early Childhood Education* (1999) fails to adequately emphasise intercultural education or cultural diversity as an issue of significance in early years education.

The Minister for Education and Science launched the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) in October 2002 to meet the recommendation of *Ready to Learn*. It is funded under the National Development Plan and is jointly managed by the Dublin Institute of Technology and St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. The main objectives of the CECDE (http://www.cecde.ie/english/about_us.php, accessed November 20th 2005) are:

- To develop a quality framework for early childhood education;
- To develop targeted interventions on a pilot basis for children who are educationally disadvantaged and children with special needs; and
- To prepare the groundwork for the establishment of an Early Childhood Education Agency as envisaged by the White Paper.

Within this context, the functions of the Centre (ibid) are:

- To develop early education quality standards in relation to all aspects of early childhood education including equipment and material, staff qualifications, training, learning objectives, teaching methodologies, curriculum and related areas;
- To develop a support framework to encourage compliance with quality standards by early education providers;
- To co-ordinate and enhance early education provision, including parental involvement, with a particular focus on disadvantaged and special needs groups;

- To undertake and/or commission research and development through which best practice in curriculum, teaching methodology and parent involvement may be implemented and evaluated.

The CECDE has a wide range of research initiatives in place such as 'Early Intervention for Children with Special Needs in Diverse Settings' and 'In Search of Quality-Multiple Perspectives'. An extensive number of publications are also available to download from the Centre's website, as well as a quarterly newsletter called *Alana*. The research team has documented the need for a quality framework in the early childhood education and care sector in Ireland. They have also conducted an audit of all research conducted on early childhood care and education in Ireland from 1990-2003. This particular research also highlighted gaps in the sector to assist the centre in future research projects. In conjunction with the issue of quality and an audit of services the centre has also researched the issue of disadvantage and special needs amongst 0-6 year olds in Ireland.

Literature, reports, and projects based on early childhood education in Ireland have been on the increase since the late 1960s, and according to Hayes "the more recent research projects have a wider, more academic focus than earlier work" (Hayes, 1998: 87). The NCCA's *Towards a Framework for Early Learning* (2004: 4-5) is a step towards the development of a national curriculum for all those involved in the nurturing, education and development of children from birth to six years, e.g. practitioners working in a crèche, Montessori, primary school, playschool and so on, but most importantly parents, who are the prime educators of young children. The Framework is divided into five sections as follows:

- Section 1:
  Rationale and Purpose: policy and legislative context, benefits of early learning, vision and aims and features;
- Section 2:
  The child as a learner: differing experiences of childhood and impact of these on learning, learning through themes (well-being, identity and belonging, communication and exploring and thinking).
- Section 3:

Contexts for learning: relationships-social and interactive nature of early learning, play-rich learning potential, and language as a vehicle for learning;

- Section 4:
  Supporting learning through the assessment process: educational potential of assessment, contributions of different people with special educational needs, reflective practice in supporting children and adults in their learning;
- Section 5:
  Suggested components of the framework, learning presented through themes, Theme-aims, learning goals, suggested learning experiences, exemplars of good practices. (2004: 4-5)

The CECDE and the NCCA are interlinked as they both recognise issues in early childhood education in Ireland as part of their research strategies and are funded by the Department of Education and Science. It is important to recognise that when the term early childhood setting is discussed it encompasses many different learning environments, which will be discussed below.

There are a variety of early childhood settings available which focus on the young child's developmental needs, including families, playgroups, drop-in centres, childminders, crèches and nurseries, infant classes in the primary school, and after school groups (ibid). In Ireland children are required by law to begin primary school in Ireland from the age of six, however many children begin formal schooling from the age of four (but they must be four by the first of September of the school year) (Ball, 1994: 25). For instance, according to Department of Education and Science statistics on the 1st of January 2004, the number of children under the age of 6 years in national schools in the Republic of Ireland included the following:

Table 4: Number of Pupils in Primary Schools by Age and School Type

Age on 1st of January 2004	No. in Junior infants	No. in Senior Infants	No. in First Class	No. in Second Class
3 or under	8	-	-	-
4	25,065	96	-	-
5	31,278	24,034	261	2

The *White Paper on Early Childhood Education* (1999) clearly indicates the importance of quality[vi] education in the early years in the primary school, i.e. the infant classes, for example, in its definition of quality section it states, "The White Paper is child-centred. It seeks to achieve lasting educational and developmental benefits for children and quality must be viewed in this context" (ibid: 53). Children enter primary school from different settings, for example it is possible that certain children have received a 'good quality' preschool education (as outlined in the White Paper), and according to the *White Paper* (1999: 75), "it is important that, for these children, the benefits of early childhood education are not lost but rather are consolidated as they progress through the education system." There are also children who enter the primary school system not having received any formal preschool education and therefore the White Paper (1999: 75) also recommends that these children "must be enabled to benefit to the maximum degree from the education provided in the early classes in primary school." The Primary School Curriculum (1999) also addresses early childhood education and makes recommendations for the educational provision of children in junior and senior infant classes. The curriculum "reflects a child-centred approach to education from the time the child enters the primary school environment to the time he/she leaves to enter second level education" (Primary Curriculum Review, www.ncca.ie) and its principles (Government of Ireland: Introduction) include:

- Integrated learning
- Active learning
- Guided discovery
- Collaborative learning

The most recent thinking in relation to early childhood education involves the merging together of the care and education sectors and is now very much an aspect of the goals of policy makers in the Republic of Ireland. Both the *National Childcare Strategy* (DJELR, 1999) and the White Paper '*Ready to Learn*' (DES, 1999) highlight the need to link both the care and education of young children. Kiernan (2004: 8) cites Caldwell (1989), who defined the merging together of care and education in relation to children's learning and development as 'educare'. Many of our European counterparts, such as France and the Nordic countries provide a comprehensive 'educare' system for young children. Childcare in Sweden has two main aims, firstly to support and encourage children's learning and development and secondly to enable parents to combine their childcare responsibilities with education or employment (OECD, 2001: 176). Provisions in place in Sweden mean that all children 1-12 years are entitled to childcare as long as both parents work or study (ibid, 177) and the fee for one child attending preschool is set at three percent of the household income or 122 Euro per month (INTO, 2005: 20). There is also a high standard of training and qualifications amongst staff, for example, 98% of staff in Swedish preschools are trained to work with children (OECD, 2001: 177). Ireland has begun the process of consolidating the care and education sectors, however much has to be done, for example, the following list highlights *some* of the recommendations made by the recent OECD thematic review of Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland (2004: 89-91):

- The co-ordination of childcare and early education for 3-6 year olds, in particular, the co-ordination of services for the 3-6 year olds based on the school.

- Funding a whole-day service. The use of local schools for a full-day service for 3-6 year olds would encourage further collaboration between the education and care sectors in Ireland.
- An entitlement for all 4-year olds to a free education place in a school or pre-school with expansion of access for three year olds;
- The employment of a trained child assistant for every infant classroom
- Essential need for increase of funding in the ECCE sector in Ireland
- The expansion of early Start to a full day session

These recommendations aim at linking the education and care sectors in Ireland, thus intending to create and 'educare' system.

Although the present commitment to ECCE by policy makers and researchers in Ireland is quite succinct, increased commitment by the Irish Government initially followed by those working in the area of early childhood care and education, for instance teachers, childminders, researchers alike is required if Ireland is to be ranked in the same league as other European countries in terms of the provision of an in-depth 'educare' system (Kiernan, 2004: 12). By bridging the gap between care and education it could be possible to meet the developmental and lifelong learning needs of the 0-6 year old population.

2.4 Intercultural Education Policy in the Republic Of Ireland

According to the INTO (2004), "Ireland is increasingly becoming a multicultural, multiracial society, forcing us to examine our attitudes both towards ourselves and towards the ethnic minority groups in our communities". The Irish education system, due to societal changes is becoming increasingly more culturally diverse. Note the word *more* in the extract above, indicating that cultural diversity has long been an aspect of Irish society (further details outlined in chapter 1). The policies and provisions that are in place to support culturally inclusive education in Ireland and in

other countries will be examined in this chapter. The aim of this section is to outline educational policies and provision whose aim is address the issue of cultural diversity.

Social justice concerns have increased dramatically in Ireland in recent years, which have influenced the development and implementation of equality legislation such as the *Employment Equality Act* (Ireland 1998) and the *Equal Status Act* (Ireland 2000). These acts prohibit discrimination on nine grounds:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Religion
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller community

(Government of Ireland, 2000 cited The Equality Authority, 2003: 1)

Such legislation is supposed to provide protection for all those living in Ireland (including children) from those forms of discrimination. Education policy in Ireland aimed at supporting human diversity has been influenced by international policy documents such as the United Nation Committee on Rights for the Child (UNCRC) (1989) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declaration on the education for all (1990). The first two articles of the UNESCO declaration on education for all states that:

1. Every person-child, youth and adult-shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.... The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time.

2. The satisfaction of these needs empowers individuals in any society and confers upon them a responsibility to respect and build upon their collective cultural, linguistic and spiritual heritage...to be tolerant towards social, political and religious systems which differ from their own, ensuring that community accepted humanistic values and human rights are upheld, and to work for international peace and solidarity

in an interdependent world.
(UNESCO, 1990, quoted by Kenny and McLaughlin, 2004: 09)

It can therefore be stated that the needs of each individual should be at the centre of education policy and that respect for the culture and ethnicity of oneself and others is vital in the strive for intercultural harmony. One could argue that the word tolerant, which means 'to endure' or 'be patient of' (Oxford, 1998: 696) does not give the impression of being fully respectful of another religion for example. There may be more suitable words to use instead of tolerate which would send a message of greater harmony, for example value or appreciate.

The DES White Paper on Education, *Charting Our Education Future* (1997) argues that Irish education policy should reflect international developments and contexts and "should serve to underline the importance of education in areas such as human rights, tolerance, mutual understanding, cultural identity" (cited in Kenny and McLaughlin 2004: 09). Therefore, from a Government mental view, in Ireland education is seen to play a key role in the development of a culturally inclusive society, and it is through this mechanism that children are given the opportunity to respect and understand their own culture and that of their families, peers and other community members.

The *Report on the Forum for Early Childhood Education* (1998) clearly cites the necessity "for intercultural dimensions in the curriculum and in teacher education courses" (The Forum Secretariat: 143). The Report also indicates the Secretariat's desire for the inclusion of adult Travellers in the implementation of early childhood services, which if implemented could be viewed as increasing the cultural diversity of those delivering services in Ireland. The Forum on Early Childhood Education was very significant as it provided the first real opportunity for discussions and debates to take place regarding early childhood education issues in Ireland. The Secretariat's

support for the facilitation of cultural diversity is clearly stated in the report. The *White Paper on Early Childhood Education* (1999) "is welcomed as an important contribution to setting out the aims and requirements of early childhood education" (Murray *et al.*, 32). The Paper does however fail to give satisfactory recognition to intercultural education, which is a clear oversight, as the Secretariat at the Forum on Early Childhood Education addressed the necessity for the recognition of this issue. In spite of this, support for traveller education and the provision for young children with special educational needs is addressed in a very significant way (ibid: 32).

Support for cultural diversity is recognised by the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999), which acknowledges that it has a "responsibility for promoting tolerance and respect for diversity in both school and the community" (NCCA, 2005: 17). The terms 'intercultural education' and 'cultural diversity' are not overtly visible in the curriculum itself, however the NCCA (2005: 19) states that "intercultural education is not an addition to the Primary School Curriculum, since the curriculum is itself is an intercultural curriculum." One of the aims of Social Personal and Health Education is "to enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world" (Department of Education and Science, 1999: 9). This aim clearly stipulates the importance of cultural inclusiveness, and the teacher guidelines go on to develop this by stating that, "the school has a responsibility to ensure that its curriculum is free of bias and that the issues of inequality in any form are addressed and dealt with" (ibid: 26). The NCCA (2005: 20-23) outlines seven characteristics of intercultural education and how they are reflected in the Primary Curriculum. This outline helps to show more clearly the aim of the curriculum to incorporate intercultural education as part of the overall curriculum and

not necessarily as a separate subject area. A summary of the main characteristics include the following:

- Intercultural education is for all children;
- Intercultural education is embedded in knowledge and understanding, skills and capacities, and attitudes and values:
- Intercultural education is integrated with all subjects and with the general life of the school.
- Intercultural education requires a real-world focus:
- Language is central to developing intercultural competence
- Intercultural education takes time
- The school context important in facilitating learning

The *Primary School Curriculum* (1999) clearly includes intercultural education as part of its overall vision. Although intercultural education is central in many subject areas of the curriculum, for instance Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Social, Environmental, Scientific Education (SESE), it is as part of the hidden curriculum where intercultural competence and understanding can be extensively developed.

The sample policy document outlined by the Primary School Development Planning Unit in conjunction with the INTO (http://www.into.ie) suggests the following guidelines to consider in the development of an enrolment policy:

- Are all pupils welcome to enrol in our school irrespective of race, religion, membership of traveller community, family status, sexual orientation or disability?
- Are pupils place in age appropriate classes?
- Are arrangements made for pupils who do not wish to participate in religion classes/RSE (Relationships and sexuality Education) lessons?
- Is the characteristic spirit of the school explained to parents so that they are aware of the religious denomination of the school and its reflection in the curriculum offered and the organisation of the school?
- Does the enrolment form take into account that parents may be separated, divorced, same sex or single parent families?
- What support can we offer to pupils/parents/staff whose first language is not English? Who are not Irish Nationals?

(http://www.into.ie/ROI/SchoolAdministration/AdministrativePolicies/EqualOpportunities/filedownload,827,en.pdf)

The questions above are intended to support and evoke discussion amongst school staff in the writing of enrolment policies. There is a clear intercultural dimension to the guidelines, for instance, the inclusion of children of all races and religions and the recommendation for support for children and families whose first language is other than English. Therefore, the questions clearly intended to encourage a co-operative approach to school enrolment policies, regardless of the race, culture, religion, or social/economic background of the children and families, and are representative of the guidelines of relevant legislation in the Republic of Ireland, such as the Equal Status Act 2000.

As outlined in the previous chapter Travellers are an ethnic group living within Ireland who have their own cultural identity. *The Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools* (DES, 2001) acknowledge this and promote the incorporation of intercultural education in schools and states that the aims of intercultural education are as follows:

- to foster conditions conducive to pluralism in society
- to raise pupils' awareness of their own culture and to attune to the fact that there are other ways of behaving and other value systems
- to develop respect for life-styles different from their own so that pupils can understand and appreciate each other
- to foster a commitment to equality
- to enable pupils to make informed choices about, and to take action on, issues of prejudice and discrimination
- to appreciate and value similarities and differences
- to enable all pupils to speak for themselves and to articulate their cultures and histories (Ibid, 2001: 38).

Thus, aside from the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999) the DES outline the importance of intercultural education in other publications, for instance, *The Guidelines*

on Traveller Education in Primary Schools (2001) view Intercultural education as generally involving the implementation of a "culturally plural curriculum for all children" (Ibid, 2001: 24). Pluralism is therefore an important concept for the Department of Education and Science in relation to this issue. It is worthy to note that *The Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools* (2001) was published prior to the NCCA Guidelines on Intercultural Education (2005), and therefore may have influenced the work of the NCCA. Pavee[vii] Point, a Dublin organisation has fought for years for "the participation of Travellers in the making of policies affecting them" (Magee, Irish Independent Weekend Supplement, 2002: 8). This is a valid point and is one, which should always be acted upon in relation to the making of educational policies in Ireland. The inclusion of Travellers in the making of policies that affect their education would go a long way in helping to make traveller education effective and a meaningful experience for traveller children. Through the inclusion of Travellers in the making of educational policies for their children provision can be made to include and address in the policy provision the day-to-day needs of Travellers as experienced by themselves. Such an approach was adopted by the DES through the inclusion of Travellers groups in the writing of *The Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools* (2001)[viii].

It could be viewed that provisions for inclusive Traveller education is quite well developed in Ireland, and is continuing to be improved regularly, but provisions for educational inclusiveness with regard to other ethnic groups is at a very early stage. Pavee Point, established 20 years ago, is a 'partnership of Irish Travellers and settled people working together to improve the lives of Irish Travellers through working towards social justice, solidarity, socio-economic development and human rights' (www.paveepoint.ie). One could state that Traveller education is so well developed

because Travellers are recognised as a distinct ethnic group who have been part of Irish society for centuries (www.paveepoint.ie, accessed November 19th, 2005) and organisations such as Pavee Point represent and protect their interests and rights as individuals. Other ethnic groups in Ireland, many of who have English as a second language have only been present in Ireland for the past ten years or so. The socialisation process affects all children and not just children from minority ethnic backgrounds. Early childhood settings are no exception to cultural bias and diversity, and it is therefore important that the cultural needs of young children are addressed in the most appropriate way by implementing the most suitable provisions (O' Doherty *et al.,*: 43). All children attending early childhood settings in Ireland are affected by cultural diversity and it is imperative that cultural differences are accepted in their educational environment, as they "will encounter minority ethnic groups, including Travellers, differently abled people etc. in their future lives"(Ibid: 43).

Conclusion

This chapter focussed on the approaches to intercultural education in Ireland, the United Kingdom and North America. In the case of Ireland, cultural inclusiveness in the education system has only recently begun to be addressed. Britain has a longer history of cultural diversity than the Republic of Ireland and therefore it could be stated that Ireland should take the opportunity to learn from the successes and failures of approaches to intercultural education in other countries. Like Ireland, Travellers have been part of Scottish society for centuries. In 1992 national statistics on Travellers in Scottish schools were non-existent, while the first health statistics for travellers in Ireland were first published in 1987, (Magee, 2002: 9). Research carried out in Scotland between 1992 and 1998 found that because some Traveller families, such as Occupational Travellers (circus, show and fairground families) move around a lot, their

children tend to underachieve compared with their peers (Jordan, 2002: 20). The research also indicated that "a more integrated but flexible approach is required if the needs of Travellers and other interrupted learners' are to be fully met" (ibid: 21). The importance of flexibility regarding peoples' culture is pointed out here and this is something that the Irish education system could keep in mind in relation to the education of young Traveller children. As indicated earlier, Ireland like the UK compensate for not having a well-developed nursery education by allowing early entry into primary schools and through the medium of playgroups. The compulsory school age in Britain is five and in Ireland it is six, however in Ireland children are permitted to attend primary school if they are four on or before the first of September (Ball, 1994: 25). This factor clearly affects an effective intercultural education as children begin the formal curriculum too early.

The number of different ethnic groups living in the U.S.A. is much more diverse than in the Republic of Ireland, however the number is increasing rapidly. Ethnic minorities have been part of the U.S. education system for the past number of decades, whereas the only ethnic minority group in Ireland until recently has been the Traveller community. In 1965 the 'Head Start' project was introduced in the United States, which aimed at giving children between the ages of three and five from poor families an educational start in life. The educational needs of the poor/disadvantaged in American society were literally ignored until "the enactment of the Head Start legislation in 1965" (Austin, 1976: 30). Ireland has a similar initiative known as the Early Start Pre-school Programme, which aims to address educational disadvantage in a positive way, by focusing on young children who may be challenged to meet their maximum capabilities within the education system (Education research Centre, 1998: 6). It is clear that the Early Start preschool programme was modelled on the successful

Head Start program in the United States. The aims of the two programmes are similar and they both target the disadvantaged members of society and are culturally inclusive.

Both England and the United States have progressed from a lack of recognition of the needs of cultural minorities, to the development of intercultural education. It was through continued effort and the concerns of citizens that the needs of cultural and ethnic minorities in these countries became an important part of the education systems, including early childhood education. Intercultural education is now being used to replace the shortcomings of multicultural education, which O'Reilly (1993: 16) indicates as follows:

1. Multicultural education, as developed in UK and USA, tended to be confined to schools, which were multi-ethnic. This implies that racism exists only where there are mixed groups.
2. Multicultural education failed to reach the needs of white children in monocultural schools. It was assumed that these children did not need to develop an awareness of people from different cultural backgrounds to themselves.
3. Multicultural education tended to focus on minorities and not on the dominant culture, and therefore did not see the dominant culture as being an ethnic group.
4. Multicultural education focused on developing positive self-images in minority children and tended to neglect the fact that children from the dominant culture needed a positive sense of self also.
5. Racism and power were not dealt with in multicultural education.

These points clearly point out the need for an intercultural approach in schools rather than a multicultural approach, in order to develop true inclusiveness for *all* children. As outlined earlier, reference to intercultural education is only now beginning to unfold in Ireland. For example there is little reference to intercultural education in the *White Paper on Early Childhood Education* (1999), which by all standards is a very important document. By trying different approaches, such as anti-racism and multicultural education, both the U.K. and the U.S.A. have formulated policies for intercultural education for the future.

With regard to the welfare and education of young children the Government have outlined a clear plan with specific objectives, i.e. *The National Children's Strategy* (2001). The Strategy proposes many initiatives to help create a well-developed early childhood education system, and one, which is culturally inclusive. Ireland is new to cultural diversity in comparison to the United States, and therefore it remains to be seen what the outcomes of the Governments' plans will be in the next ten years or so.

Investment into early childhood education is a vital element in helping to create a well-educated and capable society. According to McGuinness (2000: 11):

> Supporting early childhood education provides one of the best returns on investment as early years provision lays the foundation for later success in learning, leading to improved retention further up in the system, the achievement of appropriate certification and enhanced chances of employment, in addition to better health and knock-on benefits for later family members.

The advantages of creating a positive early childhood education system are clear, and, as cultural diversity is increasing in Irish society it is important to create an early childhood education system that is culturally inclusive and bias free. Globally, there is a "shift from the concept of the nation-state as a rather autonomous, independent entity to more heterogeneous societies-from societies with a definite cultural foundation and identity to societies comprising many ethnic and cultural groups" (ibid: 5). Ireland is part of this global trend and it will be even more prevalent in the coming years.

The United Nations refers to education as being "directed to the full development of the human personality and to strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Gardner *et al.,* 1980: 3). This indicates the importance placed on equal opportunities and rights for all individuals in society by the United Nations. The United States and Ireland realise the value of providing educational opportunities for all

children in the early years, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds. A lack of resources and legislation often impedes this process, particularly in Ireland.

Although the needs of ethnic minorities in early childhood education in Ireland are being addressed it can be argued that much more has to be done to achieve complete success. The discussions in this chapter have shown that the most important aspect of intercultural education is the welfare and inclusion of *all* children in the early years classroom, regardless of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Thus, "learning to appreciate and recognise positively each others' differences and similarities in childhood should be seen as a critical investment towards Ireland's new multiculturalism" (The National Children's Strategy: 70). It is fundamental that an increased focus is placed on meeting the needs of young ethnic, cultural and language minority children in the early years in Ireland. It is clear that multiculturalism and interculturalism are similar in many ways but according to the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI, 1989: 30):

> Interculturalism is seen as a project, a hope, a hypothesis, a perspective, a long-term task to be unceasingly worked over, an ethical commitment, an ideal. It is presented as going further than multiculturalism, transcending mere coexistence of different cultures, though without advocating that they should all be mixed in a single melting pot in order to forge a new social contract.

Thus, a move away from multiculturalism and towards interculturalism, with perhaps an anti-bias approach is the most positive method of creating culturally inclusive environments for all children in early childhood settings. Addressing teachers' own biases and those of children is clearly an important aspect of creating a culturally inclusive environment in early year's classrooms.

According to Derman-Sparks (1989: 5):

> If children are to grow up with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for effective living in a complex, diverse world, early childhood programs must actively challenge the impact of bias on children's development.

CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES ON INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN IRELAND- A FOCUS ON THE EARLY YEARS

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the developments in intercultural education guidelines for primary schools in Ireland since 1999. As early childhood education classrooms are the focus of this study it is appropriate that the significance of importance of early year education in a child's life be examined. The main section focuses on the whole school approach to intercultural education, from school planning to classroom planning, with a significant emphasis on the Irish education system.

3.1 A Guide to School Planning for Intercultural Education in Ireland

The school, whether it is a preschool or primary school is an important social outlet for the young child, mainly because it encompasses such an extensive aspect of his/her day-to-day life thus influencing his/her social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Gutek refers to education as "a total lifelong process that begins with one's birth and ends with one's death" (1992: 1). Many developmental changes within the child take place at school. Briggs and Potter state that, "a school is constructed by the synergy of leaders, assistants, parents and children. They bring together their different skills, experiences, needs and agendas. The way in which all of these facets interact within the physical environment creates 'the school'" (ibid: 3). In essence, a school is constructed of more than a mere physical building – it is the interaction and relationship between all those who inhabit the building that defines a school as an educational environment. Similarly the setting for a 'school' could take on many forms, for instance the location of a school could be in a single room or garden – the

actual building is not the most relevant factor. It is the bringing together of children, teachers, parents and local community members, and the learning that occurs within the physical structure that defines a school. The way in which a school environment and the teachers within influence a child's development and cultural attitudes will be explored later in this chapter. Consideration will be given to "the primary function of education, from society's perspective, is the transmission of the cultural heritage: the accumulated knowledge, values, beliefs, and customs of the society" (Roberta M. Berns: 201).

Thus, the school has an affect on children's all round development, including social, emotional, intellectual and physical. The environment of the school and the educators within expose its pupils to certain social values, which are part of the school's overall ethos. For instance, a Catholic school promotes Christianity and the Catholic faith, while an Educate Together school does not focus on any one religion but instead provides children with an overview of world religions and cultures, the aim of which is to instil in the children an appreciation of and respect for diversity in all its forms. Such schools provide provision for specific religious instruction to take place if required outside of the main teaching. Gaire *et al.,* (2005: 100-101) highlight the means through which multi-denominational education is organised and delivered in Irish schools as follows:

> Educate Together schools are obliged to respect the rights of each child, irrespective of the child's social, cultural or religious background. Each school organises a comprehensive programme of ethical education about different faiths, cultures and belief-systems in a comparative and child-friendly manner. This programme is designed to teach children about values, morality, social responsibility and rights, all of which are necessary to inform a child's developing mind to live in our rapidly Changing society. Respect and appreciation for diversity is encouraged and being different is taken for granted.

An increasing awareness is evolving in Ireland in relation to the importance of positive cultural perspectives in all educational settings, which is evident from such recent publications as *Intercultural Education in the Primary School* (NCCA: 2005); *Primary Voices-Equality, Diversity and Childhood in Irish Primary Schools* (IPA: 2004); *Survey of Traveller Education Provision in Irish Primary Schools* (DES: 2005). In order for children to develop positively as individuals, and to learn positive cultural awareness:

> Teachers need to be aware of and knowledgeable about each child's cultural and ethnic background, and then be able to use that information as one part of the puzzle that is the child.
> (Briggs *et al.*, 1999:259)

The viewpoint of the NCCA (2005, 2005: 27) is that "school planning for an intercultural school can be incorporated in school development planning work, which is already underway in schools". School development planning is an important aspect of the whole school community and approaches differ from school to school depending on each school's particular social and economic situation. Schools must devise development planning documents that outline the implementation of all curricular areas, and additional issues such as anti-bullying, equality, inclusion of parents and so on. In terms of school planning the NCCA (2005: 27-32) state that the planning process should include the following:

- **Conducting a school review using an intercultural perspective**: The guidelines provide a checklist from which the school community could begin to engage in an intercultural review.
- **Developing a school mission, policy and action plan**: Following the school development review it is important for the school to identify and address both short-term and long-term issues that are relevant to their particular school environment.
- **The school mission**: ...All schools have mission statements that reflect the aspirations and traditions of the school itself. In order to meet the educational needs of all children and to ensure a supportive learning environment, a school should accommodate principles of equality, diversity and respect for each individual.
- **School organisation and management:** ...The Education Act (1998) states that all schools must have school plans in place that support principles of access

and equality. The NCCA (2005) suggest that schools could have an Intercultural Education heading for very section of the school plan and related policies.

- **Curriculum and Assessment:** The principles and features of the Primary Curriculum influence how a school manages curriculum and assessment. The implementation of the intercultural dimension of the curriculum requires much collaborative planning.
- **Including intercultural education in all areas of school planning:** It is important that school planning ensures that other issues are addressed which are part of an inclusive school environment, for example, reporting racist incidents, providing language support, providing age-appropriate placement, developing a school charter that promotes equality and celebrates diversity and so on.
- **Action Planning:** In order to develop an intercultural school culture the school may choose to begin by using the action plan model which is part of the Development Planning Support materials (www.sdps.ie). The plan works as a guide to help monitor the success and progress of a priority, for example intercultural education in this instance.
- **Implementing the school plan**:...It takes time for action plans to be fully implemented...Schools should respond to changing circumstances while at the same time remaining true to the school mission and policies.
- **Monitoring and evaluating the action plan**: ...Successful implementation should include, for example, helping all children achieve their potential, breaking down stereotypes and celebrating diversity.

It is important for Principals and staff to remember that the above guidelines are not a step by step programme that should be followed verbatim. They are guidelines that can be used to enhance the specific needs of individual schools. The physical and social environment of any school should be inclusive of all learners, and thus intercultural education is not just embedded in the subject content of the Primary curriculum but also other aspects that contribute to school and classroom life, such as the visual environment, learning resources, school policies and special cultural events (NCCA, 2005: 32). According to the NCCA (2005), "inclusive schools are characterised by learning environments that reflect and show pride in the language, ethnic, and cultural diversity that characterises Ireland. In effect inclusive schools provide support for the positive self-image of all children irrespective of their ethnicity, as well as reinforcing the normality of diversity for all children" (NCCA, 2005: 32). In other words the social make-up of Ireland should be reflected in the school's ethos. As society is regularly

transforming, for instance in terms of population, immigration, economy and so on, the school should be aware of such changes and consider them as part of their school ethos in order to reflect the Ireland of the day. The community is a key aspect of all school planning and it is important that schools respond to the needs of its local community in order to create a positive relationship between both social entities. The Primary School Development Planning Support unit (http://www.sdps.ie) outlines a number of guidelines to assist schools in the planning process to develop an inclusive school. For instance, in referring to parental involvement the guidelines suggest ensuring that there is always a gender balance on the Parents Association, as well as having members who can represent all members of the community, for example, the Traveller Community and international community. The guidelines also suggest means to develop positive home/school communication, for instance, ensuring the use of multi-lingual notices in the school and availing of a translation service if needed. The guidelines above are very practical, relevant, adaptable and cover extensive characteristics of the inclusive school. In a similar manner to the NCCA's Intercultural Guidelines for Primary Schools, the School Development Planning Support (SDPS) guidelines can be implemented in a way that is suitable school's local environment and community. One significant aspect of school policies on intercultural education is the development of an anti-racism charter. Such a charter or policy was viewed as an important aspect of this study and has been incorporated into recent guidelines published in this country, for example, according to the INTO (2005), a suitable anti-racism charter can be devised or updated for any school community by considering a number of thought provoking questions, for example, who is responsible for drawing up the charter? And what are the procedures for dealing with racist comments/incidents?

In terms of inclusive schools, there is no 'quick fix plan' as such. Other than following reputable guidelines, in the end every school takes its own individual approach. Armstrong (INTO, 2004: 34) points out some possible characteristics of an inclusive school, such as being accessible to all: physically, culturally and pedagogically and critically examining the curriculum and teaching practices, and seeking the views of pupils on their learning. The focus of Armstrong's characteristics of an inclusive school is that of a whole-school approach, in other words the voices of the whole-school community (i.e. children, parents, teachers, other community members) are listened to, valued and respected, as are their differences, such as cultural/racial.

Planning for the physical and social environment of an inclusive school can be approached through the school development plan. Firstly, a review of the inclusiveness of the school environment would help establish certain goals and an achievable timeline for those goals. The NCCA (2005: 33) provide a useful checklist for schools, which asks such questions as are there procedures in place for dealing with racist incidences? And Are members of minority ethnic groups affirmed in a positive sense of their identity? Note the use of the term 'minority group' here. Even though these guidelines were published as recently as 2005, in 2006/2007 such groups would most likely be referred to as newcomer children (as depicted in the Introduction). Starting a new school is always a very daunting experience for children, therefore as well as the usual insecurities and worries such as making new friends or getting to know new teachers, children who move to Ireland from another country have extra pressures to deal with, for example, language barriers, approaches to homework, school discipline, the subjects that are taught or the age at which children start school. The NCCA (2005) outline some key concerns that schools should consider when supporting all new children, whatever their ethnicity:

- Create an environment which is experienced by the child as warm, welcoming and positive;
- Enable the child to be seen by others and to see him/herself in a positive way in the classroom;
- Enable the child to learn the ways of the school and the education system as soon as is practicable
  (NCCA, 2005: 34)

To assist schools in positive procedures for new children the NCCA (2005: 35) have devised a checklist listing the information, which should be gathered about all new children entering a school, for instance, ensuring correct pronunciation of the child's name and identifying the child's first language.

The INTO Intercultural Guidelines for Schools (2002) provide guidelines for schools, parents and teachers to create culturally inclusive learning environments for children. These guidelines may be adapted to suit individual needs:

- **Enrolment Policy:** ...It is recommended that interpreters be provided for parents who have little English ... Where possible correspondence with non-national parents should be sent in the appropriate language.
- **Inclusive Strategies for Parents: ...** Parents should be encouraged to get involved in classroom activities (such as class discussions on other countries), school tours, and parents' association and so on. They should also have an involvement in the drawing up of the school's anti-racist policy.
- **Whole School Guidelines:** The school should provide opportunities for minority children to remain knowledgeable about their own culture as well as learning about Irish culture ... It is very important to present an extra safe and welcoming environment for children who have come from war torn countries. This can have a traumatic effect on children's social and emotional development children.
- **Classroom Guidelines:** The ideal classroom environment is one where children can learn from one another and where cultural differences are respected.
- **Bilingual Learners:** It is vital that schools help to facilitate the maintenance of first language...Schools can display first language in the form of greetings, charts and so on.
- **Bilingual Learners in the Classroom:** Group work encourages extensive use of the second language and picture, drawings, photos, charts act as excellent stimuli for understanding content and context.
- **Dealing with Racist Incidents: ...** Racist incidents should be dealt with in the same way as any other incident of bad behaviour. The anti-bullying policy

should make a direct reference to racism and state that racism is an unacceptable form of behaviour.

- **Ensuring Success: ...** It is important for schools to examine whether children of ethnic minority are achieving, both academically and socially, at the same pace as their peers.
- **School Charter against Racism:** Children could devise a school charter against racism and then sign their names to it. The charter could be written by children of all ages including those in the early years, for example children in junior/senior infants may write that everyone should have a friend.

The NCCA and INTO guidelines outlined above demonstrate many similarities, for example, the positive role of a school charter against racism, the encouragement of the maintenance of a child's first language during school time and the development of a whole-school approach to inclusive education planning, i.e. consultation between parents, teacher and children in the process. However the reference to newcomer children as ethnic minorities is quite derogatory.

It is essential that all school staff are aware of the 'pitfalls' associated with the implementation of a culturally inclusive school and classroom plan. Rodriquez et al., (http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/earlycld/ea400.htm. visited on 17/01/2003: 13-14) outline some of the problems associated with this process as follows:

- **The "Fix-It" Paradigm**: ... It is fundamental that teachers acknowledge children's differences and focus on their individual strengths ... The other pupils could be exposed to a new and different language, while the child in question is given the opportunity to practise his/her mother tongue and to make a valuable contribution to the class.
- **Pigeonholing**: It is important that teachers do not create or promote stereotypes of groups of people.
- **Tourist Curriculum**: This type of curriculum only addresses cultural diversity on special occasions, and does do not consider cultural diversity to be an everyday aspect school life.
- **Self-Fulfilling Prophecies**: Teachers should not assume that children who do not speak English as their first language are academically less able than other pupils but should instead have high expectations for all children.

- **Misconception about Language Acquisition**: It is important that teachers do not assume that all children acquire a new language in the way or that children learn a new language more readily than adults.
- **Quick-Fix**: Schools should not address cultural diversity in a 'quick-fix' manner. It is vital that schools approach issues of cultural diversity on a continual basis and work with families, children and communities.

In diverse environments, it is through the development of positive self-esteem and social competence, and the involvement of parents that true inclusiveness can be attained (Siraj-Blatchford, cited by Pugh, 2001: 102-107). Thus, "an integrated, holistic and developmental approach is needed to learning, teaching and care with children from birth to seven years of age" (ibid: 101), and if this approach is achieved the possibility will exist for teachers to help create a culturally inclusive school environment.

To conclude, it is clear that education is very significant in developing positive cultural attitudes in children in the early years of childhood, especially as culturally diverse societies are becoming increasingly more evident in the twenty first century.

3.2 Intercultural Education Policy in the United Kingdom and Other European Countries

Bradley states that "due to the efforts of black parents, teachers and educationalists in Britain, educational provision for ethnic minority pupils has generated an enormous bank of literature in the past twenty years" (Bradley. 1996: 19). The supportive educational needs of ethnic minorities arriving into Britain were ignored until the late 1950s, early 1960s. This was the post war era and many ethnic minority children arriving into England were from former colonial countries, which according to Tomlinson (1983: 1) added to the equality debate surrounding the education of ethnic minorities. It was also around the time of the 1950s and 1960s that major cultura

population changes began to take place in Britain, for example, Tizard and Phoenix (1993: 3) state that in the mid 1950s there were no more than 15,000 black people in Britain. Ethnic minority children began to be seen as a problem and therefore, *assimilation* was the approach taken by the British Government to cope with the 'problem'. This meant that ethnic minority children were to be totally absorbed into British culture, for example, according to Bradley (ibid: 20), "English language teaching was offered in reception centres to infant and junior pupils and when the proportion of linguistic minority pupils reached thirty percent of the school population they were 'bussed' to schools outside their area." Thus, the 'influence' of the ethnic minority children on society was curtailed.

Edwards and Knight (1992: 21) indicate that "the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of immigrant children were seen within a pathological framework: schools and teachers needed to help them conform to British expectations if they were to succeed in British society." During the 1970s there was a clear move away from compensatory education[ix] to *cultural pluralism* as multicultural education was firmly established in schools. The aim of this approach was to increase the self-esteem of ethnic minority children by displaying signs of respect for minority cultures. Thus, curricular change became the focus. Multiculturalism was criticised in the past as it failed to address the issue of the eradication of racial discrimination against ethnic minorities, for instance, Prosser (1978); Pugh (2001). It was however an acceptable form of education during the 1970s in Britain while simultaneously being criticised by advocates of anti-racism education (ibid: 21).

Questions began to be asked in the U.K. during the 1970s regarding the education of different cultures and the underachievement of black students. As a result, the

Rampton (later known as the Swann) Committee was established in 1979. Initial research carried out by the Rampton Committee showed a lower level of educational achievement by West Indian children in comparison to White and Asian children. Specific issues, such as racism, especially in the form of stereotyped or negatives views of West Indian children, were addressed. The Committee recognised the need for a change in attitude by the whole community in Britain and also the need for in-service training of teachers so that they would become familiar with the needs of ethnic minority children and also become knowledgeable about the multicultural approach to education (MacKinnon and Statham, 1999: 36).

The rationale of anti-racist education is to direct teaching and learning at all children, regardless of their ethnicity, whereas research indicates that multicultural education has been mainly aimed at ethnic minority children, for example, as Murray and O'Doherty (2001: 17) suggest, "a mere glimpse at other cultures does not deal with racism that may exist within one's own culture or outlook". In Britain the follow on from anti-racist education has been intercultural education, although the implementation process has a long way to go, especially in early childhood education. According to Murray and O'Doherty (2001: 40) the intercultural approach involves the following:

> The interaction, understanding and integration among and between different cultures and ethnic groups without glossing over issues such as racism. The development of an intercultural approach implies policies which further these aims.

In contrast, multiculturalism tends to gloss over issues of racism and unequal power relations (ibid: 40). The early 1980s offset a debate about the importance of multicultural education as it was criticised for a number of reasons as Epstein (Haran *et al.*, cited, 17) outlines including:

a) focusing on a diversity of culture when the real issue was the tackling of

racism;
b) being shallow, superficial and exotic;
c) being based on the false belief that prejudice is caused by ignorance.

The Rampton Committee became the Swann Committee in the early 1980s and in its final report showed support for cultural pluralism, with their underlying philosophy being 'Education for All'. Both the Rampton Report (UK, 1981) and the Primary School Curriculum (DES, 1999) recognise that intercultural education is for *all* children and the respect of every child's personal culture and identity is paramount in any education system. As is stated in the Rampton Report (Cited by NCCA, 2005: 21):

> A 'good' education cannot be based on one culture only. Where ethnic minorities form a permanent and integral part of the population, we do not believe that education should seek to iron out the differences between cultures, nor attempt to draw everyone into the dominant culture.

Further research by the committee of West Indian children's' underachievement showed it to be decreasing over time. They found unintentional racism to be evident, probably due to a lack of education on the subject in schools and that socio-economic conditions were found to contribute partially to the underachievement of West Indian children as well as Bangladeshi children. They proposed further in-service training of teachers and the promotion of the employment of teachers from ethnic minorities without the lowering of teaching standards (Murray and O' Doherty: 38-39). The 1972 White Paper, *Education: A Framework for Expansion*, published by the British Government reinforced the issue of equality. In its recommendations for preschool education it called for "equality of educational opportunity for all" (Austin, 1976: 87), as did the Education Act of 1944. In terms of legislation to counteract *all* forms of discrimination, Armstrong strongly supports recent Irish legislation such as *The Employment Equality Act* (Ireland, 1998) and *The Equal Status Act* (Ireland, 2000). She continues by pointing out that although the UK has a significant piece of legislation in place in terms of the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act* 2001

(SENDA) the UK lacks legislation to "outlaw all forms of discrimination in all forms of life" (Armstrong cited in *The Inclusive School*, INTO, 2004: 27).

As Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and has ties with the Republic of Ireland in terms of North South Education initiatives.[x] It is worthwhile exploring the approach taken in Northern Ireland to cultural diversity in education. Since the early 1980s the Northern Ireland Department of Education has recognised the need a commitment to inclusive intercultural education as part of its primary curriculum. In its circular, *The Improvement of Community Relations: the Contributions of Schools* (1981), the DENI stated that:

> Every teacher, every school manager, Board member and trustee, and every educational administrator within the system, has a responsibility for helping children to learn to understand and respect each other, and their differing customs and traditions, and of preparing them to live together in harmony in adult life.
> (DENI Circular 1981/21, quoted in Kenny *et al.*, 2004: 09)

Northern Ireland consists of diverse communities, mainly of religious diversity, for instance the Catholic and Protestant communities. There have been difficulties between these communities, which has led to a divisive society in some localities. The Cultural Diversity committee of the Community Relations Council (CRC) has supported a number of cultural and educational initiatives since 1990 that address the diversity of the communities in Northern Ireland, for instance, the research conducted by Connolly, Smith and Kelly (2002) into the cultural and political awareness of 3-6 year olds. A number of policy documents published by the DENI support inclusive education for all children, give parents increased choices in their children's education and acknowledge the education rights of all children. These documents include *The Education Reform Act* (1988), The Green Paper '*Excellence for All*' (DFEE, 1987), the *Disability Discrimination Act* (1995), and the Code of Practice (DENI, 1996) (Kenny

and McLaughlin, 2004: 10). These documents support the educational opportunities for all children and clearly disagree with any form of discrimination, such as disability, cultural or religious. Northern Ireland has long been a state of diversity, which has caused conflict among its citizens, particularly in relation to religious diversity. The Education (Northern Ireland) Reform Order (1989) introduced cross-curricular themes as a way to address the conflict in Northern Ireland, while an anti-bias curriculum is employed in all integrated schools (Kenny and McLaughlin, 2004: 10).

As far back as 1994 it was recognised by researchers that the early childhood education and care sector in Northern Ireland needed improvements to address the social and educational needs of the children and parents in its community. For example, Ball (1994), in his study and review of patterns of provisions in the UK for early childhood education and care services concluded that there is a need for change in the UK in the future, for example, according to Ball, "it fails to meet the needs of either children or their parents and many of those most in need, and most likely to benefit, miss out" (Ball: 40). It is clear therefore that while development of intercultural education in Britain has taken place over the last thirty years or so, continued development is required as in other countries such as Ireland and the United States.

3.3 Intercultural Education in North America

The United States has long since experienced linguistic, social and cultural diversity, but has more recently acknowledged the grave need to increase awareness about, and confront issues regarding diversity in schools (Rodriguez, and Caplan, http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/earlycld/ea400.htm. 1998). According to Ball (1994), over half of the children in the U.S.A. aged three to six years (inclusive) attend some sort of peer group activity, for example, part-time in kindergarten (often

part of a local school), a nursery school (often privately run), or parent co-operatives (employing and assisting a qualified teacher) (ibid: 26). Racial segregation was widespread in educational institutions in the United States until the late 1950's when the Supreme Court made an historic decision in the case of *Brown V. the Board of Education of Topeka*. The Supreme Court declared that separate but equal schools were unconstitutional. This decision led the way for the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Banks, 2001: 21). During the civil rights movement developments in education "were aimed at increasing educational equality, including school desegregation, affirmative action, bilingual education, and multicultural education" (ibid 22). From the 1960s to the 1980s great effort was made by the American nation to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination. Since the 1980s there has been a considerable increase in ethnic, cultural and language diversity in the United States, for example, according to Pallas *et al.,* by 2020 forty eight percent of school-age youths will be students of colour (ibid: 27). This clearly indicates the enormity of the increase in cultural diversity in the United States at present. Banks points out that teacher education in the United States needs to be reformed if change is to take place for ethnic and cultural minorities in the future (ibid: 39). It is likely that intercultural education, as outlined earlier, will need to take precedence over multicultural education if positive change is to occur. The following statistics (Gray, 1993, cited in Gordon *et al.*, 2000: 114) give an indication of the extent of cultural diversity in the education system in the Unites States of America:

- Enrollment in public schools increased between 1985 and 1991 by just over 4%, yet the number of students with little or no English language skills increased by 50%.
- Students in the Washington, D.C. school systems speak over 127 languages and dialects.
- One of six children in Californian public schools is born outside the United States, and one third of these children speak a language other than English at home.

- By 2010, Hispanics, who can be of any race, will become the largest minority population.

The rapid increase of cultural diversity in schools in the United States is clear from the above statistics. Teachers and educators should be aware of cultural differences, and be informed in best practice for culturally inclusive educational environments. There are many different cultural groups living in the United States, and each group brings with it its own unique values and beliefs to American society. Such groups include: Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, African Americans and European Americans (ibid: 117). Similar groupings can be identified in all continents.

It is clear, therefore, that the range of cultural diversity is quite vast in the U.S, and this in turn has an affect on all areas of society, including education in the early years. The United States is no stranger to cultural diversity, but it is a nation of rapid change with the cultural minority predicted to become the new majority in the near future (ibid). It has been necessary therefore for the United States Government to address the issue of inclusiveness with regard to cultural diversity in its society. The focus for this study is early childhood education and thus, a review of the policies and provisions that exist for culturally inclusive early childhood education will follow.

In 1965 the *Economic Opportunity Act* paved the way for Head Start programs. These were "designed to give economically and culturally disadvantaged children an early educational opportunity before entering school" (Gutek, 1992: 253). The Early Start Preschool Programme in Ireland is an obvious outcome of the Head Start program. The Head Start program targets lower-income children, and aims at providing cultural and educational experiences that these children would otherwise not experience, for example, trips to the zoo or a museum, group activities such as songs and games and

painting and drawing to stimulate learning readiness. Gordon *et al.,* (2000: 26) emphasise three important aspects of the head start programme:

- *Compensatory education*-programs that compensate for inadequate early life experiences.
- *Parental involvement*-inclusion of parents in planning, teaching and decision-making.
- *Community control*-local support and participation.

The goal of the Head Start program is to "give economically and culturally disadvantaged children an early educational opportunity before entering school (Gutek: 253)". This is implemented by giving children from lower-income families the opportunity to partake in educational experiences that are normally common to middle-class children, for example, trips to the zoo or museum, group songs and stories and so on (Ibid: 253). These points clearly indicate the goals of Head Start, which are to give poorer children an early education, to educate parents along with their children and to emphasise the importance of local and community values as part of the education process. Head Start initiated a wave of enthusiasm for early childhood programs in the U.S.A., and contributed to a renewed interest in providing quality educational experiences for young children (Gordon *et al.,*: 27). Researchers argue that while an initial learning start is provided, when the child enters elementary school the impetus is diminished because the follow-up provision is not effective enough (ibid: 253). According to Smith, the pressing concern in the United States is "how to educate all children well, particularly how to teach children of color, children who are poor, and from diverse groups, who have been disproportionately underserved by the education system" (Cochran-Smith, Journal of Teacher Education, March/April 2001: 91).

The US Government's role is to implement the necessary legislation that is required to help improve the quality of the education system, including early childhood education. During President Bush's first term in office one of his aims was to give more control to parents in the education of their children, which would in turn have a positive effect on the overall education process. Reeves (2001) reflects on the issue of increased parental involvement in the US education system by stating that "the nature of federal influence in education in the next few years is likely to enhance the power of parents, but this enhancement of parental power will be of value only to those who recognize and apply it" (Reeves, 2001: 81). This aim reflects one of the objectives of the Head Start program as outlined previously. Greater parental rights can benefit the dichotomy of the whole family in terms of educational achievement. However, if parents are given increased power of choice in terms of there children's education the responsibility rests with them to actively embrace and use this power to positively influence their children's education.

Brandt (cited in Banks, 2001) indicates that the growing number of cultural diversities in the United States should be seen in a positive way and the nation should address the issues involved, such as education, with hope and realise that we can all learn from one another regardless of our cultural backgrounds. He goes on to state that, "the growing number of racial, ethnic, and language groups poses challenges to established institutions but are a potential source of hope and renewal." Thus, the twenty first century will be one of change for the American education system, and the effects these changes will have on early childhood education remain to be seen.

Canada too has also addressed the issue of cultural diversity by passing the *Canadian Multicultural Act* in 1988. The Canadian Government passed the policy to ensure the

positive development of multiculturalism in Canada. The introduction of the Act reinforces the aims of such Acts as the *Citizenship Act*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Official Languages Act*, which all promote the rights and equal status of Canadian citizens (www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/policy/act). In the foreword the Canadian Government also reaffirms its dedication towards the rights of all individuals by stating:

> And whereas the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.

The Multicultural Act (Quoted Kilbride, 1997: 218) outlines ten objectives, as follows:

1. to recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;
2. to recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;
3. to promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to such participation;
4. to recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development;
5. to ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity;
6. to encourage and assist the social, cultural economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;
7. to promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins;
8. to foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of those cultures;
9. to preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and
10. to advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

The Act (ibid: 218-219) requires all federal institutions to:

1. ensure that Canadians of all origins have an equal opportunity to obtain employment and advancement in those institutions;
2. promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the ability of individuals and communities of all origins to contribute to the continuing evolution of Canada;
3. promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the understanding of and respect for the diversity of the members of Canadian society;
4. collect statistical data in order to enable the development of policies, programs and practices that are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada;
5. make use, as appropriate, of the language skills and cultural understanding of individuals of all origins;
6. generally, carry on their activities in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada.

The above requirements are intended for federal institutions, which according to the Act mean any of the following institutions of the Government of Canada:

A. a department, a board, commission or council, or other body or office, established to perform a governmental function by or pursuant to an Act of Parliament or by or under the authority of the Governor in Council;
B. a departmental corporation or Crown corporation (www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/policy/act, 2).

The Canadian Government has clearly indicated their dedication to the development of a culturally inclusive society. By passing laws such as the *Canadian Multicultural Act,* and developing programs such as *Head Start* in the U.S. and *Early Start* in Ireland people become more aware of cultural diversity, and that racism, or prejudice towards other individuals because of difference are not acceptable behaviours. Awareness and education are key elements when trying to develop a culturally inclusive society. This factor will be reiterated in later chapters during interviews with early childhood professionals working in Ireland.

3.4 A Guide to Classroom Planning for Intercultural Education

This section will outline the classroom planning from a teacher's perspective that is necessary to ensure a culturally inclusive learning environment in primary schools in Ireland, for instance the physical learning environment and the emotional needs of young children. The suggestions given for appropriate classroom planning for intercultural education in this section follow the recommendations provided by the NCCA guidelines, Intercultural Education in the Primary School (2005).

3.4.1 Physical Environment

The physical environment of a school contributes significantly to the overall ethos that is presented to pupils, parents, teachers and community members. According to the NCCA 'intercultural classrooms are characterised by learning environments that reflect and show pride in the language, ethnic, and cultural diversity that characterises Ireland" (NCCA, 2005: 40). The same is true for any country. Both the Irish and English language has long been part of the physical displays in primary schools in Ireland. To truly represent the cultural diversity of present day Ireland, the physical environment of schools should extend beyond the use of Irish and English displays to include the vast variety of languages that are spoken by pupils and others living in the community. Such an extension in the characteristics of school displays would act as a means to support the positive self-image of all children in the school, regardless of their ethnicity, and would present diversity in an accepted and respected light (ibid: 40). There are a number of issues to consider when planning the physical environment of an intercultural classroom, which includes the following:

- Representing diversity as a normal part of Irish life and human existence;
- Ensuring that representatives of minority groups do not focus on 'spectacular' or 'colourful' events;

- Ensuring that all children irrespective of their colour, ethnic group, or ability can feel at home in and represented in the classroom.
  (NCCA, 2005: 40)

Many authors and organisations, such as Derman-Sparks (1989), Saderman Hall (1999), York (1991), Siraj-Blatchford (1994), Kenny and Mclaughlin (2004), INTO (2002) and the NCCA (2005) have all suggested similar ways to develop the physical attributes of a culturally inclusive/anti-bias classroom, some of which will be listed below. The areas of play, visual displays and art materials will be explored below. Some of the materials/resources include a home/dramatic play area which could contain multiracial dolls, food containers representing items from different cultures with labels in different languages or clothing and shoes, which could include traditional holiday clothes from a variety of countries (Saderman Hall, 1999: 11).

The NCCA (2005) provide a similar list to that above and also suggest that other toys such as dolls, homes and jigsaws should represent the diversity of ethnic groups in Ireland, for example, white, black, Asian and Mediterranean. Both male and female dolls should be provided, while toy trailers and halting sites should be provided to reflect elements of the Traveller way of life (NCCA: 41). Displays of various languages, representing children in the class and in the wider community should be part of the visual environment, for instance, Polish, English, Irish, French or Romanian (ibid). Reading dual language books are excellent ways for children to learn a new language while at the same time remain up to date with reading in their home language. Dual language books also allow for greater participation at home from parents. IBBY Ireland (2001) provides a wonderful selection of multicultural books for children, which include dual language books. According to Siraj-Blatchford (1994) children will volunteer words in their home language if they feel secure in the learning environment. However, it is important not to force children to speak in their home language if they

do not wish to do so (ibid: 79). Multilingual posters, labels and notices provide a valuable message of respect for diversity to the children, their families and the wider community (ibid: 79). Development Cooperation Ireland, 2004 provide a wide-ranging selection of resources useful as teaching aids in culturally inclusive classrooms). York (1991: 64-66) suggests that display materials should include artwork and artefacts from existing cultures, for example, fabric, rugs, musical instruments, photos (from magazines or bought), paintings or beadwork. Photographs of the school neighbourhood or visitors to the school would show a true reflection of the various ethnicities that live together.

3.4.2 Social Environment

A social environment which is conducive to learning, and which reflects inclusiveness for all, for instance cultural diversity, language diversity or special educational needs, should impact positively on a school's pupil population. Building inclusive social environments in schools results in pupils feeling welcome and accepted in their learning environment. According to the NCCA (2005) there are a number of ways that school staff can impact positively on a pupil's social development in his/her new school, for instance:

- Focus on the pupil's capabilities as opposed to their weakness, for example, "Maria speaks Spanish fluently", as opposed to "Maria doesn't speak English very well";
- Encourage collaborative work amongst pupils who have the same first language, for instance during activity time or other group activities. If there is no shared language other subjects, such as music, art or drama are excellent activities to provide suitable engagement amongst pupils;
- Each child should feel included in all aspects of their learning environment.

Deegan, Devine and Lodge (2004: 198-199) in their study of children's perspectives of racism in primary schools in Ireland connected "the centrality of children's social

relationships to their school lives and to a sense of belonging and security which emerged as a result of their friendships in school". As part of the process of insuring an inclusive learning environment it is important for the Principal and school staff to learn as much as possible about a newcomer child, for instance, is the child's name correctly spelt and pronounced?, are there subjects which the child will not be taking?, is the child's religion different to that of the school ethos and if so how will this affect classroom interaction?, what is the child's first language? (NCCA, 2005: 43). Language varieties are now a significant aspect of school life in Ireland, as this study will show (See Findings section).

Children are constantly learning and are therefore liable to respond to new situations or words in an inappropriate manner because of a lack of understanding. For instance, children often respond to diversity in an uncomfortable way which can manifest itself in name-calling or aggression. Teachers should embrace such responses as an opportunity to engage in intercultural work with their pupils (NCCA, 2005). Anderson (2004) suggests a number of interventions that could influence the social environment of a school and its approach to cultural inclusiveness in a positive manner. Although Anderson focuses specifically on the needs of refugee children, the interventions could be implemented, or adapted where required, in order to create a culturally inclusive learning environment for all pupils by ensuring for instance that there is a caring adult or mentor available, that local information is made readily available to alleviate some of the stress associated with relocation, which could possibly be made available in a variety of languages. Anderson (ibid) also suggests that the school environment should be 'tolerant' of refugee children. It could be stated that tolerance is not such a positive approach to recommend when creating a culturally inclusive environment. It implies to the reader that it is recommended that refugee children should be 'put up with'. These

suggestions highlight the fact that in order for newcomer children to feel accepted and welcome as part of a school community there should be input from different social networks, as opposed to the school alone, for instance local sports clubs, information centres or parenting classes.

There are many significant contributors that come together to define a person's social identity; for instance, children develop and learn within many different social, cultural and language environments. Consequently an important aspect of classroom planning is to recognise such diversity, which has always been an aspect of Irish society. For example the presence of Irish Travellers has long since provided social, cultural and language diversity within Irish society. However, the intensity of this diversity has increased dramatically in recent years, due to a high level of immigration from both EU and non-EU countries (See chapter 1). Language is a significant aspect of a person's identity and it is imperative that a child's first language is appreciated and allowed to flourish in educational settings, while at the same time supporting second language learning. A learning environment that supports first and second language learning helps children to develop a positive self-image (NCCA, 2005: 45). In conjunction with social and cultural changes, Ireland has also undergone changes within family structures. Thus, considering the significant changes that have occurred within social, cultural, language and family structures within Irish society in recent years, it is important for teachers to ensure that classroom planning incorporates these changes in order to be inclusive of the children in their care.

Deegan, Devine and Lodge (2004: 6) suggest that:

> There is a need to bring to the fore the realities of living and learning in an increasingly diverse Ireland and the role of primary schooling (as a key aspect of the education system where all young people are required to attend) in shaping and contributing to such change.

3.4.3 Choosing Classroom Resources

The resources available in a classroom play a vital role to add to or improve intercultural education, as outlined in section 3.3.1 (physical environment). This section outlines possible sources from which teachers can choose useful educational resources to implement a culturally inclusive learning environment for their pupils. Children are regular explorers in their classroom and therefore the resources available reflect what the teacher considers important or not important (Derman-Sparks, 1989). In turn the pupils view the presence of appropriate intercultural resources in the classroom as an accepted part of their learning environment. There are a number of sources from which early childhood educators in Ireland can choose intercultural resources, which will assist in creating a culturally inclusive learning environment. Intercultural materials in Ireland have become more widely available in the past year or so because of the notable increase in cultural diversity amongst the population. It is fair to say that intercultural education was not viewed as an important part of the Primary Curriculum prior to the increase in immigration. This study promotes the inclusion of intercultural education in all classrooms regardless of the extent of cultural diversity amongst pupils, a concept which is emphasised on a regular basis throughout this thesis.

An example of available and useful resources for intercultural in Ireland include the Primary Curriculum (1999), The Development Education Unit of Development Co-operation Ireland, which provides a guide of useful resources, Pavee Point (Traveller Organisation) who also produce a list of resources, which are also accessible on the Pavee Point website (http://www.paveepoint.ie). Non-governmental organisations such as Trocaire or Oxfam are also appropriate sources for intercultural materials. Integrate Ireland Language and training is an organisation, which supports primary teachers in

the delivery of English as an additional language through the means of useful resources, guidelines, pupil lessons and also training workshops for teachers. The Department of Education and Science in conjunction with the NCCA, National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, Irish National Teachers' Organisation and UNICEF are all providers of resources and support for teachers who wish to add to, or improve upon their knowledge of intercultural education and best practice for its implementation in the classroom.

It is clear that there are many sources from where to acquire intercultural resources in Ireland. However, it is worthy to note that the sourcing, use of and importance given to such resources is the responsibility of the class teacher, while at the same time adopting a whole school approach.

3.4.4 Integrated Thematic Planning of Curriculum

An integrated thematic approach to intercultural education results in cross-curricular planning which integrates intercultural education content across all subject areas, where feasible (NCCA: 2005). For instance, language, which is central to a child's overall development, provides children with an opportunity to explore the world they live in and to learn to express their emotions. Language is also a strong contributor to a child's self-identity. Similarly arts education allows for the child to explore differences in cultures through self-expression and discovery. Arts education is also a very diversity-showing subject because its global dimension. Such an approach helps to ensure that intercultural education becomes a natural aspect of the children's learning environment, as opposed to being taught as a specific subject area for two hours per week. The NCCA (2005) suggest a number of themes from which teachers can incorporate intercultural education subject matter across areas of the curriculum and as

such provides pupils with "a more coherent and richer learning environment". The themes include:

- Identity and belonging;
- Similarity and difference;
- Human rights and responsibilities;
- Discrimination and Equality;
- Conflict and conflict resolution

A brief insight into the possible approach to develop appropriate lesson content for intercultural education within each theme will now be given. Firstly, the theme of identity and belonging plays a key role in the overall delivery of intercultural education content. The NCCA (2005) view this theme as a significant contributor to an inclusive curriculum by defining identity and belonging as follows:

> Identity refers to the identifying characteristics, behaviours and understandings which children may have, sometimes uniquely, and sometimes shared with others. Shared identities enable children to develop a sense of belonging or close relationship with or affinity to a particular group

Positive self-identity and belonging is viewed by many researchers as a significant aspect of early childhood education, for instance, Derman-Sparks (1989); York (1991); Siraj-Blatchford (1994); Connolly (1998); Deegan *et al.*, edited (2004) and Lodge and Lynch, edited (2005). For instance, Siraj-Blatchford (1994) cites Lawrence (1987) and Burns (1982) by stating that a positive sense of identity and self-esteem is learned and has even been linked to high academic achievement. Derman-Sparks (1989) children learn their identity and develop attitudes through the interaction of three factors: experience with their bodies; experience with their social environments and their cognitive developmental stage. There are similarities therefore between Siraj-Blatchford's view on the significance of identity in a child's development and that of Derman-Sparks.

From an Irish perspective the Primary Curriculum (1999) highlights the development of a sense of Irish identity as a key issue, giving children the opportunity to understand and partake in all the cultural aspects of an Irish heritage, for instance, a diversity of languages, music and diversity in communities (NCCA: 2005). Hence, identity in an Irish sense incorporates characteristics of contemporary Ireland, which in conjunction with the diversities of being Irish also include a wide variety of other cultural and social aspects. The Ireland of today is very much part of a growing European community and therefore a European dimension is a significant aspect of the identity of a child growing up in Ireland. Secondly, the theme of similarity and difference refers to the recognition in all learning environments of the uniqueness of all children. Children differ in many ways, for instance in terms of skin colour, abilities and economic/social background. While these differences are clearly evident and research shows (Siraj-Blatchford, 1994 and Connolly, 1998) that children become aware of differences from a young age, it is therefore imperative that children learn and respect one another's similarities and differences in a positive way. In essence, we are all similar in terms of our physical human being; however our differences (such as personalities, cultural backgrounds, talents and so on) are what make us unique. Thirdly, the theme of human rights and responsibilities is important because of the need for children to understand that humans are all equal, regardless of personal traits such as nationality, religious affiliation or skin colour. Both the *United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the *United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) state that all humans are equal universally, that rights should be recognised equally and should not to be taken away from individuals (NCCA, 2005). It is important that all children realise their rights and their equal status within a community. The classroom environment should portray this message through its physical, social and curricular aspects as outlined earlier. The following theme refers to discrimination and equality.

York (1991) defines discrimination as "the practice of giving different treatment to a person based on race, sex, religion, ethnicity, age, mental capacity, physical ability, and/or sexual preference". The theme of discrimination and equality should be recognised as an important aspect of primary education in Ireland simply because under the *Equal Status Act* (2000) it is against the law to discriminate against a person on nine different grounds:

- Gender;
- Marital status;
- Family status (having children, being a carer);
- Age (Between the ages of 18 and 65);
- Disability;
- Race;
- Sexual orientation;
- Religious belief;
- Membership of the Traveller Community

The *Equal Status Act* (2000) is a relatively new piece of legislation, which possibly reflects the surge of interest in the area of intercultural education within the past few years in the Irish education system. Finally, peace and conflict refers to the way in which the differences between people, whether they are physical, social or cultural, can often become a source of conflict. Early childhood education focuses on making and maintaining friendships, talking to one another, being kind and appreciative to one another. In essence, children learn from a young age about the importance of getting along with one another, and that differences are not an excuse to hurt another person's feelings, for instance name-calling (York: 1991). York suggests themes such as "Let's be friends", "Alike and Different" or "I'm Me and I'm Special" as being useful in the delivery of peace education. These themes were represented in research conducted in primary schools as part of this study through the use of a series of books by Amos *et al.,* (1997) (See findings). According to Derman-Sparks (1989) if conflict arises in a classroom the teacher should not ignore the situation but should in fact help the

children concerned to address their misconceptions and guide them in exploring their feelings and opinions of others. This can be done through discussion during circle time, relevant stories, such as Amos and Spenceley (1997) or other activities such as the exploration of skin tones by allowing children to examine their skin colour in a mirror or by using skin tone crayons/paints (skin tone colours should be present in all classrooms, both mono-cultural and intercultural).

To sum up, a notable feature of all five themes is that each could be adopted as part of classroom planning for culturally diverse or non-culturally diverse classrooms. Finally, keeping cultural characteristics aside, it is could be stated that diversity exists in the form of other traits in all classrooms in the form of the individuality of each child, for instance the social and economic backgrounds of children differ, as do their individual personalities and abilities.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 has shown that there are many ways to develop positive cultural attitudes in the early childhood years, with the school setting and early childhood educator both being very influential in this goal. For instance, the teacher's influence on children's play behaviours is an important factor in the creation of a culturally inclusive learning environment. Hull *et al.,* (2002) have some appropriate advice for teachers regarding the significance of play in the early childhood setting:

> There is a lot to know about play, but it is worth the time and effort to increase your understanding of play because of the huge influence it will have on your interpretation of children's development and your ability to plan a responsive environment. (Hull *et al.,* 2002: 210)

Once the child enters the early childhood education system, the teacher becomes an important influence in his/her overall development. It is important that early childhood

educators, "examine their own attitudes and prejudices and learn to deal with them in positive ways", before they can deliver a culturally inclusive, anti-bias curriculum (Siraj-Blatchford cited in Pugh, 2001: 105). It was stated earlier that children's attitudes towards others are learned and therefore by including appropriate intercultural resources in a classroom a teacher sends a message to children about the importance of childhood developmental issues and acceptable classroom behaviour for example, having a positive sense of self-identity, respecting the differences in others, knowing their rights as a child and being fair to their peers.

By learning such attributes from a young age it is possible that respecting the diversity of others will become a natural part of their developmental process and will become an accepted part of their curricular and extra-curricular activities at school.

CHAPTER 4: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD, WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THIS DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The study of social development is a vital component in the study of psychology. According to Bukatko and Daehler (1995: 3) the word development means:

> all the physical and psychological changes a human being undergoes in a lifetime, from the moment of conception until death. The study of human development is above all, the study of change.

The early years are a crucial part of a child's life-long development as they play a significant role in the child's emotional, personal, social and cognitive development. According to Berger (2000: 241), the early childhood years, which she indicates are from the age of two to six years, emphasise the importance of play. Berger states that:

> Young children spend most of their walking hours at play, acquiring the skills, ideas, and values that are crucial for growing up. They chase each other and dare themselves to attempt new tasks, developing their minds; they invent game and dramatize fantasies, learning social skills and moral rules.

Thus, many aspects of a child's personality are developed during the early childhood years.

Multicultural societies are relevant to the social development of children as culture itself plays an important role in the socialization of children as Murray and O' Doherty (2001: 43) indicate:

> Diversity is a majority issue because all children are socialized within the cultural context. The process of socialization concerns all children and is not only relevant for minority ethnic children.

This chapter will explore the social development of young children and the role of culture on such development, both within the family and school environment. Cultural diversity and social development are interlinked and therefore it is worthwhile exploring both issues.

Social development may be defined as "that branch of developmental psychology concerned with the developmental changes in the manner in which individuals interact with one another" (Bergan *et al.,* 1976: 164). Child (1997: 1) defines psychology as "the systematic study of animal and human behaviour." The Oxford English Dictionary (1998: 620) defines society as "mixing with other people, companionship, or company", and it refers to the term social as being an adjective of society, meaning "relations of people, or living in communities". Durkin (1995: 2) describes social psychology as "a sub discipline of psychology concerned with the scientific study of human social behavior". Commenting on the debate that exists amongst psychologists concerning the significance of social psychology, Durkin states that developmental social psychology contributes in many respects to the nature and foundation of social instruction and influence (ibid: 2). In 'Psychology', Bernstein *et al.,* (1988: 7) describe social psychology as the study of how people influence one another, for example, in terms of copying certain behaviours of others around them.

The opening section of this chapter will analyse the social and emotional needs of the child in early childhood. It then goes on to analyse the influences on the social and emotional development of young children, for example, parenting styles, cultural and economic factors, divorce, single-parent families and sibling relationships. Peer relationships, and the effect they have on the social development of children are then

explored. The influence of culture on the family, peer relationships and the emotional development of the child is also analysed where appropriate.

4.1 The Social Development of Children in Early Childhood

With regard to the social development of the child in the early years, it is necessary to examine Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, which were an expanded version of Freud's psychosexual theory. Erikson refers to them the eight stages of life.

Erikson's stages (Gutek, 1992: 148-159) include the following:

1. *Basic trust v mistrust.* Birth to one year.
2. *Autonomy v shame and doubt.* Two to three years.
3. *Initiative v guilt.* Four to five years.
4. I*ndustry v inferiority.* Six to eleven years.
5. *Identity v role confusion.* Twelve to eighteen years.
6. *Intimacy v isolation.* Young adulthood.
7. *Generativity v stagnation.* Adulthood.
8. *Integrity v despair.* Old age.

According to Bernstein, Roy, Srull and Wickens (1988: 66):

> Each stage focuses on one issue or crisis that is especially important at that particular time of life. How the person resolves these issues is reflected in his or her personality and social relationships. If an issue is resolved positively, Erikson claimed, this will be reflected in positive characteristics, such as trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry. If the crisis is not resolved positively, the person will be psychologically troubled and cope less effectively with crisis.

According to Berger (2000: 40), "each of Erikson's stages is characterised by a particular challenge, or developmental crisis, which is central to that stage of life and which must be resolved." Therefore, with regard to the social development of children in *early childhood*, it is necessary to analyse stages two and three of Erikson's theory. The theory defining these two stages could be useful for early childhood educators in identifying the developmental stage of the children in their care, which could then influence their teaching techniques and classroom environment.

Stage two, *autonomy versus shame and doubt*, concerns children between the ages of two and three. Hayes (1993: 150-151) explains this stage as follows:

> Autonomy is achieved where parents and others foster the development of the child in a way that is appropriate to her developmental stage. Where adults are over-strict or restricting they may shame the child leading to a sense of doubt rather than autonomy.

Children gain their first sense of independence during the toddler years, and they become self-reliant in many activities, such as toilet training, feeding, walking and talking. There is a need at this stage for guidance from the child's parents in his/her exploration (Bee, 2000: 279). Berk (2000: 19) states that during the stage of *autonomy versus shame and doubt* "autonomy is fostered when parents permit free choice and do not force or shame the child." Children at this age often attend a preschool, for example in Ireland, the Early Start preschool Programme provides education for children, as young as three years, from disadvantaged backgrounds. The programme promotes the cognitive development of the children alongside their socio-personal development (Educational Research Centre, 1998: 9).

Stage three, is referred to as *Initiative versus Guilt*, and refers to children between age four and five years. This stage represents Freud's *phallic stage* during which the child begins to become accountable for his/her actions, and "a sense of ambition and responsibility develops when parents support their child's new sense of purpose and direction" (Berk: 19). It is during this stage that the child begins to have goals, and to strive towards achieving these goals, for example, he/she may try to assemble a toy or jigsaw and eventually realise he/she can't do it. He/she often becomes frustrated and may throw a tantrum. Parents often find this behaviour quite hostile and contentious (Bee, 2000: 279). The child at this stage feels the need to act independently, however the parents need to control the child's behaviour, which in turn may lead to conflicts of

interest. It is clear that "too much control and the child will not have sufficient opportunity to explore; too little control and the child will become unmanageable and fail to learn the social skills he will need to get along with peers as well as adults" (Bee, 1997: 189).

The child's initiative corresponds with his/her goal ambition, guilt is felt when he/she can't achieve a complicated activity (Berger, 2000: 41). This stage is relevant to the field of early childhood education as the child has an active role in the education process at this stage. In Ireland, children begin primary school at the age of four or five, and therefore it could be beneficial for educators of young children in the primary school (junior infant/senior infant classes) to be knowledgeable of the *initiative versus guilt stage*.

Erikson's comparative stage, *Initiative versus Guilt* indicates that the child wishes to take the initiative with regard to his/her actions (Bee, 1997: 189). Erikson portrayed children as active beings in their own development process (Shaffer, 2000: 40).

4.2 The Emotional Development of Children in Early Childhood

The Oxford English Dictionary refers to emotion as a "strong instinctive feeling such as love or fear" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1998: 207). Bodily characteristics and facial expressions can help to determine a child's emotional state. According to Santrock (2001: 340), "emotion is a feeling or affect that involves a mixture of physiological arousal (a fast heartbeat, for example), and overt behaviour (a smile or grimace, for example)". Early childhood educationalists and parents are constantly referring to children in terms of emotions, for example, 'he's a happy child', or 'she looks sad today'. Emotional and physical developments are equally vital in the child's overall

development, however changes in emotional development are often more difficult to see than in physical development (Hayes, 1993: 142).

Santrock (2001: 348) summarises the development of emotion during early childhood as follows:

- Preschoolers become more adept at talking about their own and others' emotions.
- Two and three year olds substantially increase the number of terms they use to describe emotion, and learn more about the causes and consequences of feelings.
- At four to five years of age, children increasingly reflect on emotions and understand that a single event can elicit different emotions in different people.
- Children show a growing awareness about controlling and managing emotions to meet social standards.

It is during the early childhood years that children begin to realise that certain emotional displays are socially acceptable in different circumstances. Reissland *et al.,* (1991) observed the interactions between pairs of siblings (aged between twenty months and five years), while playing competitive games in the company of their mother. They concluded that all of the children displayed images of pride upon winning, but the five year olds were less forthcoming with their reactions than the three year olds. It is clear that the five year olds were aware that gloating was not a positive image to portray (Durkin, 1995: 258). Signs of emotion begin from an early age, and are part of a child's social development.

As a child grows, he/she expresses various emotions, such as guilt, shame, pride, fear, joy, sadness, and so on. Children begin to use language to describe their emotions shortly after they start talking. As a child develops into the early childhood years, he/she becomes more aware of the causes, and consequences of emotions, for example, receiving a gift leads to happy emotions, and an injury leads to negative or sad emotions (Bukatko *et al.,* 1995: 413). A child's knowledge about emotions can have an

effect on his/her social development. Children who know the correct emotional response to give in different situations are generally liked by their peers, and react in an appropriate way to the emotional expressions of children their own age (ibid: 413). According to Bee (2000: 156) the preschool child "begins to figure out that particular emotions occur in situations involving specific relationships between desire and reality". It is clear that preschoolers have an adequate understanding of emotions, but their emotional development does not reach its peak until middle childhood (ibid: 157). Harter *et al.,* (ibid: 157) indicate that, "it is only at about age 10 that children begin to understand that a person can feel and express opposite feelings at the same moment (ambivalence)." Therefore, a child's emotional development is merely evolving during early childhood.

4.2.1 The Influence of Culture on the Emotional Development of the Child in Early Childhood

The culture of a child can affect the direction of his/her social development for instance the way in which he/she expresses or detects emotions. A child's characteristics, and his/her parent's values and attitudes, can affect the way in which emotional socialization takes place. Parent's emotions clearly affect the child's emotional development, for example if parents are emotionally unresponsive then the child's own emotional development may be severely affected. Anna Freud, in her study of children evacuated in the Second World War or who lived through the Blitz, discovered that it was not necessarily the terrifying experience of war which "adversely affected young children but rather the degree of emotional stress shown by parents and other significant carers" (Rutter, 2001: 175). Different emotional behaviour is acceptable in different cultures. According to Schaffer (1996: 240):

> Different cultures have evolved different rules for emotional display; within any one society there are differences among families in the emotional climate that they have established; and in each case adults act, both consciously and unconsciously, to steer the child into ways of expressing, managing, and even talking about emotions that conform to the customs of their particular group.

It is clear therefore that the adult is very influential in the child's emotional tendencies, and the adult's cultural values influence his/her own attitudes towards emotional display. Researchers have found many different examples of emotional behaviours amongst children from varying cultures, for example, "American children tend to smile more in response to the smile of a stranger than do Israeli children" (Bukato *et al.,* 1995: 416). Schaffer (1996) describes the emotional displays of young kindergarten children in Japan as follows: 'Hendry went along to her son's kindergarten, and observed local practices. She found that the kindergarten staff played an influential role in the children's emotional behaviour. Crying was discouraged, and when arguing over games or toys, older children were urged to give in to younger children and apologise' (ibid: 241). It is clear that the children in this study were encouraged to display positive emotional behaviour, and to play in a friendly way with one another. Schaffer's research also shows that displays of certain emotions, mainly negative ones such as anger, were not regarded as acceptable behaviour.

It is evident that adults and their cultural values are the main influence in a child's emotional development. This influence begins when the child is at a very young age, and continues to affect the child's emotional development throughout his/her life. According to Bukatko *et al.,* (1995: 417) "the cultural norms governing emotions, mediated through parental behaviors, serve to elaborate and refine the child's emotional tendencies." Therefore, one of the main focus to consider when discussing the child's emotional development is the cultural values of his/her parents, and the culture of the environment he/she is reared in.

4.3 Influences on the Social and Emotional Development of Children in Early Childhood

4.3.1 Parenting Styles

The primary influence on the child's social development within the family is his/her parents. Berger believes that family functioning is more important to a child than family structure (Berger, 2000: 433). Within this concept of the 'ideal family' lies the relationship between child and parent. This relationship is very dominant in establishing the social and personality developments of the child. Child-rearing practices are an important aspect of the child's social development. According to Shaffer (2000: 356) "socialization is the process by which children acquire the beliefs, values, and behaviours deemed significant and appropriate by the older members of their society." Therefore parents, whether active in their child's upbringing or not can significantly influence the child's socialization patterns. Berger (2000: 357) cites LeVine who suggests that families define three important goals for their children:

1. The **survival goal**-to promote the physical survival and health of the child, in the hope that the child will live long enough to have children of his or her own.
2. The **economic goal**-to foster the skills and behavioural capacities that the child will need for economic self-maintenance as an adult.
3. The **self-actualization goal**-to foster behavioural capabilities for maximising other cultural values (for example, morality, religion, achievement, wealth, prestige, and a sense of personal satisfaction).

Le Vine's approach demonstrates family goals however a vital part of child rearing is parenting styles. Diana Baumrind (cited in Berk, 2000: 563) assimilated information on different child-rearing styles by observing parents interacting with their preschool children. Baumrind's research acknowledges two dimensions of child-rearing styles. The first style is *demandingness*, which means that some parents set high standards for their children and the children meet these standards, whereas other parents show very

little interest in their children's upbringing and rarely affect their behaviour. The second dimension is *responsiveness*, meaning that some parents have discussions with their children, and are responsive to and accepting of their children. Other parents are unresponsive and display little interest in their children (ibid). Evidence has shown that the children of parents who have high expectations often demonstrate higher self-esteem than other children and show more altruism towards others (Bee, 1997: 204). Bee (2000: 350) describes altruism as "giving away or sharing objects, time, or goods, with no obvious self-gain." Research shows that young children who show empathy and altruism towards others are able to control their own emotions quite well (ibid: 343) and "variations among children's level of empathy or altruism seem to be related to specific kinds of child-rearing" (ibid: 343). Communication and interaction is the key to a good parent-child relationship. According to Bee (1997: 204), "the parent needs to convey to the child that what the child has to say is worth listening to, that his ideas are important and should be considered in family decisions." All of these family characteristics are significant in the development of the child, but they often occur in combinations. Baumrind (cited in Bee, 1997: 205) highlighted three such styles:

1. The *permissive parental style* is high in nurturance but low in maturity demands, control, and communication.
2. The *authoritarian parental style* is high in control and maturity demands but low in nurturance and communication.
3. The *authoritative parental style* is high in all four.

According to Santrock (1995: 315), "authoritarian parenting is a restrictive, punitive style that exhorts the child to follow the parent's directions and to respect work and effort." The parents' word is final and the child is expected to obey without questioning. The level of demands is high, however parent-child interaction, and emotional communication is low (Berger, 2000: 318). *Authoritarian* parents therefore expect the child to honour their authority. Research has shown that these children are often socially subdued, demonstrating high levels of aggression or appearing out of

control on occasions (Bee, 1997: 205). Patterson (cited by Bee, 1997: 205) indicates that the "out of control" child "is most likely to come from a family in which the parents are authoritarian by inclination but lack the skills to enforce the limits or rules they set." According to Baumrind's research, this type of child demonstrated hostility when observed around peers. It is clear that the authoritarian style of parenting does not allow the child to communicate in an open, independent way, and the child's sense of self-expression is at a minimum (Berk, 2000: 564).

The *authoritative* type of parenting is more flexible than the *authoritarian* type. Berk (2000: 563) states that, "authoritative parents make reasonable demands for maturity, and they enforce them by setting limits and insisting that the child obey". Authoritative parents set demands, but also demonstrate warmth and affection, and respond to their child's needs. According to Bee (1997: 206) children reared in an authoritative environment demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem and independence, they respond to their parent's requests without defiance, and show generosity towards others. Authoritative parents include their children in family decisions and "exercise control in a rational, democratic (rather than a heavy-handed, overbearing) way that recognizes and respects their children's perspectives" (Shaffer, 2000: 365).

Permissive parents make very little demands on their children, but the child rearing style is of an accepting nature. They often lack maturity and do not see themselves in the role of parent, and therefore discipline is not a priority for them. They allow children to make their own decisions and "view themselves as available to help their children but not as responsible for shaping how their children turn out" (Berger, 2000: 206). The children of permissive parents often demonstrate negative behaviour, and Baumrind (cited in Berk, 2000) found that the children regularly displayed tantrums

when asked to do something contrary to their wishes. She also discovered that children of permissive parents "were overly demanding and dependent on adults, and they showed less persistence at tasks in preschool than did children of parents who exerted more control" (Berk, 2000: 564). Essentially, permissive parents communicate well with their children, but a sense of discipline and guidance is lacking.

A fourth parenting style also exists, and is referred to as the *uninvolved or neglecting type*. Uninvolved parents are unenthusiastic about the child rearing process, and "show little commitment to care-giving beyond the minimum effort required to feed and clothe the child" (Ibid: 564). These parents often spend a lot of time thinking about, and coping with problems and stresses of their own, which means that child rearing is not a focus for them. Displays of aggression are common in a young child of uninvolved parents (Shaffer, 2000: 366).

Family styles are an important part of child development as they may influence a child's personality and social interactions with others. According to Bee (1997: 207), research has indicated "the authoritative pattern shows clearly that one can be both affectionate and firm and that children respond to this combination in very positive ways." Thus, there is a "happy medium" when it comes to child rearing. To sum up, discipline is an important aspect of helping children to learn the difference between right and wrong however it is equally vital that parents display affection and guidance. A combination of these characteristics can produce a successful parenting style, and can influence the child in positive ways from a very young age.

4.3.2 Culture, Ethnic and Socio-economic Variations in Families

Culture "refers to a people's way of doing things, a system of rules for making meaning of their world, a system of values and beliefs that affect their behaviour. Culture is learned" (ibid: 259). Many parenting styles are affected by the ethnicity and culture of the child. Ethnicity is concerned with a person's ethnic group and national origin. A child's culture is only one aspect of his/her personality while children from the same ethnic background may not necessarily have the same cultural attitudes (ibid: 259). Different ethnic groups in society have individually distinctive parenting styles, and it is important to be familiar with them, as they are most likely to contribute to the social development of the child in the early years and in later life. It is generally accepted that members of the one society have common attitudes towards child-rearing practices however members of different societies often have different sets of values, and opinions about children (Schaffer, 1996: 225). Pomerleau *et al.,* (1991) researched Haitian and Vietnamese families, along with indigenous Quebec families who all settled in Montreal. They investigated the attitudes of the mothers in these families towards child development. Each mother was asked to state the age at which she thought that children acquire certain abilities, such as hearing, seeing, walking and so on. The following table indicates the results:

Table 5 : Beliefs about Child Development by Mothers from Three Cultural Groups

	Haitian	*Quebec*	*Vietnamese*
A. Mean age (in days) when mothers ought to initiate specific activities			
Talk to child	38.0	4.2	71.6
Show first book	781.6	363.9	476.3
Take bottle unaided	217.2	154.3	217.0
Dress self	1,010.6	776.5	843.5
B. Mean age (in days) when mothers believe children first acquire various abilities			
Hear	27.6	4.9	52.8
See	30.4	18.9	48.2
Recognize mother	62.4	37.6	78.3
Think	405.1	91.8	609.0
Understand words	292.4	215.6	267.3

Source: H. Rudolph Schaffer, *Social Development*, (U.S.A. and U.K.: Blackwell, 1996)

The results clearly show diverse opinions about child development amongst the three cultures. For example, Quebec mothers, in comparison to the other two groups, believed that children's abilities emerge at a very young age, and that parents should initiate child-rearing techniques at an early stage (ibid: 216).

Harwood *et al.,* (cited by Shaffer, 2000: 369) analysed the parenting styles of Native American and Hispanic parents. They discovered that they are both:

> more inclined than European parents to (1) maintain close ties to a variety of kin and (2) insist that their children display calm, proper, and polite behaviours and a strong respect for others, as opposed to independence, competitiveness, and the pursuit of individual goals.

This demonstrates essential differences in parenting styles from culture to culture. Children's attitudes also vary according to their parents' child-rearing pattern. Research has shown that a particular parenting style can have different effects on children from the same community, depending on the ethnicity of the children (Berger:

324). With regard to children in early childhood, it has been found that "physical punishment obviously promotes aggressiveness in European American children but not necessarily in African American children" (Deater-Deckard *et al.,* cited by Berger: 324). It is clear that within the same cultural group certain parenting styles can promote different reactions from various children depending on their ethnicity. *Greenberger and Chen* found Asian and American-Asian parents to be quite authoritarian, as they placed an emphasis on discipline in their day-to-day parenting style. This pattern was a lot more controlling than the parenting style of other ethnicities (Greenberger *et al.,* cited by Shaffer: 369). These examples all demonstrate the importance that culture and ethnicity play in the rearing of children. Culture and ethnicity influence the overall development of the young child throughout his/her life, helping to shape the way the child interacts with his/her family and peers, and within the social world. Western and Eastern cultures differ greatly in many ways, including parenting styles. It is obvious that most parents want the best for their child, and many are "very critical of other parents, whom they find to be too lenient or too harsh; too accepting or too demanding" (Berger: 324). In some way, this form of criticism justifies a parents' own choice of parenting style. Louis Laosa (cited by Shaffer: 371) summarises the reasoning behind the effects of culture and ethnicity on the social development of the child:

> Indigenous patterns of child care throughout the world represent largely successful adaptations to conditions of life that have long differed from one people to another. [Adults] are 'good [parents]' by the only relevant standards, those of their own culture.

Shaffer describes socio-economic status (SES) as "one's position within a society that is stratified according to status and power" (Shaffer: 218). Researchers have identified discrepancies in parenting styles amongst different socio-economic groups, for instance according to Santrock (1995: 480), low-income families tend to discipline their

children in a physical and critical way. This analogy is quite generalised and should not be viewed as being representative of all low-income families. Santrock (ibid) continues by stating that middle and upper income families are more likely to praise their children about positive behaviour, and reason with them about negative behaviour. Once again such a statement is a generalisation which does not represent all middle/upper income families. It is clear that the economic status of the family has an impact on the child-rearing techniques of the parents, but practices will of course vary from family to family.

4.3.3 The Role of Sibling Relationships and Birth Order in the Social Development of a Young Child

Siblings are very influential in the social development of the young child. The relationship between parents and children is studied frequently, but the relationship between siblings is often neglected in terms of research. The arrival of siblings can bring about a fundamental onset of change within a family, and this arrival can have dramatic effects on a child already in the family. Each child changes and develops at a constant rate, and therefore when a new sibling is welcomed into the family home, relationship adjustments have to be made. The older child often feels that his/her hitherto relationship with his/her parents is undermined by the new arrival, and receiving less attention from his/her mother is likely to encourage feelings of frustration and neglect. When a new baby is embraced into the home a child has many emotional adjustments to make in relation to his/her new sibling, in the same way that the baby's own emotions develop after birth. Durkin (1995: 129) states that a child can feel threatened by a new baby, and may feel the need to seek attention from a new source. He also points out that, "siblings provide some of the earliest indicators that social life can be a battlefield". Sibling rivalry, which Shaffer describes as "the spirit of competition, jealousy, and resentment that may arise between one or more siblings",

is a common characteristic of families (Shaffer: 374). It is clear however, that parents should try to continue with normal everyday routines as much as possible, and provide the love and attention the older child needs, once the new baby arrives (ibid: 374).

Social experiences are often relative to sibling position and to the number of siblings a child has. Birth order helps the child to understand the feeling and expectations of sibling position and the child often learns how much power he/she has within the family, for example, placing blame, or when to side with his/her parents, and when to rebel against them. The older child is regularly expected to show responsibility and be an inspiration to the younger child. This can be difficult at times, especially if the older child is feeling 'left out' or neglected by parents. The younger child needs more attention, and so the older child often retaliates by throwing tantrums (Santrock: 468). Sibling influence is most prevalent from the age of two and all through the middle years (Mussen *et al.,* 1980: 281). The 'only child' is frequently considered to be spoiled and self-centred, however research has shown that the 'only child' is often "achievement-oriented and displays a desirable personality, especially in comparison with later-borns and children from larger families" (Falbo *et al.,* cited by Santrock: 469). As with most conceptions of development, the 'only child theory' may differ from child to child, and should be considered as a generalisation.

Children's sibling relationships are very active from an early age. There are many different possible combinations of sibling relationships, and it is therefore difficult to generalise about them. Santrock (2001: 468) indicates that the "factors to consider are the number of siblings, the age of siblings, birth order, age spacing, the sex of siblings, and whether sibling relationships are different from parent-child relationships". Children spend a lot of time together, engaging in play and observing one another's

relationships with parents, family and friends. Sibling interaction encourages many different feelings of emotions (Schaffer: 265). The sibling relationship is generally different to that of the parent-child relationship. Children learn about social rules such as possession, sharing, taking turns in games, and inventing rules of their own, while interacting with siblings (Ibid). The younger brother or sister can benefit greatly from the influence of his/her older sibling/s, as Shaffer (2000: 378) indicates below:

- **Siblings as Attachment Objects**: Research has indicated that younger children find solace in the company of an older sibling when a stranger is present. The older sibling often displays signs of security and care giving for their younger brother or sister. Other research has shown that, children who provide comfort for their younger sibling are the ones who are very attached to their mothers. The older sibling, no matter how young he/she may be, is often a source of emotional security for younger brothers or sisters.
- **Siblings as Models and Tutors**: Younger siblings often model themselves on the actions of their older brothers or sisters. New skills can be learned this way or, sometimes, direct instruction is given. This sense of informal instruction is a source of fun for the younger child and makes learning an enjoyable experience. Older siblings often provide better instruction than an older peer because, (1) older siblings feel a greater responsibility to teach if the pupil is a younger *sibling*, (2) they provide more detailed instructions and encouragement than older peers do, and (3) younger children are more inclined to seek the older sibling's guidance.
- **Siblings as Contributors to Social-Cognitive Understandings**: Siblings interact on a very regular and intense basis, and therefore social-cognitive competencies may be fostered and developed more readily. Moral reasoning, self-expression, negotiation and compromise and emotional understanding are also developed through sibling interactions.

Dunn (quoted by Schaffer: 266) provides evidence of these factors in the following example:

Three-year-old playing bouncing ball with older sibling:
Sibling: Can I have a go? Can I do that? May I?
Child: When I have had two goes.

Sibling: Yes, it's your turn so…so you have two goes. Am I four so I have four goes. Yes! I have four goes. *(A few moments later child tries to get ball back).*
Sibling: No! I have four goes. Four.
(*Child gets ball back, sibling again requests turn*)
Sibling: Can I have a go?
Child: No. When I have had eight goes. 'Cos I'm…

This example clearly indicates many of the aspects of the teaching and learning that occurs when siblings interact.

In conclusion, although birth-order influences certain aspects of child development, some critics believe that it is not a good indicator of children's behaviour. Sibling interaction and relationships are important aspects of child development and family processes (Santrock, 2001: 469). The social development of the child in early childhood is therefore clearly affected by sibling relationships in both positive and negative ways, and its influence cannot be ignored when considering family processes, and the overall development of the young child.

4.3.4 The Effects of Peer Relationships on the Social Development of Children in Early Childhood

Peer relations contribute significantly to a child's social development in infancy, early childhood and throughout the child's adolescent and adult life as the following section will indicate. According to Santrock (2001: 337), "peers provide a source of information and comparison about the world outside the family". Friendships begin to emerge during early childhood, and research has shown that "children tend to abandon their immature and inefficient social exchanges with age and acquire more mature ways of relating to peers" (ibid: 490).

There can be both positive and negative outcomes from peer relations. In general, it is clear that good peer relations may be essential for normal social development in early childhood (ibid: 494). A child's popularity amongst his/her peers can have a significant impact on his/her emotional well-being. Peer acceptance or rejection, can have a positive or negative effect on the child in his/her future life (Schaffer, 1996:

319). Shaffer (2000: 453) states that, "peer acceptance is a measure of the likeability (or dislike ability) in the eyes of the peers". An increasing number of young children are spending a large proportion of their childhood in day care and preschool, and therefore peer interaction is a fundamental aspect of their social development. Peer interactions increase significantly during the preschool years. For example one investigation demonstrated that "children interacted with peers 10 percent of their day at age 2, and 20 percent of their day at age 4" (ibid: 490). Thus, children in the early years are affected by the concept of peer acceptance and popularity.

Psychologists often classify children into one of five sociometric categories. Shaffer (2000: 453) describes *sociometric techniques* as "procedures that ask children to identify those peers whom they like or dislike or to rate peers for their desirability as companions; used to measure children's peer acceptance (or nonacceptance)". The *nominations technique* refers to the number of positive or negative nominations, or selections, a child receives by his/her peers, which in turn reflect his/her sociometric status (ibid: 453). Both these techniques will be referred to in the following section. They include: *popular, rejected, neglected, controversial and average status. Popular* children are often regarded by other children to be a best friend, and are very rarely disliked by peers. Others see popular children in a positive way, and rarely respond in a negative way towards them (ibid: 454). According to Schaffer (1996: 320), "popular children are liked because they have outgoing, friendly personalities, are skilled at interacting both in dyadic and in group settings and can take the lead in activities without undue aggression". Researchers have shown that popular children tend to be good listeners, are fun to be around, are happy, self-confident and demonstrate concern for others when needed (Santrock, 2001: 491). It is clear that not all children can fit the

requirements for popularity. All children are unique and individual, and therefore display many different types of personalities.

Rejected children are generally disliked by most of their peers and are "high in social impact but low in social preference" (Shaffer, 2000: 454). These children are never regarded as a best friend, and as a result they often display antisocial and aggressive behaviour towards their peers, and disrupt peer activities (Schaffer, 1996: 320). *Neglected* children "are infrequently nominated as a best friend but are not disliked by their peers" (Santrock, 2001: 491). These children show little confidence in group-situations, are often seen playing on their own, and are generally shy and introverted (Schaffer, 1996: 320). It is clear that neglected children are not selected as best friends, but they are not disliked by others either. *Controversial* children are regularly selected as someone's best friend, as well as being frequently disliked. Shaffer (2000: 454) indicates that there are also *average status* children who very often receive a balanced number of positive and negative nominations as someone's best friend. Schaffer (1996) summarises the characteristics of *popular*, *neglected* and *rejected* children in the following table:

Table 6: Behavioural Profiles of Popular, Rejected, and Neglected Children

Popular children

- Positive, happy dispositions
- Physically attractive
- Lot of dyadic interaction
- High levels of cooperative play
- Willing to share
- Able to sustain an interaction
- Seen as good leaders
- Little aggression

Rejected children

- Much disruptive behaviour
- Argumentative and antisocial
- Extremely active
- Talkative
- Frequent attempts at social approaches
- Little cooperative play, unwilling to share
- Much solitary activity
- Inappropriate behaviour

Neglected Children

- Shy
- Rarely aggressive; withdraw in face of others' aggression
- Little antisocial behaviour
- Not assertive
- Lot of solitary activity
- Avoid dyadic interaction, more time with larger groups.

Source: H. Rudolph Schaffer, *Social Development*, (U.S.A. and U.K.: Blackwell, 1996), 320.

There are many different types of children who are categorised into social groupings according to their personal characteristics. These groups are evident from an early age, once children begin mixing with peers, for example in childcare. It is important that parents, educators and carers alike are familiar with the type of child that is in their care, to help them develop socially in a positive way.

Children are exposed to a wide variety of peers, and eventually develop close relationships or ties with one or more of their peers. These close bonds are referred to as *friendships* (Shaffer, 2000: 461). Friendships are an important part of everyone's social world, and begin from a very early age. According to Hartup as cited by Craig (2000: 59), "friendships are reciprocal, voluntary relationships based on affection. They are essential to the acquisition of skills and competencies in a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development". The focus for this section will be on friendships during early childhood. Shaffer (2000: 461) describes friendship as "a strong and often enduring relationship between two individuals, characterised by loyalty, intimacy, and mutual affection". Friendship is obviously a very important aspect of the child's social world.

Gottman (cited by Santrock, 2001: 501) demonstrated that friendships serve many functions, which include the following:

1. *Companionship*: Friendship provides children with a familiar partner, someone who is willing to spend time with them and join in collaborative activities.
2. *Stimulation*: Friendships provides children with interesting information, excitement, and amusement.
3. *Physical support*: Friendship provides resources and assistance.
4. *Ego support*: Friendship provides the expectation of support, encouragement, and feedback that helps children to maintain an impression of themselves as competent, attractive, and worthwhile individuals.
5. *Social comparison*: Friendship provides information about where children stand vis-à-vis others and whether children are doing okay.
6. *Intimacy/affection*: Friendship provides children with a warm, close, trusting relationship with another individual, a relationship that involves self-disclosure[xi].

Gottman's conclusions were based on observations of pairs of playmates between the ages of three and nine. Parents filled in a questionnaire after the observations were completed. The information about the children's behaviour, gathered from the observations was used in determining "how the interactions of children who became friends differ from those of eventual non-friends" (cited in Santrock, 2001: 462).

Research has shown that friendships become an important part of a child's life from as young as one or two years old. Friederick Kanfer (cited in Santrock, 2001: 462). and his associates found that three to six year olds were willing to sacrifice their own play time to help a friend, but were not willing to do so for a mere acquaintance. Hinde, Titmus, Easton, and Tamplin (cited by Schaffer, 1996: 326) discovered that about half of the four year olds they observed developed a strong association or friendship with another child.

Friends are an extremely important part of a child's life. Without friendships a child can experience an intense feeling of loneliness, which in turn has a negative impact on the child's personality and social development (ibid: 325). Many studies have shown that being without friends can result in negative developmental outcomes for a child, for instance Schaffer lists some of the conditions associated with friendlessness in the following table:

Table 7: Conditions Associated with Friendlessness

Children without friends are more likely
• to have emotional problems
• to lag behind other children in perspective taking abilities
• to be less altruistic
• to have deficiencies in such social skills as group entry, cooperative play, and conflict management
• to be generally less sociable
• to show poorer school adjustment
• to make fewer educational gains

Source: H. Rudolph Schaffer, *Social Development*, (U.S.A. and U.K.: Blackwell, 1996), 327.

Shaffer (2000: 464) considers the functions of friendships:

- **Friends as Providers of Security and Social Support**: One friend can provide a lot of support and comfort for a child, especially one who may be excluded from the larger peer group. A friend's role is therefore to provide social support for others, and this becomes increasingly more important as children

grow older. (Shaffer refers to social support as "tangible and intangible resources provided by other people in times of uncertainty or stress").

- **Friends as Contributors to Social Problem-Solving Skills:** From preschool age onwards, friends are more likely to continue interacting with others even after a disagreement, whereas acquaintances are less likely to interact after a disagreement.

It is clear therefore that friendships or the lack of friendships can contribute positively or negatively to the social development of the child.

4.3.4.1 The Influence of Culture on Peer Relationships in Early Childhood

According to Schaffer (1996: 315), "both the nature and extent of peer relationships are influenced by the type of society in which the child is brought up in." From an early age, children interact with many different types of people, such as family members, friends, teachers, relatives, and so on. The amount of time children spend with different individuals can vary from culture to culture. For example, children who live in a small nomadic village have a smaller chance of communicating with children of the same age, than children who live in a city or town in a developed country. Research has shown that children from certain nomadic villages experience almost all of their social interactions with siblings or cousins. Therefore they have little contact with children from other families, or from other cultural backgrounds. This type of peer interaction is clearly different from the peer relationships that most children experience in a western country (ibid: 315).

Bukatko *et al.,* (1995: 575) state that, "the way a culture or society organizes peer experiences for children can serve as a vehicle for conveying its primary values and ideals." Some children are brought up in *collective* environments, which mean that group care is a part of their lives from an early age, and interaction with peers is

comprehensive through adolescence. Children who grow up in peer-oriented settings often display certain behaviours that distinguish them from children who are raised in environments that favour independence (ibid). Different cultures promote varying approaches to peer interaction; for example, in certain societies a child will address his/her playmate when he/she is dissatisfied with the playmate's behaviour, whereas in other societies the dissatisfied child may tell an adult and say nothing (ibid: 577). Thus, it is fair to say that parents play a universal role in child rearing, but the peer group is equally important, and its influence can vary significantly from culture to culture (Schaffer, 1996: 315).

It is clear that through interaction with peers children learn about themselves and others, and acquire the social skills that are essential throughout life. Other aspects of development are also attained from an early age through peer interaction, for example, according to Bukatko and Daehler (1995: 577), "through their day-to-day experiences with peers, children are directly or indirectly given strong messages about the general values and philosophies of their culture". It is important to remember that young children from different cultures often interact well together. Research has shown that the reason for this tolerance is "because they have not yet a full understanding of the cultural values of others" (Keats, 1997: 17). Young children generally develop dislikes for peers who behave in certain ways, and not because they have particular cultural values. Thus the cultural values of the adult, are once again an influence, as young children "do not generalise rejection of individual children by attributing their objections to cultural identity unless this is specifically taught to them by parents or significant others" (ibid: 18). Thus, culture has an important effect on peer relationships. The early childhood years facilitate peer interactions amongst diverse cultures once the child begins preschool, where he/she experiences friendships with

children from different backgrounds, and may also begin to replicate the desired cultural ideals of his/her parents/teachers.

Conclusion

The study of social development in early childhood examines the interaction between children and other people. According to Schaffer (1996: 1), "social development refers to the behaviour patterns, feelings, attitudes, and concepts children manifest in relation to other people and to the way that these various aspects change over time". This chapter analysed the social development of children in early childhood, in relation to personality development, family, peers, emotions and the effect of culture on some of the aspects of social development. According to Greenfield *et al.,* cited by Santrock, (2001: 554), "if the study of child development is to be a relevant discipline in the twenty first century, increased attention will need to be given to the study of culture an ethnicity". The world in which we live is often referred to as a 'global village', because of the increased contact between cultures of different backgrounds, and this contact is likely to become a lot more extensive as the twenty first century progresses. Santrock (2001: 555) states that, children and their parents today "are citizens of the world, a world that, through advances in transportation and technology, has become increasingly interactive." This interaction affects many aspects of the child's life in the early years, one of them being social development, and the other being education.

Family and peers have a significant influence on early development, and it is during the early years that children begin to develop self-concept and self-identity. A child acquires his/her cultural attitudes from the people who interact with him/her on a regular basis.

Research has clearly shown that cultural values have an affect on child-rearing practices, peer interactions and socio-emotional development, but the cultural values of the child and his/her parents may cause conflict for the child in a multicultural society. This conflict can in turn influence the social development of the child, which plays an influential role in the child's overall development, from early childhood through life. Keats (1997: 3) indicates the important role that society, and parental cultural values play in the social development of the young children:

> The values of society at large affect the children's perceptions of themselves and their cultural heritage, encouraging acceptance or antipathy towards the values of their own and other cultural groups within the society. Parents train children in what they regard as appropriate behaviour, but that behaviour is not always seen as appropriate when the child moves into other environments outside the family such as the school or the peer group.

The study of the social development of the child in early childhood, and the role of culture in this development, is clearly an important aspect of child development research in the twenty first century.

There are many definitions of culture, and its significance in relation to child development is becoming increasingly important worldwide because of the up surge in the interaction between diverse cultures, which can be clearly seen in the increased level of immigration in Ireland in recent years (see chapter 1). Bee (2000: 12) describes culture as "a system of meanings and customs, including values, attitudes, goals, laws, beliefs, morals, and physical artefacts of various kinds, such as tools and forms of dwellings". The role of culture as an important factor in the social development of the young child has been analysed throughout this chapter, and the relationship between both is clearly evident.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY- RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodologies used to investigate the aims of this study, which included:

- An analysis of the provision (at the time of study) for intercultural educational and cultural diversity in early year classrooms in the primary school (i.e. junior and senior infants), for instance, language support and parental support;
- An analysis of the level of awareness of young children of certain issues and terms in relation to cultural diversity, for example, the terms racism, culture and Travellers were explored in interviews with children;
- A report on best practice of and positive approaches towards intercultural education and cultural diversity in the primary schools involved in the study.

The cultural education and development of young children in junior and senior infant classes in primary schools in Ireland was the main focus of this study. An outline of the research questions was given in the Introduction chapter. The research was inclusive of the whole-school community, in other words those who had influence on children's education, for instance teachers, parents, and educational researchers were also consulted. As a researcher I am very interested in listening to the voice of children and providing children with the opportunity to give their opinions about issues which directly affect their lives. Recent research into the child's position in Irish society suggests that there has been an increase in the emphasis placed on children's rights to access and be active individuals in the education process. For instance, the establishment of the National Children's Office (NCO) by the Government in 2001 was a progressive step towards the inclusion of children's views on issues, which affect their lives. The NCO website (Accessed November 1st 2006) states that the NCO is committed to implementing their goal of providing opportunities for children to have

greater input and participation at policy level (For further information on NCO initiatives see Appendix ?).

Following the decision to research 'Intercultural Education in Early Childhood Classrooms', a research review was conducted, which in turn allowed for research questions to be devised which concentrated on intercultural aspects of early years education in the Republic of Ireland and other countries, such as The United Kingdom. It was then possible to focus and select the most suitable research methodologies, on the basis of the research questions in order to explore the topic further. In addition, my experience as a primary school teacher encouraged my interest in intercultural education as well as providing me with access to classrooms for research and interviews with educational personnel.

In order to adequately explore the research questions it was necessary to design effective and appropriate methodologies to do so. The research design involved careful consideration of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. As the area of intercultural education in early childhood classrooms was inadequately researched at the time of the study, it was decided that a method of triangulation would best suit this study to provide variation and possible verification of data. In essence triangulation uses "different kinds of measurements to verify or rule out certain conclusions" (Miles *et al.,* 1994: 267). After thorough investigation it was decided that the majority of the research would concentrate on qualitative methodologies in the form of observations and interviews, while the distribution of questionnaires contributed an element of quantitative research. Both school and family questionnaires were distributed as a means to reach out to other individuals who influenced the children's lives. One aspect of the study involved the observation of children at work and play in their learning

environment, as well as observing the physical characteristics of the classrooms and schools, which promoted a culturally inclusive setting. A more in-depth analysis of the research tools will be given in the following section. The research methodologies overlapped at times during the two year study. For instance in school E observations, interviews with children and teachers took place during each visit. Thus, the different phases of the research (interviews, observations and questionnaire distribution) worked in collaboration with one another to provide an overall sense of cohesiveness to the data findings.

5.1 Design and Implementation of the Study

According to Mac Naughton *et al.,* (2001) there is little written specifically about researching early childhood education. They indicate a need for more literature to be made available based on this topic:

1. As early childhood studies are multi-disciplinary, standard texts written for students of the social sciences or the humanities are often not sufficiently broad for the needs of the early childhood field.
2. General education research texts often focus specifically on research in classrooms and thus often do not meet the needs of the early childhood researcher, who must be familiar with methods and techniques relevant to research in the multitude of contexts experienced by the child from birth through to the early years of school.

The study of early childhood education, with specific exploration of intercultural education was the main focus of this study. Therefore, research techniques that complement this area of education were used as part of the research methodology. For instance, because of the young age of the children involved in the study (4-6 year olds) age appropriate language was used as part of the interview process and communication through the drawing of pictures was also used as a child-friendly research tool. A number of ethical considerations were also given considerable amount of thought due

to the sensitive nature of working with children; for instance, parental permission for participation in the study was received by all children involved in the research, children were always interviewed in a room with an open door and in view of another staff member, pseudonyms are used in all interview extracts during the research to disguise any identification of the children, while confidentiality and anonymity was promised in relation to the identity of the children and their contributory information. Lewis and Lindsay (2000) were consulted in relation to the necessary ethical issues required as part of the children's research process. As Mac Naughton *et al.,* (2001) indicate the age span covered by early childhood education is from birth to the early school years. In spite of this it was decided that for the purpose of this thesis the age range of 0-6 years would be narrowed to 4-6 years to allow for a more manageable and feasible study. In essence, the research concentrated on children in junior and senior infant classes in primary schools.

Research was conducted at various stages during a period of twenty five months from May 2002 to June 2004. Each research tool will now be explored in more detail by categorising the methodologies into specific genres.

5.1.1 Questionnaire: School and Family History Questionnaires

5.1.1.1 School Questionnaire

Following the first set of interviews a school questionnaire was designed to gather information about the approaches to, awareness of and school ethos towards intercultural education. In essence, the study progressed to explore intercultural education policy in practice. As part of the pilot study fifty questionnaires (See Appendix 2 for pilot letter) were administered to a random selection of primary schools

on March 19th 2003. The schools, which were randomly selected from the list of primary schools in Ireland located on the Department of Education and Science website (www.des.ie) were located in Dublin city and Dublin county, adjacent counties (for example, Kildare and Louth), while a small number of Galway city and county schools were also surveyed to provide countrywide variation. A total of 23 (almost 50%) completed questionnaires were returned-the locations and number of responses are outlined below:

- 7 denominational/*girls only* schools
- 3 denominational/*boys only* schools
- 11 *denominational/co-educational* schools (of which 3 were *Gaelscoileanna* (Irish language schools) and 1 was a *Scoil Gaeltachta* (School in a Gaeltacht [Irish speaking] area)
- 2 *multi-denominational/co-educational* schools

A few modifications were made to the questionnaire following the pilot, most of which involved a change in question layout. Following the pilot study it was decided that the study would mainly concentrate on primary schools in Dublin and its surrounding counties due to accessibility and closeness for any follow-up action research that was to take place. Schools in Galway were also surveyed due to its geographical distance from the other locations and for reasons of variety. As such, a total of 200 schools were sent questionnaires, the aim of which was to provide data that provided a glimpse of the level of cultural diversity in the primary schools surveyed and depict some of the approaches that schools were taking to embrace intercultural education and cultural diversity as part of their school environment (see appendix 3).

A total of 73 completed questionnaires were returned - a response rate of 37%. It was hoped to have at least a 50% response rate, and therefore some schools were sent a follow up letter to seek completion of the questionnaire. Included in the 37% response

rate are some schools that received this follow-up letter. The following table provides a summary of the main attributes of the school questionnaire:

Table 8: Details of School Questionnaire

Research Tool	Locations of Distribution	Time Scale	Number Distributed	Response Rate
School Questionnaire	Dublin city and county; Kildare; Meath; Louth; Galway city and county	June 2003	200	73 (37%)

Of the schools that replied only 47% (34) indicated an interest in taking part in further research. Of the replies received from each county, the following percentages expressed an interest in further contact with the researcher.

Table 9: Percentage of replies from each county who expressed an interest in further involvement in the study

Dublin	Meath	Louth	Galway	Kildare	Total
76%	8%	8%	5%	3%	100%

Upon further contact by telephone a number of the Principals who had indicated an interest in future involvement in the research declined such involvement. There were different reasons given by several Principals for the disinterest in further involvement; for example, schools could not commit to the time involved or had already committed to other research projects. One particular response stood out from all the rest: 'Our school would not be suitable because we have no ethnic minorities here'. Following an explanation of the nature of the study, i.e. that intercultural education should be incorporated into all schools, whether they are mono-cultural or multicultural, the lack of interest in participation remained the same in this particular instance.

Once the data from the questionnaire was inputted and explored using the computer programs Microsoft excel and MaxQDA, the next stage involved the selection of schools that were interested in taking further part in the research. The criteria for selection were made on the basis of geographical variation and variety in school types. The school questionnaire data impacted on the initial design of the study, which transpired to focus on observations of teachers and pupils in two schools (School A and School B), as well as the delivery of an intercultural education lesson by the researcher once a week over a period of eight weeks. The following table lists the schools which were selected and agreed to take part in the research:

Table 10: Schools Involved in Research

Schools	Location	Type
School A	A village setting in an urban suburb	Co-educational
School B	A town in East of Ireland	Girls only
School C	Suburb in urban area	Girls only
School D	Suburb in urban area	Boys only
School E	Suburb in urban area	Co-educational

5.1.1.2 Family History Questionnaire

Parents were viewed as an important part of the whole school community and therefore it was viewed as imperative that they should contribute to the data. In order to include parents in the study a family history questionnaire was distributed to parents in schools C, D and E (See appendix 4). The aim of the questionnaire was to ascertain the cultural, ethnic and traditional values of the parents of the children from these schools. Parents were also given an opportunity to give their opinion on the Primary curriculum, for instance on the importance of the Irish language in their child's overall education. The table below outlines the response rate of the Family history questionnaire:

Table 11: Family History Questionnaire

Research Tool	Locations of Distribution	Time Scale	Number Distributed	Response Rate
Family History Questionnaire	School A: A village setting in an urban area School B: A town in East of Ireland School C: Suburb in urban area School D: Suburb in urban area School E: Suburb in urban area	June 2004	81	37 (47%)

The results of the family questionnaire contributed significantly to the data findings and provided a personal insight into the family life of a section of the children involved in the study, which would otherwise be difficult to extract in terms of personal content and quantity of replies.

5.1.2 Interviews: Educational Personnel, Teachers, Parents and Children

Interviews formed a significant aspect of this study and involved children, parents, teachers and other professionals working in the field of early childhood education and early childhood education. The qualitative research interview was used to gain information relating to the issue of interculturalism in early childhood education. According to Rubin and Rublin (1995):

> Qualitative interviewing is both an academic and a practical tool. It allows us to share the world of others to find out what is going on, why people do what they do, and how they understand their worlds. With such knowledge you can help solve a variety of problems.

There are many different types of interview techniques; which are both valid and positive research methods. However, there are many forms to choose from, for instance, the structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview. As part of this study Kvale's (1996) interpretation of qualitative research interviews was adopted:

- *Life world*: The topic of the interview is based on the subject's knowledge and experience in relation to it.
- *Meaning*: The interviewer interprets the subject's meaning of the themes explored in the interview.
- *Qualitative*: qualitative knowledge rather than quantitative is the aim.
- *Descriptive*: One of the interview objectives is to obtain open descriptions of different aspects of the subjects' life worlds.
- *Specificity*: Specific situations, rather than general, are elicited.
- *Deliberate naiveté*: The interviewer is open to new ideas and opinions.
- *Focused*: The interview is focused on different themes.
- *Ambiguity*: If desired interviewee statements can be ambiguous.
- *Change*: New insights and awareness can occur during an interview and the subject can change his/her opinions or meanings about a theme.
- *Sensitivity*: Different interviewers can produce different statements on the same themes. There is a clear need for sensitivity.
- *Interpersonal relations*: Interpersonal interaction is a very important part of the interview as it is because of this that knowledge is obtained.
- *Positive experience*: A research interview can be very insightful and informative for the interviewee, and he/she may obtain new knowledge about his/her life situation.

Semi-structured interviews formed one aspect of this research, while unstructured interviews contributed in a lesser way to the overall research technique when required. Interviews are a valuable form of research as they "enable participants-be they interviewers or interviewees-to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view" (ibid). This was clearly the most suitable method for the purpose of this thesis, and was chosen from a wide range of qualitative research techniques available. Structured interviews were not appropriate, as they do not give the researcher enough freedom to make changes where he/she requires or to address issues emerging in the interviews,

and thus the structured interview is regarded as a closed situation. According to Lee (1999):

> Semi-structured interviews usually have an overarching topic, general themes, targeted issues, and specific questions, with a predetermined sequence for their occurrence. As in the unstructured interview, but unlike the structured format, the interviewer is free to pursue matters as circumstances dictate.

The approach adopted in the semi-structured interview is less formal than in structured interviews, and therefore allows the interviewee to respond in his/her own words and to give his/her honest opinion. The interviewee answers questions based on topics chosen by the researcher (ibid). During semi-structured interviews predefined questions are used and prompting techniques are used to probe the respondent to answer more (Mac Naughton *et al.,* 2001: 152). Unstructured interviews which are also referred to as narrative or non-directive interviews, could be described as the opposite of structured interviews. According to Arksey and Knight (1999: 7), " with this form of interview, the researcher will have decided only in general terms upon the main themes and topic areas to be explored, but will be flexible in the approaches used to explore them". The interviewee uses his/her own language and presents his/her own ideas on the topics in question. Thus, the interviewer plays a more passive role than in the structured or semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data received in an unstructured interview can present clear information about the interviewee's understandings and views of the research topics discussed (ibid). The analysis stage of the research can be quite time consuming and therefore this type of interview was not used extensively in this thesis.

During semi-structures interviews the interviewer introduces a topic and goes on to explore it by asking the interviewee specific questions. In this case the researcher wanted to explore specific areas of early childhood education and to find out the interviewees' experiences in the area, and also their personal views on the topics in

question. The semi-structured model of interviewing allowed the researcher to carry out her aims. The interviews consisted mainly of semi-structured interviews, with some containing characteristics of the unstructured interview technique. The interviews involved the use of semi-structured questions, which were designed to guide the discussion and cover the topics in question. All questions used were based on an open-ended format to encourage the interviewee to present his/her own thoughts and opinions on the topics to be covered. A number of previous studies were consulted and examined for suggestions on the wording of questions, interview techniques and analysis (ibid: 93-108). The final list of questions and topics was adapted to suit the expertise of each interviewee, and the use of open-ended questions supported the informal nature of the interviews and helped to create a sense of co-operation and positive communication between the interviewer and interviewee. Personal and institutional anonymity were promised to each interviewee. Table 12 below provides a summary of the interviewees and other aspects associated with the interview process:

Table 12: Summary of interviewees and related characteristics

Research Tool	Locations	Time Scale	Number of Interviews
Interviews with Educational Personnel: • One representative from Pavee Point Traveller Education Centre; • One representative from the Traveller Education Section of the Department of Education; • One representative from the INTO; • One representative from a College of Education. • One representative from The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism.	City centre schools in two varying locations in Ireland	May-July 2002	5
Interviews with teachers	School A School B School C School D School E	October 2003 -June 2004	11
Interviews with Parents	School C School D School E	June 2004	5 (Indian; Irish; Lithuanian; Czech Republic)
Interviews with Children	As above	October-December 2002; March-June	20 (See appendix ?)
		2004	Total number of interviews: 41

Interviews with parents, teachers, educational personnel and children took place at various times during the period May 2002 to June 2004 and each interviewee was met once. Interviews took place in two urban settings. The interviews took place at the participant's workplace and lasted between thirty minutes and an hour and a half. Prior to the interview some subjects requested details of the topics and questions to be

covered and therefore these were posted or emailed to the participant a few days before the interview date. Before the interview started the researcher made it clear what she aimed to do and how the information obtained would be used and also explained her interest in the research topic. Interviewees were reminded of the procedure of the interview and the topics to be covered. In some instances the questions were discussed in the order prepared, however in other situations the questions deviated from the list of questions as many topics were explored in conversation. The checklist was referred to at times to ensure that each topic was investigated and explored. At all times throughout the interview probing cues and eye contact were used to help the participant feel at ease and to ensure that he/she expanded and developed his/her thoughts (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 280). The remarks made by the interviewee were also reflected upon before moving on to the next line of questioning. On completion of each interview, and prior to transcription a copy was made of each master tape, which was then transcribed. Although transcribing was a suitable means for analysing the data collected, it was also possible that the loss of data would occur because taped interviews did not portray any non-verbal communication, which according to research provides very important information (Cohen *et. al.*, 2000: 281). As a result, particular care was taken when transcribing the interviews, for example the researcher took note of the tone of the voices, interruptions, the mood of the speakers and so on (Ibid: 282). It was found that many topics overlapped and subjects often gave an answer to two or three questions/topics while discussing one topic.

A number of interviewees were interviewed on the basis of their expertise in the field of intercultural education and early childhood education in Ireland. The research focussed on cultural, ethnic and language diversity in early childhood education (children between the ages of three and six years), and thus subjects were chosen

specifically for their expertise in, and knowledge of this area in Ireland. Interview questions were carefully devised and were piloted on a number of close colleagues working in the field of education. Following an analysis of the pilot study a number of changes were made to the order of the questions and additional topics were included to be explored (See appendix 5 for an outline of the interview questions with educational personnel). In order to devise suitable questions for interviewing professionals in the area of early year's education it was necessary to research the literature that impacted on the development and implementation of policies in this area. The following were the core issues addressed in each interview:

- Changes in early childhood education in Ireland;
- The needs of ethnic minority children in Ireland;
- Attitudes to ethnic minority children and approaches to culturally inclusive education;
- Parent-school relations;
- Policy documents in Ireland in relation to Intercultural education in the early years.

Interview questions were adapted to avail of the diverse and varied knowledge of each subject of the research topic, for instance the representative from Pavee Point was an expert in the field of Traveller education provision and therefore the interview concentrated on this aspect of intercultural education. In contrast, the main focus of the interview with the INTO representative was in relation to early childhood education and intercultural education. To determine the length of the interviews and the suitability of questions, pilot studies were undertaken which were found to be successfully appropriate for the research. Subjects were initially contacted by email and telephone to explain the researcher's study and to seek permission to interview the subject at an appropriate time in the research. Follow-up calls were made to some participants and additional emails were sent to the others to arrange interview times and locations. Two interviews were carried out by telephone due to the busy schedule of

the interviewee. An unstructured technique was used for telephone interviews. Each of the other participants agreed to a taped interview.

Teachers and Principals were interviewed as they were viewed as a significant influence on the delivery of intercultural education in primary schools, as well as on the overall education and personal development of the children in their care. Interview questions were carefully devised and were piloted on a number of close colleagues working in the field of education. Following an analysis of the pilot study a number of changes were made to the order of the questions and additional topics were included to be explored (See appendix 6) for an outline of the interview questions with teachers and principals. The interviews with school Principals and teachers (eleven in total) concentrated on two very topical themes - (a) *intercultural education* and (b) *racism.* Interviewees were chosen as a result of those who indicated in the school questionnaire that they would be interested in further involvement in the study. It was difficult to talk to some Principals/teachers because of their hectic schedules; however eleven gave their time to speak, while three of these were subsequently used as host schools for the active research. The objective of interviewing Principals was to inform them in more detail about the research in question, to determine who would be interested in getting further involved in the research, and to learn about the school's awareness and approaches, if any, to intercultural education.

As part of the communication with parents they were also invited to attend their child's school for interview (see Appendix 7: Interview questions for parent interviews). This proved to be a slow and difficult process because of the lack of response from parents. Class teachers were very helpful in this process, in particular because of their communication with parents, which resulted in a number attending for interview. The research with parents proved to be a valuable aspect of the overall research process, in

particular the questionnaire. The data received from the research conducted with parents contributed significantly to the overall findings of the study.

Finally, the contribution of children to the data was of vital importance to this study. The voice of the child was deemed important in order to gain true insight into the young child's development and awareness of intercultural issues. In all 20 interviews took place with children from all schools involved in the study. The interviews were of a semi-structured nature and quite often children spoke freely and at length in response to questions. An outline of the questions used in children's interviews can be seen in Appendix 8. A list of the children interviewed, the school they attended and their nationality is provided in appendix 9. The children's interviews proved to be a very significant aspect of the overall study although challenging at times because of the young age of the children (4-6 year olds), which limited the line of questioning and language use. However, in order to encourage the children to express themselves age appropriate stimuli were used; for instance, the children were asked to draw pictures of their friends using skin-tone crayons, which were then discussed to detect the children's awareness of their friend's nationalities, cultures or skin tone. Simple picture books about children from different countries were used to gather information on stereotyping and racism. A significant amount of data was obtained from the research conducted with children, and therefore proved to be very worthwhile.

5.1.3 Observation of Children

The observations proved to be a useful research tool because it allowed the researcher to become familiar with the children in the classes and vice versa. Thus, at the time of interview the children felt more comfortable and relaxed. The physical aspect of classrooms and schools was also observed and notes were taken in regard to school

ethos' visual displays, books and so on that promoted cultural inclusiveness and acceptance of the pupils in the school and wider community. An abundance of data was received from observations of children and schools. In order to document observations of school and classroom environments and children's work, video and photographs were used. This process allowed for visuals to be inserted into the findings sections, which provided an opportunity for evidence-based discussions.

5.1.4 Intercultural Lessons

The initial methodology involved observations of teachers and pupils in two schools (School A and School B), as well as the delivery of an intercultural education lesson by the researcher once a week over an eight week period (October 2003-December 2003). The lessons were age-appropriate and were devised in consultation with recommendations for and approaches to intercultural education in the early childhood classroom suggested by a number of recognised sources, for instance, *Anti-Bias-Curriculum* (Derman-Sparks: 1989); *Roots and Wings* (York: 1991) Bisson, Julie. *Celebrate! An Anti-Bias Guide to Enjoying Holidays in Early Childhood Programs* (Bisson: 1997) and *Include Me Too!-Human Diversity in Early Childhood* (Kilbride: 1997) the *Primary Curriculum* (Government of Ireland: 1999). Although the lessons provided useful data, such as children's drawings and opinions, it was decided to change direction for the rest of the study. There were a number of reasons for this: firstly, although a number of the lessons were videoed it was very difficult to observe the children in action because there was too much emphasis on teaching and getting the lessons finished. Secondly, upon reflection it was decided that a more in depth approach was needed to observe and listen to the children's opinions on cultural diversity issues. Hence, the second phase of the study in schools C, D and E focused strongly on observations and interviews. Thirdly, the teaching aspect of the study did

not yield sufficient data to explore the research questions adequately. As a result of these changes the data was more extensive which in turn provided an opportunity to explore the research questions in-depth.

The change in methodological styles from those used in schools A and B to those adopted in schools C, D and E was very beneficial to the overall outcomes of the study. Although all research tools provided interesting data, it was the research conducted in schools C, D and E that proved to be most insightful into the study of intercultural education in primary schools in Ireland. To sum up, the methodology involved the use of a wide range of research tools, which as a result provided in depth data and greater scope to explore the research questions.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the main research tools used as part of this study. The overall method adopted was that of triangulation which included interviews, observations and questionnaire distribution with both adults and children involved in the different elements of the research. Consideration was given to a number of ethical issues because of the sensitive nature of working with young children and because of the somewhat controversial nature of the research topic. For instance, confidentiality and anonymity were promised to all respondents, while parental permission was received for the participation of all children involved in the study. Recognition is given to the fact that it was decided to change direction during the study from an engagement with intercultural lessons with children towards a more discussion/observational discussion with them. The change in research approach also involved greater participation by the whole-school community, for instance parental involvement.

CHAPTER 6: DATA FINDINGS-SCHOOL ISSUES: DIVERSITY, CULTURE AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Introduction

As a result of the significant number of topics of interest that were highlighted in the data analysis it was decided to divide the analysis discussion into two parts, namely chapter 6 and chapter 7. The aim of chapter 6 is to analyse the data collected and discuss the findings in a thematic format. This chapter outlines the topics which emerged from the data in a significant manner, while chapter 7 will outline the topics which materialized in a less significant way. The main focus of this chapter is to discuss findings from the point of view of teaching personnel and Principals, the children's views on culture, diversity and life in school, the views of the parents on culture and diversity and intercultural education. Firstly, a profile of the schools involved in the study will be given, for instance, location, economic and employment status of the area, pupil diversity and so on. The profile will help place the findings into context with the characteristics of the school and its surrounding area. There were five schools, which will be referred to as School A, B, C, D, E, involved in the action research aspect of the study. The research included parent and school questionnaires, observation of children, interviews with teachers, parents and children and the use of intercultural lesson plans with both schools A and B, all of which have been outlined in the methodology section. A brief description of each school and the locality in which it was set will be given, together with the table below which outline the characteristics of each school in terms of setting, pupil and teacher population, cultural diversity and so on:

Table 13: Characteristics of the Schools in the Study

	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C	SCHOOL D	SCHOOL E
Location*	Suburb in urban area	Town in East Ireland	Suburb in urban area	Suburb in urban area	Suburb in urban area
Total population of area**	1,855	3,243	196,413	5,633	7,803
School classification	Co-educational/ Denominational	Girls only/ Denominational	Girls only/ Denominational	Boys only/ Denominational	Co-educational/ Denominational
Teachers***	3	24	16	22	26
Junior infant teacher	1	3	2	2	4
Senior infant teachers	1	7	1	1	4
RTT******	0	1	1	0	1
English language support teachers	0	0	1	1	3
Learning support teachers	0	1	1	2	1
Resource teachers	1	3	1	3	3
Pupil pop.*******	Less than 100	201-400	201-400	201-400	401-600
Traveller pupil pop.	0	10	14	0	11
International pupil pop.********	0	Unstated for whole school- 3 in junior and senior infants	46	6	120

* Location means that of the actual town/village/suburb where the school is located within each of the main urban/rural areas named

** Taken from Census 2002 figures (http://www.cso.ie)

*** Total numbers of teachers in each school, including Principal full-time and part-time teachers

**** Includes a part-time teacher

***** The school questionnaire gave the following options for pupil population: less than 100/101-200/201-400/401-600/600+

****** Pupils whose first language was one other than English or Irish

An outline of the characteristics of each of the five schools and their locality will be given on the basis of observations made and interviews conducted during this study:

School A:

This was a co-educational, Catholic school in a village setting in a city suburb. In recent years this village has become highly developed with modern apartments and retail units. Such modern developments have changed the appearance of the village and have resulted in more people living in the area, and as a result have contributed to increased traffic congestion.

My first encounter with the staff at the school took place on October 8th 2003. During this visit I spoke with the Principal to obtain some general information about the school and the pupils. The school itself was small in size with only two teachers - both female, including the principal. The Principal taught junior infants to second class, while the other teacher taught third to sixth class. For the purpose of this study only junior and senior infant children were needed, and therefore while I met with these children the principal supervised the children from first and second class. There were twelve children in total in junior and senior infants, ranging from four to six years.

Child 3 attended speech therapy, while child 11 was born in Mexico but adopted as a baby by Irish parents. The parents of all twelve children completed a permission slip, which allowed the children to take part in the study. The principal in School A was very welcoming and supportive of this research as she demonstrated by attaching a personal note of approval with the parent permission note.

The displays and resources in the classroom itself did not promote cultural diversity, for instance there were no pictures of children from different countries. Irish culture was an aspect of the classroom displays, for example, there was a map of Ireland and the Irish language was also featured. The books in the library were also very mono-cultural.

School B:

School B was a Catholic, girl's only school and was located in a town in East Ireland. However, since the time of the study the area surrounding the school has become quite developed with the construction of new houses for people who commute to the nearest city for employment.

There were eighteen children involved in this study, all of who were in senior infants.

The majority of children in this class were Irish by birth (one of whom was a settled Traveller), however child 10 was born in China. There was one child

with diabetes and therefore required a special needs assistant at all times in the classroom. All the children were well behaved on my visits and seemed to have a friendly relationship with one another.

The classroom was bright and colourful with lovely displays of the children's art work and writing. There were a good selection of activities and maths equipment and there was also a computer corner in the room. Intercultural education did not seem to be an aspect of the classroom environment, for instance there were only white female dolls as opposed to giving children the opportunity to play with dolls of different skin colour gender. There were lots of books in the library however the pictures and content of the majority was very mono-cultural. The school itself had a few posters of children with different skin colours outside the Principals office. There was also a UNICEF poster on children's rights. The Principal said that this research made her more aware of cultural diversity and she wanted the school to become more representative of different nationalities.

School C:

School C was located in an urban suburb. It was a girl's Roman Catholic school. The school day began at 8.50am and ended at 1.30pm for the infant classes. There were seventeen children in the junior infant class that took part in the research. The teacher was also the vice-principal and she was very supportive of the study.

Five of the pupils (Child 4; Child 7; Child 8; Child 10 and Child 12) were withdrawn regularly for English language support classes. The following information was obtained about these children from the class teacher:

- Child 4 was born in Pakistan. Her father was a doctor and she and her family had been living in Ireland for two years. According to the class teacher the child's mother had 'fairly good English'.
- Child 7 was born in Lithuania. This was her second year at school as she repeated junior infants. She lived with her mother.
- Child 8 was also from Lithuania and had been living in Ireland for approximately one year. She had very poor English, while her mother was unable to speak English.
- Child 10 had no language difficulty as her mother was Irish and her father was Indian. This child was born in India and according to the teacher lived in England prior to settling in Ireland..
- Child 10 was Nigerian and was able to communicate well in English. The teacher was unsure about the child's mother tongue, however she thought it could be urdu/French. The child's first language was something that this teacher should have been *sure* of language is a very important aspect of any person's identity. The fact that this teacher guessed child 10's first language demonstrates a lack in communication between family and school in this instance.

The class teacher informed me that a few of the pupils came from socially and economically disadvantaged home backgrounds. This was important information in case any of these children were to be interviewed.
Irish culture was quite prevalent as part of the school ethos, for instance there were many displays of irish language in the corridors and on one occasion it was 'seacthain na gaeilge' or 'irish week'. Pictures in the corridors included children and adults of many different nationalities and a map of the world was on display to help locate the many different countries that were represented by pupils in the school.

School D:

This was a boy's only Catholic school in an urban suburb. The school was located in a densely populated residential area and was close by to a local shopping centre and Catholic Church. There is a 'buzzer' system in place to enter the school. According to the principal the school had been a target of vandalism, such as broken windows in the past. Upon entering the school the interest in sport was clear, for instance there are many photographs of pupils who won different competitions for football or athletics. Evidence of Irish culture was also visible, for example there were displays in Irish language and a framed copy of the Irish proclamation was also hanging on a wall at the entrance to the school.

The Principal was male, while the class teacher was female. The teachers and staff were very welcoming and accommodating in this school, especially the school secretary who was very helpful with phone calls, administrative requests and so on. There were thirty-one boys in the junior class that took part in the study.

The majority of the pupils were born in Ireland, however, two children were born outside Ireland-Child 28 was born in Germany, while Child 17 was born in Congo. Child 28 had poor English language skills as he had only arrived in Ireland a few months previous to the study. He was withdrawn from the classroom every day to attend the English language support teacher. During one observation session child 28 returned from the English language support teacher's class and the other children were asking him what he was doing with that teacher. The children's class teacher had told the pupils that Child 28 was receiving help to learn English. Perhaps the children's young ages led to this inquisitiveness and eagerness to find out what was happening in a classroom outside their own environment. The parents of two children did not give permission for their children to be involved in the study and they were therefore not observed or interviewed. Observations were conducted in the classroom, while interviews took place in the school library.

School E:

School E, was also situated in an urban suburb. This was the most modern of all the schools involved in the study and was first opened approximately ten years ago. School E was a co-educational Roman Catholic School and was located in a socially and economically disadvantaged community.

Once again there was bell to press to gain access to the school for security reasons. The first impressions of this school were positive in the sense that it had a very child-centered atmosphere, for instance it had bright walls, colourful displays of photographs and children's artwork and writing. The cultural diversity of the pupils in the school was also evident even without meeting a child because of the various languages that were on display at the entrance to the school. There were booklets on the Irish education system available in many languages (some of which included Polish, French, Lithuanian) for parents to take. There was also a very large map of the world on display with a border of the national flags of all the different countries of origin of the children in the school. The children passed this everyday going to and from their classroom or to the PE hall.

Prior to observing or interviewing the pupils numerous meeting were held with and phone calls made to the Principal of School E. This Principal's enthusiasm for intercultural education and the development of a positive place for cultural diversity in her school was evident from the first meeting with her. She was very supportive of the study and had my presence in the school approved by the Board of management and parents before any research was undertaken. Reference will be made on several occasions during the topics discussed in this chapter to the Principal of School E, which will support her commitment to the creation of an inclusive learning environment of all the children in her care. The children involved in the study were in senior infants and were taught by a female teacher:

Fourteen of the Thirty-two children in this class were born outside Ireland. The nationalities of the children included Irish, Jordanian, Bosnian, Nigerian, Angolan, Albanian and Indian. These children attended the English Language Support teacher on a regular basis. The Indian child had only been in the class a few weeks prior to this research. According to the teacher this child could not speak any English. During observations it this was noticed, however the teacher and other pupils were very supportive of the child and a steady progress could be seen even during the short time of this study. The child's mother was interviewed as part of the parent interviews.

As previously outlined in the methodology chapter, data was collected using a method of triangulation which incorporated interviews, questionnaires and observations, for example, children in junior and senior infant classes were observed and interviewed, parents were sent questionnaires and were interviewed; teachers and others, such as professionals working with Traveller groups were interviewed. Upon reading through interviews and questionnaires a number of common themes emerged (listed below), some of which may not apply to all groups of data sources, for example, the theme of

school policy only applies to teachers and other professionals. The themes were chosen on the basis of their relationship and significance to the study of intercultural education, with a special emphasis on children between the ages of four and six years. The research questions were referred to at all times during the selection of the themes, as it was deemed important to reflect the research questions in the chosen themes. The following themes and sub themes will be explored in this part of chapter 6:

6.1 Cultural Identity and Attitudes
- 6.1.1 Language
  - 6.1.1.1 English as a Second Language and First Language Recognition
  - 6.1.1.2 Irish language
- 6.1.2 Family Traditions and Celebrations
- 6.1.3 National Identity
- 6.1.4 Traveller Community

6.2 Racism

6.1 Cultural Identity and Attitudes

This section will explore different aspects of cultural identity and cognate attitudes. Firstly, the diversity of participants' language found in the research will be explored, with specific attention being given to English as a Second language, their first language use and the Irish language. Secondly, the way in which families celebrate traditions and the importance given to such occasions in terms of family life and the children's education will be described. The children's recognition of their own family members will also be analysed. Thirdly, the issue of national identity will be addressed. This topic became prevalent as part of the theme of cultural identity when examining the data findings.

Giddens (2001: 29) refers to identity, in the broadest sense of the word, as "the understandings people hold about who they are and what is meaningful to them. These

understandings are formed in relation to certain attributes that hold priority over other sources of meaning". The sources of identity Giddens refers to include for instance, gender, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnicity and social class (Ibid). According to the Australian website 'Racism. No Way' (http:www.racismnoway.com.au), cultural identity, which is the focus of this particular theme, represents "a person's sense of self identity related to their notion of belonging to a particular cultural or ethnic group". The research explored the awareness and characteristics of selected adults and children's cultural identity, through the means of interviews, a family history questionnaire and observations. Thus the theme of cultural identity and attitudes emerged when the data was examined.

6.1.1 Language

According to Derman-Sparks (1989), 'language is a basic element of culture' and is therefore a key aspect of cultural identity. Language is a form of communication, which is used in both written and spoken forms in educational, family and other social environments. As part of the research process it was deemed important to address children's awareness of the languages they learn and communicate with at school and at home. The findings from the parent questionnaire showed a wide variety of first languages for both adults and children; For instance, the children in the 37 schools surveyed had 43 different mother tongues amongst them, which included the following:

Figure 3: Number of Children with a European First language

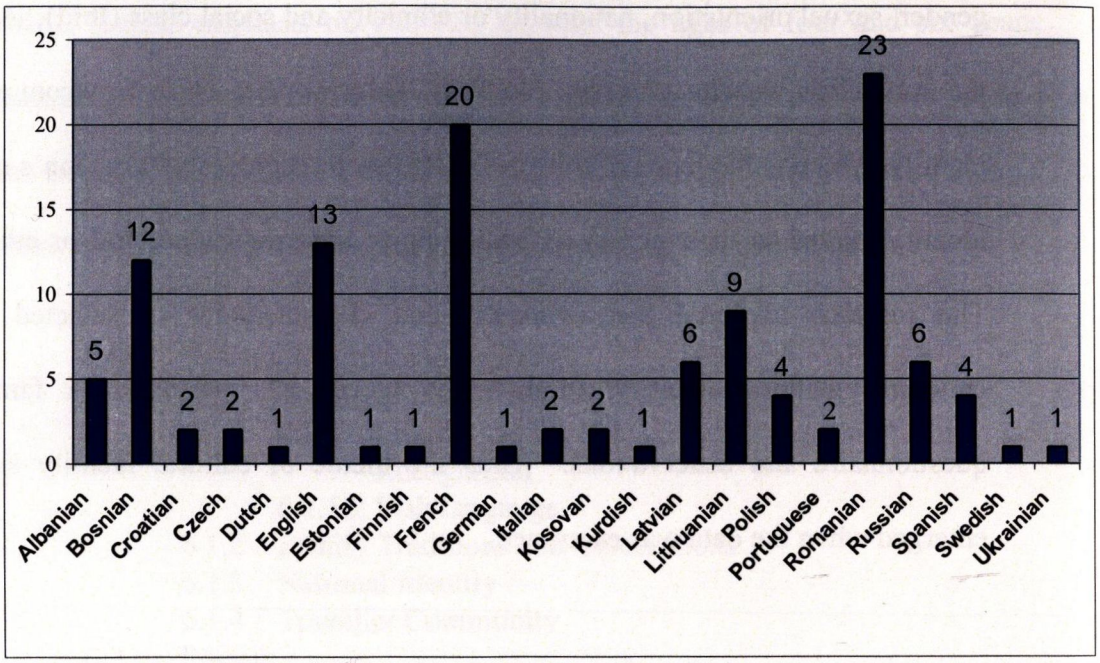


Figure 4: Number if children with an African First Language

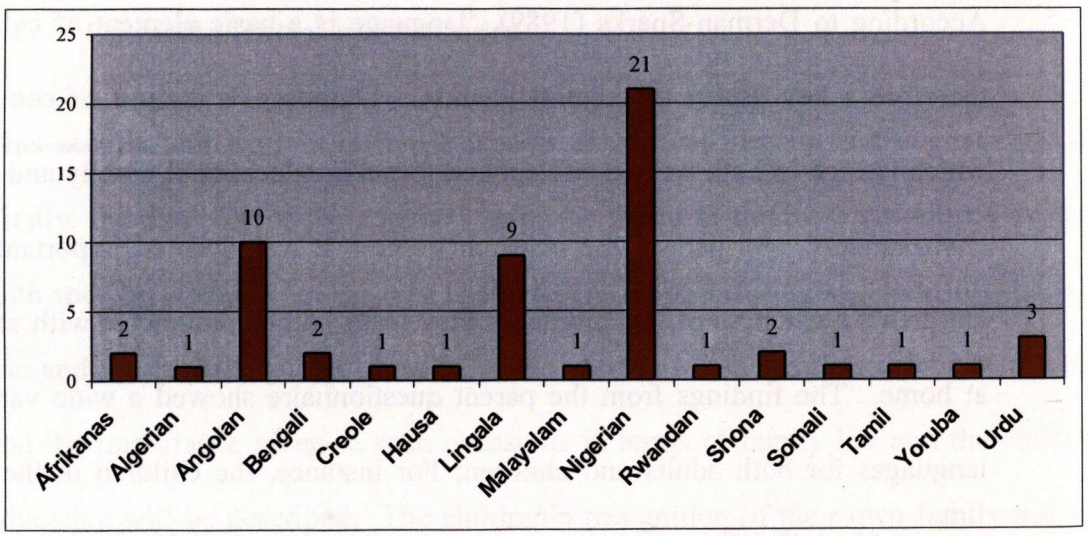
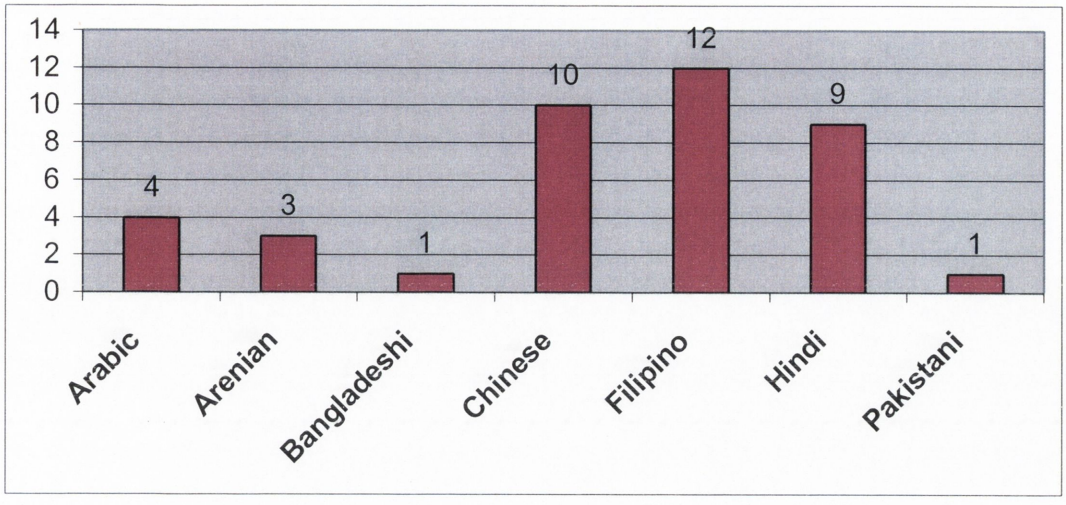


Figure 5: Number if Children with Asian/ Middle East First Language



The survey clearly shows a wide range in language diversity. The information for 56 children in the survey was either unknown or missing, indicating the possible existence of even more diversity in terms of first languages.

In a group discussion with children from School A (December 3rd 2003) spoken languages in Ireland and the location of Ireland on the world map were discussed. The children sat in a circle while discussing a map of the world that was put on display. They were very interested in the discussion as Ireland and Mexico were pointed out on the map (the countries of birth of the children in the group).

The children were then asked, "What language do most Irish people speak?". The children responded:

"I don't remember"
"Irish"
"Spanish"

Eventually one child said, "English". The girl who had been born in Spain told the rest of the class some words she knew in Spanish, e.g. "Hola" "Adios". A tape with samples of different languages (e.g. from Bolivia and Honduras, Philipines and Kenya) was played for the children. The countries were located on the world map before the children listened to the corresponding languages. While the tape was playing it was paused after the examples and the children repeated the greeting in the new language, e.g. 'jamboe' means hello in Swahilli. They really enjoyed this exercise. (December 3rd 2003, School A: Video)

One child who was born in Ireland but whose parents were born in China, was asked about her recognition of the Chinese language. She was aware of the language and was used to hearing it at home but was unable to say anything in Chinese.

Researcher: What language do the people speak in Singapore?
Child 14: Chinese.
Researcher: Can you speak Chinese?
Child 14: No.
Researcher: Do you know any words in Chinese-what about hello?
Child 14: No
Researcher: Are your mommy and daddy from Singapore as well?
Child 14: Yes
Researcher: Can your mommy and daddy speak Chinese?
Child 14: Yes, but I don't know what they mean.
(Interview with Child 14-female pupil, School B: November 19th 2003)

This extract highlights a social pattern that is part of Irish society, in other words because of immigration as outlined in chapter one, families are becoming increasingly multi-lingual, for example, a family who immigrate to Ireland from Lithuania may only speak lithuanian and may have no knowledge of the English language. However, if this family had a young child he/she could attend school in Ireland and would learn English. The child's knowledge and use of Lithuanian would then depend on his/her parent's influence; meanwhile his/her parents may have poor English skills.

Such an example highlights the reality of first and second language use and that learning English as a second language is part of many immigrant children's education. This will be explored in the following section.

6.1.1.1 English as a Second Language and First Language Recognition

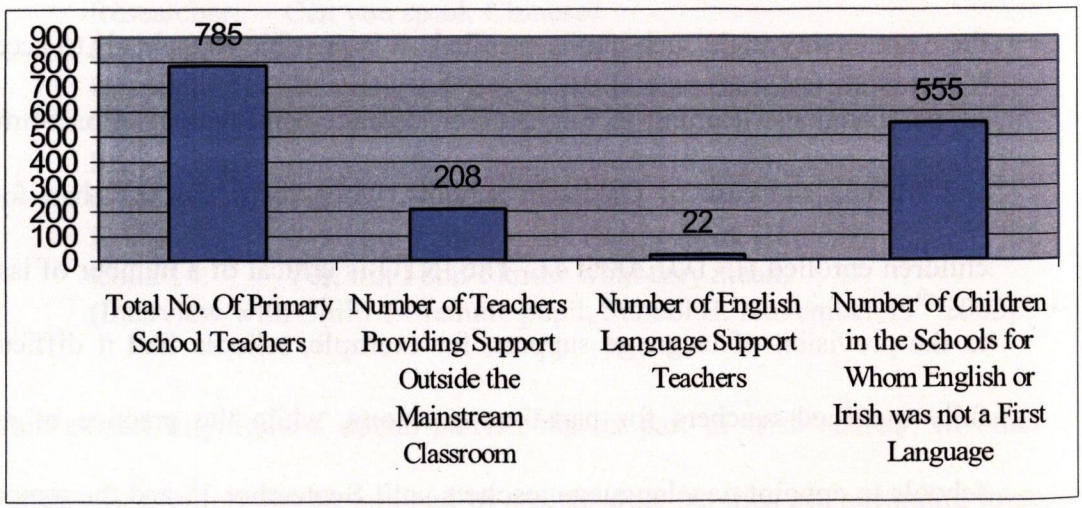
The information received from the 73 schools involved in the survey was quite diverse, for instance, there was a difference in the level of language diversity, school policies and resources and so on. The provision of English Language Support in the primary schools surveyed also proved to be an issue of diversity. Although referred to at the time of the survey as ELS, this support for pupils is now mostly referred to as English language support in schools and is delivered to pupils by the language support teacher. Additional full-time language support teachers are appointed when there is 14 non-English speaking children enrolled in a school, and a further teacher is appointed where there are twenty-eight such pupils enrolled. It is possible for schools to access grants to support language learning in English (for instance employment of part-time teachers), and Irish in the case of Gaeltacht schools, when there are less than fourteen such children enrolled (INTO, 2006: 4). The INTO is critical of a number of issues relating to the provision of language support, for example, schools find it difficult to attract fully qualified teachers for part-time positions, while the practice of not allowing schools to appoint new language teachers until September 1st and the temporary nature of such positions also causes difficulty in finding fully qualified teachers (I.N.T.O., 2006: 5). According to the I.N.T.O. there is a lack of professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their abilities and skills in the area of language teaching as well as there being a lack of adequate resources and materials to support such teaching (Ibid). One interviewee in this study criticised the method of

withdrawing children for language support teaching and indicated that emersion in the English language and with English speaking peers is a vital aspect of successful language teaching:

> The withdrawal method where they take them out to someone who may not be a qualified teacher, who's not on the teaching staff, may not have great communications. All the research would say, even going back to oral language itself that other children and with an adult to scaffold language in that context, be it oral language or play, that's how children learn language. Drawing them into isolation from their peers who are English speaking seems to be ludicrous. (Interview with Professional 2: May 22nd, 2002)

It was clear from the findings that English Language Support Teachers are now being widely employed in the primary schools surveyed to help educate children who speak English as a Second Language as the figure below demonstrates:

Figure 6: Teacher numbers in Schools (Results obtained from school questionnaire)



The survey therefore revealed that there were an average of 11 teachers in each school and an average of 8 children per school.

One school in the survey reported that the 23 pupils in junior and senior infants received approximately 13 hours per week each of English language tuition by an

English language support teacher. This figure was written as an approximation, which indicates that some weeks the children may receive less or perhaps more individual English language lessons. This is an interesting example of the large-scale diversity that is prevalent in Irish schools today. Figure 7 outlines the numbers of hours per week that each child attended English language support classes at the time of the survey:

Figure 7: Number of Hours per Week that Newcomer Senior Infant Pupils Attended English Language Support

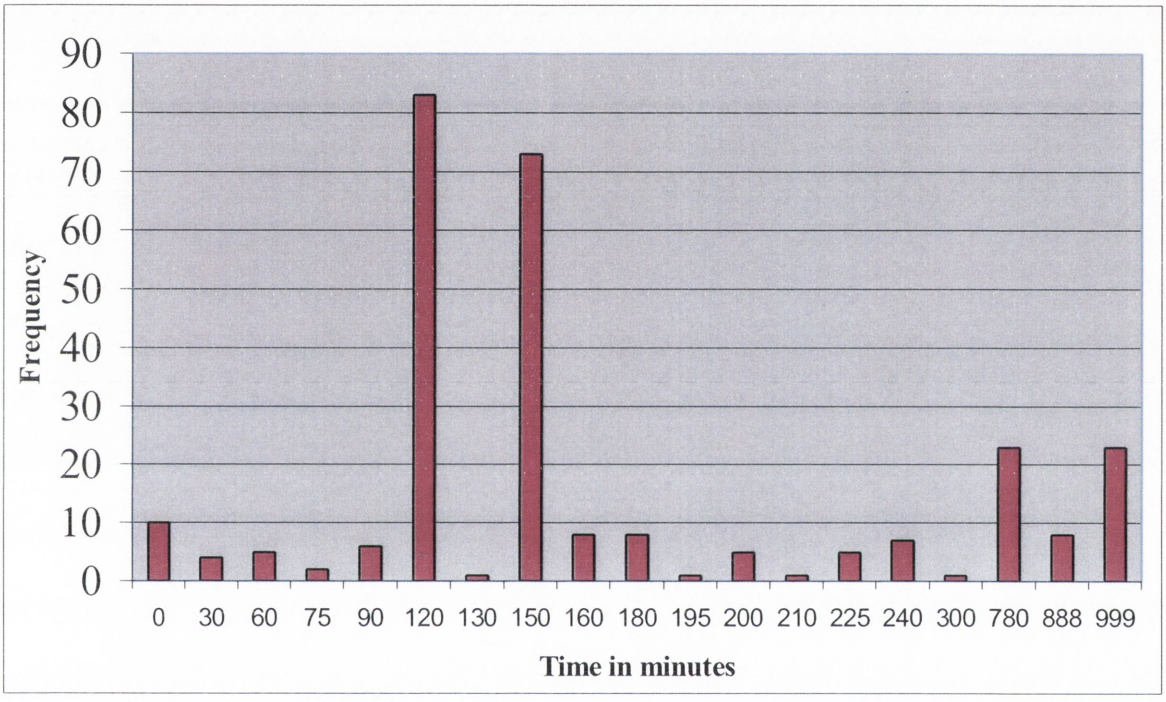


Figure 7 demonstrates that 33 children were receiving no language support. According to the Principals interviewed some of these children did not require additional support because they had a good standard of English, while some were in schools who did not have the basic number of non-English speaking children enrolled necessary to receive additional language support.

Principal 8 of School E that had a high intake of international pupils (120+) wanted the children in her care to gain as much knowledge from their English language classes as possible. As the Department of Education and Science only recommends two years intervention for children with little or no English entering the Irish education system (http://www.education.ie), a lot of work has to get done in a short time for both teacher and pupil. Through her conversation with a NEPS Psychologist, this particular Principal was told that five years is a more realistic amount of time for special intervention for children with little or no English (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003). Principal 8 outlined a number of strategies her school used to support children attending English language support classes. The English language support teachers were divided up into three specific groups: 'teacher one' was known as the 'language blaster', which meant that he/she used lots of verbal language, 'teacher two' taught language and emergent readers, while 'teacher three' was also a language blaster and sometimes had a mix of pupils. The purpose of 'teacher three' was that children got used to being with children of different skin colour to their own and the international pupils got the benefit of being in the presence of children who had a better grasp of the English language than themselves, thus learning from them (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003). School E also placed importance on the language needs of the parents in the school community. According to the Principal of the school, three teachers from the school stayed late two evenings per week to teach English to local adults.

All the children in the survey were either bilingual (as all children spoke English and Irish or as their first language) or multi-lingual (as some children spoke their first language, English as a second language and Irish). Child 2, originally from Nigeria, showed her multilingualism in the following ways demonstrated by the next extract:

Researcher: What languages can you speak Sarah?
Child 2: English, French and urdu (check spelling)
Researcher: Can you say something to me in French?
Child 2: Am....
Researcher: Bonjour, ca va?
Child 2: Ca va!
Researcher: Very good. You also learn another language in school
Child 2: Irish
Researcher: Good sarah
(Jennifer says something in her first language)
Child 2: That means how are you!
Researcher: I see.
Child 2: I can speak Dutch as well (Says hello in Dutch)
Researcher: Who teaches you Dutch?
Child 2: I just learned it
Researcher: Do you know who teaches it to you?
Child 2: I can't remember
Researcher: What language do you speak at home with your family?
Child 2: Sometimes English, sometimes Urdu
Researcher: Do you speak French at home?
Child 2: I speak it to the people who speak it
Researcher: Like whom?
Child 2: Like the man beside me
Researcher: I see. What kinds of people live beside you?
Child 2: Black people
Researcher: Do you have books at home?
Child 2: Yes
Researcher: What language are your books written in?
Child 2: English
(Interview with Child 2-female/6 yrs. 1 month/born in Nigeria, School E: March 3rd 2004)

Child 13 was adopted from Mexico when she was a baby but was very familiar with her heritage and language abilities as shown in the following extract:

Researcher: What language do the people speak in Mexico?
Child 13: They speak kind of Spanishy.
Researcher: Can you speak Spanish?
Child 13: Yes.
Researcher: What words do you know?
Child 13: "Hola"
Researcher: What does Hola mean?
Child 13: Hello.
Researcher: Hola Joanne!
Child 13: Hola Lorraine!
Researcher: Do you know any other Spanish words?
Child 13: I know one more but it's an Irish word.

Researcher: What is it?
Child 13: Fliuch, it means wet.
Researcher: Do you learn Spanish words at home?
Child 13: Yes.
Researcher: Who teaches you?
Child 13: My mom.
Researcher: Oh she's very good.
Child 13: My dad only knows English.
Researcher: Does your mom know Spanish?
Child 13: Yes.
Researcher: Where is your mom from?
Child 13: (pauses.....)
Researcher: Is she from Ireland as well?
Child 13: No, she's from.....
Researcher: Well don't worry if you're not sure because you can fill that in on the sheet I gave to your teacher and I'll collect it next week.
Researcher: Are you able to write any Spanish words?
Child 13: No.
Researcher: Do you know the Spanish word for Goodbye?
Child 13: (pauses.....) Adios!
Researcher: Adios! Very good.
(Interview with child 13-female/born in Mexico-adopted Ireland, School A: November 19th 2003)

Child 13 had never returned to Mexico however it could be interpreted that her family felt it was important to teach her about her cultural heritage. Another example of language diversity is seen through a conversation with a child who attended school E:

Researcher: What languages do you speak?
Child 3: English.
Researcher: Anything else?
Child 3: That's all, oh and Irish.
Researcher: Very good. Do you speak any different language at home?
Child 3: Yes I do, French..
Researcher: Who do you speak French with?
Child 3: My brother.
Researcher: Do you speak French with your mom and dad?
Child 3: Yes.
(Interview with Child 3- female/6 yrs./Nigeria, School E: March 3rd, 2004)

The diversity of languages amongst pupils raised the issue of first language recognition and its importance in the child's education and identity. According to Siraj-Blatchford

(1994) the educator is the facilitator for children's use of language and language diversity in the classroom, and as such where possible "children should be encouraged to speak in their home language to each other and during role-play" (Siraj-Blatchford, 1994: 79). Blatchford (1994) also goes on to say that "in a setting where children feel comfortable and secure they will volunteer words in their home language, but children should not be forced to say things in their first language if they do not want to" (Ibid). In the extract below professional 2 highlighted her opinion of the importance of language as part of a child's identity and encouraged the use of first languages in schools where possible, similar to the views of Blatchford outlined above:

Researcher: What are your opinions on the promotion of a child's mother tongue who speaks English as a second language?

Professional 2: I think it's important. This goes back to identity, language definitely identifies who you are therefore if you don't have an opportunity to use your language you are being denied an identity. This idea, I think it was in England recently, the Home Secretary was insisting that they'd have to do an English test coming into the country before they be let in, sounded quite horrific to me. They were really saying they can come into the country but they must become like us. Languages shouldn't be allowed to die. There's always s a different view of the world seen through a language so the more views of the world we have the better. They have to be closely related, obviously living in an English speaking community life is more difficult for them. To deliberately seek out other children who speak the same language is important and let them speak to one another in their own language.

I think this often goes back to an issue of poverty, I know we have the EU situation, but even before that, if a child comes from say France, I think this would be celebrated as very interesting and we'd all learn how to count in French for example because he/she may be from a rich country. Why do we discriminate in these ways, it goes back to poverty and power.

(Interview with Professional 2, May 22nd, 2002)

This research clearly showed diversity in languages amongst the pupils in the schools surveyed. Such diversity should be respected and promoted in classrooms as indicated by Professional 2 above. If Derman-Sparks (1989) indicates language forms part of a person's identity a child's first language is an equally important aspect of his/her identity as that of a second language learned at school.

6.1.1.2 Irish Language

The Irish language is a compulsory aspect of the primary school curriculum, however some children are exempt from learning the language in certain circumstances[1]. Irish primary schools promote a close relationship between the English and Irish languages as recommended in the Primary Curriculum (1999). Both languages are taught in three different schools contexts: **1.** Schools in which English is the first language of the children, **2.** Schools in which Irish is the home language and medium of instruction, and **3.** Schools in which Irish may or may not be the home language of the children but is the medium of instruction in the school (*Primary Curriculum-Introduction*, 1999: 43). The Primary Curriculum (1999) states that an appropriate experience of both English and Irish "has an important contribution to make to the development of the child's cultural awareness and sense of cultural identity" (Ibid). Thus, the significance of language learning in a child's overall identity is clear.

A mere 4 out of 37 respondents in the parent questionnaire felt that Irish was not an important part of their child's school curriculum. This shows that these respondents placed value on Irish as a language, and as a learning medium. In other words the

majority of parents in the survey felt that it was important to them that their child speaks and learns Irish at school. Parent 3 noted the Irish language as an important aspect of her own childhood education:

> Irish, Irish was a big one. My sister has fluent Irish, well she lives in Carraroe now. Everything is Irish to her. And French was a subject I loved. But it was down to my teacher-she was very good.....I still love Irish as a language. I would spend a lot of time in Galway and I love listening to them.
>
> (Interview with Parents 3, School D)

The 'them' above refers to the local people in Connemara Co. Galway. Parent 3 appeared to be very passionate about languages, in particular the Irish language, an interest she passed onto her child, and viewed as an important part of her child's education as illustrated below:

Researcher:	What do you feel are the important aspects of your child's education?
Parent 3:	Well the enthusiasm would be one thing. He likes to learn. He comes home with the little cards with the Irish words and he has to learn them. He knows them. Now the only thing is we were at home there and I didn't know what the Irish was for computer.
Researcher:	Oh, its ríomhaire.
Parent 3:	Ríomhaire is it. He seems to have the interest in Irish, well I have it I suppose.

The issue of the Irish language was explored in the children's interviews as well as the adult interviews, for instance children were asked to give meanings of words in Irish or to identify Irish as a language they spoke at school. The majority of children were aware of Irish words, but some however did not know the name of the language they were learning (Irish). Perhaps this was a characteristic of their developmental stage, as the interviews below indicate:

Researcher:	What languages can you speak?
Child 1:	From Poland and English.
Researcher:	Polish and English, good. I think you learn another language at school. Do you know what it is?
Child 1:	No.

Researcher: Well, have you ever heard your teacher say Seas suas agus suí sios?
Child 1: Yes.
Researcher: Do you know what that language is?
Child 1: Yes. It is sit down on the chair.
Researcher: Good. That's what one of them means. It's called Irish.
(At this point I ask J to say something to me in Polish, which he seems very happy about. It is important to encourage the use of a child's first language in school where possible. J says hello and goodbye to me in Polish).
Researcher: What language do you speak in your house?
Child 1: Polish.
Researcher: Do you ever speak English in your house?
Child 1: Yes.
(Interview with Child 1-male/6 yrs. 9mths/Born in Poland, School E: February '04)

Researcher: Tell me , what languages can you speak?
Child 20: I can speak Ireland language.
Researcher: Ireland language, very good. What language are you speaking now to me?
Child 20: Ireland.
Researcher: Do you know the name of the language, of the way we're talking right now?
Child 20: No.
Researcher: It starts with the letter 'e', 'eddie elephant' (letter land), eng....
Child 20: English.
Researcher: Your teacher teaches you another language too. What is it again?
Child 20: Irish.
Researcher: Do you know any words in Irish?
Child 20: Yes.
Researcher: Can you tell me some?
Child 20: Slán leat agus go raibh maith agat, go raibh maith agat, tá fáilte romhat, oh I can't think of the word for goodbye...
Researcher: Slán.
Child 20: No, it's for hi, oh yes Hola
Researcher: That's that Spanish word for 'hi' we learned last week, very good
(Interview with Child 20-female/Irish, School B: December 10th 2003)

One Traveller child, who attended School E was asked to define her spoken languages but was also unsure what to say. Her recognition of Cant (the native Traveller language) was also absent, which was not surprising as according to Pavee Point

although an important part of Traveller heritage Cant is "little spoken today" (http://www.paveepoint.ie):

> Researcher: Ok, can you tell me A, what languages can you speak?
> Child 13: pauses....
> Researcher: Is it English or Irish?
> Child 13: Irish
> Researcher: Have you ever heard of a language called Cant?
> Child 13: No
> (Interview with Child 13- female/born in Mexico-adopted Ireland, School B, December 3rd, 2003)

It is important to note that for those children not of Irish origin, the Irish language was a third language and therefore was often viewed as less important than their first or second languages, but was possibly viewed an experience of Irish culture. A parent of Indian origin, with good spoken English, living with her child and husband in Ireland for approximately six months before the interview took place indicated her views of the Irish language as follows:

> Researcher: What are your opinions about the Irish language?
> Parent 1: (Laughs) I don't think she can learn because we are not using this language. I'm sure she'll learn the Irish, we are not using it in other places.
> Researcher: What languages does your daughter speak?
> Parent 1: Our language (Malaela-check spelling) and English.
> Researcher: As your child gets older do you think she should be exposed to other languages?
> Parent 1: Yes, I like her to learn other languages, its good for her.
> (Interview with Parent 1, School E, March 16th, 2004)

This parent was very adamant about her daughter becoming as fluent in the English language as possible while living in Ireland. Both she and her husband worked in the medical profession and it was apparent during the interview that she was interested in providing her daughter with a valuable education in Ireland, for example she placed importance on the need for her daughter to learn English as a means for her to progress in life:

Researcher: What would you say are the most important things that your child learns at school?

Parent 1: Probably she is learning everything - drawing, sports and she can talk to others. Before she come here she, when she started she can hardly understand teacher. Then later after two months she can. Now she is talking with us a little bit. In the beginning that was difficult but she is ok now.

(Interview with Parent 1, School E, March 16th, 2004)

In essence the findings showed that primary schools are multi-lingual and that first and second language learning have an important part to play in the preservation of a child's identity and in his/her education.

6.1.2 Family Traditions/Celebrations

This section explores the importance of family traditions and celebrations as part of family life and the influence of culture on such traditions is also highlighted. Giddens defines family as "a group of persons directly linked by kin connections, the adults members of which assume responsibility for caring for children" (Giddens, 2001: 173). The children were all asked about their family in the interviews as family was viewed as part of the child's identity. Some of the responses included:

Researcher: Where do you live A?
Child 18: I live in a trailer, oh no a house
Researcher: A house! Who lives in the house with you?
Child 18: My brothers and sisters.
Researcher: What are your brothers called?
Child 18: T is the big fella, J is the big fella and J's the smallest fella.
Researcher: What are your sister's names?
Child 18: S and K
Researcher: That sounds like a lovely family A. Do you have any pets.
Child 18: Yes, Girlie and Rose. Rose is the horse.
Researcher: What about Girlie?
Child 18: She's the girl.
Researcher: What kind of animal is Girlie?
Child 18: She's a dog.
Researcher: Where does Rose stay?
Child 18: Out in the field.

Researcher: So you have a field beside your house, do you?
Child 18: No, its out in the very back.
(Interview with Child 18-Traveller child/Irish/female School E: December 3rd 2003)

To set the scene the context of celebrations and traditions will be explored. Celebration means, "to mark (a special occasion) with festivities or suspension of routine activities/to mark (a holy day or feast day) ceremonially (The Penguin English Dictionary, 2002). The Penguin English Dictionary (2002) refers to a tradition as:

> The handling down of information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another/an inherited pattern of thought or action, e.g. a religious practice or a social custom/a convention or set of conventions associated with or representative of an individual, group or period/cultural continuity in social attitudes and institutions

Traditions in this study have similar meaning to the definition given by the Penguin English dictionary and refer to such things as birthday celebrations, religious holidays such as christenings, Christmas, Easter, Eid and so on, in other words special occasions which are celebrated as a family. The topic of family traditions was addressed in the family history questionnaire and children's interviews. Thirty-seven parents returned the family history questionnaire from all three schools involved in second part of the study. The majority of the children (28), mothers (27) and fathers (22) from these families were born in Ireland. Thus, Irish traditions were listed as part of family life for most of the respondents, and there were therefore a lot of similarities between responses, for example, Catholic holidays such as Christmas, Easter and St. Patrick's Day were mentioned frequently as holidays that were celebrated by the family. However, Parent 1 of Indian origin stated that she and her family celebrated the feast of Ramadan. Countries of birth listed other than Ireland for both parents and children included Albania, Angola, Bosnia, England, Germany, India, Nigeria, South Africa and the USA:

Table 14 : Country of Birth of Parents and Children

Country of Birth	Child	Mother	Father	Grandparent 1 Male (Live/Lived)	Grandparent 2 Male (Birth Place)	Grandparent 1 Female (Live/Lived)	Grandparent 2 Female (Birth Place)
Albania	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Angola	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Bosnia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
England	2	3	4	0	4	3	6
Germany	0	1	1	0	1	0	
India	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Ireland	28	27	22	31	58	20	40
Isle of Mann	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Italy	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Nigeria	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Pakistan	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Scotland							2
South Africa	1	0	1	1	0	0	2
USA	1	1	1	0	0	1	
Missing/not applicable	0	0	2	0	4	5	12
TOTAL	**37**	**37**	**37**	**37**	74(Male and female grandparents)	**37**	74

Generally parents stated that special occasions were celebrated with families, giving presents, eating dinner, going to festivals/parades and so on.

All parents who responded to the family history questionnaire felt that special occasions/holidays such as Christmas day, Ramadan, Easter, Chinese New Year, St.Patrick's Day, Chanukah and so on were and important part of family life. Parent 1 – who was part of an immigrant family living in Dublin, outlined some of the traditions, which were important to her and her family:

Researcher: Ok, now we are going to talk a little about holiday celebrations. Can you tell me about some of the special days you would celebrate as a family?
Parent 1: Religious mass and Easter, like the St. Patrick's Day which we didn't go as we are working. Then we will go to India and celebrate the Holy Days. For Holy vacations we will go to India and celebrate there. Here we bring the children to the park and things like this.
Researcher: Do you celebrate Indian holidays in Ireland?
Parent 1: Yes.
Researcher: Are religious ceremonies part of your life?
Parent 1: Yes, like marriage, birthdays.
(Interview with Parent 1, School E: March 16th, 2004)

This discussion demonstrated a family who recognised the importance given to continuing their own traditions in a foreign country, while at the same time embracing the traditions and 'way of life' of their host country, for instance St Patrick's Day celebrations. Later in the interview this woman discussed the difference between Irish culture and culture in India. She was emphatic that Irish people have the opportunity to enjoy life more than Indian people and seemed placed value on working diligently in her home country:

Researcher: Can you tell me a few words to describe your own culture?
Parent 1: (Laughs) There is different culture in our place and here. In our place we are not enjoying, we are all working different places, maybe husband works one place and wife works a different place, we don't enjoy life as much. When it comes to vacation we'll enjoy. But here I think all people are enjoying very well. They are going on Summer holidays, they like to journey and so on.
Researcher: Will you go on a Summer holiday?

Parent 1: We are also going but we are not a very rich family. Rich families go different places.

(Interview with Parent 1, School E: March 16th, 2004)

The following is an example of the cultural traditions as expressed by an Irish born family. There appears to be an emphasis placed on the main Catholic celebrations such as Christmas and Easter and family celebrations such as birthdays; Sunday seems to be a 'family day'. There is also an emphasis within this family on celebrating occasions, such as birthdays as a family unit:

Researcher: Moving onto holiday celebrations now. Can you tell me what special days you celebrate as a family, for example birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas.

Parent 3: Well its his father's birthday today and I was up in Dunnes today and I was told, "get daddy a Scooby Doo cake". Of course its nothing to do with the fact that he likes it himself. Like for the kids we'd do a few balloons, a birthday cake and a candle. For the kid's birthdays we'd have their few friends and they'd go off down to leisureplex. For my other son, he'll be three on Sunday we'll have a bouncy castle. You have to mark it.

Researcher: Would other family members be part of the celebrations?

Parent 3: Yes, well on Sunday now I'll have all my family and the kids and all of B's (husband) family. We'll have a BBQ and a few drinks. Christmas would be very much family. I'd either go to my mothers or B's mothers for Christmas dinner. Then I'd have them over Stephen's day. We'd have different nights.

Researcher: Are religious holidays important in your family life?

Parent 3: Am, we probably wouldn't mention them too much. I mean we'd go to mass every Sunday to Children's mass. I wouldn't mention that its Our Lady's birthday. No I wouldn't. Patrick's Day now probably because of the parade. Then you've Easter then. On Good Friday now I brought him up, probably because he's getting older. I don't think he fully understands it. You know the children's stations of the cross?

Researcher: Yes.

Parent 3: Which I have to be honest with you, I prefer the children's one than the adults one. The effort and everything they put into it. We'd go to the children's Christmas mass.

(Interview with Parent 3, School E: March 16th, 2004)

As part of the action research element of this study in School A the 'Watoto Trócaire Pack' was used as a tool to discuss culture, family, friends and different ways of

living. A story was read about a girl called Cecilia from Nairobi in Kenya, whose spoken language was Swahilli. A picture of Cecilia with her mother and father was shown to the children, and was discussed, for instance the location of Kenya and Nairobi were found on the map of the world. The children were asked questions about the story as it was being read. Once the story was read the children were shown other pictures of Cecilia that were in the pack, for example one of Cecilia at school, playing outside with her friends and eating her dinner. We briefly discussed these pictures, which led to an exploration of the subject of families.

We talked about the different types of families that exist and that not everyone has a mammy and daddy living in his/her house, for example some children may only have a mammy and so on. In order to be inclusive of all the children and their families it was important to highlight the fact that each family is different in terms of the number of individuals, the sex of the individuals and so on. Each child then told the rest of the group about his/her family, for example, "I have two brothers and one sister", "I have a pet dog". The children then proceeded to go back to their seats and draw a picture of their own family. Some Colombian music was played as background music while the children were working, which gave a nice relaxing atmosphere. The following are some examples of the pictures drawn by the children:

Figure 8:Child from School B: December 3rd 2003

Note the inclusion of the goldfish as part of this child's family. This was a regular occurrence when children were drawing their families-pets were viewed as an important part of their families.

Figure 9: Child from School B: December 3rd 2003

Once again the importance of the child's pet as part of the family is seen in this picture with the inclusion of the child's dog.

Figure 10: Child from School A, December 3rd 2003

Figure 11: Child from School A, December 3rd 2003

Figure 12: Child from School B, December 3rd 2003

Some of the children were aware of skin colour as a marker of difference between people. Skin colour was discussed as part of the action research, which included the introduction of skin colour crayons as part of the learning environment. Derman-Sparks (1989) supports this observation of differences such as skin colour, hair texture

and eye shape by young children. She states that children begin to recognise differences in physical characteristics, such as skin colour from the age of two years and by the age of three and four, they expand their observations of difference. Derman-Sparks (1989: 32) recommends the positive acknowledgement of children's skin colour, which will in turn help the child develop a concept of who he/she is and how he/she feels about him/herself. Derman-Sparks (Ibid) provides an example of children's observation of skin colour as part of her research with children in early childhood settings:

> Colouring with brown crayon, Donald (3.5 yrs) announces, "I'm brown too. I'm about as brown as this crayon." "Yes," appropriately responds his teacher, "your skin is a beautiful brown"

A response given by another teacher in this instance could have been to say, "we're all people and it doesn't matter what skin colour we have". This would, according to Derman-Sparks (Ibid) be an "incorrect response" to the child's statement as it could make the child think there is something wrong with his/her skin colour and thus create a negative self-image.

I observed children in the study being careful in choosing the correct skin colour for their family members. For example one girl who was born in Mexico has light brown skin but as she was adopted and her parents are Irish her parents have whiter skin than her. She chose a brown colour crayon when colouring in her own skin and a beige colour for her mum and dad (see below):

Figure 13: Child from School A, December 3rd 2003

(December 3rd 2003, School A: Video)

The child below also demonstrates an awareness of her families skin colour.

Figure 14: Child from School B, December 3rd 2003

Of course not all the children saw the necessity in using the skin colour crayons. The 'correct' skin colour did not seem very relevant to them:

Figure 15: Child from School B, December 3rd 2003

6.1.3 National Identity

It was intended that this study would give a representation of the interviewee's self-identity and how they viewed their family's ethnic identity. Parents were asked in the 'family history questionnaire', 'How would you describe your family's cultural/ethnic background?'. Of the 37 respondents almost half (16) did not answer this question. There were no reasons given for the lack of response but it is logical that people found it a difficult question to answer, mainly because describing ones ethnic background without being given a selection of responses to choose from can be a complex and time-consuming task. For instance, MacGreil's study of "intergroup prejudice and tolerance in Ireland and the degree of attitude and prejudice changes which have taken place in the Dublin population over the sixteen years between 1972-73 and 1988-89" (1996: 55) addresses the issue of ethnic self-identity. As part of his research, MacGreil asked a random sample of 1,347 people the following questions: *"Which of these terms, i.e., Irish, Province/County, Northern Irish, Southern Irish, Anglo-Irish, British,*

European, or other, best describes the way you usually think of yourself?". The majority of respondents in this instance (96%) gave an Irish identification as their first preference, i.e. Irish, County/City, Southern Irish or Northern Irish. Perhaps there would have been a higher response rate to the question about identity in the 'family history questionnaire' of this study had the respondents been given choice answers similar to those given by MacGreil in his research. The type of responses given by those surveyed include the following:

Table 15: Ethnic Family Identity of Respondents of Family History Questionnaire

- "By celebrating events in our culture/religion"
- "Catholic"
- "General"
- "I don't want to describe anything"
- "I have two sisters in law, one from Hong-Kong and the other from Israel. Also my sister lives in South Africa. I am proud of my family culture. It's the lack of knowledge that makes people scared and could then become racist, which I am totally against"
- "I would think it is just normal, not really strong normal everyday culture. I also think it is important to learn about it and other culture and people they are growing up with in school and at home"
- "Irish"
- "Irish culture"
- "Me and mine as European Irish. My parents/grandparents as old Irish"
- "Old and very good"
- "They are all Irish"
- "Traditionally Irish as in religion and celebrating all our Holy days and saints' days within Ireland. Trying to teach our children about this country and its traditions"
- "Typical Irish"
- "Very Irish"
- "Very much Irish cultural background with some Chinese background. My daughter doesn't relate to a whole lot yet, its not a big deal to her"
- "Very open and tolerant and respectful of all races and religions (we are not of any religion)"
- "White Irish with UK connections. Mixed religions (Catholic/Protestant) Europeans"
- "White/Irish"
- "Would not be heavily involved in Irish culture"

The majority of replies above represent identification with Irish culture, however there are some responses of the meaning of cultural identity, which are worth further investigation. For instance, two parents felt it important to mention the fact that their

family was white skinned, which could mean that this family placed value on skin colour as part of their self-identity. Religion was another characteristic of ethnic self-identity by those surveyed, for example, Catholic and Protestant faiths were mentioned and the celebration of religious events. Three respondents indicated that tolerance and respect for all cultures and races is an important aspect of identity indicating an anti-racist approach to life. Another parent indicated that her child was too young have an interest in her Chinese ancestry, mainly because the child's parents were both born in Ireland and therefore the family mainly emphasized their Irish heritage. This example also shows how the traditions of a culture can often lessen or become extinct from generation to generation. For instance the child in this example had a grandparent who was born in China but does not have contact with this side of her family. The survival of the Chinese culture in this child's life may well depend on the emphasis placed on it by her Irish born parents, or on her interest to discover more as she grows older. Similar comparisons can be made between this example and that of child 14 (School B)-both children were depending on the influence of their parents to encourage the development of aspects of their ethnic identity.

The example of cultural self-identity above given by parents involved in the study lead to a discussion about children's sense of self-identity, in other words how did the children in classroom discussions and interviews view their cultural background and country of origin? In terms of national identity the children who were interviewed as part of this study can be categorized into three different groupings: (a) children born in Ireland to Irish born parents; (b) children who were born outside of Ireland to Irish born parents; (c) children who were born in a country outside Ireland. Firstly, examples will be discussed of the responses given by Irish born children with Irish born parents in relation to national identity.

As part of this study, the recognition of the flag of a child's country of origin was viewed as a contributing factor to national identity. Connolly *et al.,* (2002) research with 3-6 year old Catholic and Protestant children in Northern Ireland also examined children's awareness of national flags as part of self-identity. Connolly, Smith and Kelly's (2002) study used interviews to ask children what they knew about the Irish Tricolour and the Union Jack flags. Children were then asked in a follow-up question whether they preferred one of the flags to the other. 82% of the children stated that did prefer one flag to the other. For instance, Catholic children were nearly as likely to prefer either the Irish Tricolour or the Union Jack, Protestant children were twice as likely to state that they preferred the Union Jack to the Irish Tricolour. Connolly, Smith and Kelly's (2002) research therefore suggests that children from the age of three years are likely to show preference for particular flags that reflect their community (2002: 24-25). In other words children become aware of and recognize national flags from a young age, a fact that is reflected in this study. In the extract below, Child 17, (who was born in Dublin to Dublin born parents) shows that he was aware to some extent of his nationality as he stated that he was from Ireland, and he also knew the correct colours of the Irish flag.

Researcher: Can you tell me what country you are from C?
Child 17: Ireland.
Researcher: Very good. What colours are on the Ireland flag?
Child 17: Orange, white, green
Researcher: Excellent (C smiles at the praise and seems more relaxed). Where have you seen an Irish flag?
Child 17: Am, when I was walking down the hall I saw it where you come from.
Researcher: Very good C. It's good to look and see what is on the walls. What is that jersey you have on?
Child 17: Dublin.
Researcher: Do you follow the Dublin team?
Child 17: (nods)
Researcher: It's a cool jersey.
(Interview with Child 17, School E: March 31st 2004)

It is worth noting that the child above went to a very culturally diverse school with more than 125 international pupils at the time of this research. The school Principal and staff were very much aware of the diversity and different nationalities of all its pupils. Upon entering the school the national flags of all its pupils were displayed as well as greetings in different languages, therefore it was no surprise that the child above mentioned that he saw the Irish flag in the hallway of his school. The child below stated that he saw the Irish flag at the St. Patrick's Day parade.

Researcher: How old are you?
Child 9: Five.
Researcher: Tell me K, where were you born, what country?
Child 9: (She fiddles with her hair and eventually speaks) Ireland.
Researcher: Ireland, good. Can you tell me what are the colours of the Irish flag?
Child 9: Green, white and …… orange.
Researcher: Very good. Where have you seen an Irish flag?
Child 9: In the parade.
Researcher: What parade was that?
Child 9: It was the one with the man walking down the street.
Researcher: What was the parade for, what was the celebration for?
Child 9: For St. Patrick's day.
Researcher: Did you go to the St. Patrick's day parade?
Child 9: I sawed it on t.v.
Researcher: Do you know anything about St. Patrick?
Child 9: No.
(Interview with Child 9, School H: March 24th 2004)

Both child 17 and child 9 reflect the importance of images as part of children's learning from a young age, for example by seeing their national flag in their environment it helped these children begin to create a sense of national identity.

The interview extract below also reflects a child who was aware of his nationality and the difference between countries. For example, he states that people in France speak a different language to Irish people, he was aware that both English and Irish are spoken in Ireland and that a child in his class was born in Mexico. The use of the names of

these countries also indicates that the child has a certain amount of knowledge about his own community and the wider world. For instance:

Researcher: G, tell me what country are you from?
Child 19: Ireland
Researcher: Good. What colours are on the Ireland flag?
Child 19: White and orange and green.
Researcher: What country is your mom from?
Child 19: Ireland as well
Researcher: What about your dad?
Child 19: Ireland as well.
Researcher: Great. Do you know anybody who is from a different country to Ireland?
Child 19: Yes, P (names a girl in her class)
Researcher: Do you know what country P is from?
Child 19: No.
Researcher: She's from Mexico (we had discussed this several times) Have you ever been to another country, outside of Ireland?
Child 19: Yes I've been to France and…….. (pauses)
Researcher: What was it like in France?
Child 19: Great.
Researcher: Did the people speak the same language as you?
Child 19: No
Researcher: What language did they speak?
Child 19: They speaked different.
Researcher: Do you know what it is called?
Child 19: No
Researcher: French. What language do you speak G?
Child 19: English
Researcher: Do you learn any other language in school?
Child 19: Irish.
Researcher: Do you know any words in Irish?
Child 19: Yes
Researcher: Tell me a few.
Child 19: Spunóg….I don't really know the rest.
Researcher: Well that's very good.
(Interview with Child 19, School A: December 10th 2003)

Some of the younger children in junior infants class associated the word country with their local community. Locality is considered important to children at a young age as is reflected in the Primary curriculum (1999), which recommends that children be taught about their local community initially before expanding to teach them about Ireland, Europe and then the rest of the world, in other words 'start small and finish big'. The extracts below indicate that at a young age children's sense of the world is limited to

their home and school, in other words their community, for instance the children below mention the name of their villages as their 'country' (Child 15's village is named as C below, while child 16's village is named as K below):

Researcher: What country are you from?
Child 15: C.....
Researcher: What country is your mom from?
Child 15: I don't know the name
Researcher: Do you know what country your dad is from?
Child 15: No
.....
.....
.....
Researcher: What flag is on your badge?
Child 15: It's an Ireland badge.
(Interview with Child 15- junior infants/Irish/male, School A: November 26th 2003)

Researcher: What country are you from?
Child 16: K.....
Researcher: Do you know the name of the country that K..... is in?
Child 16: No
Researcher: Ok. What country does your mom come from?
Child 16: K.....
Researcher: What about your dad, where does he come from?
Child 16: I don't know
(Child 16- female/Irish, School B: November 26th 2003)

Although child 15 above was unable to verbalise that he and his family were born in Ireland he did manage to state that his badge was an 'Ireland badge'. Once again this example shows that recognition of the national flag forms part of a child's national identity from a young age.

One of the interviewees was born in Mexico but was adopted as a baby by Irish born parents. It was interesting to find out that this child had a strong sense of identity. Her parents had given her enough information to realize that she was born in Mexico and for her this meant that she identified herself as being Mexican. She appeared very

comfortable in talking about her adoption and seemed to be a very happy child in her family and school environment as she spoke in an affectionate way about her family and had lots of friends at school:

Researcher: If somebody asks you, who has never met you before where you are from, what would you say to them-Ireland or Mexico?
Child 13: Mexico.
Researcher: Why would you say Mexico?
Child 13: Because.....
Researcher: That's where you were born is it?
Child 13: Yes.
Researcher: You're so lucky- you have two home countries-Ireland and Mexico.
Child 13: My mom and dad got me. My mom was in the back with me and when we got back I got christened.
Researcher: Would you like to go back to Mexico for a visit when you get older?
Child 13: Yes.
(Interview with Child 13- female/born in Mexico-adopted Ireland School A: November 19th 2003)

Another group of children who were interviewed were those who were born in a different country to Ireland. One of the aims of this research was to discuss with these children their sense of national identity and to assess the significance of Ireland in their self-image. These children were all aware of the characteristics of their locality and of Ireland as a country, however they identified themselves as nationals of their home country as the two examples below indicate:

Researcher: Tell me J, where are you from?
Child 1: Poland.
Researcher: Poland! I've never been to Poland but my friend has and she says its lovely. When did you come to Ireland?
Child 1: (Thinks for a few seconds) My mommy gave me to English.
Researcher: What did your mommy do?
Child 1: My mommy moved me to English.
Researcher: I see. Did you move to England first?
Child 1: Yes.
Researcher: So you moved to England and then to Ireland.
Child 1: Yes.
Researcher: If somebody asks you J, what country are you from? What do you tell them? Do you say Poland, England or Ireland?
Child 1: Poland.

Researcher: What country does your mommy come from-where was she born?
Child 1: From Poland.
Researcher: Good. Where does your Daddy come from?
Child 1: From Poland and my granny too.
(Interview with Child 1- male/6 yrs. 9mths/Polish, School E: February 2004)

Researcher: Now I'm going to ask you a few questions. Can you tell me F what country are you from?
cChild 14: Singapore.
Researcher: Where is Singapore?
Child 14: It's kinda near to Australia.
Researcher: Australia, I see. If somebody asks you F whether you are from Ireland or Singapore what would you say-would you say you are from Ireland or that you are from Singpore?
Child 14: Singapore.
Researcher: Is that where you were born F?
Child 14: Yes.
Researcher: Do you know anything about Singapore?
Child 14: Yes, it's hot.
Researcher: I see, have you ever been there?
Child 14: Yes.
Researcher: Can you tell me about when the time you visited Singapore?
Child 14: I got a swimming pool.
Researcher: Were you on a holiday with your family?
Child 14: Yes and there are loads of toy stores and all and they have lots of diva stars.
(Interview with child 14- female/born in Singapore, School B: November 19th 2003)

The extract below outlines an interview with a child who was born in Nigeria. This was a lengthy and very informative interview as the child was very willing to speak and seemed to be very aware of her new life in Ireland in comparison to her life in Nigeria, her young age could be attributed to this.

Researcher: Hello
Child 2: Hello
Researcher: What is your name?
Child 2:
Researcher: What is your second name-I mean surname?
Child 2: E……..
Researcher: How old are you?
Child 2: Six
Researcher: What country do you come from Sarah?
Child 2: Nigeria

Researcher: Nigeria, where is Nigeria?
Child 2: It's in a far, far place
Researcher: Can you tell me something you remember about Nigeria-what was it like?
Child 2: The floor is made out of sand, a bit like a beach
Researcher: I see and is Nigeria a hot place or a cold place?
Child 2: Hot and sometimes it's cold
Researcher: Is it different to Ireland?
Child 2: It has the same things as Ireland but it doesn't have the school
Researcher: I see. If someone asks you where you come from Sarah, what do you tell them-Nigeria or Ireland?
Child 2: Nigeria
Researcher: Do you know what colours are on the Nigerian flag?
Child 2: Am, green, white, green
Researcher: Good. Do you know the colours on the Irish flag?
Child 2: Orange, white, green
Researcher: What country does your daddy come from?
Child 2: Nigeria as well
Researcher: What country does your mammy come from?
Child 2: Nigeria as well
Researcher: Nigeria as well, I see. Tell me something you like about living in Ireland?
Child 2: I like living in Ireland cause sometimes I go to ..... (local shopping mall)
Researcher: What do you like in the .....?
Child 2: I like to eat McDonalds
Researcher: What do you like to get in McDonalds?
Child 2: Am, children's toy
Researcher: In the Happy meal. Is there anything you don't like about living in Ireland-don't like?
Child 2: Am....no
Researcher: Is there anything you miss about Nigeria-somebody or something?
Child 2: No
(Interview with Child 2- female/6 yrs. 1 month/born in Nigeria School E: March 3rd 2004)

Similar to other interviewees this child had a strong sense of identity with her home country, while at the same time adopting her new way of life in Ireland, for instance, she stated that she liked everything about Ireland especially the local shopping centre which she did not seem to experience to same extent in Nigeria. McDonalds restaurant, as with most young children, was also a popular place to visit-mainly for the free toy in the 'Happy Meal'! A noticeable feature of all the interviews with children, regardless of birth place, cultural or economic feature grounds was that they all liked and disliked

many of the same things, such as TV shows, places to visit, friends and so on. Knowledge of the national flag was also a similar trait amongst the interviewees. Child 2 above demonstrated that she knew the colours of the Irish and Nigerian flag without prompts. This child attended School E, which as stated previously had wonderful displays in the hallway of all the national flags and languages of its pupil population. It was evident from the children who were interviewed and observed in School E that they felt a respected part of the school community and had an awareness of their national identity. In spite of the fact that this school was making every effort to be inclusive and respectful of all cultures racism was still a part of the school community, which the Principal found difficult to eradicate even with policies in place to deal with such an issue. This situation will be discussed further in the section on racism and stereotyping below.

6.1.4 Traveller Community

On the Pavee Point website the Irish Traveller is described as "an indigenous minority that has been a part of Irish society for hundreds of years. Travellers share a nomadic way of life as well as common language, customs, values, traditions and history that mark them as a distinct group" (http://www.paveepoint.ie/fs_irish_a.html). The Traveller community is recognised as a distinct group in Irish society by Travellers themselves by the Government of Ireland, for instance, the Equal Status Act (2000) defines the traveller community as 'the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland'. The Census 2006 form (http://www.cso.ie), as outlined below in the question on cultural background identifies the Irish Traveller having a distinct

White Irish background different to other Irish people. It also presupposes that all Irish Travellers are white:

> What is your ethnic or cultural background?
> Choose one of A, B, C, D:
>
> A. White
> 1. Irish
> 2. Irish Traveller
> 3. Any other White background
> B. Black or Black Irish
> 4. African
> 5. Any other Black background
> C. Asian or Asian Irish
> 6. Chinese
> 7. Any other Asian background
> D. Other, including mixed background
> 8. Other, write in description

Thus, once the Traveller community was recognised as a theme in this study it was decided to analyse the data in relation to Travellers as a specific group due to the distinct nature of the Traveller community as a cultural group in Ireland. The theme of the Traveller community was highlighted during interviews with children, parents Principals and other Professionals. Two of the Professionals (professional 1 and professional 3) who were interviewed were significantly involved in the promotion and improvement of Traveller education, with both having almost twenty years experience in the area of traveller education and in the writing of policy and research documents related to the rights and education of Travellers. Both Professional 1 and 3 recommended Derman-Spark's Anti-Bias Curriculum (1989) as a positive intercultural approach and it also was referred to on numerous occasions as research for this study. Of the five schools in the survey, three (B, C, E) had Traveller children as part of the pupil population. Between the three schools there were a total of 35 Traveller children in attendance, of which 10 were in junior or senior infant classes. The number of

Traveller children therefore made up a very small fraction of the total population of the schools. Each school had a RTT to assist in the education of the Traveller children.

One Principal stated that she would like to learn about teaching methodologies around cultural issues, for instance, the different homes that children live in:

> I would like to learn about teaching approaches, for example, in a lesson on homes how should one deal with the situation of a Traveller child who lives in a trailer?
> (Interview with Principal 3, School B: May 18th 2003)

This Principal seemed unsure about how to approach the Traveller culture in the education setting. It was clear that she viewed the Traveller culture as a sensitive issue and seemed to be looking for reassurance about how to incorporate it into school life as evident by her conversation with Traveller parents:

> There are two families of Travellers, one is settled and the other isn't. I recently asked a Traveller parent about their culture and whether it would be alright to discuss it openly in the classroom with their children, and she said yes that they are very proud of their culture.
> (Interview with Principal 3, School B: May 18th 2002)

The importance of the development and recognition of Traveller's identity as part of the education system was also highlighted by Professional 1 through her conversation with a Traveller parent:

> The Traveller parent is sending their child to school to be educated, for example as a traveller mother once said to me, "I want him to go to school, to learn to read and write, to go through the school system but I want him to come out the other end a traveller." She was therefore very clear that it was education, but education delivered in a way that wouldn't make the child deny his identity or be ashamed of it.
> (Interview with Professional 1: May 18th 2002)

Professional 1 continued by stating her own views on the importance of the preservation of Traveller identity in educational settings:

Researcher: In your opinion what are the needs of young Traveller children with regard to education?

Professional 1: At the very start they share a lot of the needs of other children as well but I think that they will become very aware very quickly that they are different to others. I think a huge need for traveller children is that they feel welcomed, valued and respected. That the difference is not something to be ashamed of, but I think very often as soon as they go into the education system or into any experience away from their home and their family life they begin to experience a negativity. Having their identity valued is a huge need, having that identity respected and valued in the whole school in the ethos, whether it's linked to materials, corridor displays, attitudes of staff, what happens in the playground, how home-school liaison is organised.

(Interview with Professional 1: May 18th 2002)

The extract below clearly indicates that Professional 3 also placed importance on the development of self-identity-not just of traveller children but of all children, and not just of children but of adults as well:

> We're coming from a human rights perspective, a children's rights perspective, we have a good and strong knowledge base on Travellers but we also have an awareness of interculturalism..... The goals that Louise [Derman-Sparks] has laid out are very comprehensive, they're very good, because they're talking about building your own self-identity and the goals are not only for the children but they are for the adults as well. It's not just about us as adults doing something with children, it's very clearly about adults working on themselves to recognise the difficulties that are occurring for children, whether they're settled children or traveller children or children from other cultures.
>
> (Interview with professional 3: May 9th 2002)
> Note: 'Louise' refers to Louise Derman-Sparks

In essence, as part of a Traveller child's education his/her identity and culture should be nurtured and respected, while the same ethos should apply for all children regardless of

their cultural background. Professional 1 gave her opinion as to how a Taveller child's culture could be respected in the classroom environment. She also suggested that through meeting the cultural needs of Traveller children their learning needs and educational attainment could be enhanced:

Professional 1: To move on then it would be nice if they could see their own culture, and not on it's own so much but their culture and other cultures reflected in the text books they use, the toys that they may see in the infant rooms and if you have that along with a teacher who is aware of an intercultural and antiracist approach I think the child's needs could be very well met. Their learning needs a can then be approached. I think if you ignore that first important element we will find ourselves not reacting appropriately to their learning needs and causing delays in their learning, and negative attitudes towards learning, devaluing learning and I think that is very real. We don't have any research looking at why traveller children are underachieving in schools it would be my opinion again that it's linked to that very factor.

Researcher: Negativity?

Professional 1: Yes, and an undervaluing of them or feeling that they are undervalued.

(Interview with Professional 1: May 18th 2002)

Nomadism is part of the Traveller culture and as a result some Traveller children can have interrupted education. However, other Traveller families do not move from place to place and are known as settled Travellers, many of whom live in houses. The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 (Government of Ireland: 3) addresses the housing needs of Travellers by stating that all local authorities must provide accommodation for Travellers in their functional areas, which should include, authority housing, group housing schemes, permanent residential caravan parks and transient halting sites. However, Pavee Point (2005: 39) is critical of the fact there are no regulations in place to ensure that the accommodation programmes are implemented. It became clear that there was an opinion amongst some Principals that there was a relationship between the educational attainment of Travellers and their living situation,

for instance Principal 8 stated that the Traveller children in her school attended school regularly because they were settled, which she felt was beneficial to their education:

> There are 11 Traveller children in the junior school. Most are in halting sites but some are settled. The Traveller children attend school regularly, which is good. It makes a difference because when this happens the children need less individual help from the Resource teacher.
> (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003)

However, Principal 2 reported that in her opinion the Traveller children in her school missed school as a result of accommodation difficulties:

> We were the first school in this area to accommodate Traveller children. I think it was 1990 that the first Traveller children came to this school. We have always had above our quota, which I think is about 15/16/17 Traveller children (between Junior and Senior schools as we have the same quota number) until this year. We feel here that this is because the Co. Council have made new regulations with regard to Traveller's parking their trailers. They are moved immediately if the park in an unauthorised place. When this happens they go across the border to Meath and spend the night and then move back again in the next few days. I think that is why a lot of Traveller children are missing school in this area.
>
> (Interview with Principal 2, School C: March 30th, 2004)

Although there were no Traveller children attending School D the Principal stated that there was a Traveller playgroup on the school grounds. The children from this group did not proceed to attend the primary school as they lived outside the school catchment area. The playgroup was the nearest Traveller specific playgroup to the children, which was the type of playgroup the parents wished for their children:

> With regard to Traveller children, there is a Traveller playgroup in a room in the school but none of the children transfer to the school, which is a pity. The children tend to go to school in J, which is nearer to where the children live.
> (Interview with Principal 1, School D:)

As part of Traveller children's education in primary school a RTT can be appointed to a school, which has 14 Traveller children with identified educational needs (DES: 2002).

The DES recommend in its Traveller support guidelines (2002) that the RTT works in partnership with the class teacher to provide tuition to the Traveller child within his/her mainstream classroom or that the Traveller child be withdrawn for group tuition to address his/her specific educational needs (Ibid). Two of the professionals interviewed were critical of the way in which the RTT operates in schools:

Researcher: Do you think the Traveller resource teacher in schools, specifically for younger children is being used in the most appropriate way?

Professional 1: I would like to see it reviewed. I'm very conscious that there are over five hundred resource teachers for Travellers, full time posts in our primary school system at the moment. While on the one hand I would welcome a professional approach to Traveller children's learning needs which can be given by the learning resource teacher or traveller resource teacher in schools. Preferably in my opinion a combined/team approach. I would like the learning support teacher to have an intercultural anti-racist approach in learning support, the same as I would like the resource teacher for Travellers. I don't separate that too much. I think that there needs to be within the school a pastoral care element. For me the ideal support teacher for Travellers would be one who is very professional about learning support, working with the various learning support teachers and have the backing of the principal and class teachers, with some timetabling allowance for parental contact, liasing with children, finding ways to celebrate not just Traveller culture on its own again but a variety of cultures. They would be resources for not just the Traveller resource teacher but all the school staff as well. There are times when resources for Travellers tried to be that to the school but maybe because of inadequate structures or a misreading of their primary role in the school get diverted from their main focus which is to support the school, that is the traveller child number one, the teachers, the school, to make sure that the Traveller children have access to the primary school curriculum, that they enjoy it and benefit from it. I'm glad to say that there are a lot of schools now that do not take out Traveller children particularly in the infant classes. In fact I would be very strongly promoting in class support. ..... There's a huge fear of the Traveller child or any child that is withdrawn from the class for learning support becomes dependant on one-to one, small group learning. They become deskilled in their classroom skills, they begin to

enjoy being out when they're getting individual attention, switch off when they go back in. I think there are huge issues here that need to be addressed by every school but also by the Department. While the Department have very definitely given the extra resources in terms of those five hundred teachers seen as positive discrimination towards travellers really it could end up the opposite because of the way the learning support is delivered. So a whole school approach and a reduction of the withdrawal of the child. I would prefer to see an elimination of the withdrawal of Traveller children from the room specifically. Using the school resources in a holistic way to respond to the learning needs of Traveller children and all the time working as a whole-school approach. I think we need to build in things like contracts with the class teacher, for example "I will deliver with you learning support for this child. It should begin by giving numeracy and literacy priority but there may be needs in other curricular areas where children would benefit from learning support and that's again where the in-class support could be looked at.

(Interview with Professional 1: May 18th 2002)

Researcher: What is your opinion on the resource teacher in schools and his/her role?

Professional 3: We are saying that there are plenty of Traveller children who don't need resource teachers. The resource teacher should be an asset to the school but because of the way the department sets it up it's discriminatory and also to the settled children who need it, but also segregating the Travellers giving the impression to the other children in the class that the traveller children are less clever or less able.

Researcher: I agree.

Professional 3: So we have huge issues around that, but unfortunately it's very difficult to get the department to listen to you. Children are being stigmatised all the time so you're reinforcing, reinforcing the stereotypes because settled children are learning by default that they are better than Traveller children. They're assimilating it because of the way things are done. Another thing we have a problem with is that often the resource teacher activity is done during Irish so that Traveller children are being denied the opportunity to learn Irish. We do have evidence of this as well where traveller children have not learned Irish, but have been purposely segregated from the class and have not learned Irish. Recently there's a young traveller boy who has finished sixth class and got one of

> the highest grades in the school but he has no Irish. He is being denied by some decision made by some individual in the school that he would not do Irish. He is being denied the opportunity to go into teacher training and other professions that need Irish. What we're looking for is role models for other Traveller children to become part of the mainstream in terms of professions. That's a denial of somebody's right in our education system.
> (Interview with professional 3: May 9th 2002)

Both professionals suggested that there was need for improvement in terms of the function and role of the RTT in primary schools, especially in terms of the withdrawal system. Both advocated in class supported would be more beneficial to the Traveller child, for example, Professional 1 praised those schools who provide Traveller children with in class support. Professional 3 felt very strongly that Traveller children who are withdrawn from their mainstream classroom for additional tuition are being 'stigmatised' and in a sense are being belittled in front of their peers. Although there have been significant changes in terms of policies relating to Traveller education, the interviewees clearly indicated that more adjustments are needed to provide Traveller children with an education that parallels their peers, for instance a greater emphasis on intercultural and anti-racist education as suggested by professional 1:

> I think society is changing so rapidly, economic development has been so rapid in recent years that I don't see Task Forces or White Papers as the definitive documents. They reflect the stage that we're at, they need to be built upon and there isn't anything I think to stop us from doing that but it has to be named and included in targets. Things like the National Anti-Poverty Strategy will impact as well, the setting up of the Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Education and Science is a positive development and I think that can be added to. Having a focus on intercultural and anti-racist agenda, permeating all of the initiatives could impact very positively on the children who come from ethnic minority backgrounds, that again includes Travellers.
> (Interview with Professional 1: May 18th 2002)

The professionals interviewed implied that Traveller children experience discrimination and racism. Parent 2 stated that a Traveller family who lived near her home experienced difficulty socialising with neighbours because of their living conditions:

> Researcher: Do you think where you live would have an effect on the lack of racism because it is mainly Irish people who live there?
> Parent 2: There would be against Itinerants, Travellers. I don't know what is politically correct now to say.
> Researcher: So there is a Traveller community near where you live?
> Parent 2: Yes.
> Researcher: Have you experienced or seen any acts of racism towards Travellers?
> Parent 2: Amm, there is a Traveller family near us and we've had a lot of problems with their lack of respect for nature and cutting things down. They have done things to us as neighbours and that. So there is the case where you'd be annoyed and you'd be at a meeting with the neighbours. Maybe the children do pick up on some of that, you know. They hear it on the street.
> (Interview with parent 2)

This woman was clearly angered by the actions of the Traveller family and such a statement highlights the difficulties that can exist between amongst people of varying cultural backgrounds. Professional 1 highlighted the importance of opportunities for communication between Traveller parents and teachers. She stated that it is positive when Traveller parents are welcomed in schools and given the opportunity to discuss their children's educational progress. However, in the interviewee's experience some Traveller parents are not given the opportunity to become part of the school community. She was critical of this practice as well as schools which turn Traveller children away because of lack of resources to provide them with an education-a a practice she herself has heard from her interaction with Traveller parents:

> That interaction runs from the very positive to the very negative. Obviously the very positive is where the Traveller parent is welcomed the same as other parents or maybe in fact a little more, where they are made feel comfortable and their children are made feel welcome, where they know they can discuss issues of concern to them with the teachers, or where the teacher or principal or home-school liaison person will visit them in a positive encouraging way rather than coming to complain. I would be confident in saying that the majority of

> Traveller parents don't experience that, it's only a small minority that experience it. I would be happy in saying that the awareness in having those positive links is increasing and I hope that will continue to increase. Going to the other end of the spectrum then where the Traveller parent has lost contact with the school is one where they are told the school is full, that there isn't room, they don't have the resources, will they call back. There are Traveller parents experiencing that today which I think in a democratic society, claiming to be civilised is terrible. There are genuine cases where the school is full but I think it's the principal's role in the case to be helpful, honest and caring to the parent, giving them a positive experience. In the context of Traveller children and possibly other ethnic minority children I think the school has to look very carefully at its role in terms of outreach to parents. Again I think you have to look at the Education Act, which is very specific about how schools have a responsibility to liase with parents, inform them and consult with them.
> (Interview with Professional 1: May 18th 2002)

During children's interviews information was sought about their awareness of the word Traveller. There was also some discussion around the meaning of the words 'caravan' and 'trailer' to ascertain the children's knowledge of the relationship between these words and Travellers. The majority of children understood the meaning of the word Traveller as a person who travels from place to place in a bus or car as the extracts below show, while their understanding of the words caravan and trailer was also good:

Researcher:	Have you ever heard of Travellers?
Child 4:	Nods to indicate yes
Researcher:	You have. What are Travelers?
Child 4:	They travel everywhere
Researcher:	Do you know any Travellers?
Child 4:	No
Researcher:	Have you ever heard of a trailer?
Child 4:	Yes
Researcher:	What is a trailer?
Child 4:	A trailer is a…..
Researcher:	Are you not sure?
Child 4:	No
Researcher:	Have you ever heard of a caravan?
Child 4:	Yes
Researcher:	What is a caravan?
Child 4:	Well it's a different kind of van what people sometimes live in
Researcher:	Very good. Do you know anyone who lives in a caravan?
Child 4:	No
Researcher:	Have you ever been inside a caravan?
Child 4:	No

(Interview with Child 4, School C: March 3rd 2004)

Researcher: The last word is Travellers. Have you ever heard of the word Travellers before?
Child 2: Travellers, that means someone that lives in a country and travels back to their country.
Researcher: Do you know any Travellers?]
Child 2: (Shakes her head to indicate no) One already traveled back to their place.
Researcher: Have you ever heard of the word trailer before?
Child 2: Trailer, a trailer is a kind of a car
Researcher: Good. Have you ever of the word caravan before?
Child 2: Its sort of like a bus and it carries people
Researcher: Do you know anyone who has a caravan?
Child 2: No
(Interview with Child 2, School E: March 3rd, 2004)

Researcher: What about the word Travellers?
Child 11: Ya.
Researcher: Do you know any travelers?
Child 11: Ya, 'L'. He traveled…I can't remember where he traveled.
(Interview with Child 11, School E: March 31st, 2004)

Two children-Child 6 and Child 3 (excluding two Traveller children), were aware of Travellers in their locality. Their impressions of Travellers were related to visuals, for instance that they lived in trailers and that they had dogs. The children attended School's D and E, which were located in different parishes but the same town land and were within approximately four miles of one another:

Researcher: What about Travellers?
Child 6: (Nods head to indicate yes)
Researcher: What do you know about Travellers?
Child 6: They have dogs
Researcher: I see. What else do you know about Travellers?
Child 6: And they have car..trailers
Researcher: What else can trailers be called-there's another word that people sometimes say?
Child 6: Caravans
Researcher: Very good. What do they do with the trailers?
Child 6: They put the caravans on it
Researcher: Where do the Travellers live?
Child 6: In the thing

Researcher: Do they live in a house
Child 6: In the…caravan
Researcher: Do you know any Travellers?
Child 6: No
Researcher: How do you know so much about Travellers?
Child 6: Cos I see them
Researcher: Do they live near your?
Child 6: Ye, in the park near me
Researcher: I see
Child 6: Near the circus
Researcher: Do you have any friends who are Travellers?
Child 6: No
Researcher: Who are your friends?
Child 6: 'G' and 'M' in me school and then 'A' in me school
(Interview with Child 6, School D: March 23rd 2004)

Researcher: What about 'Traveller'
Child 3: Yes
Researcher: What's a Traveller?
Child 3: You travel in something else.
Researcher: Like what?
Child 3: Like a car and a big truck.
Researcher: Good. Have you ever heard of the word 'trailer'?
Child 3: No.
Researcher: What about 'caravan'?
Child 3: Caravan, yes.
Researcher: Have you ever seen a caravan?
Child 3: No, yes (changes her mind)
Researcher: Where have you seen a caravan?
Child 3: Someplace, when I pass by, when you want to go C…(shopping centre) you all this mess on the road and that's where the caravan is.
Researcher: Do people live in the caravans?
Child 3: Ah, sometimes yes.
Researcher: Do you know anyone who lives in a caravan?
Child 3: (names 2 boys and girl)
Researcher: Where did you meet them?
Child 3: I don't know.
(Interview with Child 3, School E: March 3rd, 2004)

Child 3 associated the Traveller's living situation in his locality as being 'messy' because this was what he observed on his regular shopping trip. It is noticeable that child 3 and child 6 were not reporting negative views of Travellers, but were stating their own observations of Travellers in their locality.

Child 10 was interviewed and was aware of her identity as Traveller:

Researcher: Have you heard of 'Travellers'?
Child 10: I'm a Traveller
Researcher: What about caravan?
Child 10: Ya
Researcher: Trailer?
Child 10: Ya.
Researcher: Tell me are caravans and trailers the same things?
Child 10: Ya.
Researcher: Which one do you say-caravan or trailer?
Child 10: Trailer
(Interview with Child 10-Irish Traveller, School E: March 3[1st], 2004)

In conclusion, the findings highlighted the importance of maintaining and promoting Traveller identity as part of their education. Equality of access for all parent was also highlighted as well as the need for Traveller children to feel accepted in their learning environment through the presence of positive images of their lifestyle in books, pictures and so on. The need for Traveller children to receive additional tuition in their mainstream classroom was also stated by some professionals as opposed to the with drawl method, which according to professionals interviewed can cause Travellers to become stigmatized in front of their peers. Professionals 1 and 3 reported cases of racism against Travellers, which is in line with the Equality Authority's Annual Report 2005 (2006). The report states that although race is the main type of discrimination experienced by people at work, members of the Traveller community were most likely to experience discrimination in a number of services. The report highlighted allegations of discrimination such as in access to schools, shops and accommodation.

6.2 Racism

The issue of racism emerged as a recurring theme during the analysis of the data of interviews with children, teachers and other professionals, together with findings from the parent questionnaires. This research found that the most common forms of racism

amongst adults in the study were related to cultural differences and name-calling. Principals reported that racial name-calling was evident in their schools, which they and their staff defined as a form of bullying and such incidences were often dealt with by referring to the school's bullying policy, as opposed to an anti-racism policy. Just over half (55.5%) of the Principals and teachers interviewed reported that they had noticed incidences of racism in their school prior to being interviewed. For example:

> There are many incidences of racism in the school amongst children from all communities. Teachers have even experienced racism.
> (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003)

> We have very happy children in the school. The school has no anti-racism policy, but the anti-bullying policy covers it. There have been a few incidences between the Traveller children and the non-national children. Racism is a form of bullying and therefore I feel that the anti-bullying policy covers racism.
> (Interview with Principal 3, School B: September 2003)

These incidences varied from name-calling amongst children, to name-calling amongst adults. Some teachers and principals made similar links between bullying and racism. School D has been subjected to vandalism on numerous occasions and according to the Principal, when the children are asked for any information they may have about this, it was not uncommon to hear "it's the Africans or Blacks" from the Irish born children (Interview Principal 1, September 2003). Such comments were viewed by the Principal to be racist, as no one else was considered to be the cause of the vandalism other than children from the immigrant population. Some Principals also reported racism amongst children, for example one incident happened in the schoolyard while the Principal herself was supervising. A black child and a white child were arguing and the Principal overheard the black child say to the white child:

> "Fuck off you white nigger!
> (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003)

The Principal believed that it was clear that the black child knew the term nigger[xii] was a derogatory term, and in this instance there was a clear inversion of the most

frequently used version of the word. This once again demonstrates how impressionable children are from a very young age.

Racism amongst the adults in the study was also evident, for instance one Principal depicted a comment made by a parent of a child in his school:

> A Romanian child scratched another child and immediately the other child's parent wanted to know had the Romanian child had his injections. I was taken aback by such a comment.
> (Interview with Principal 1, September 2003)

The Principal felt it was his responsibility to intervene between these adults as they were on school property. Such an example shows that it is imperative that as part of an inclusive school racist remarks, for instance negative comments about the colour of a person's skin or his/her cultural background should not be tolerated by either child or adult. This incident reflected the effect that racism can have on the whole school community, in other words Principals, teachers, parents and children alike, and brings to light the significance of the relationship between the school and the wider community. As stated by one of the Principals:

> There are a small number of Muslim fundamentalists and because of their beliefs they will not shake hands with me because I am a woman. All of the staff are women and I feel these particular Muslims have a difficult time dealing with this
> (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003)

This extract highlights the difficulties that can exist amongst people of different religious backgrounds; compounded in this instance by gender. The beliefs or traditions of one person's religion can sometimes offend or seem extreme to another person of a different faith.

School E, which was referred to earlier as an example of good practice in terms of cultural inclusiveness has also experienced racism. This may seem contradictory, but this school has undergone drastic changes in the past five years. Five years ago this school had only 18 international children, while at the time of this study it had increased to approximately 125. It is worth keeping in mind that this is a junior school, which means that classes start at junior infants and end at second class, and so the international student body is quite high. However, the Principal indicated that there was a higher degree of racism in the school five years ago, even instigated by the staff. For example, it was often said by staff members that, "*those* children are causing trouble in the yard again"(Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003). The word '*those*' meant the international children. What this suggests is that it can take time and education for people to come to terms with change. School E under the guidance of a very dedicated and caring Principal has tried with great dignity and careful thought to meet such a change in a positive way and to be inclusive of all the children and families in the school community. For instance:

> Diversity is celebrated in our school. We have a very good parents association and they are trying to get a parent from the ethnic minority community onto the association but they have had no luck to date.....We are having an Arts Week this week and part of it is a Céilí. I'm not sure we would be having a Céilí if we weren't so aware of our own culture and this is thanks to a diverse school community..... Three teachers from the school stay back a few evenings a week to teach adults English. The Muslim women cannot be in a room with more than one man present so they are taken in another room to facilitate their beliefs. We also have dual language books so the children can read in their mother tongue also. These books are also good for parents as sometimes the children think their parents cannot read because they cannot read the English words but with their mother tongue in the books also the children see that it is just English that they find difficult and not reading. (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003)

It is clear that Principal 8 was very conscious of the diversity in her school and her interest in and passion for the welfare and happiness of all the pupils in school was

clear throughout the research, for example during observations and interviews. The strategies above are inclusive of the whole school community, from adult to child and regardless of nationality. Twenty-one schools (29%) in total reported having an anti-racism policy in place. It was stated that some of these policies were actually part of the school's anti-bullying policy). The school also provided school information for parents in different languages, such as French, Chinese, Slovakian (see appendix).

Principal 8 describes the racism in her school as 'raw racism' between both communities, i.e. the international community and the Irish community. One possible interpretation of 'raw racism' is that it was very real and intense. This Principal provided a few examples of racism that were she witnessed. For instance, the school itself was accused of being racist on one occasion when an international child was not offered a place in their fee-paying preschool (which no longer exists). According to the Principal it was said by the child's parents that the school did not offer the child a place because the school thought the child's family would not be able to afford the fees, as they were not from Ireland. In actual fact there just weren't any more places available when the child's parents applied (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003). Another racist incident in this school involved an Irish parent and an international parent who were being very abusive to one another and calling each other names. The Principal remembers that the Irish parent was very abusive and cited racist remarks to the international parent as the incident below indicates:

> To be honest there is what I would call 'raw racism' between both communities, i.e. between the non-national community and the Irish community and vice versa. For example, we had a preschool in the school up to this year. The school itself was accused of racism because we didn't offer an international child a place in the fee- paying school. It was said that we thought the child's family wouldn't be able to pay the fee because they were not from Ireland. I had to intervene between an Irish parent and a non-national parent who were being very abusive to one another and calling each other names. The Irish parent was very abusive. Examples of such racist remarks include the following:

"You're kind"
"You're type"
"Easy know why things are being robbed around here"
(Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003)

The extract above demonstrates the link between school and community and highlights the school as a central meeting point for community members, particularly those with school-age children. It is also evident from this extract that Principals can be faced with difficult situations when there is hostility between people of different cultural backgrounds. Although the school is one of the central focal points in a community it is not the only place that social hostilities can be solved. One interviewee highlighted the limits of the role of the school in a community:

> I also feel that schools are left to solve problems the politicians won't face and I think politically all of the issues you are talking about have not been dealt with in any efficient way or looked at with honesty in this country. Schools can only do as much as the community will allow it.
> (Interview with Professional C, May 22nd 2002)

Thus, even with provisions in place to counteract racism such as outlined in relation to School E, it is still possible for racism to exist as indicated by the Principal of the school. Although racist incidences were cited by some of the interviewees, parents (35 out of 37) indicated in the parent questionnaire that anti-racism issues were an important part of their children's school curriculum. In other words, most parents felt it was important that their children should be given the skills and knowledge to become anti-racist individuals.

One cause of hostility or frustration amongst teachers and parents can be due to a lack of communication because of first language differences. For instance the difficulty for an English speaking Principal in communicating with parents whose first language is one other than English or Irish. Due to the lack of adequate availability of translation

facilities "young children often become the primary translators for the entire family in all matters including housing, health as well as education" (John Lynch, 2005: 3). The use of interpreters could be one solution to communication break down between teachers and non-English speaking parents, as recommended by the INTO (2006: 9): "Schools should have access to funding which would allow them to provide translation and interpretative services where necessary". However, the limited availability of interpreters to assist teachers and Principals communicate with non-English speaking parents and vice versa was a problem cited amongst some interviewees in this study, for example:

> There are some difficulties with parents at times. Communication is often a major obstacle. I speak a little French to some parents but it's limited. A lot of Nigerians have good English but is hard to understand at the same time. There are no available interpreters around which is a difficulty.
> (Interview with Principal 8, October 22nd 2003: School E)

The incidences of racism outlined above are mainly presented from an adult point of view. The study also examined children's interpretation and understanding of the terms racist and racism. The following section details the findings.

6.2.1 Children's Understanding of Racism

As part of the interviews with children I decided to ask them about their understanding of the word racism, as it was deemed important to ascertain whether children between the ages of 4 and 6 years had any understanding of the concept. The findings suggested that the children in the study had no understanding of the word racism and in fact the majority stated that they had never heard the word prior to the interview. This echoes the findings of Deegan, Devine and Lodge (2004) from their interviews with second, fourth and fifth class children found that the children had limited understanding of what racism meant. The youngest of these children would be two to four years older than the

children in this study, while the oldest would be five to seven years older. Thus, both this study and that of Devine *et al.,* (2004) found that the children interviewed (4-11 years) had no or limited understanding of the meaning of the word racism.

The children in this study were asked the following questions during individual interviews: 'Have you ever heard of the word racism before?' and 'Have you ever heard of the word racist before?'. Naturally the word race, which is the root of the words racism and racist, was familiar to the children in terms of the action of running, and therefore some responses included:

Researcher: Have you ever heard of the word 'racism'?
Child 17: Yeah
Researcher: What does it mean?
Child 17: You run.
Researcher: Have you ever heard of the word 'racist'
Child 17: No
(Child 17- Male/Irish, School A: December 3rd 03)

Researcher: Right, the first word is racism. Have you ever heard of racism?
Child 5: No
Researcher: What about racist? … Racist?
Child 5: (Nods her head to indicate yes)
Researcher: Good. What does racist mean?
Child 5: It means to run
(Child 5- female/4 yrs 5 months/Irish, School C: March 3rd 2004)

Other responses from children included statements, which showed a clear lack of understanding of the meaning of racism and also indicated that because the children were young that they could have been trying to please the researcher by giving any answer:

Researcher: Now I'm going to say some words to you and I want you to tell me if you know them. Just say yes or no. If you haven't don't worry because some of them might be hard. The first word is 'racism'; have you ever heard of that word, 'racism'?
Child 2: Yes

Researcher: What does it mean?
Child 2: I can't remember
Researcher: That's ok. What about the word 'racist'-have you ever heard the word 'racist' before
Child 2: Racist is a kind of food
(Child 2- female/6 yrs. 1 month/born in Nigeria , School E: March 3rd '04)

In the following extract child 19 is asked about her understanding of the words 'racism' and 'racist'. She did not know the meaning of 'racism', while she indicated that 'racist' was a 'good word'. It is possible that she stated that she had heard of the word 'racist' in order to be correct and to please the interviewer.

Researcher: Have you ever heard of the word 'racism' before?
Child 19: No
Researcher: What about 'racist'
Child 19: Yes
Researcher: Do you know what it means?
Child 19: No
Researcher: Do you think it's a good word or a bad word?
Child 19: Good
(Child 19- female/Irish, School A: December 10th 03)

Two children stated that they had heard the word 'racism' previously, however they also stated that they did not know the meaning of the word.

Researcher: Now I'm going to say a few words J and I want you tell me if you know them. Ok?
Child 1: Ok.
Researcher: The first word is 'racism'. Have you ever heard of 'racism'?
Child 1: Yes.
Researcher: You have. What does that mean?
Child 1: From Poland.
Researcher: Oh that you are from Poland?
Child 1: Yes.
Researcher: Who told you that word?
Child 1: My mam.
(Child 1- male/6 yrs. 9mths/born in Poland, School E: February 04)

One possible interpretation of this extract is that the boy's mother told him that because he was Polish some people might be racist towards him. However, it is difficult to say

for definite. Another child who stated that she had heard of the word 'racist' was also unclear of the meaning of the word:

Researcher: Now, I'm going to ask you if you have ever heard of a word before. You might have heard the word from a friend or your teacher of on television, but you mightn't know what it means. Just tell me what you think. Have you ever heard of the words racism or racist before?
Child 13: Racist.
Researcher: Have you heard that word before?
Child 13: Yes.
Researcher: Where did you hear it?
Child 13: G told me.
Researcher: Did she tell you what it means?
Child 13: No, she just said the word to me.
Researcher: Why did she say the word to you?
Child 13: Because she just said that I don't know it or something and she told me that I should remember that.
Researcher: What was the word again?
Child 13: Racist.
(Child 13- female/born in Mexico, School A: November 19th '03)

Child 13 as stated previously was born in Mexico but adopted as a baby by Irish born parents. She has dark coloured skin and is the only child in a two-teacher school with dark coloured skin. It is possible therefore that the child 'G' in the extract above equated racism with looking different and therefore wanted her friend to know that she might hear the word racist because she looked different to other children in the school.

None of the classes involved in the study had skin colour crayons and it was the first time any of the children had used such crayons for drawing or colouring. From my observations the children were therefore very excited about using the crayons and were very interested in trying to match the skin colours of the crayon to that of themselves and their friends and families. One of the lessons conducted with the children involved asking them to draw one another's faces in pairs. A mirror was provided for children to examine their face closely in terms of physical features such as eye colour, skin colour, hair colour and so on. As an introduction to this lesson, the children in each class were

asked to describe the similarities between people and to discuss my physical appearance, which eventually focussed on my skin colour. In School B the children described my skin colour as white and when we discussed this a little further it was decided that the colour of my skin was really a 'pinky/peachy colour'. In the following extract a number of the children in the group gave their interpretation of the similarities between all people, which mainly focussed on physical characteristics such as hair or eyes:

Child: "Their clothes are the same." (Senior infant child)
Researcher: Then prompted the children by asking, "is there anything the same about people's faces?"
Child: "Their hair" (Senior infant child)
Child: "We have noses" (Senior infant child)
Child: "Your chin" (J.I.)
Child: "We have eyes" (Senior infant child)
Researcher: "How many?"
Child: "two"
Child: "We all have a mouth"
(Group discussion with children from School A: November 5th 2003)

The aim of this lesson was to show that all people have the same physical characteristics which all work in the same way, regardless of the colour of these characteristics. This concept was likened to an egg or an apple, which can be a different colour on the outside, but is the same on the inside (see appendix for this lesson). The use of lessons in the classroom, which address colour preference has been cited by Derman-Sparks (1989) as a tool, which can alleviate negative opinions of colours such as black or brown. For instance, a teacher could make sure that children regularly use different shades of black and brown as part of their play activities, in paints, paper and play dough. She also suggests making a list of all the beautiful black and brown objects the children know. According to Derman-Sparks such strategies should encourage positive feelings about black and brown colours and will help reduce the negative attitudes towards darker skinned children, which are often created by

racism (Ibid: 37). This also echoes the work of Connolly *et al.,* (2002) also used colour preference as part of their research into children's awareness of cultural and political issues in Northern Ireland when children were asked to choose their favourite colour flag (Union Jack or Tricolour) as well as the colours associated with certain football teams. The majority of children in the research viewed very dark colours in a negative way. This was consistent with Derman-Sparks recommendation that dark colours should be used as part of the overall curriculum to help eradicate negative viewpoints of such colours - otherwise such negative views may be transferred to darker skin colours. Children gave different reasons for their dislike of darker colours as outlined below:

Researcher:	I'm now going to put some of these crayons on the table (multicultural crayons) and I want you to choose your three favourite colours. (She chooses the light brown, beige)
Researcher:	Why did you choose those colours?
Child 16:	Because they're really nice
Researcher:	Are any of them similar to the colour of your skin?
Child 16:	Not really
Researcher:	This one is kind of like it (beige). Which are your three least favourite? (she chooses dark pink, mushroom and brown) Why are they your three least favourite?
Child 16:	Because they're really nice.
Researcher:	Do you know what least means?
Child 16:	No
Researcher:	Least means the ones you don't really like. (She chooses pale pink, darker brown and darkest brown). Why don't you like those colours?
Child 16:	Because they're really dark

(Interview with Child 16- female/Irish: Nov. 26th '03)

Although this girl chose brown as a colour she liked, she also chose the darker browns as colours she disliked - the only reason being because they were 'dark'. Another child's dislike for the colour black was also related to the darkness of the colour but also because of his personal beliefs. It transpired that the boy did not believe in or celebrate Halloween and because the colour black is associated with this festival the child disliked the colour.

Researcher: What is your favourite colour?
Child 2: Yellow
Researcher: Is there any colour you don't like?
Child 2: Black
Researcher: Why don't you like black?
Child 2: Because it's a dark colour and I don't celebrate Halloween
(Child 2- female/6 yrs. 1 month/born in Nigeria, St. Mark's NS-March 3rd '04)

There was also a tendency for some of the children to relate gender and colour as shown in the following extract where the young boy states that he liked the 'blacky' colours because they are 'for boys'.

Researcher: Why do you like the brown colours?
Child 12: Because they're kind of blacky and black is for boys isn't it?
Researcher: You think black is for boys and the other light colours are for girls.
Child 12: Yes
Researcher: Good.
(Interview with Child 12- male/Irish: Nov. 12th '03)

Colour is therefore a strong element in the formation of young children's perceptions of other people and objects, and skin colour can influence the onset of certain acts of racism. Racism was a clear theme of the findings of this study. The analysis above clearly highlights the fact that racism was an aspect of school and community life and affected both the adult and child population of the study. Anti-racism policies are designed to counteract racism and put in place a schools approach to and ethos towards anti-racism. The relevance of anti-racism policies as part of the school environment will be explored in greater detail in the section on school policy. Parent 2 had clear opinions on racism in Ireland, which are highlighted in the extract below. This woman was Irish and had lived in England for a number of years prior to returning to live in Ireland. The diversity of nationalities in England had a clear impact on her, which she viewed as having been transferred to present Ireland. Her reasoning behind racism was ignorance of others, and she felt Irish people were ignorant and as a result were racist.

She has clear stereotypes of other nationalities, for instance the fact that Indian people either own shops or are doctors (Stereotyping will be explored in the next section):

> Parent 2: I've never been exposed to racism so I feel very lucky. I have to say though when I first went to England, ten or eleven years ago, I was there for five years, and I was like gobsmacked. You'd go to the market and because the African women were so confident, I think as a race of people the Irish are not confident and that's why we hit out at other people and why we are racist and ignorant as well you know its all new and 'oh we're going to get like England'. It's like Indian people, if they don't own a shop they're doctors, they work, you know. We forget our own, we should be racist against some of our own really, how they treat the system, how they treat each other, its horrendous. Then I came home and I was like Oh my God its all over here now. Whereas when we were growing up there was one family, they didn't even live near us and they were black, well they were half caste. Oh my God they were the only ones.
>
> (Interview with Parent 2)

CHAPTER 7: DATA FINDINGS-WIDER EDUCATION SYSTEM AND POLICY ISSUES

Introduction

Chapter 7 continues with an analysis of data findings by exploring the remaining themes, which emerged during examination of the data. The information in this chapter mainly focuses on the wider education system and policy issues drawing primarily on the views of school principals, education personnel and parents. It was also felt that due to the extensive nature of the entire findings it was more appropriate to divide the data analysis into two separate chapters. The themes explored in this chapter include the following:

7.1 Stereotyping
7.2 Religion
7.3 School Policy
7.4 National Policy
7.5 Training

7.1 Stereotyping

Stereotyping was a recurring theme throughout the findings and emerged as a noticeable issue during interviews with both adults and children, even though it was not directly addressed in the questions. The Australian website 'Racism, No Way' define stereotyping as "a generalised set of traits and characteristics attributed to a specific ethnic, national, cultural or racial group which gives rise to false expectations that individual members of the group will conform to these traits". According to MacGreil (1996) stereotyping contributes to generating and reinforcing prejudice in society. He continues by stating, "negative stereotypes become social stigmas against members of certain groups and categories" (ibid: 42). Giddens (2001: 250) provides examples of some stereotypes that are often applied to ethnic minority groups, for instance, black

men are often viewed as naturally athletic or East Asian people are hardworking, diligent students. While some stereotypes have a certain element of truth, most are generally over exaggerated or are a form of displacement which means that feelings of "anger of hostility are directed against objects that are not the real origin of those feelings" (ibid). Once stereotypes become embedded in society they are difficult to erode even when they are highly misrepresentative of reality (ibid). One of the Principals as part of this study indicated her view that work immigrants are more 'confident' than immigrants who receiving state benefits: "We have a lot of Philippine nurses and they are very nice to deal with. They are a lot more confident than those from other countries who are on social welfare" (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd '03). The stereotype of Philipino people as being hard working is evident in this statement. Professional 2 highlighted the negative stereotypes that new immigrant children in Ireland are often referred to by the education authorities. She disagrees with the terms 'non-national' and 'non-English speaking' and suggests that such terms classify a child as being deficient beings:

> I was horrified to hear that the children coming into the country, asylum seekers are classified as non-national, non-English speaking children. They're also classified as having language deficiencies, which I think is disgraceful. They classify children with another language as language deficient, there are serious question marks over that.
> (Interview with Professional 2: May 22nd, 2002)

Another interviewee highlighted the discrimination she felt that Traveller children experience in their effort to receive a non prejudiced preschool education in Ireland:

> "I honestly think at this point that there is a deliberate and conscious effort to wipe out Traveller culture. But it is often the case that if preschools take in other Traveller children then some of the other children leave, like the case in Galway".
> (Interview with Professional 1: May 22nd, 2002)

As well as mainly advocating 'integrated preschools' this interviewee also envisaged segregated preschools and that it should be the choice of the Traveller parent to choose which preschool would be most desirable for his/her child:

> "When I say real choice I mean equality of opportunity to access either the segregated or integrated setting. I would like to see a drive towards good integrated preschooling for Travellers".
>
> (Interview with Professional 1: May 22nd, 2002)

Both inclusion and integration are terms which were addressed in chapter 2. Although this interviewee advocated 'integrated' settings the preferred approach presently is one of 'inclusion'. Perhaps if Professional 1 were to be interviewed today she would use the word 'inclusion' instead of 'integration', because of the increased research into the field of intercultural education in recent years. The findings on stereotyping reflect aspects of Howard Becker's labelling theory (1963). According to Becker (1963) social groups make rules that specify some actions as 'right' and other actions as 'wrong'. When an individual breaks one of these rules he could be seen as "one who cannot be trusted to live by the rules agreed on by the group. He is regarded as an *outsider*" (1963: 1). If one examines this action from the point of view of the labelled *outsider* he may not accept the rule by which he has been judged or the perspectives of the judges, and therefore the rule breaker could regard his judges as *outsiders*. Becker refers to deviance as 'the failure to obey group rules' (ibid: 8). A deviant therefore is one who has been successfully labelled as such as a consequence of his rule breaking.

According to Becker (1963: 14), whether an act is deviant or not depends on how others react. For instance, "the same rule may be an infraction of the rules when committed by one person, but nor when committed by another; some rules are broken with impunity, others are not". In essence, whether an act is regarded as deviant or not depends on whether it violates a rule and on the actions of other people as a result of

the behaviour. The degree to which an act is regarded as deviant depends on who has committed the act and the person who has been harmed by the behaviour (1963: 12). Becker cites Garfinkel (1949: 369-381) who referred to the difference in the apllication of the law for Negroes and Whites in 1940's America. Garfinkel stated that a "Negro believed to have attacked a white man who committs the same offense; it is only slightly less well known that a Negro who murders another Negro is much less likely to be punished than a white man who committs murder" (ibid: 13). This demonstrartes the fact that the same infraction of a rule can have different consequences for individuals, depending on their image or social standing. The comments made by parents in School D that suggested that any crime committed in their locality was conducted by 'the Nigerians' has sentiments of Becker's labelling theory. In other words, indivduals who are viewed or stereotyped by others in a negative way are often more readily accused of deviant behaviour when it occurs than those who are seen as positive contributors to society. Another example of Beckers's labelling theory is in the response given by Principal 8 when she referred to the Philipino nurses as being 'nice to deal with' while 'others' on social welfare were a lot less confident. The Principal in this instance had a positive image of one group, while she viewed another group in society in a less positive way. If for instance a crime was committed by a member of one of those two groups it would be more likely, according to Becker's theory that the person from the 'social welfare group' would be accused than the Philipino nurse without even without any evidence because of the difference in each person's social standing.

During a number of children's interviews pictures, (taken from magazines) of children and families from varying cultural backgrounds were shown to the children. By discussing the pictures the children's knowledge and viewpoints of the people in the

pictures was elicited. From this elicitation social stereotypes formed some of the responses given by the children. The main stereotype given by children between the ages of 4-6 years was equating certain skin colours with specific countries, for instance; some children stated that children who had black skin were from Africa as demonstrated in the extracts below (Descriptions of the people in the pictures are outlined at the back of the book and are given before each extract):

This child was shown a picture of a child from a hill tribe in Tamil Nadu, India who was sitting down to eat:

Researcher: Lets look at this picture on page twenty. What do you see in the picture?
Child 10: A little girl.
Researcher: A little girl, good. What is she doing?
Child 10: Smiling.
Researcher: She is smiling. She looks happy. What does she have in her hand?
Child 10: An apple (A big green fruit-like a water melon, not sure!).
Researcher: What kind of clothes is the girl wearing?
Child 10: Indian clothes.
Researcher: How do you know they are Indian clothes?
Child 10: (Points to the material the girl has wrapped around her waist-she has no clothes on her upper body).
Researcher: Where do you think this girl is from?
Child 10: Africa. (Even though the girl said the girl in the picture is wearing Indian clothes)
Researcher: Why do you think she is from Africa?
Child 10: Cause, she has that (points to clothes), she's like that, she's black and she has black hair.
(Child 10, 6 yrs 1 month, Irish Traveller, School E: March 31st 2004)

The following extract depicts child 9's interpretation of a picture of a child. She associates dark coloured skin with African children, as did many of the other interviewees.

Researcher: Ok, now we're going to look at the book I was telling you about. This is page three. Tell me what you see in the picture.
Child 9: A little baby.
Researcher: What is the baby doing?

Child 9: Sitting on a rock.
Researcher: What kind of clothes is the baby wearing?
Child 9: Trousers and a jumper and runners and a hat.
Researcher: Do you think this boy lives in a hot or cold place?
Child 9: Cold.
Researcher: What country do you think he lives in?
Child 9: Africa.
Researcher: How do you know he lives in Africa?
Child 9: Because he has a dark face.
Researcher: Would you like to go to Africa?
Child 9: No.
Researcher: Why not?
Child 9: Because it has very big trees.
Researcher: How do you know that?
Child 9: I saw it on t.v.
(Child 9, female/4 yrs 11months/Irish, School C: March 24th '04)

Once again the importance of skin colour is reiterated in the following extract as child 9 stated that the children in the picture was not from Africa because she had a 'different face than Africa'. In other words the child in the picture did not have black skin:

Researcher: Lets look at the picture on page 4. What do you see in this picture?
Child 9: A little girl.
Researcher: What kind of clothes is the little girl wearing?
Child 9: A tee-shirt and a cardigan.
Researcher: Where do you think this girl lives?
Child 9: Ireland.
Researcher: Why Ireland?
Child 9: I just do.
Researcher: Do you think this girl could be from Africa?
Child 9: No.
Researcher: Why not?
Child 9: Because she has a different face than Africa.
(Child 9, female/4 yrs 11months/Irish, School C: March 24th '04)

The following extract also shows the significance for young children of skin colour in relation to the identification of the nationality of another person:

Researcher: I see. Who do you see in the picture?
Child 6: A girl and a boy
Researcher: A girl and a boy. What country do you think they are from?

Child 6: Africa
Researcher: Why do you think they are from Africa?
Child 6: Cos they have black skin
Researcher: Would you like to go to Africa some day David?
Child 6: (Shakes his head to indicate no)
Researcher: Why wouldn't you like to go to Africa?
Child 6: Cos I don't like it
Researcher: Why don't you like it?
Child 6: Cos I'm givin' money to the black babies
Researcher: Who do you see in this picture?
Child 6: A girl
Researcher: What is she doing?
Child 6: She's messin'
Researcher: What does she have on her face?
Child 6: Chocolate
Researcher: What country do you think this girl is from?
Child 6: Africa
Researcher: Why do you think she is from Africa?
Child 6: Cos she has that skin?
Researcher: What skin is that?
Child 6: Black skin
Researcher: Is it the same as your skin?
D: No
(Child 6, male/4yrs 8months/Irish/junior infant March 23rd- School D)

Child 6 had a clear viewpoint that people who have black skin come from Africa. He also had a negative stereotype about 'the black babies'-this image could possibly have been adopted from the regular images transmitted on television and from photographs which charity organizations advertise to raise money for less fortunate children in countries such as Africa. It must be stated that the majority of the children in such advertisements have black skin and are malnourished. It is not surprising therefore that a child of 4-6 years would develop an association of black people and poverty. At such a young age children's views are influenced by skin colour and connect race with skin colour (Derman-Sparks: 1989). Child 6 also stated that he wouldn't like to go to Africa-presumably because his only image of the country was as being a poor country and a place where he had to send his money to help 'black babies'.

Researcher: What can you see in this picture?
Child 6: A mammy

Researcher: How do you know she is a mammy?
Child 6: 'Cos she has, she makes food
Researcher: What food can you see in the basket?
Child 6: That's ok. Where do you think she lives?
Child 6: Where the black babies live
Researcher: Where is that?
Child 6: Over in Africa
Researcher: How do you know this lady lives in Africa?
Child 6: Because she has black skin
Researcher: Do you know anyone who has black skin?
Child 6: No…ye, C (boy in his class)
Researcher: Where does C come from?
Child 6: The black babies
(Child 6, male/4yrs 8months/Irish/junior infants March 23rd-School D)

Child 6 continues in this extract to reiterate his viewpoint that the woman in the picture was from Africa because her skin was black. He also stated that the woman in the picture must have been a mammy because she was making food in the picture. Child 6 therefore associated a mammy with a woman who makes food-presumably, which was what he experienced at home every day.

Child 10 was shown a picture of a European family on holidays in a warm place (picture taken from a holiday brochure):

Researcher: Where do you think this family is from-I mean what country do you think they are from?
Child 10: (looks at me and smiles as if to say 'that's easy') Points to the table and herself and says this country.
Researcher: What is this country called?
Child 10: Ireland.
Researcher: How do you know they are from Ireland?
Child 10: Cause they look like that and they're white.
(Interview with Child 10, female, 6 yrs. 1 month, School E: March 31st 2004)

The brochure did not state the origin of the people in the picture, however they did have white skin. Child 10 associated people with white skin as being Irish-not surprising as she herself was white and Irish as were most of the people she interacted with on a daily basis. In conjunction with that at just over 6 years the child would have had limited geographical knowledge-therefore it is no surprise that if the child were to

choose a country where white people might life she would choose the one she was most familiar with.

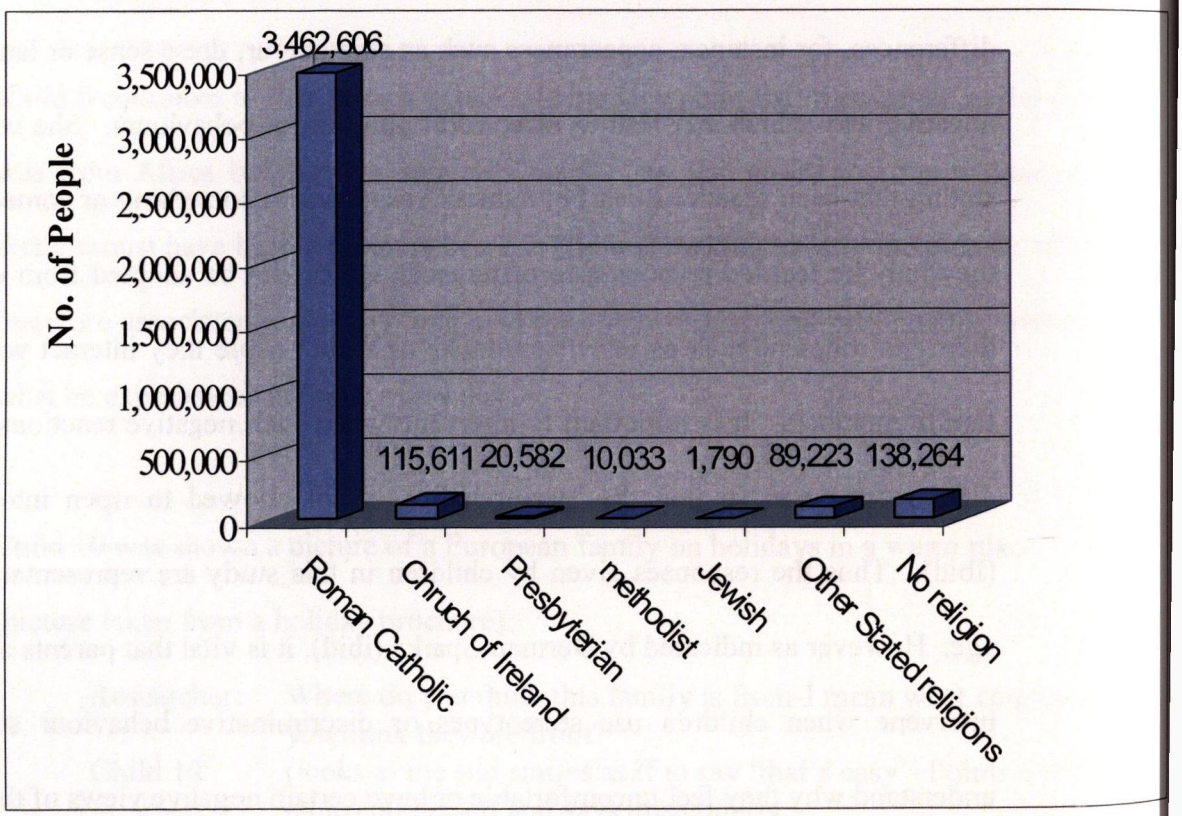
The extracts above clearly show that the children interviewed from both junior and senior infant classes equated a certain skin colour with a certain country of origin-for example, black skin was associated with Africa, while white skin was associated with Ireland. Derman-Sparks (1989: 69) points out that children sometimes react to cultural differences, for instance, appearances such as skin colour, dress sense or language, in a negative way which can lead to discomfort and hurtful behaviours. She continues by stating that such reactions can be 'natural' responses to something or someone new or they may be learned responses to differences which can be adopted from elements in their environment such as television/books or from people they interact with, such as family members. It is important to intervene when such negative reactions to cultural differences occur so that the 'pre-prejudice is not allowed to ripen into prejudice' (Ibid). Thus the responses given by children in this study are representative of their age. However as indicated by Derman-Sparks (ibid), it is vital that parents and teachers intervene when children use stereotypes or discriminative behaviour so that they understand why they feel uncomfortable or have certain negative views of their peers.

7.2 Religion

Although difficult to reach a generally accepted definition of religion, in one form or another religion is an aspect of all known human societies (Giddens, 2001: 530-531). Giddens provides some characteristics that all religions share: "Religions involve a set of symbols, invoking feelings of reverence or awe, and are linked to rituals or ceremonials (such as church services) engaged in by a community of believers (ibid).

These feelings of reverence or awe can involve Gods or other beings or objects, for instance a 'divine force', or Buddha (ibid). Malesevic (2004: 20) refers to Durkheim (1995: 429) who likens religion to a moral force that holds society together and is "a form of collective consciousness in which society celebrates its own image and power". The main religions celebrated in Ireland taken from Census 2002 figures are displayed in figure 16 below:

Figure 16: Religious Diversity in the Republic of Ireland



Note: The 'male' and 'female' dolls refer to gender specific dolls, whose presence are an important aspect of an inclusive learning environment

As Ireland is traditionally a Roman Catholic country Catholicism is the chosen religion of the majority of the population. The Roman Catholic Church governs approximately 94% of the schools in Ireland while the majority of the remainder are Church of Ireland (http://www.cso.ie). Multi-denominational schools have seen a big surge in popularity in the recent times and there are currently 39 multi-denominational schools in the Republic of Ireland (http://www.educatetogether.ie). The rise in multi-denominational schools is due to the demand for choice by both Irish and international parents for non-Catholic schools and could also be related to the increased diversity in the Irish population because of the rise in immigration There are also a very small number of schools controlled by other religions, for instance, there are two Muslim schools in Dublin.

Connolly, Kelly and Smith (2002) found that 3-6 year old Catholic and protestant children in their Northern Ireland study preferred certain symbols (such as flags, football shirts, parades) associated with their own cultural tradition. For instance, when asked to choose between two circles, one green, white and orange representing the Irish tricolour and the other red, white and blue representing the Union jack, catholic children were more likely to choose the green, white and orange circle than Protestant, while Protestants were more likely to choose the re, white and blue circle than Catholics. The children in the Connolly et al's study were also able to identify certain football shirts (Rangers and Celtics) with particular groups, i.e. Rangers for Protestants and Celtic for Catholics, for instance a Protestant boy, aged 6 in the study stated "A Catholic wears it because they support it. Footballers play in it. Wee boys wear it" (2002: 36). Thus, according to Connolly et al. children of certain religions are aware of symbols associated with their cultural background from the age of three. Religion as a specific subject was not a major focus in this study as it was viewed as being too

complex and broad a topic to analyse in full detail, and so it was discussed in brief. However, religion emerged as a theme from discussions with parents, teachers and children and from the findings of parent and teacher questionnaires. The study showed that religion was part of people's identity and contributed significantly to family and school life, such as celebrations and traditions. The children in this study also had an age appropriate awareness about their religious affiliation, which was nurtured by family traditions/activities and school ethos.

The children of Parent 3 attended School D, which was a Catholic School. Parent 3 seemed to value the Catholic religion as an important aspect of her children's upbringing. One parent who was a Catholic and whose husband was a Protestant indicated how her family coped with having mixed religions. The children were being raised in the Catholic Church, however it was clear that the family had respect for the Protestant religion as well as other world religions:

Researcher: Very good. And do religious ceremonies play a part in your family celebrations/occasions throughout the year?

Parent 2: Yes, Easter as well. My daughter's an alter server so we would be aware of our holidays. You know, coming up to Easter we would discuss Jesus dying on the cross, we wouldn't be a family that would bang on about religion. We would discuss anything that the children would bring home from the different cultures. My husband is Protestant and we're Catholic and the children are aware, very aware and if they choose when they're older to become Protestant they can do. My husband takes them to mass.

Researcher: To the Catholic church?

Parent 2: Yes.

(Interview with Parent 2, female, School D: date?)

One parent, who was originally from India, stated that she and her family celebrated religious holidays, such as Easter, while special Holy days are celebrated by returning to India. This parent did not state her religion of choice;

Researcher: Ok, now we are going to talk a little about holiday celebrations. Can you tell me about some of the special days you would celebrate as a family?

Parent 1: Religious mass and Easter, like the St. Patrick's Day which we didn't go as we are working. Then we will go to India and celebrate the Holy Days. For Holy vacations we will go to India and celebrate there. Here we bring the children to the park and things like this.

Researcher: Do you celebrate Indian holidays in Ireland?

Parent 1: Yes.

Researcher: Are religious ceremonies part of your life?

Parent 1: Yes, like marriage, birthdays.

(Interview with Parent 1, Indian, School E: Wednesday 16th 2004)

The Principal of School E viewed Catholicism as a clear aspect of the school's identity, while at the same time respecting and including the children of other faiths in all religious activities if they so wished:

> The issue of religion is dominant. We are a Catholic school but we now can't assume that every child will make his/her communion. Instead we allow children who don't want to make their communion to attend a ceremony of commitment. The ceremony of commitment is also for any Irish children who wish to take part instead of their making their communion. As a school we know have a clearer sense of our own identity as an Irish Catholic school.
> (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd '03)

There are different cultural and social beliefs associated with religions, for instance Muslims fast during Ramadan while many Catholics fast during lent. Catholic schools respect such beliefs however they can also be a cause of controversy in denominational schools. The Catholic schools that took part in the research placed value on the Catholic faith as an important aspect of the schools ethos and identities. For instance, the role of the First Holy Communion ceremony was highlighted as a significant part of the education of the children in the schools and religion also played a part in school drama as indicated below:

Researcher: Is G your friend.
Child 17: Yes, we're in the school play together
Researcher: What are you doing for your school play?
Child 17: I'm going to be Joseph and G is going to be Mary and G is going to have a baby.
Researcher: What's the story of Jesus about?
Child 17: We're just going to knock on the door, like this (knocks on the table) and then she has open it and every time she has to open it. J has to come in first and then G.
(Interview with Child 17, male, Irish, School A: Dec.3rd '03)

The age of the children interviewed (4-6 years) restricted the questions that could be asked about religion and other subjects. This was because of the limited knowledge of the children due to their young age. It was clear that in relation to religion the children in this study were familiar with the concept of praying God's house (Church) and Jesus as the extracts below show:

Researcher: How many children can you see in this picture?
Child 9: Four.
Researcher: Are they boys or girls?
Child 9: Two boys and two girls.
Researcher: I see and what are the children doing?
Child 9: Praying.
Researcher: How do you know they are praying?
Child 9: Because they have their hands together.
Researcher: Do you ever pray like that?
Child 9: Yes.
Researcher: When do you say your prayers?
Child 9: At night-time.
Researcher: Does somebody say your prayers with you?
Child 9: My mum.
Researcher: Do you say prayers in school?
Child 9: Yes.
(Interview with Child 9, Female, Irish, School C: March 24th '04)

Researcher: That's true. Do you go to the church?
Child 7: Ya
Researcher: Who takes you?
Child 7: My mam and dad
Researcher: What do you do at the church?
Child 7: Sit down
Researcher: Good. Do you listen to anybody at the church?
Child 7: Ye

Researcher: To whom?
Child 7: Holy God
(Interview with Child 7, March 23rd 2004: School D)

Researcher: Do you ever go to a church?
Child 11: Ya, I sleeped in one.
Researcher: When?
Child 11: When it was my baby's christening.
Researcher: Who takes you to the church?
Child 11: My dad.
(Interview with Child 11, male, Irish, School E: March 31st 2004).

A number of children were interviewed whose religious faith was either non-existent or was one other than the Catholic faith. Two Nigerian children appeared to be quite knowledgeable about their Christian faith and it could be gathered from the extracts below that going to Church with their families was an important regular outing for the children, for example one of the children stated that her mother dressed in special Nigerian (native) clothes going to church, as outlined below:

Researcher: Are there any special clothes in Nigeria?
Child 2: Yes
Researcher: What are they like?
Child 2: Nigerian dress and you wear something like a wrap and you tie something around your head
Researcher: Does your mommy or daddy have any Nigerian clothes?
Child 2: My dad has one like this (Moves her hands from her head to her feet) and a hat and my mom has one just like that
Researcher: I see. Do they wear their Nigerian clothes?
Child 2: Am yes sometimes to go to, to go to church
Researcher: Where is your church?
Child 2: In the city
Researcher: Do you have Nigerian clothes like your mommy and daddy Jennifer?
Child 2: I have one like this-this is like this (makes a movement under her arm with her hand) like a butterfly.....
Researcher: Is there any colour you don't like?
Child 2: Black
Researcher: Why don't you like black?
Child 2: Because it's a dark colour and I don't celebrate Halloween
Researcher: Why don't you celebrate Halloween?
Child 2: Because I'm a Christian and Jesus was born at Christmas
Researcher: What is a Christian?
Child 2: Like me
Researcher: Like you, I see. Do you go to a special church?

Child 2: Yes
Researcher: What do you do at church?
Child 2: I pray and I play a game and sometimes I get in a bouncy castle
Researcher: To whom do you pray?
Child 2: Jesus
Researcher: What kinds of things do you say to or ask Jesus?
Child 2: Like there's an enemy and Jesus comes to the enemy and he tells us about Moses and the devil and that's all
(Interview with Child 2, female, Nigerian, School E: March 3rd '04)

Child 2's dislike of the colour black because of its association with Halloween was described in the earlier section on racism. It is clear that she was aware that Halloween was a festival, which she did not celebrate because of her religious beliefs. Her Christian faith was obviously an important aspect of her upbringing. Child 3, also a Christian like Child 2 had a similar level of understanding and knowledge about her religion to that of all the other children, for example, they prayed to Jesus and associated Jesus with Church and so on:

Researcher: Where have you seen an Irish flag?
Child 3: When I was going to the church.
Researcher: Where do you go to church?
Child 3: From here.
Researcher: From beside your school?
Child 3: No, from very far away.
Researcher: What's the name of your church?
Child 3: Am, its about Jesus.
Researcher: I see, who goes to church with you?
Child 3: My mom and dad and brothers and my sisters.
Researcher: What do you do at church?
Child 3: I pray.
Researcher: Who do you pray to?
Child 3: Jesus.
Researcher: What do you say to Jesus when you pray?
Child 3: I don't know
Researcher: That's ok. What language do you speak to Jesus in?
Child 3: Fren, (begins to say French), English.
Researcher: Do lots of other people go to Church?
Child 3: Yes.
Researcher: How do you get there?
Child 3: With my car.
Researcher: Do you go the same church as J? (J is in C's class)
Child 3: No.
(Interview with Child 3, female, Nigerian School E: March 3rd '04)

There were some children who did not take part in any religious instruction in the class, while others were permitted to take part in the religious programme called Alive-O even though they were not Catholic. The reason for this seemed to be that the religious programme in junior and senior infants addressed friendships, family, morals, and did not go into detailed descriptions of the intricacies of the Catholic faith:

> Researcher: Do you ever go to the church?
> Child 8: No. (Very definite about this)
> Researcher: Do you say prayers in the classroom with the other children?
> Child 8: No.
> (Interview with Child 8, female, Bosnian, School E: March 24th'04)

There were also Catholic children who took part in religious instruction in school but who had limited or no access to the Church or other religious activities outside of school hours. This reiterates the point that the school is only a contributor to a child's social and educational development-the family also has a role in supporting the child's education at home:

> Researcher: Do you ever go anywhere with your mam or dad in the car?
> Child 6: (Nods) Dunnes
> Researcher: What do you do at Dunnes?
> Child 6: We go shoppin'
> Researcher: Do you ever go to the Church?
> Child 6: (Shakes his head to indicate no)
> Researcher: That's ok
> (Interview with Child 6, March 23rd 2004: School D)

Religion was shown to be a clear aspect of school culture and contributed to the diversity of the pupils attending the schools in the study.

7.3 School Policy

The aim of this section is to examine school policy in relation to intercultural education. The findings showed that the main school policy document that related to intercultural education was the 'anti-racism policy'. According to the findings 21

schools (29%) reported having an anti-racism policy in place. It was stated by a number of Principals that some of these policies were part of the school's anti-bullying policy. There was a clear lack of anti-racism policies in place in the schools surveyed. It is possible that schools were unsure of what direction to take in the writing of anti-racism policies due to the lack of availability to quality guidelines on the writing of such policies. However, since the time of the interviews a number of documents have been published that could assist Principals in the writing of intercultural policies, for instance, the NCCA's *Intercultural Education in the Primary School* (2005) and the INTO's *Intercultural Education in the Primary School-An INTO Discussion Document* (2005). Four of the seven Principals suggested that their school did not require an anti-racism policy because the pupil population consisted of only Irish born English/Irish speaking children. However, research shows (NCCA: 2005; Brown: 1998; Deegan, Devine and Lodge: 2004; INTO: 2002) that it is vital that all schools have an intercultural dimension for each aspect of the school plan and policies addressed therein. It is expected that such policies should support the principles of equality of access and participation for all and the planning process should reflect the recommendations of the Education Act (1998); the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the Equal Status Act (2000). The Primary School Development Planning Unit in conjunction with the INTO (www.into.ie) provide an outline of a sample policy in relation to equality of access and participation (Equal Opportunities) which schools can use a resource in devising such policies that reflect their particular needs and environment. Principal 2 outlined her school's approach to the inclusion of all parties involved in the education and welfare of the pupils, for instance, parents, teachers, Board of Management, as part of the development and implementation of new school policies:

> When the school develops a policy the need for a policy is identified first. There is a small discussion at a staff meeting and then a sub-committee is selected. This committee is always represented by teachers at the junior and senior end of the school. The committee meet with me and we draw up a draft policy and we allow two weeks for changes. At the next staff meeting the policy is discussed in groups and a second meeting follows during which the final draft is developed. This draft is then presented at the BOM meeting. Following this every parent is given a copy of the policy and are invited to make submissions to make changes to the policy. In all the years we have been doing this we have never received a response from any parent asking to makes changes or criticising the policy draft. I like to think this is because the policy is so well drafted but who knows. We only allow parents contribute like this with policies such as on bullying and not with curriculum policies.
> (Interview with Principal 2, School C: March 30th, 2004)

Schools were asked to provide a sample of their anti-racism policy if one was in place in the school. Two of the 21 schools (School C and School E) with anti-racism policies provided a sample of their policy. The anti-racism policies received were brief, but they did provide the relevant message to pupils, parents, teachers and other community members that racism was not tolerated in any form in the schools. A brief description of the main points of these policies will be given below.

School C's policy is entitled 'Equality and Anti-Racism Policy Statement'. The policy was developed 'in collaboration with parents, teachers and management'. These partners were also responsible for any matters that arise in relation to the development or review of the policy. The obvious group to be omitted from this collaboration was the pupils of the school. The pupils' contribution, even through the discussion of ideas should always be viewed as a valuable aspect of all school policies. After all, the pupils are the ones who are affected most by school policies. This policy promoted the 'respect and positive celebration of difference', which could also be interpreted as an intercultural approach. The Catholic ethos of the school was outlined, while also emphasising the school as being 'mindful of the moral, conscientious, religious and cultural principles of all within the school community'. During an interview with the

Principal 2 of School C she discussed this policy and the difficulty the partners had in relation to the use of the 'correct' language, for example initially the school used the words 'tolerate differences', however upon reflection this was felt to be more of a negative view than a positive one. Thus, the final draft of the policy included the terms 'affirmation, respect and inclusiveness', which was viewed by the school staff to present a more united and positive ethos than the term 'tolerate'. As the Principal in School C suggested, tolerating something/someone means 'putting up with' something/someone, which is not the approach to take when a school is trying to be inclusive of all and therefore it was wise for the school to put thought into what they wanted their policy to say as the extract below shows:

> The school does have an anti-racism policy. Originally we used the word 'tolerance' in our enrolment policy but after much discussion we changed it to 'mutual appreciation for other cultures'. We felt that tolerance can be quite a negative word. I have never seen any incidences of racism in terms of the way that the children get along with one another. I have had a lot of affirmation from parents, but never complaints about racism.
> (Interview with Principal 2, School C: March 30th, 2004)

School E supplied a copy of what it termed '*Policy and Guidelines on Intercultural Education*' and also its' '*School Charter Against Racism*'. A noticeable feature of this intercultural education policy is the specific mention of 'Travellers' and 'ethnic minorities'. The policy ensures that Travellers are identified as a unique ethnic group (there were a total of 11 Travellers in the whole school). For example, the policy states, 'we seek to avoid making assumptions or generalisations about children of ethnic minorities, including Travellers'. This policy promotes an intercultural as opposed a multicultural approach by stating 'we seek to avoid treating children from ethnic minority backgrounds, including Travellers, as ambassadors or representatives of their country of origin or of their minority group'. The policy also has several positive points in relation the development of a culturally inclusive learning environment, which

is reflective of the recommendations of much of the current literature on intercultural education, Intercultural Education in the Primary School (NCCA: 2005). Examples include the affirmation of each child's first language, the placement of 'ethnic minority' children in age appropriate classes, compassion towards all asylum seeker children 'who may have suffered trauma or may be experiencing difficulties adapting to a new environment and language' (INTO: 2005) and School E also supports families in finding interpreters for initial school meetings. Although this policy may seem short at a glance, upon further investigation it proves to be a quality, concise policy and one, which considers the best interest of the child and family at all times. School E also supplied a copy of its 'School Charter Against Racism' (See appendix?). This deals specifically with the issue of racism and relates to all children in the school regardless of cultural background. This charter goes beyond the realm of racism and incorporates the social, personal, health and safety of every child, for example, the charter states that 'every child has the right to be listened to; be included in school activities and have friends; feel safe from mocking, threats, verbal and physical abuse and use and develop his or her own talents'. Having both an intercultural policy/guidelines and an anti-racism charter, which were both clear and concise in their own right, showed that School E had an understanding of and positive attitude towards the development of a culturally inclusive learning environment.

Enrolment policy also developed as area of influence on intercultural policy. For instance, enrolment policies determine the order of preference from which children are accepted into a school and is regarded as a policy that represents equality of access and participation for all children. In chapter two an outline was given of guidelines for schools on the development of enrolment policies.

(http://www.into.ie/ROI/SchoolAdministration/AdministrativePolicies/EqualOpportunities/filedownload,827,en.pdf).

Principal 2 highlighted the procedure of enrolment in her school as follows:

> With regard to the enrolment policy we are a Catholic school and the following is the criteria used:
>
> 1. Local children are given first preference;
> 2. Children who live outside the locality but has a brother or sister attending the school;
> 3. Open to people outside the locality.
>
> (Interview with Principal 2, School C: March 30th, 2004)

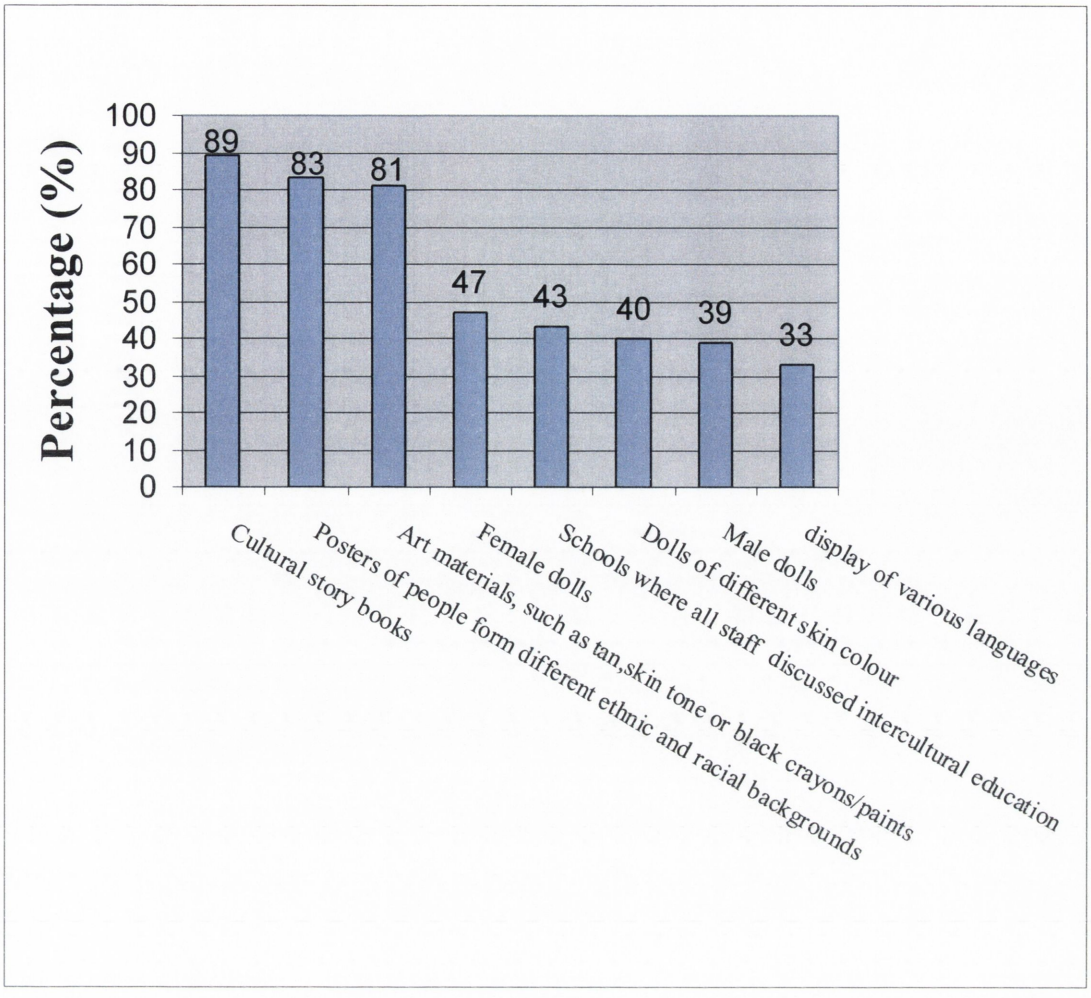
Although School D did not have a specific anti-racism policy in place the Principal felt it worthwhile to mention that the issue of anti-racism was addressed as part of the enrolment policy:

> The school has no anti-racism policy but it is mentioned to a small extent in the school's enrolment policy.
> (Interview with Principal 1, School D)

Principal 1 did not go into detail as to the extent of the reference to anti-racism in the enrollment policy. In essence, intercultural education should be an aspect of all school policies and can be interrelated with most subject areas.

In order to implement school policies resources are often needed, for instance if a school has a policy on intercultural education or anti-racism the teachers will need suitable resources to deliver the objectives of such policies. As part of the school questionnaire Principals were asked to report on the resources that were being used in their school to promote intercultural education/cultural inclusiveness. The following data was found:

Figure 17: School Resources for Intercultural Education



Principals were also asked to describe other resources which are used in the school, which in their opinion supported intercultural education. 79% of Principals did not answer this question, which was a very high proportion. There could be a number of reasons for the high lack of response to this question, for example perhaps those questioned did not recognise the intercultural value in the resources in their schools, or a high number of resources were already given as options and Principals felt this gave an adequate response. There were also a number of schools surveyed who because of the low number, if any, of international pupils attending the school felt it unnecessary to avail of or use any resources that support intercultural education. Of those who indicated the use of other resources the responses included the following:

Table 16: Additional Resources For Intercultural Education

- Books: library books from various ethnic backgrounds, books written in other languages and dual language books;
- Plays;
- Newspapers from different cultural backgrounds;
- Trócaire resources;
- SPHE resources, for example books on emotions;
- Videos;
- Language scheme for junior infants-Carroll Heineman;
- Calenders from Asia, China
- Globes and world maps;
- Toys
- Posters from around the world;
- Russian and Chinese texts;
- World maps showing places of origin;
- Integrate Ireland language and training manual;
- Chatterbox-oral language programme;
- Games, jigsaws etc, but not enough;
- Theme toys;
- Cultural photos of the children in the school-representing the variety of nationalities;
- Music cds from around the world;
- Videos highlighting different nationalities;
- CD rom with different languages included, e.g. Romanian, Polish;
- Multicultural calendar;
- Several books on different religions, feast days, celebrations, events;
- Resources such as Celebrating Difference, Windows on the World;
- Parents invited into school to tell folk tales from their own country

The list above was drawn up from observations of the schools involved in this study and indicates a wide variety of additional resources, which were not named in the questionnaire, and which were in use in schools. It was a positive aspect of the findings that schools recognised the importance of the use of educational resources, which promoted cultural inclusiveness. 21% of schools reported using additional resources as part of the intercultural education strand of the curriculum.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that school policy was highlighted as an important aspect of the school environment by the staff of the schools involved in the study. Although

the prominence of the reference to school policy in interviews was less than that of other topics it was deemed an important aspect to discuss the findings, mainly because the educational professionals who were interviewed, who highlighted it as an aspect that influences the day to day running of school life.

7.4 National Policy

This section explores the aspects of the findings that relate to national policy on intercultural educational issues in the Republic of Ireland. Although this topic was referred to relatively briefly in the interviews with Professionals, it is viewed as an important aspect of this study because of its influence on the delivery of, and approach to intercultural education in primary schools. The most significant policy documents were discussed in chapter 2, for instance, *Ready to Learn: The White Paper on Early Childhood Education* (1999), *Primary School Curriculum* (1999), *Equal Status Act* (2000), *The Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools* (2001) and *Intercultural Education Guidelines for primary Schools* (NCCA: 2005). As part of the interview process some interviewees were asked to give their opinions on changes and developments in national policy relating to intercultural education and early childhood education, while others referred to the topic while discussing other issues.

With regard to early childhood education Professional 1 expressed a positive reaction to the Primary Curriculum (1999) and its approach to junior classes in the primary school. She emphasised the importance of Travellers being named in the *White Paper on Early Childhood Education* (1999), while she referred to the lack of action in the establishment of an Early Childhood Agency as disappointing. The *While Paper on Early Childhood Education* recommended the setting up of such an agency:

Researcher: What changes have you seen in early childhood education in that time? Are these changes impacting positively on traveller children?

Professional 1: ...It can be quite regimented in some schools depending on the nature of the teacher's training, opportunities for in-service and so on. I think change has been very slow, but I do think it's happening, I'm absolutely delighted with the revised curriculum and with the approach for the junior classes. I think there's still a huge lack of focus on early childhood education in Ireland. I was very pleased to see the *White Paper on Early Childhood Education*, to see travellers named in that White Paper but I'm disappointed that change and the setting up of the Early Childhood Agency and Unit is still very much in it's infancy and I don't see it impacting yet.

(Interview with Professional 1, May 18th 2002)

Since the time of this interview the CECDE was established at St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, Dublin, whose research into early childhood education was outlined in chapter 2. One of the centre's main objectives is to prepare the groundwork for the establishment of an Early Childhood Education Agency as envisaged by the White Paper. Seven years on from the publication of the White Paper there is no evidence of the establishment of such an agency, however the work of the CECDE should be commended. Professional 1 continued by highlighting the increased diversity in Irish society at the time of the interview and the need for this diversity to be embraced and included as part of policies. She also compliments a number of initiatives that support cultural diversity, such as the establishment of the Social Inclusion Unit at the department of Education and Science:

Researcher: There are a lot of references to traveller education and intercultural education also in the Report on the Forum for Early Childhood Education, why do you think they were not included in the White Paper on Early Childhood Education?

Professional 3: I think there is more realisation today and greater consciousness now that it is real. I think society is changing so rapidly, economic development has been so

> rapid in recent years that I don't see Task Forces or White Papers as the definitive documents. They reflect the stage that we're at, they need to be built upon and there isn't anything I think to stop us from doing that but it has to be named and included in targets. Things like the National Anti-Poverty Strategy will impact as well, the setting up of the Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Education and Science is a positive development and I think that can be added to. Having a focus on intercultural and anti-racist agenda, permeating all of the initiatives could impact very positively on the children who come from ethnic minority backgrounds, that again includes travellers.
>
> (Interview with Professional 1: May 18th 2002)

Professional 2 also referred to early childhood education and suggested that the pedagogy has become more child-centred, which is positive. She was critical of the lack of emphasis on play in the Primary Curriculum (1999) as in her opinion play is a vital part of the learning experience of the child in the junior classes in primary school. The Early Start initiative, which was outlined in chapter 2 caters for children from disadvantaged families. Professional 2 disagreed with the negative stigma that was associated with Early Start. In her opinion such initiatives should be replicated for all children in junior and senior infants, while the formal curriculum could then be implemented in first class:

> I think pedagogy has come on and has become more child-centred. In many respects the care element was always there but it was always there with good teaching. I'm very anxiously awaiting the new curriculum that's published by the NCCA in September… The one thing the Revised Curriculum doesn't do is talk about play, it talks about play in terms of methodology, maybe they deliberately did that because the other curriculum is coming. If play isn't named then it doesn't get the emphasis it needs. I think we need to reconceptualise what is happening in junior infants. I think we should be starting our curriculum in first class. Ideally you're talking about 12/15 to 1 with a qualified teacher and a classroom assistant in all schools. One of the things about Early Start is that it is stigmatised disadvantaged. I've been in schools and suggested that they open a three year old classroom and principals have said "we don't want to be one of those Early Start Schools". I also think four year olds are sitting too long on chairs and we need to look at our space and planning in early years classrooms and the furniture we use, particularly for junior infants.
>
> (Interview with Professional 2, May 22nd, 2002)

Since the time of this interview a national play policy has been published by The National Children's Office, which emphasises the importance of play for young children, in the community through the establishment of playgrounds, at home and at school. The NCCA's 'new curriculum' which professional 2 referred has not been published to date, however *Towards a Framework for Early Learning* (2004: 4-5) was published in 2004 and is a step towards the development of a national curriculum for all those involved in the nurturing, education and development of children from birth to six years, e.g. practitioners working in a crèche, Montessori, primary school, playschool and parents.

With regard to curriculum, Professional 1 recommended an intercultural approach to the primary curriculum as a whole, in other words that intercultural education should not be treated as an individual subject area, but should instead permeate all subjects:

> I would like to see the promotion of an intercultural curriculum and that not being an add on or a particular week where you would focus on it, but that it would in fact in the line of the Revised Curriculum and the teaching strategies it would actually influence every subject in an integrated way all the time because it's about teaching methodologies again rather than content alone. There are certainly occasions for content but in the main it's about how you integrate interculturalism in all of the curriculum and all if the subjects.
> (Interview with Professional 1: May 18th, 2002)

Such an approach to intercultural education is also indicated by the NCCA (2005: 19) who state that "intercultural education is not an addition to the Primary School Curriculum, since the curriculum is itself is an intercultural curriculum."

Professional 1 was critical of the progress made in relation to children's rights and community facilities for children in Ireland as indicated below:

> Researcher: The final issue is policy. What are your views on the Irish Governments policies in relation to early childhood traveller education and for other ethnic minority children?

Professional 1: I don't see what is being said in the policy documents transferring into real action and practice. I feel the child is less valued in Irish society than the adult and I think that's reflected in everything. So little has happened for the very young child, whether it's in community, where there isn't good playground opportunities. I know there is a new initiative coming on stream for such things as recreational activities for young children where they would begin to in fact develop good leisure habits and recreational habits which would be very important for their overall development and complement learning in the school situation. I think we have very little happening for Irish children in Irish society and what is happening is happening in school and that isn't enough.
(Interview with Professional 1: May 18th, 2002)

Although Professional 1 was critical of the value placed on children in Irish society, it must be highlighted that since the time of the interview a number of positive initiatives have been implemented that focus on giving all children the right to a voice and on the overall development of all children. These initiatives were examined in chapter 2, for instance, the establishment of the National Children's Office (2000), the publication of *The National Children's Strategy* (2001) - which was outlined in chapter 2 and the establishment of an Ombudsman for Children (2003).

The findings demonstrated the importance of the relationship between the implementation and development of national policy and the work that is conducted in schools, a relationship, which Professional 3 highlighted:

> Without policy, without changes in policy, it's very hard to get stuff rolled along the ground if it's actually going to meet any kind of need. The other issue is, I think the issue, is that while, and this is our experience, we've gone out, we're doing a little piece of research at the moment on what's happening out there in practice. A lot of what's happening, I wouldn't say that people who are in practice are doing anything that they would feel, or consciously would feel that is negative, you know.
> (Interview with Professional 3)

However, Professional 1 stated that too much emphasis on policy can have a negative effect. In her opinion policy too often focuses on what will happen in the future and does not respond to or recommend action for the present. She also suggested that a more cohesive approach is needed between the policies that relate to adults and children, in other words the policies that relate to adult education or welfare should consider or be reflective of the policies that relate to children's education and welfare:

> Researcher: More specifically to the policy documents, what is your opinion of the way the White Paper addresses intercultural education?
>
> Professional 1: Not adequately, I think if it were to be written today it would get a lot more importance. We would have been talking about intercultural education for ten years in terms of travellers and people really looked at us as if it wasn't important and that travellers weren't an ethnic group they were Irish. So people have been very slow to take it on board. I think there is still a huge amount of ignorance and that policy very often focuses on the end result rather than on what needs to happen now. The policies from all the Departments in the Department of Education and Science should be complementing each other, like how many of the adult education centres focus on early learning and crèche facilities, they could compliment each other.
>
> (Interview with Professional 1: May 18th, 2002)

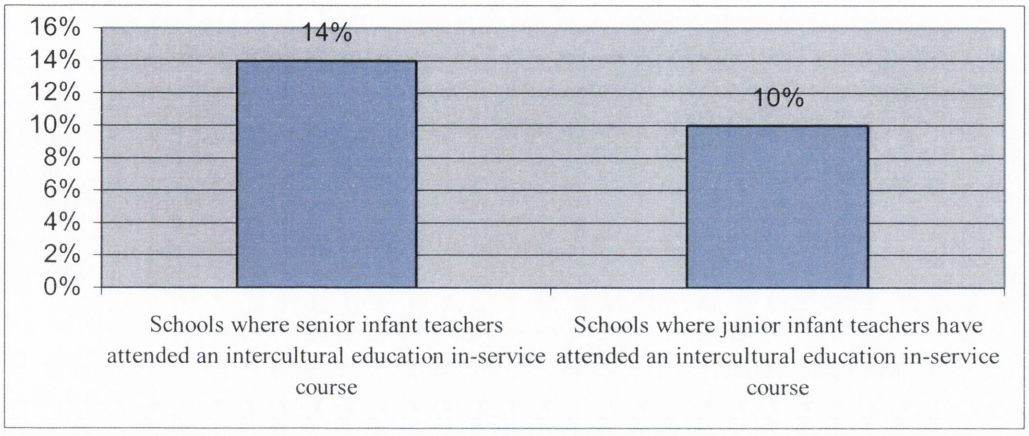
The findings showed that national policy is influential in the developments that place in school policy and education as a whole. Another area that reflects national policy is that of teacher training - both pre-service and in-service, which will be explored in the following section.

7.5 Pre-service, In-service and Continuing teacher Professional Development

The topic of training, in a similar way to that of national policy, although only briefly referred to by a small number of interviewees is regarded as an important aspect of the development of intercultural education approaches and policies in primary schools. As

part of the school questionnaire Principals were asked to state whether infant teachers in their school had received intercultural education training. A small number of teachers had attended in-service training as the figure below demonstrates:

Figure 18: In-service Training For Intercultural Education



One interviewee stated that intercultural education training for teachers should incorporate an examination of teacher's own attitudes towards racism and towards people of different cultures to their own, which is a similar concept to that promoted by Kenny and Mclaughlin (2004), Tomlinson, (1983) and Siraj-Blatchford, (1994) as outlined in chapter 2:

Interviewee: I think there's a lot of, and I use the true meaning of the word, ignorance about intercultural education and that teachers may think it's a module, it's about another subject area in the curriculum and teachers are feeling a bit over burdened anyhow so there might be some resistance because of that. Whereas I think in pre-service training and in-service training if teachers are given opportunities to understand that first of all it's about me as a teacher and my attitudes and then it's about my own ability to analyse and build on that first, so that in terms then of also coming to terms with my own racism first so that I can identify what it is, be honest about it, do something about it and develop the skills to counter it in myself first and then in my teaching.

Researcher: So what you're saying is that before a teacher delivers effective intercultural education to children he/she ahs to deal with his/her own intercultural attitudes first.

Interviewee: To be good at it yes and to be wholesome in it and holistic. I think teachers can begin to approach interculturalism without

> going through that process, but I don't think it would be as effective and I don't think it can be as integrated as it could be.
> (Interview with Professional 1)

By examining their own attitudes teachers would also in effect be examining their own identity. Thus, the theme of training is linked to the theme of cultural identity and attitudes, the latter being an important aspect of teacher training for intercultural education as shown by Professional 1 and Professional 2 as indicated below:

> In some sense it's easier to look beyond yourself and then having looked at it to put the two together and see how does this apply to us. Identity is very important. At this point, and this will change, the B.Eds get all their early years training in first year. After they've done their modules, unless they opt for the elective in third year we don't see them again. The SESE lecturer has a committee going to look at diversity issues and how we can feed them into all areas of the college. That is happening. In their first year they do their home TP the following September and I have four groups of about thirty five each. Just before they broke up for their exams I did a session to focus on September TP. I encouraged them to look at the richness of their own area as if they were a visitor, and to use their local area in their lessons. I set them that task and to talk in small groups of three or four. In one group one girl said to me "I'm from Cavan", and I said "Cavan town?" and she replied, "no, no I'm not from anywhere". Another girl whispered where she was from so as others wouldn't here. I therefore have eighteen/nineteen year old students in 2002 with no sense of place or identity. Not everyone is like that but in terms of the whole broad issue of who you are and respecting difference, then how can you understand who others are if you don't know who you are in the first place?
> (Interview with professional 2)

Principal 8 highlighted the lack of support that was available at the time of the interview from the Department of Education and Science in relation to best practice on intercultural education. She stated that her staff had to 'make it up as they go along' (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003). This lack of support was also reiterated by a teacher in School D who was in fact a Special Needs Assistant, but had been hired by the school Principal to teach Romanian and Latvian children in the school. According to the Principal in this instance he hired a SNA (Special needs Assistant) because of a lack of availability of qualified teachers, and because the Department of Education and Science would not fund an English language teacher for

this particular school (Interview with Principal 1, School D: March 2004). This example highlights the fact that although a school may not have the quota of children to employ an English language Support teacher it does not eliminate the reality that there are children in need of tuition. Principals and teachers are in touch with the real situation on the ground and are often the most capable people to decide on how resources should be used to suit the children in their particular school.

Professional 2 highlighted the importance of shared ideas amongst professionals in terms of pedagogies and approaches used to promote cultural diversity in schools. She had strong views that teacher education training in Ireland needed to adapt to include a more European dimension, in other words, students could spend time in a school in another country in order to gain experience of other educational systems:

Researcher:	How do you think teachers need to address the issue of interculturalism before delivering an appropriate intercultural education program in the early years classroom?
Professional 2:	The real issue is as you've pointed out, what opportunity do we give teachers to reflect how they view and deal with these issues, what do they mean by tolerance. Reflective practictionership is something teacher education would very strongly aspire to and has been present for some time. I think we should discuss issues such as immigration, diversity openly in a non-judgemental way with students and in time give them guidance. Another issue is that teacher education is much too over crowded, our students are in lectures from 9-6 five days a week. I would love long term if our student went to any other country for some time, like the Erasmus program, just to know that there are other systems. I must say when Erasmus students join some of my groups they are wonderfully useful when they talk about their own experience of schooling. It sometimes throws our students that some of them don't go to school until they are seven or eight. Where there are good practices which are European-based in terms of diversity there are schools with very good programs and very good systems in place, to let the students go and have a placement there. I think they need that experience. The same opportunity should be offered to teachers especially

> those who have a high number of emigrant children. If they had an opportunity to go and spend a month in a school with good practice that it would be very helpful for them. I think the Department of Education should take the initiative on this and fund a sub, a preferably a principal and class teacher to go. You need to have management to be au fait with this and to guide things through. If a young student goes out to the school and the culture of the school is very different, it's very hard for a young teacher to change it, nearly impossible but if you had a principal and another teacher there who is very supportive of good practice then at least some of the theories can become practice. To change pedagogy is a tremendously difficult thing to do.
>
> (Interview with professional 2)

In essence the findings show that in-service training was found to be available to teachers in a limited capacity. In order to keep abreast of latest developments in education and to reflect upon one's teaching, in-service training was viewed by interviewees as being an essential part of a career in education:

> If we talk about a child-centred curriculum I think then it is very friendly to all children, but it's giving teachers if you like opportunities for in-service to influence their methodologies and their pedagogical approaches that would impact mostly.
>
> (Interview with Professional 1)

Conclusion

Chapter 7 provided an analysis of the findings using a thematic format, which emerged during data analysis, some of which was more significant than others. The themes for chapter 7 were chosen as a result of careful consideration of the data received from observations of children, parent and school questionnaires and interviews with children, parents, teachers, principals and other professionals working in the field of education. Certain themes, such as *Cultural Identity and Attitudes; Racism* and *Traveller Community* were clearly identified as the main contributors to the data. While the themes of *Stereotyping; Religion; School Policy; National Policy* and *Training* were

not as prominent as the aforementioned, they were viewed as significant aspects of the analysis. The themes were all related in one form or another, as in the case of *Cultural Identity and Attitudes* and *Traveller Community* - the Traveller Community have a clear sense of their own cultural identity within the Irish community as outlined in section 6. . Religion too is often associated with a person's identity as the research of Connolly, Smith and Kelly (2002) indicated. Developments in school policy and the protection of citizens against racism in Irish society are directly related to the decisions made in national policy, for instance *The Equal Status Act* (2000) protects all residents in the Republic of Ireland against any form of discrimination or acts of racism.

Upon examination this study showed that intercultural education is of utmost importance especially in terms of issues that should be accepted and embraced as part of school culture. The characteristics of intercultural education, such as language education, anti-racism education and the acceptance of the cultural identity of all were highlighted by interviewees, both children and adults, in this study as important elements of the education of young children.

The findings show that anti-racism education is an integral part of intercultural education. At a young age children are often unaware of such terms as racism or culture, however this does not necessarily indicate that the ideals behind such concepts cannot be delivered as part of the learning environment. In early years settings it can be an effective strategy to allow cultural diversity become a naturally accepted aspect of a child's day-to-day learning experience. In other words the term racism itself does not need to be mentioned in a lesson promoting anti-racism in order for the concept to be taught. The concept of anti-racism and an appreciation for all cultures can be integrated into any subject area without formally identifying the word racism. In terms

of anti-racism education this research demonstrated that children of all racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds should understand that racism is not acceptable and that racism towards or the lack of respect for any person is not tolerated in any school - regardless of the level or lack of cultural diversity in the school. Thus, intercultural education can be an influential aspect of the hidden curriculum as opposed to being a specific subject area.

Many intercultural education guidelines have come on stream in the past number of years (see chapter 3). The lack of anti-racism policies was a noticeable feature of the majority of schools involved in the survey. To aid schools in the writing of anti-racism policies guidelines are available such as the NCCA's Intercultural Education Guidelines (2005). Many countries have a longer history of cultural diversity than Ireland and have had to adapt to massive immigration, for example, the UK and Australian. Therefore, the approaches and experiences of other nations should not be diminished when considering effective methods to incorporate intercultural education effectively into the Primary Curriculum.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION

At this point I would like to review the two main overarching themes that emerged from this research, the first being *Cultural Identity* (see chapter 6) and the second being *Institutional Practices* (see chapter 7*)*. As part of the study a whole-school/ community approach was adopted, which explored the theme of intercultural education in detail from a number of different perspectives, which included, the education system as a whole, teachers, parents and children. The extensive range of data collected provided the opportunity to conduct analysis in a thematic format. Each theme is sub-divided into a number of key sub-themes (which became evident during analysis of the findings), as displayed below:

Theme 1: Cultural Identity

- Importance of language in a child's life, such as first language use, acquisition of a second language and so on;
- Celebrations and other cultural markers
- Reaction of those who impact on the child's overall development, safety and happiness (family, peers, teachers, other adults);
- Influence of adult and peer behaviours on a child's self-esteem

Theme 2: Institutional Practices

- An analysis of the levels of the recognition and celebration of cultural difference within schools and the structures, practices and behaviours in place to support cultural diversity. For instance, the development of anti-bullying, intercultural education, language and other support policies,
- An insight into Government initiatives and approaches to address the issue of intercultural education in primary schools in relation to such aspects as racism, religion and stereotyping;
- The continual development of teacher education, both pre-service and in-service in relation to intercultural education and other supports for pupils;
- The development of intercultural education approaches and resources within schools, for instance, the use of dual language books, skin colour crayons, displays of first languages of all pupils and so on;

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise and discuss the main findings of the study in terms of the two aforementioned themes, while bearing in mind the relationship between the key findings and the aims of the study as discussed in the methodological section (see chapter 5):

- An analysis of the provision (at the time of study) for intercultural educational and cultural diversity in early year classrooms in the primary school (i.e. junior and senior infants), for instance, language support and parental support;
- An analysis of the level of awareness of young children of certain issues and terms in relation to cultural diversity, for example, the terms racism, culture and Travellers were explored in interviews with children;
- A report on best practice of and positive approaches towards intercultural education and cultural diversity in the primary schools involved in the study.

Having discussed the relationships between these themes, a number of key findings of each theme will be further highlighted to demonstrate their impact on the different facets of, and contributors to intercultural education and cultural diversity in Ireland.

8.1 Cultural Identity

The theme of cultural identity and attitudes contributed significantly to the findings because of its relationship to all groups involved in the study, i.e. children, parents and teachers. Self-identity was found to be an important aspect of people's lives from a young age and both children and adults had different conceptualisations of their own identities and visions of who they were. For instance, language formed a major part of people's perceptions of their own identity, not surprisingly as the data revealed a total of 43 different spoken languages in the 37 schools surveyed. The children involved in the research that were observed or interviewed were all bi-lingual, or multi-lingual in some instances. For example, some children spoke English and Irish at school, while newcomer children (immigrants) spoke their first language (at home) and learnt

English/Irish at school. Language, as a significant aspect of overall family identity and values was also prevalent. It is worth referring back to the child in school B (See page 165) whose parents were both Chinese, but she herself was born in Ireland. When interviewed this child stated that she didn't speak Chinese, however her parents did, but she didn't understand (Interview with Child 14, School B: November 19th 2003). This demonstrates the impact of emigration on family structures and values. It is possible therefore for a first language to diminish over time if is not spoken to or used by children born in a new host country. The level of value placed on a first language by those who immigrate to a country where the host language is different, and the availability of resources in their new country to support their first language use can therefore determine the survival or extinction of that language for future generations. The study revealed that cultural identity also had an impact on the education system as a whole, for instance the increased level of multi-lingualism has resulted in the need for schools to employ English Language Support teachers, as seen in School E whose staff consisted of three ESL teachers. The data does reveal the lack of supports, such as in-service training and school/classroom resources for intercultural education at the time of the research. For instance, the lack of anti-racism policies and skin tone crayons/pencils was evident, both of which could be described as two basic tools in the successful delivery of an education programme that supports cultural diversity needs of its pupils. In summary, the main attributes which respondents used to define their sense of identity were language (first and second language learning), nationality - in terms of the recognition of national symbols such as country flags, cultural/religious celebrations, for instance Christmas, Ramadan, St. Patrick's day or weddings. The importance of family members/family life and friendship also shone through in conversations with adults, and in particular children in relation to their self-identity. When exploring the theme of national identity in Ireland it would be an inaccurate

portrayal to do so without discussing the Traveller Community as a specific ethnic group. The main finding from the data in relation to Traveller Community was the existence of a need for continued support by schools and at Government level to ensure that Traveller identity is preserved and that young Traveller children be given the education, support and needs that they require, in an equal way to their peers. For instance, Professional 1 suggested that a Traveller child's education should be delivered in a way that does not deny his/her identity as an Irish Traveller. There was concern over the role of the RTT in primary schools by some professionals, because of the method of withdrawal from mainstream class that is used to instruct Traveller children. For example, professional 3 highlighted this issue and stated that Traveller children are being stigmatised as being different as a result of this method of teaching. As a means of preventing such stigmatisation against Travellers it could be recommended to schools as a priority that Traveller children receive in-class support in a similar way to children who are assisted in class by a learning support or resource teacher. The children's interviews provided data which indicated the existence of stereotyping by some children in relation to Travellers, for example:

Researcher: What about Travellers?
Child 6: (Nods head to indicate yes)
Researcher: What do you know about Travellers?
Child 6: They have dogs
Researcher: I see. What else do you know about Travellers?
Child 6: And they have car..trailers
(Interview with Child 6, School D: March 23rd, 2004)

As with all ethnic groups, it was clear from this study that Travellers and those working to support the Traveller community viewed the preservation of the Traveller identity as a significant aspect of an intercultural education programme.

8.2 Institutional Practices

The theme of institutional practices incorporates many different elements, namely structures, policies and behavioural approaches within the school system and at Government level. For instance, policy development in relation to cultural diversity, anti-racism or anti-bullying, language support initiatives and continuing teacher education. The issue of racism contributed significantly to the overall study, both in the literature review as well as in the data analysis. Racism as a theme was evident in research with children, parents and teachers and it was clear from the findings that racism was present in Irish society at the time of this research. The evidence of racism in Ireland emerged as a result of incidences of racism with parents and children as depicted by some Principals, for example, during an interview with principal 8, School E (October 22nd, 2003). At national policy level the Equal Status Act (Ireland: 2000)and the Employment Equality Act (Ireland: 1998) prohibit discrimination on nine grounds, one of which is race. However, even with such legislation in place racism is still an aspect of Irish society according to findings by Amnesty International (2001). While the NCCRI (October: 2000) show that reported incidences of racism rose from a mere 4 from May 2002 to 70 from may 2004 to October 2004. It is also worth noting that these were only reported incidences and it is therefore highly possible that there were many more unreported incidences over this period.

Children's understanding of racism was explored during interviews and it was found that children at the age of 4-6 years had very little understanding of the issue. This was supported by the findings of Devine *et al* in their 2004 study on racism with primary school children. Thus, with regard to the question of racism being fact or fiction in Irish society, evidence from this study and that of others proves that there is an element of racism in existence in modern day Ireland. It is possible for the education system to

help in children's attitudes however the fight against racism should be viewed as an issue of importance at Government level in terms of the provision of supports for agencies and schools which aim to address the issue of racism. In conjunction with that it could be stated that Government support can only reach a certain level in the mindset of the public. Once education and supports have been provided and implemented at Government level, it is then up to each individual to examine their own conscience and attitudes towards other people.

Stereotyping was highlighted as contributor to the study because of its prevalence in interviews with adults and children. For instance, it is worth referring back to an interview with Principal 8 who made a comment in relation to working migrant parents and those receiving social welfare assistance as follows: "We have a lot of Phillipine nurses and they are nice to deal with. They are a lot more confident than those from other countries who are on social welfare" (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd 2003). It was found that the stereotyping depicted in the data findings highlighted the use of labels to identity others and as a result majority and minority groups become part of the social order. The children in the study also contributed to the theme of stereotyping, the main focus of which involved an association of skin colour or physical appearance with a certain label or nationality as evident from the interviews with children (See interview with Child 10 page 228 and Child 9 page 228)

These extracts clearly show the influence of media, such as television on a child's perception of others, and the significant connection for young children of physical attributes, such as skin colour with identity. The most prevalent findings amongst children were their belief that people with black skin are from Africa. Perhaps it will take time for such an assumption to change in Ireland, even though the children in this

study were of a very young present day generation. Stereotypes will always exist as it is human nature to label others and it is part of the social order that minority and majority groups exist (Becker, 1963). Positive media images of all nationalities and a school environment which also reflects different nationalities favourably lend themselves to the creation of a culturally environment. However, in the case of Ireland, it is possible that due to the recent and continuous growth in population and immigration changes in stereotypical behaviour and thoughts may only lessen with the onset of future generations because of the probability of mixed race families.

It would be alsmost impossible to refer to religion when discussing school practices in Ireland, due mainly to the fact that the majority of schools are Catholic and are run by the Catholic Church (94%: http:www.cso.ie). It was not intended that the research would focus on religion due to its complex and often controversial nature, however as a result of comments made by parents and religious education in schools religion emerged as a theme in its own right. Religion was frequently associated with family celebrations, such as weddings, christenings, Christmas, Eid, Ramadan and Easter. It was as a result of responses given in the Family History questionnaire and during interviews with adults and children that the relationship between identity, religion and family values became clear. Religion formed an important aspect of some respondent's family lives, however for others religion did not feature as a contributor to their family beliefs, for instance:

Researcher:	Why don't you like black?
Child 2:	Because it's a dark colour and I don't celebrate Halloween
Researcher:	Why don't you celebrate Halloween?
Child 2:	Because I'm a Christian and Jesus was born at Christmas
Researcher:	What is a Christian?
Child 2:	Like me
Researcher:	Like you, I see. Do you go to a special church?
Child 2:	Yes

Researcher: What do you do at church?
Child 2: I pray and I play a game and sometimes I get in a bouncy castle
Researcher: To whom do you pray?
Child 2: Jesus
Researcher: What kinds of things do you say to or ask Jesus?
Child 2: Like there's an enemy and Jesus comes to the enemy and he tells us about Moses and the devil and that's all
(Interview with Child 2, female, Nigerian, School E: March 3rd '04)

Researcher: Very good. And do religious ceremonies play a part in your family celebrations/occasions throughout the year?
Parent 2: Yes, Easter as well. My daughter's an alter server so we would be aware of our holidays. You know, coming up to Easter we would discuss Jesus dying on the cross, we wouldn't be a family that would bang on about religion. We would discuss anything that the children would bring home from the different cultures. My husband is Protestant and we're Catholic and the children are aware, very aware and if they choose when they're older to become Protestant they can do. My husband takes them to mass.
Researcher: To the Catholic church?
Parent 2: Yes.
(Interview with Parent 2, female, School D: date?)

Researcher: That's true. Do you go to the church?
Child 7: Ya
Researcher: Who takes you?
Child 7: My mam and dad
Researcher: What do you do at the church?
Child 7: Sit down
Researcher: Good. Do you listen to anybody at the church?
Child 7: Ye
Researcher: To whom?
Child 7: Holy God
(Interview with Child 7, March 23rd 2004: School D)

The data also showed a lack of choice of multi-denominational schools for children of religious beliefs other than Catholicism, primarily because of the fact that Ireland is traditionally a Roman Catholic country and according to the CSO 94% of primary schools in Ireland are Roman Catholic (http://www.cso.ie). The variety of languages and cultures was demonstrated earlier and as part of that religious diversity was also

prevalent. However, despite this it was common for teachers and parents to suggest that children attended their school because 'it was the nearest to their house'. In other words, had there been a greater choice of multi-denominational schools in the localities represented in the study parents of non-Catholic backgrounds would have preferred to send their children to such schools.

School policy emerged as an issue which was related to the political, policy and provision aspect of intercultural education. During interviews with educational professionals, such as teachers, and those working as researchers or lecturers in the field of early childhood education it became clear that school policy had a role to play in the development of cultural inclusiveness in schools. The most significant finding to emerge in relation to school policy was around the issue of anti-racism policies and guidelines for the implementation of intercultural education as part of the overall curriculum. There was a clear lack of school policies in relation to both these issues, for two reasons. Firstly, as outlined in chapter 7 certain Principals did not feel the need for such policies because, as they indicated their 'school population was mono-cultural'. Secondly, there seemed to be a lack of available guidelines, resources and training at government level to assist schools in their endeavours to implement policies to promote cultural inclusiveness within the school and wider community.

National policy emerged as a sub-theme of institutional practices as result of interviews with professionals working in the field of early childhood and/or intercultural education. Although a relatively low impact issue in terms of the findings, the data collected was deemed worthy of inclusion in the overall analysis. For the most part national policy in relation to intercultural education was viewed by interviewees in a positive manner, for example, professional 2 stated that the child-centeredness of the

Primary Curriculum (1999) was a positive change. Other policies for which positive feedback was given include White Paper on early Childhood Education (1999) and the National Children's Strategy (2001). There were some criticisms of policy at the time of the research, for instance the lack of emphasis on play in the Primary Curriculum and the lack of action taken in relation to the establishment of an early Childhood Agency, as recommended by the White Paper on early Childhood Education (1999). However, since the time of this research advancements have been made with regard to both of these criticisms, for instance, in 2004 the NCCA published a document entitled as a step towards the development of a national curriculum for all those involved in the education and care sector of children from birth to six years. The establishment of the CECDE at St. Patrick's College Drumcondra conducts research into early year education, including cultural aspects. It is hoped that this research will act as groundwork for the establishment of an early year's agency.

Finally, the issue of teacher training and continual in-service training evolved as an aspect of the findings due to the evidence of a significant lack of development in this area. It emerged that both in-service and pre-service training for primary school teachers in the field of intercultural education was not adequate, for example, both Professionals 1 and 2 highlighted the lack of opportunities for teachers to attend in-service training in intercultural education issues. The feeling of "it up as we go along" (Interview with Principal 8, School E: October 22nd, 2003), was one which I interpreted from speaking to a number of teachers in this study. Thus, the need for practical support and guidance in incorporating intercultural education in an inclusive manner across the curriculum was widely cited by interviewees in the study. It could be suggested that this lack of training has an affect on the delivery of a culturally inclusive primary curriculum, and the level of confidence that teachers need to believe in their

own ability to do so. Data from interviews with teachers and other experts demonstrated the need and demand for training in this area. Possible recommendations for improvement in the area of in-service and pre-service training will be outlined in the following section.

8.3 Recommendations for Consideration by Policy Makers for Future Improvements into the Area of Intercultural Education in Primary Schools in Ireland

In summary, I observed that there was a lack of focus on the importance of intercultural education during this study, with many schools lacking the appropriate resources needed to implement a culturally inclusive learning environment. It is fair to say that since the time of this study intercultural education has been given greater focus as an integral aspect of early childhood education in Ireland from a European, national and local perspective. Therefore, it is my hope that this study will pave the way for much needed improvement and research into the positive impact that intercultural education can make on the overall development of young children.

The following outlines possible recommendations for future study in the area of cultural diversity issues in early years and primary education. These recommendations are issues that in my opinion should be considered by policy makers in the future when devising new policies for intercultural education in primary schools. The recommendations listed below have been borne out of the findings of this research, for instance from conversations with teachers and Principals, as well as my own observations during the course of this study. I would strongly recommend exploration into the following topics as a means toward continued improvement in the area of intercultural education and its inclusion as a positive participatory factor in all

curricular and extracurricular elements of the early childhood and primary school systems:

1. The system of English language support in primary schools

It was noted during this research that children were generally segregated from their peers for English language support. It is my opinion that such a practice highlights difference in children's language abilities in a negative manner. In-class support, such as that which is recommended for children with special educational needs (http://www.education.ie), should also be adopted in the case of English language tuition. Such an approach would most likely encourage full participation and immersion in all classroom activities (including English class) of every child. The delivery of group activities involving a qualified teacher in English language support tuition within the classroom environment would also be of value, with class teacher and English language support teacher working together.

In addition, the ELS teacher could work with a group of children in need of support during English classes as part of mainstream classroom tuition. The withdrawal of children from class involves an immense amount of planning and timetabling in order that children do not miss the same subject everyday. This could also be viewed as an almost impossible task for an ELS teacher because of the number of children and class levels in his/her care. It is most likely that children would inevitably miss class lessons and interactions with their peers if withdrawn to another room for tuition on a regular basis. The maximum two year English language tuition for immigrant children as outlined by DES should

also be changed so as the individual need of children is assessed. In other words, should a child require more than two years of English language support this could be facilitated as part of group work within the child's mainstream classroom environment.

The majority of children who speak English as an additional language are not exposed to their first language during the school day. The use of dual language books and the freedom to converse with peers in their first language at specified times of the school day should be permitted. The development of a child's first language should not be confined to the home environment alone. For instance, if a Polish child is not permitted to speak Polish at school and his/her parents work until 6/7pm this child could become less proficient developmentally in his/her first language. By all means if a person decides to emigrate or are misplaced to a country they should obey its laws; however it should not be a prerequisite that immigrants are not given support and respect in maintaining their own cultural identity.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the importance of English language proficiency for all immigrants in need of such assistance (both adult and children). The level of English language proficiency has an impact on the development of the young immigrant children (in particular if his/her parents are unable to speak/read English), for example homework can become a difficult task if the parent cannot help his/her child because they cannot understand English. In addition, young children often translate parent-teacher meetings to their parents because the parent cannot speak English. The Principal of School E gave this example during this study, and as a result the

school began to provide English lessons to parents after school. Teachers working in the school conducted these lessons on a voluntary basis.

The establishment of more cross-border and inter-country communication schemes in order to help with positive forward planning towards the development of culturally inclusive learning environments for young children in Ireland would also create improved levels of communications between schools with regard to intercultural education. This would also enable the 'passing on' of school reports on immigrant children who move from county to county due to economic reasons, for example the parents of immigrant children often move from place to place searching for work. Thus, the children in these families often have an interrupted education with a lack of information being passed onto the children's new school, thus leaving teachers in a very unclear position with regard to family background, level of English language use, religious beliefs and first language use. The development of a universal and mandatory report system that could be passed on from school to school when children move should be in place for all children. For this to be successful the parents of the children should inform the children's principal of the name, class and teacher of their new school in order for important social, educational and cultural information to be passed on. As it stands a number of children receive the maximum of two years language support in a school, then they move to another school and receive another two years, whether they require it or not. Thus, a system of over crowding can often exist in English Language Support classrooms. This is due to a lack of communication between schools and between parents and schools.

Perhaps the Department of Education and Science could create an initiative whereby school classrooms would be used after school hours to provide such a service on a regular basis. Teachers qualified to teach English as an additional language could teach the lessons and be paid for their work. This initiative would provide greater employment in communities and would ensure the use of classrooms, which would otherwise be left vacant as opposed to being used as a valuable community resource. Those who would take up the lessons would also have the opportunity to socialize with other parents, while at the same time learn the language that their child uses on a day-to-day basis at school.

2. Teacher Education and Personal Development:

This research demonstrated the need for continuing teacher education into the area of intercultural education (including both pre-service and in-service training). This issue became apparent during teacher interviews, from personal observations of teachers in action and from interviews with professionals working in the area of intercultural and early childhood education. Such training would first and foremost include an opportunity for teachers to examine their own attitudes towards cultural issues such as race, identity and religion. At this point I would like to reiterate the comment made by Professional 1 in support of this recommendation:

> …I think in pre-service training and in-service training if teachers are given opportunities to understand that first of all it's about me as a teacher and my attitudes and then it's about my own ability to analyse and build on that first, so that in terms then of also coming to terms with my own racism first so that I can identify what it is, be honest about it, do something about it and develop the skills to counter it in myself first and then in my teaching.

Improvements into the area of cultural diversity in schools could include the development of a certificate/diploma for translation services for the education sector, from which a database of translators could be developed with whom teachers/Principals could make contact with when needed. This would also provide additional employment for people from all cultural backgrounds and would create a greater sense of inclusiveness in schools.

Training into the teaching of English as an additional language should also be made available to all teachers. As it stands only ELS teachers receive such training from the DES, even though the class teacher spends the most time per day with the children in need of such support (http://www.education.ie).

3. Need for a Greater Diversity in School Staff

It can be argued that there is a significant need for the employment of a variety of nationalities and ethnicities (including Travellers) in the Irish education system, as opposed to the very mono-cultural teaching population that currently exists. This issue became apparent from personal observations of teaching staff and the clear lack of cultural diversity that existed amongst them, for instance during the course of the study I did not meet any Traveller who was employed in a school either as a teacher or in a supportive role. One possible approach to improving the role of the RTT would be to work in conjunction or liaise with a person from the Traveller community in terms of understanding the cultural aspects and way of life of the young Traveller child. The lack of diversity amongst teachers in the study did not reflect the many identities of the pupil population. Therefore, it must have been difficult for immigrant children to

identify with their teachers or to have positive role models from their own culture. It could be stated that such a lack of diversity amongst teaching staff encourages a form of assimilation into Irish culture, which as a result fails to encourage the full development of every child's personal identity.

At present the requirement of an honour in leaving certificate Irish is a stumbling block for many potentially talented teachers. The DES require that second level students must obtain an honour in leaving certificate Irish, as well as the required points to gain entry to the Bachelor of Education Degree programme. This inevitably excludes a high proportion of students, for instance those who may be less capable at languages than other subject areas, from becoming influential educators. I believe the compulsory honour in Irish could be described as an exclusionary requirement, which in turn leads to a teaching personnel that lacks the necessary diversity to represent modern day Ireland and its primary school population. Lest we forget that all children learn Irish from junior infants to leaving certificate as a compulsory subject unless excluded on specific grounds, such as certain special educational needs. Naturally some immigrant teachers may sit the leaving certificate Irish exam and be successful; however such a task would prove very difficult for any adult. There are many Irish pupils who sit the Irish leaving certificate exam and fail to gain the required honour, and thus are exempt from becoming primary school teachers, regardless of their talents/intellectual abilities in other subject areas. Although I firmly believe in maintaining national identity, it is also equally important to respect and nurture the cultural identities of all pupils where possible. It could be stated that to do this successfully there must be a culturally diverse teaching population in existence.

It is my belief that there are many qualified primary school teachers amongst the immigrant population living in Ireland who would undoubtedly contribute positively to the teaching population - the actual statistics with regard to qualified primary school teachers and their ethnic background are unavailable at present, however this would be an interesting topic to study further. This research showed that there was a very limited availability of qualified translators for primary schools in need of such a service. This problem could be minimized with the employment of more language diverse educators. This would facilitate greater interaction and communication between immigrant families and teachers. One possibility of the most efficient use of a 'language diverse' staff would be for teachers to swap classes according to their own abilities, for example a teacher qualified to teach Irish could instruct another teacher's class in that subject, while the other teacher could instruct the 'Irish teacher's' class in a subject area within his/her comfort zone/expertise. Such a practice would take planning and interaction amongst all teaching staff and the wider school community.

The need for teachers who are qualified to teach Irish is essential, in particular because it goes a long way to preserving national identity. One possibility of ensuring the preservation of the Irish language while at the same time employing cultural diversity would be to employ a certain percentage of teachers qualified to teach Irish, with the remainder percentage of teachers being those qualified outside the Republic of Ireland or whose degree subject is a language other than Irish, for instance another European language. By all means standards should be in place, such as points level entry into the B.Ed programme, however, it should be considered that what one teacher may lack in

one subject area, another may compensate for in another. Thus, it is invaluable that teachers of all abilities and with capabilities in diverse language/cultural backgrounds should be employed or at least be given the opportunity to be employed in our schools. As a result of such an approach the majority of the pupil population would be represented in some form by their teachers.

Due to the high level of language diversity amongst pupils in primary schools in Ireland it is possible that the future looks brighter in terms of cultural diversity amongst teaching staff. This is due to the fact that current immigrant children and Irish children born to immigrant parents learn both English and Irish and are often exposed to their first language at home. Thus, once the current population of young children who speak English as an additional language reach leaving certificate age there is a high probability that a number of these children will continue their education and pursue a B.Ed degree. As a result, cultural and language diversity amongst teaching staff should be heightened in the future.

The above recommendations for further study are purely as a result of my own observations of, and discussions with the adults and children involved in this research. They are suggested as a means to create positive change on the path towards greater inclusiveness into the primary education system in Ireland. These changes can only occur and impact positively on intercultural issues in schools with the assistance, support and combined effort of the whole school community-pupils, teachers, parents, Government members and policy makers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Current European Union Member States

EU MEMBER STATES	YEAR OF MEMBERSHIP
Austria	1995
Belgium	Founder member
Cyprus	2004
Czech Republic	2004
Denmark	1973
Estonia	2004
Finland	1995
France	Founder member
Germany	Founder member
Greece	1981
Hungary	2004
Ireland	1973
Italy	Founder member
Latvia	2004
Lithuania	2004
Luxembourg	Founder member
Malta	2004
Poland	2004
Portugal	1986
Slovakia	2004
Slovenia	2004
Spain	1986
Sweden	1995
The Netherlands	Founder member
United Kingdom	1973

Appendix 2

Pilot Interventions Implemented by the Department of Education and Science in Ireland to Improve the Early Childhood Education

1. Rutland Street Project

Rutland Street Project was a pre-school, which was established in 1969 that was attached to the Rutland Street Primary School. The Department of Education collaborated with the Bernard Van Leer Foundation (http://www.bernardvanleer.) in the establishment of the project. One of the main objectives of the Project was to assist children in the transition from home to school, and to help develop their cognitive skills (DES, 1999: 98). The Rutland Street Project, which is still in operation today, was a research project from 1969 until 1974 and has made a valuable impact on the pre-school education of the young children in the area. A particular curriculum is in place, and the active involvement of parents is encouraged. An evaluation of the project was carried out by the Department of Education, in conjunction with the Educational Research Centre in Dublin. The results of the evaluation indicated that the children involved did not maintain the school related skills and knowledge when they entered primary school. However, an evaluation of the children at sixteen years of age suggested that the participants that took part stayed in school longer, and were more likely to take part in a public examination than the children not involved in the Rutland Street area (David, 1998: 81). It is possible that other factors, for instance family support and individual ambition could also have contributed to the length of time the children stayed in school. Therefore, although a number of children who were involved in the Rutland Street Project were reported to have more successful academic paths than those who were not involved in the Project, it would be inaccurate to attribute the project itself as the sole factor for this success.

2. Early Start

Early Start an early year educational programme, which was introduced in 1994, was aimed at addressing educational disadvantage in a positive way, by focusing on young children who may be challenged to reach their maximum capabilities within the education system. The evaluation report (Educational Research Centre, 1998) indicates that the Early Start Programme was incorporated into the Irish school system in a positive way. Parents of the children involved showed appreciation and enthusiasm by getting involved in the programme. Junior Infant Teachers felt that Early Start children were more developed cognitively and linguistically than non-participants. There are a few difficulties, which should be noted. Overall there was poor attendance, perhaps because attendance is voluntary. Children's test results did not show significant changes in the levels of cognitive development. The relationship between the teacher and the child-care worker was not always satisfactory. It is generally accepted that the school day should be lengthened by about two hours, to allow for further cognitive development. Early Start staff felt they should have had more time to visit other Early Start Schools to assist them in their concerns. Staff development needs to be addressed, as it does not complement the objectives that are to be implemented. Early Start is centred around a number of schools (more than 40 at present) whereas the Rutland Street project is located on a single premise. This allows for greater effectiveness.

3. Breaking the Cycle

Breaking the Cycle is a project which targets disadvantage in the primary school through the provision of special grants for equipment and consumables, a reduction in class sizes and significant emphasis on school planning and teaching methodologies (DES, 1999: 98-101). Such a project is a vital addition to the educational and social success of the pupils in schools, which are located in disadvantaged areas.

Appendix 3

Information on the Progress of the National Children's Office

The NCO website outlines the main participation projects that the NCO is working on, which clearly shows a dedication implementing a culture of participation and consultation by children as well as adults. The projects include:

- Comhairle na nÓg;
- Dáil na nÓg;
- Dáil na bPáistí;
- The Student Council Working Group;
- Guidelines on participation by children and young people;
- Establishment of an NCO Child and Youth Forum;
- Supporting the Young Social Innovators Exhibition;
- Supporting RTE News2Day;

Other participation projects that were organised by the NCO during the last year include:

- The involvement of children/young people in the appointment of the Ombudsman for Children;
- The involvement of children and young people in the development of a code of children's advertising;

The NCO has also recently become part of the Office of the Minister for Children (OMC) following a decision by the Government in December 2005 to establish the OMC "in order to bring greater coherence to policy making for children" (http://www.nco.ie). The improvement in the focus on childhood studies in recent years by the Irish Government is positive. However it should be noted that *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) is the possible motivator behind the Government's increased commitment to providing children with a stronger voice. Other research studies into childhood issues, which have given value to the contribution of the opinions of children include Kenny and McLaughlin's work (2004) on *Diversity in early Years Education North and South-Implications for Teacher Education* and *Primary Voices –Equality, Diversity and Childhood in Irish primary Schools* (Deegan *et al.*, edited: 2004).

Appendix 4

School Pilot

Dear Principal,

The results of a pilot study I conducted last year demonstrate the need for an integration of an anti-bias and intercultural approach in early year classrooms. I am piloting a questionnaire as part of my research and would be very appreciative if you would complete it in full. The data collected from this pilot study will allow me to make relevant corrections and adaptations to the questionnaire where appropriate. Therefore, your contribution will be greatly appreciated. The distribution of the final draft of the questionnaire will take place within the next few weeks. The following explanations will be useful when completing this questionnaire:

- *early childhood*: children between the ages of 0-6. This study focuses on children between the ages of 3-6.
- *intercultural education*: Intercultural education is about respecting individuals from different cultural backgrounds in a positive way and supporting an anti-racism approach to teaching.

Purpose of the Questionnaire:
This questionnaire is important, as it is intended to ascertain valuable information about the about ethnic minority and Traveller children in early childhood classrooms in Ireland from Principals of different schools, and also to investigate the resources available in early childhood classrooms for intercultural education, The results of the survey will then be used to identify approximately 12 schools in which the researcher hopes to carry out case studies in order to gain an in depth insight into the topic. The case studies will involve working with a junior or senior infant class, and their class teacher at different stages during the school year 2003/2004. Class observations, interviews with class teachers and children, and the delivery of intercultural lessons by the researcher will all be part of the study. It is estimated that the researcher will be present in the classroom for about two hours per week (eight weeks in total, and a further few weeks later in the year to review the progress of the study).

Importance of the Research:
The overall project is very significant to the area of early childhood education and intercultural education, as it will analyse the policies and provisions that exist in Ireland for young children who are from diverse cultural backgrounds, in comparison to policies in other countries. Comparative studies provide valuable information, and it is the intention of this project to highlight the best practices that exist elsewhere in the field of early childhood education so that the situation in Ireland can either be improved, or enhanced where appropriate. It is intended that positive approaches to intercultural education in sample schools will also be highlighted.

This research will be beneficial to teachers, especially early childhood educationalists, principals, and the education profession as a whole.

I have recently received a bursary from the I.N.T.O. for the relevance and importance of my research. The I.N.T.O. are fully supportive of this questionnaire and of the overall research topic.

How to Return the Questionnaire: Please return the questionnaire in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

Return Address: Lorraine Duffy, ...

Return-by Date: April 4th 2003

Your input is desired to make this a worthwhile piece of research, and your professional opinion will be valued. The findings will be made available to you at a future date if you so wish.

Yours Sincerely,

_____

Lorraine Duffy

Appendix 5

School Questionnaire

Current Research Title

Intercultural Education in the Early Childhood Classroom, With Special Consideration of the Situation in Ireland as Compared to Other Countries

---

16/06/2003

Dear Principal,

The results of a pilot study I conducted last year demonstrate the need for an integration of an anti-bias and intercultural approach in early year classrooms. A questionnaire is included which I hope you will complete and return as your input is desired to make this research worthwhile and effective. The following explanations will be useful when completing the questionnaire:

- *early childhood*: children between the ages of 0-6. This study focuses on children between the ages of 3-6.
- *intercultural education*: Intercultural education is about respecting individuals from different cultural backgrounds in a positive way and supporting an anti-racism approach to teaching.

Purpose of the Questionnaire:
This questionnaire is important, as it is intended to ascertain valuable information about ethnic minority and Traveller children in early childhood classrooms in Ireland from Principals of different schools, and also to investigate the resources available in early childhood classrooms for intercultural education. The results of the survey will then be used to identify twelve schools in which the researcher hopes to carry out case studies in order to gain an in depth insight into the topic.

Importance of the Research:
The overall project is very significant to the area of early childhood education and intercultural education, as it will analyse the policies and provisions that exist in Ireland for young children who are from diverse cultural backgrounds, in comparison to policies in other countries. Comparative studies provide valuable information, and it is the intention of this project to highlight the best practices that exist elsewhere in the field of early childhood education so that the situation in Ireland can either be improved, or enhanced where appropriate. It is intended that positive approaches to intercultural education in sample schools will also be highlighted.

This research will be beneficial to teachers, especially early childhood educationalists, Principals, and the education profession as a whole.

I have recently received a bursary from the I.N.T.O. for the relevance and importance of my research. The I.N.T.O. are fully supportive of this questionnaire and of the overall research topic.

How to Return the Questionnaire: Please return the questionnaire in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

Return Address: Lorraine Duffy, ...

Return-by Date: Wednesday, July 2nd 2003

Your input is desired to make this a worthwhile piece of research, and your professional opinion will be valued. Educational research is vital if positive change is to take place, and therefore it is hoped that your school will be willing to take part in the study if your school is selected when the data findings are examined. Different types of schools and groups of children will be selected, for example girls only, boys only or coeducational, in order to eliminate the possibility of bias and to ensure the study is a valid piece of research. The findings will be made available to you at a future date if you so wish.

Yours Sincerely,

Lorraine Duffy

Please answer the following questions:

Name and address of school:

_____

_____

Phone:_____ Email:_____

Please write your name in capitals:_____

A. School Profile

1. School Type: Please tick

(a) Co-educational_____ (f) Denominational_____

(b) Girls only_____ (g) Interdenominational_____

(c) Boys only_____ (h) Multidenominational_____

(d) Scoil Gaeltachta_____ (i) Preschool_____

(e) Gaelscoil_____

2. Teaching Staff Numbers: Please write the number on the space provided if applicable to your school:

(a) Total Male teachers including principal_____

(b) Male Junior infant teachers_____

(c) Male Senior infant teachers_____

(d) Total Female teachers including principal_____

(e) Female Junior infant teachers_____

(f) Female Senior infant teachers_____

(g) Female Resource Teachers for Travellers (RTT)-
including shared/part- time_____

(h) Male Resource Teachers for Travellers (RTT)-
including shared/part- time _____

(I) Female English as a Second Language Teachers (ESL)-
including shared/part- time _____

(j) Male English as a Second Language Teachers (ESL)-
including shared/part- time _____

(k) Female Learning support teachers-
including shared/part- time _____

(l) Male Learning support teachers-
including shared/part- time _____

(m) Female resource teachers-
including shared/part- time _____

(n) Male resource teachers-
including shared/part- time _____

B. Profile of Pupils

1. **Student Population: Please tick**

   Less than 100 _____ 401-600 _____

   101-200 _____ 600+ _____

   201-400_____

2. Total number of pupils in Junior infants: _____

   Total number of pupils in Senior infants: _____

   Are there combined Junior/Senior infant classes?: Yes___ No____

   How many?: _____

3. **Traveller Pupils**

   Are there Traveller children attending the school?

   Yes _____ No _____ (Please tick one)

   Total Number of Traveller Pupils_____

   Total Number of Traveller Pupils in *Junior Infants*_____

   Total Number of Traveller Pupils in *Senior Infants*_____

   Is there a preschool on the school grounds?

   Yes_____ No_____ (Please tick one)

   Early Start_____ Other_____

   Please state the name of the Preschool on the school grounds (if applicable):

   _____

Please complete the following information: (Y=year /M=month) F=female/M=male

Early Start Pupils: (if applicable)

Pupils	Sex	Age Y	M	Pupils	Sex	Age Y	M	Pupils	Sex	Age Y	M
Pupil 1				Pupil 11				Pupil 21			
Pupil 2				Pupil 12				Pupil 22			
Pupil 3				Pupil 13				Pupil 23			
Pupil 4				Pupil 14				Pupil 24			
Pupil 5				Pupil 15				Pupil 25			
Pupil 6				Pupil 16				Pupil 26			
Pupil 7				Pupil 17				Pupil 27			
Pupil 8				Pupil 18				Pupil 28			
Pupil 9				Pupil 19				Pupil 29			
Pupil 10				Pupil 20				Pupil 30			

Junior Infant Traveller Pupils:

Pupils	Sex	Age Y M	Does the pupil attend an RTT- Yes or No
Pupil 1			
Pupil 2			
Pupil 3			
Pupil 4			
Pupil 5			
Pupil 6			
Pupil 7			
Pupil 8			
Pupil 9			
Pupil 10			
Pupil 11			

Senior Infant Traveller Pupils:

Pupils	Sex	Age Y M	Does the pupil attend an RTT- Yes or No
Pupil 1			
Pupil 2			
Pupil 3			
Pupil 4			
Pupil 5			
Pupil 6			
Pupil 7			
Pupil 8			
Pupil 9			
Pupil 10			
Pupil 11			

4. Cultural/Linguistic Minority Pupils

How many pupils are attending the school at present for whom English or Irish is not a first language? _____

Please specify the following characteristics of each pupil in the tables provided below:

Junior Infant Pupils:

Pupils	Sex (Male=M) (Female=F)	Age Y M	Mother tongue	Country of birth	Country of birth of Mother	Country of birth of Father	Amount of months in the school (not including Summer holidays)	Please state the number of hours per week that the child attends an ESL teacher
Pupil 1								
Pupil 2								
Pupil 3								
Pupil 4								
Pupil 5								
Pupil 6								
Pupil 7								
Pupil 8								
Pupil 9								
Pupil 10								
Pupil 11								

Senior Infants Pupils:

Pupils	Sex (Male=M) (Female=F)	Age Y M	Mother tongue	Country of birth	Country of birth of Mother	Country of birth of Father	Amount of months in the school (not including Summer holidays)	Please state the number of hours per week that the child attends an ESL teacher
Pupil 1								
Pupil 2								
Pupil 3								
Pupil 4								
Pupil 5								
Pupil 6								
Pupil 7								
Pupil 8								
Pupil 9								
Pupil 10								
Pupil 11								

C. Resources

Please tick yes or no to the following questions:

1. Does your school have an anti-racism policy? Yes____ No_____

(If you wish you may include a copy)

2. Does your school use any of the following tools as part of an intercultural/anti-bias infant education approach?

- Dolls of different skin colour: Yes_____ No_____
- Male dolls: Yes___No___ Female dolls: Yes____ No_____
- Story books which reflect different racial and cultural backgrounds:

  Yes_____ No _____
- Displays of different writing systems (e.g., Chinese, Hebrew):

  Yes_____ No_____
- Art materials such as tan, brown, black paint or ski-tone crayons: Yes_____ No_____
- Posters and art displays depicting men, women and children from various racial and ethnic backgrounds: Yes_____ No_____
- Other resources (Please list):

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

3. Have any of the Junior infant teachers attended in-service courses on intercultural education?

Yes_____ No_____

4. Have any of the Senior infant teachers attended in-service courses on intercultural education?

Yes_____ No_____

5. Have the whole staff discussed the issue of intercultural education during a staff meeting?

Yes_____ No_____

6. Would your school be willing to take part in this research for the school year 2003/2004 if selected?

Yes_____ No_____

Thank you for your co-operation. Your contribution is valued and appreciated.

_____

Lorraine Duffy

If you wish, please list any comments you may have on this research/questionnaire below:

Appendix 6

Parent Questionnaire

March 24th '04

Hello Parents/Guardians,

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your support in allowing your child to participate in my intercultural education study, and for taking time to complete this questionnaire. This study would not be possible without the backup of parents/guardians and teaching staff alike. It is much appreciated!

Attached to this note is a questionnaire, which is designed to gather information about you and your child's cultural background, and also to find out your views on special celebrations/festivals such as Christmas, Ramadan, Easter, Chinese New Year, Diwali, St. Patrick's Day and so on.

At this point in my study I would also like the opportunity to meet with some of you, the parents/guardians of the children I have been lucky enough to get to know over the past few weeks. I would like to meet with some of you to have an *informal chat* about your locality, your cultural/ethnic background and your child's educational and social experiences. The meetings would take place in your child's school at a suitable time for you.

What we talk about during our conversation will be used in a *strictly confidential and anonymous* way. I feel parents are a very important part of their child's education, and so it would be wonderful to include some of your views in my study as well as those of teachers, children and other educationalists alike.

Please complete the slip below and the questionnaire and return them to your child's teacher on/before **Tuesday March 30th**. Once again, thank you for your support!

Lorraine Duffy

_____

Your Child's Name: _____

Your Child's School: _____

Please tick one:

I **would like** to meet and talk to you Lorraine: _____

I **would not like** to meet and talk to you Lorraine: _____

Signed: _____

Child's name: _____ School: _____

Part One: Family History

Note: Just write the word PASS if you do not wish to give certain information, or if it does not apply to you or your family.

1. My child's name is:

_____

He/she was born in (city/town and country):

_____

2. My name is:

_____

I was born in (city/town and country):

_____

3. My husband's/wife's/partner's name is:

_____

He/she was born in (city/town and country):

4. My parents live or lived in (city/town and country):

They were born in (city/town and country):

and

5. My husband's/wife's/partner's parents live or lived in (city/town and country):

They were born in (city/town and country):

and

6. Did any of your grandparents come from another country?

Which person/people?

Which country?

7. Did any of your husband's/wife's/partner's grandparents come from another country?

Which person/people?

Which country?

8. How would you describe your family's cultural/ethnic background?

Part Two: Family Celebrations/National and International Holidays/Cultural Identity

1. On a scale of 1-5 how important do you consider special days/events, e.g. Christmas day, Ramadan, Easter, Chinese New Year, St.Patrick's Day, Chanukah and so on as part of your family life? (Circle one number below)
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

2. What special days/events do you celebrate in your family?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How do you celebrate them?

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. On a scale of 1-5 how important do you consider holiday celebration activities as part of the school curriculum?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

4. On a scale of 1-5 how important do you feel it is for your child to learn about holiday celebration activities, e.g. stories, poems (i.e. listening activities) that are not part of your family's tradition?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

5. On a scale of 1-5 how important do you feel it is for your child to participate in holiday celebration activities, e.g. art/music/English lessons (i.e. 'hands-on' activities) that are not part of your child's family tradition?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

6. Do you think there is too much of an emphasis placed on holiday celebration activities in the school curriculum?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

7. Holiday celebration activities are <u>not</u> an important part of your child's education. Do you agree?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

8. In your opinion how important is it that your child learns about Irish history as part of the school curriculum?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

9. In your opinion how important is it that your child learns about the history of other countries as part of the school curriculum?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

10. How important is it to you that your child learns the Irish language?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

11. Learning Irish is <u>not</u> an important part of your child's education. Do you agree?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

12. In your opinion how important is foreign language learning to your child's education?

(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

13. Foreign language learning is <u>not</u> an important part of your child's education. Do you agree?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

14. How important is it to you that your child should be given the opportunity to use his/her home language (i.e. the language used most in conversation at home) in school?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

15. How important is it to you that your child interacts with children from different cultural backgrounds to his/her own while at school?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

16. In your opinion how important is it that your child interacts with children from different cultural backgrounds to his/her own while in his/her local community?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

17. How important is it to you that your child is made aware of anti-racism issues as part of his/her school curriculum?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

18. Anti-racism issues are <u>not</u> an important part of your child's education. Do you agree?
(1 = not at all 2 = very little 3 = a little 4 = a lot 5 = a very great deal)

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix 7

Topics and Questions to be covered in Interview

A. Changes

1. What is your background in the area of early childhood education, and more specifically in the area of curriculum development?
2. What changes have you seen in the area of early childhood education in relation to ethnic minority children during that period of time?
3. (a) In your opinion how have these changes impacted positively on educational developments?
   (b) How, in any way, have these changes hindered educational developments?

B. Needs

1. In your opinion what are the educational needs of young ethnic minority children?
2. What difficulties do they experience in comparison to the majority of other children?
3. What causes these difficulties?
4. In your opinion how can they be addressed?

C. Issues and Concerns

1. I am interested in knowing what your thoughts are on current issues and concerns in early childhood education?
2. How do these issues impact on ethnic minority children, and people working in the area of early childhood education in Ireland?

D. Approaches to Culturally Inclusive Education

1. What is your view on, and experience of multicultural education?
2. What is your view on, and experience of intercultural education?
3. In your opinion what is the most effective approach to creating a culturally inclusive early childhood environment?

E. Policy

1. What are your views of the Irish Governments' policies in relation to the needs of ethnic minority children in early childhood education?
2. a. In your opinion what needs to happen at Departmental level regarding intercultural education in early childhood?
   b. What needs to happen at preschool/primary school level regarding intercultural education?
3. In your opinion, does the *Primary School Curriculum* adequately address the issue of intercultural education? If so, how does it address it, and if not where in what way is it inadequate?

4. What approach will the new curriculum for three to six year olds take in relation to intercultural education?

Note:

Interview questions have been devised based on literature research carried out in the area of cultural and ethnic diversity in early childhood education. I am seeking the views of people working in the area of early childhood education. Thus, I will be analysing this interview in my thesis and I will be quoting information received where relevant to back up my literature review. I would be happy to make this part of the thesis available to you in draft form before submission to ensure accuracy, if you wish. Any information I find that I feel may be of interest to you I would be delighted to share it with you. Some of the topics and questions may overlap, and therefore every question may not need to be addressed in the interview, but they provide an overall view of the issues I intend to cover. If you need to contact me before or after the interview please don't hesitate to call.

Thanking you, Lorraine Duffy.

Appendix 8

Interview questions for Principals

Q.1. How has your school addressed the issue of interculturalism?
Q.2. What would you like your school to gain from this research?
Q.3. Would all infant teachers be willing to get involved?
Q.4. If parental permission is given to work with a class of children, would you allow the following methods to be used in a classroom, (*not all of these methods may be used*):

- Video;
- Voice recording;
- Welcoming parents into the class situation for talks/storytelling etc.;
- Interviews with class teachers, ESL teachers, RTT, Principals, children. (These would be recorded);
- The class teacher may be asked to keep a journal.

Q.5. Have you ever noticed any incidences of racism in this school, and if so how did these incidences arise?
Q.6. Are there any issues in particular that relate to interculturalism that you would like to be addressed in this research?

Interview questions for class teachers

School times:
Start:
Break:
Lunch:
Finish:

Do the suggested times suit to visit?

How many children are in the class?

How many boys?

How many girls?

Are there any children with special educational needs? If so, what are they?

How many children are not originally from Ireland?

What are their names?

List the different countries of origin of the children in your class:

List the different mother tongues of the children in your class:

Do these children go to resource/English language teacher?

What times do they go on a Tuesday/Wednesday?

Are there economic backgrounds that I should know about?

What day and time is P.E.?

Can I have a list of their names?

Please read permission slip-have you anything to add?

Would you like to send a note to parents also?

Information for teachers:

Children's interviews will play a crucial part of the data gathering process. These will be recorded by tape and examples of the responses given to the interviewer will be analysed. The research will also include observational work of the children mixing with one another in their school environment, e.g. in play situations, during class lessons and so on.

I intend to develop lesson plans with the below concepts as the objectives:
Each child should learn:

1. **About Racial Differences and Similarities;**
2. **About Cultural Differences and Similarities;**
3. **Resist Stereotyping and Discriminatory Behaviour;**
4. **Holiday Activities in an Anti-Bias Curriculum.**[2]

Each child should have the chance to develop some of the following:

1. **Attitudes and Values:**
   - Empathy;
   - Respect for self and others;
   - Commitment to social justice and human rights;
   - Respect for diversity;
   - Develop an undertaking to learn from others with opposed viewpoints;
   - Recognising the rights of all individuals to participate in society;
   - Recognise the fact that everyone can make a difference in society.[3]

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[2] Louise Derman-Sparks, and the A.B.C. Task Force. *Anti-Bias Curriculum-Tools forEmpowering Young Children.* U.S.A.: NAEYC, 1989.

2. **Skills and Capacities:**
   - Develop active learning skills such as co-operation, participation, communication;
   - Learn the best way to deal with conflict situations;
   - Work co-operatively with others, e.g. in group work;
   - Listen to others.[4]

3. **Knowledge and Understanding:**
   - Human rights;
   - Social justice;
   - Racism;
   - Understand the terms peace and conflict and how both affect people's lives;
   - Diversity-become aware of and understand the differences that exist in society;
   - Identity: Foster in children a sense of belonging and self-identity and an appreciation for children from different identity groupings;
   - Society, History and Culture: increased knowledge of pupils' own society, culture, history, and the societies, cultures and histories of their peers.[5]

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[3] CEDR, CDU, *Celebrating Difference Promoting Equality-Intercultural Education in the Irish Primary Classroom*, (Limerick: Mary Immaculate College, 2002), 10.

[4] Ibid., 10/11.

[5] Ibid., 11.

Appendix 9

Interview Questions for Parents (Adapt to suit Irish born parents)

Family Background:

- Where were you born?
- Tell me what about your childhood there?
- What was your own school experience like? e.g. big/small school, students of different nationality?
- What languages were you exposed to in ….?
- Tell me about your family life in … before you came to Ireland?
- Why did you and your family move to Ireland?
- Is your child aware of her …. heritage? In what way?

Education:

- Did your child attend school in …?
- How does the primary education in … differ from the primary education system in Ireland?
- Why did you send your child to her current school?
- What do you feel are the positive aspects of your child's education in Ireland?
- Are there any negative aspects to your child's current education?
- What do you know about the 1999 Irish Primary school curriculum?
- What, in your opinion are the most important aspects of the Primary curriculum?
- What do you feel are the most important things that your child should learn at school?
- Tell me about some of the work your child takes home from school.

Holiday celebrations:

- What special days/events do you celebrate as part of your family life, e.g. religious holidays, birthdays, ?
- What part do these days play in your family life?
- Do religious ceremonies play a part in your family celebrations?
- What holiday celebrations does your child learn about at school?

Language:

- In your opinion what part does the Irish language play in your child's education?
- Can you or your husband speak Irish?
- What languages do you and your husband/partner speak?
- What languages can your child speak?
- In your opinion what part do other languages play in your child's education?

Culture:

- How would you describe your cultural background?
- Is there are big international community in your locality?
- Have you ever experienced or seen acts of racism in your locality?
- Tell me about your experience?
- Are your child's cultural traditions addressed in her school in any way?
- How do you feel about children learning about other cultures in school?
- Do you feel your child is aware of the meaning of racism?

Appendix 10

List of interview questions for children's interviews

- What country are you from?
- If somebody asks you, who doesn't know you, what country you're from, what do you say?
- Tell me something about your old country if you can remember.
- Did you go to school in your home country?
- Do you know anything about any countries other than Ireland?
- Tell me about it.
- If somebody asks you, who doesn't know you, if you're Chinese or Irish what do you say?
- Tell me about where you live-what is your home like? (a house? Apartment?)
- Who lives in your house with you?
- What country does your mom come from?
- What country does your dad come from?
- What languages can you speak?
- Can you tell me some words in that language?
- Can you write any words in that language?-get a sample
- What languages do you speak in your home?
- What languages are your books at home written in?
- What kind of clothes do you like to wear?
- Are there any special clothes (from your country) that you like to wear?
- Have you ever heard the words racism or racist before? What do you think the words racism/racist mean?
- Have you ever heard the word culture before? What do you think the word culture means?
- Have you ever heard of the word non-national before? What do you think that word means?
- What colour skin do your friends have?
- Draw a picture of the children you play with;
- Who would you invite to your birthday party?
- Who do you play with at home (outside of school). Do these children go to your school?

Appendix 11

Information on children in interviews

Child 1: Feb 04/male/6 yrs. 9mths/Polish/fair English/some confusion in communication
Child 2: March 3rd 04/female/6 yrs. 1 month/born in Nigeria
Child 3: March 3rd 04/female/6 yrs./Nigeria
Child 4: March 3rd 04/female/5 yrs 2 months/Irish
Child 5: March 3rd 04/female/4 yrs 5 months/Irish
Child 6: March 23rd/male/4yrs 8months/Irish/junior infants
Child 7: March 23rd/male/5 yrs 7months/Irish/junior infants
Child 8: March 24th/female/5 yrs 11 months/Bosnian/senior infants
Child 9: March 24th/female/4 yrs 11months/Irish
Child 10: March 31st/female/Traveller/6 yrs 1 month
Child 11: March 31st/5 yrs 8months/male/Irish
Child 12: Nov 12th 03/male/Irish/
Child 13: Nov 19th 03/female/born in Mexico-adopted Ireland
Child 14: Nov 19th 03/female/Singapore
Child 15: Nov 26th 03/junior infants/Irish/male
Child 16: Nov. 26th '03/female/Irish
Child 17: Dec.3rd '03/Male/Irish
Child 18: Dec. 3rd '03/Traveller/Irish/female
Child 19: Dec. 10th '03/female/Irish
Child 20: December 10th '03/female/Irish

Appendix 12

Lesson Plan Examples

These lessons will be delivered for seven weeks every Tuesday and Wednesday between November 5th and December 17th 2003.

Themes:

- Week one: Observation;
- Week two: Racial Differences and Similarities;
- Week three: Racial Differences and Similarities;
- Week four: Cultural Differences and Similarities;
- Week five: Resist Stereotyping and Discriminatory Behaviour;
- Week six: Holiday Activities in an Anti-Bias Curriculum.
- Week seven: Invitation to parents for a meal and invite any parent who wishes to talk to the children about holidays or their culture to do so

Need to look up a few finger plays/action rhymes or songs that promote anti-bias, e.g. 'sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me'
Resources: "Folk Rhymes from Around the World", edited by Evelyn Neaman, also do search on google.

Week One: Observation

Tuesday November 5th

Wednesday November 6th

9.15 am-11.00am- Scoil .....

Observation: During observation I intend to match the children's names to their faces, meaning I hope to know them by name for the following week which will entail teaching them. It will make it easier for me to teach, and to get as much as information as possible from the children on the first day.
Look at the children's interactions, who's friends with who?

12.00pm-1.30pm-Scoil.....
Observation: as above

Week Two: Racial Differences and Similarities

Tuesday November 12th
Wednesday November 13th

9.15 am-11.00am- Scoil .....
12.00-1.30-Scoil.....

Lesson 1: We're All the Same on the Inside

Lesson Objective: Children learn about racial differences and similarities by realising that we can look different on the outside, yet be the same on the inside.

Materials/Preparation:

A basket filled with yellow, red and green apples

A knife and a plate.

Time: 9.15-9.40

Activity:

Following a discussion with the children about how people are alike (we all have two eyes, we all have hair) and how we differ (blue eyes vs. brown eyes-long hair vs. short) children are shown a red, yellow and green apple.

Discuss the similarities and differences in the apples. (They are round, they are different colors.)

The teacher cuts each apple in half and places the halves on the plate. Can they tell which is which? No--because just like people, even though we may LOOK different on the outside, we're all the same on the inside![6]

Discuss the inside of each apple and state that each apple has a core with seeds.

Lesson 2

Topic: Draw Me/Draw You

Class: Senior infants

Time: 9.40-10.20

Themes: I'm Me and I'm Special, friends, Alike and Different, Five Senses

Objective: To help children notice facial features and the uniqueness of each person.

Materials: Drawing paper, markers, crayons.

Description: Have the children find a partner and ask them to sit across from one another at the table. Encourage the children to draw a picture of their partner's face. Ask the children to look at their partner and have the children describe themselves to each other before they begin drawing. Consider the questions: "What colour is his skin? What colour is her hair? What colour are her eyes? Does he have freckles? How long is his hair? The drawing probable won't look like the partner. That's alright because it's the looking at the features of another person that is important. Ask the children to exchange the drawings when they are done.

Have the children share their drawings with the class at circle time.[7]

10.20-10.50: Interview with one child (attach questions)

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[6] Renee, preschool teacher, www.abcteach.com, accessed

[7] Stacey York, *Roots and Wings-Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs*, (Minnesota: Redleaf press, 1991), 94.

Week Three: Racial Differences and Similarities

Tuesday November 19th
Wednesday November 20th

Topic: Self esteem (self awareness)

Begin this session with a 20 minute play session-use video (use p173 of Hall for Junior infants for this lesson)

Class: Senior infants

Learning objective: To recognise that everyone is different and to celebrate those differences.

Lesson 2: Activities

1. Same but different

Talk to the children about the ways in which we are the same, and the ways in which we are different.
Ask for examples of this.
Link up the children in pairs. (If there is not an even number then the teacher joins in to make a pair.)
The children talk in pairs for about one minute with a partner and find two ways in which they are different.
Each member of the pair then feeds back to the whole using the sentence,
"The difference between me and _____ is_____."

2. Guess who?

Explain to the children that this is a game about guessing who is being talked about. Then describe one of the children in the circle giving physical features and personal likes and dislikes (if known) and particular strengths.
The children have to guess who is described. Whoever guesses continues the game by describing another child.[8]

Interview a child

[8] Sian Burt, Graham Davies, Jane Lister, Rhian Morgan and Susan O'Shea, *Six Years of Circle Time-A Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2*, (Bristol: Lucky Duck Publishing, 1999), 14.

Week four: Cultural Differences and Similarities

Title: We are all Human

Themes: Boys and Girls, Friends, Families, Alike and Different, Places People Live

Objective: To help children explore the similarities among all people regardless of race or culture.
Materials: Pictures of children from around the world in everyday settings, books about children from other countries/ Watoto picture and music pack from Trocáire
Description: Display the pictures on a bulletin board near the book corner or group area. Show the children pictures and talk about them. Read two stories about children from other cultures. Say, "people live in many different places. People have different coloured skin and colour of eyes. But in many important ways, we are all alike." Ask the children if they can think of some ways that they are like the children in the story. Children's answers may include: "We have mommies and daddies, g to sleep, play, go to school, eat, wear clothes, have families, go to work, cry, get sad." End the group discussion by talking about how different people are alike eventhough they look different and live in different places.[9]

Interviews

[9] York, p118.

Week five:

Title: There Are No Bullies Here
Author: Abigail Shaw
Grades: preK-2
Subjects: Language Arts and Art
Overview: In this lesson, children explore the concept of teasing in a non-threatening way.
Objectives: Students will begin to think about how it feels to be teased and what they can do to help one another feel good in school.
Time: 35 minutes
Materials:
--*Chrysanthemum* Kevin Henkes
--chart paper
--different types of paper for creating a *warm fuzzy*
--available craft materials for decorating a *warm fuzzy*
--pencils
--markers
--glue sticks
--scissors
Background: This is an introductory lesson. This topic should be continued with other literature and discussions. It would be wonderful to address other forms of leaving people out and teasing with books like *William's Doll* by Charlotte Zolotow, *Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima, and *The Meanest Thing to Say* by Bill Cosby.
Vocabulary: teasing, compliment, *warm fuzzy* (words that make you feel good inside)
Activities and Procedure

One Day Lesson:
1. Introduce *Chrysanthemum*, and tell the children that this book is about a girl who gets teased. Ask children if they are familiar with the word tease, have them describe/define it, and write the class definition on chart paper. Make sure to talk about how the person being teased feels.

2. Read the book stopping to ask how Chrysanthemum, the main character, may be feeling at different times in the book.

3. Discuss what happened and how Chrysanthemum was feeling about her name in the beginning, middle, and end. This leads nicely into the warm fuzzy activity.

4. On a piece of chart paper write the word "compliment", read the word aloud, and ask children about that word. Brainstorm a list of some compliments and when they are used. Ask children if they can remember any compliments in the story (Chrysanthemum's music teacher pays her one.)

5. Ask your students to partner up and to think about one thing they like about their partner. (You may want to model this and label it a class *warm fuzzy*.)

6. Once children have their compliment, introduce the concept of a *warm fuzzy*. Tell children that a *warm fuzzy* is a compliment. Then ask them to close their eyes and create a picture of what they think a *warm fuzzy* would look like.

7. Explain to children that their task is to take the compliment that they came up with

for their partner and design a *warm fuzzy* to give to the partner. Children should personalize the *warm fuzzy*. The teacher can stress that the *warm fuzzies* should all look different.

8. Send children to tables where colored paper and a bucket of craft supplies are waiting. Give children time to design and construct their *warm fuzzies* before giving out glue.

9. Once the *warm fuzzy* is constructed, ask each child to write out in sentence form the compliment for his/her partner. Younger children can ask a teacher to write words for them.

10. Come back together as a class and have a *warm fuzzy* celebration where children give out the *warm fuzzies*.

Follow-Up Questions:

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated by their participation in class discussion, and completion of the task.

Extensions:

--Create a storyboard connected to *Chrysanthemum* to practice sequencing.

--Display your *warm fuzzy* collection to show people how your class cares about one another, and use it to remind your children about caring.

--Allow children to create and give out *warm fuzzies* when they suspect someone is feeling down. This promotes awareness of others and responsibility for each other.

Standards: This lesson meets the National Principles and Standards for English Language Arts and Art.

Books Referenced: ***How to Lose All Your Friends*** **by Nancy Carlson,** ***Chrysanthemum*** **by Kevin Henkes.**

Week Six: Holiday Activities in an Anti-Bias Curriculum…

Lesson One: Story and discussion

Lesson Two:

Title: Breads
Aims:

- To help children experience different types of breads;
- To practice grouping according to different classifications;
- To improve visual discrimination;
- To expose children to cultural differences in smells and foods.

Materials: Samples of various types of bread (Naan, traditional Irish brown bread, pita bread, scones, tortillas, cornbread, check out about Asian breads)
Description: Plan a bread-tasting party for the children. Ask the children to name some of their favourite breads and describe what they look like: round with a hole, or thin and flat, or long like a sausage. Bring out the bread collection in several baskets and encourage the children to identify the shape of each. Cut the breads into small pieces so each child can try two or three very different tasting breads, for example, bagel, naan and soda bread. Ask children to group the breads as follows:

1. Show the illustrated card and encourage the children to sort them according to the shapes identified:

- Circular-bagel, scone
- Rectangular-white loaf/brown loaf
- Oval-naan
- Triangular-pizza slice
- Long-baguette, breadstick
- Flat-pita, tortilla

2. Show the illustrated card and encourage children to sort the breads according to the country of origin of the breads (children will need assistance with this and some guessing work may be involved, but the overall result will mean that children become familiar with the names of different countries and breads that are eaten there)[10]

Talk with the children about how some children from other cultures eat different kinds of breads. Ask the children if they have ever eaten any of them before. Give each child a sample to try. Talk about the name of the bread and where it comes from. Follow up the activity with stories about bread (Gingerbread man).[11]

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[10] Hall, 155.

[11] Roots and Wings?

REFERENCES

[i] The term given to the economic boom which began in the early 1990s and 2000s in Ireland

[ii] The National Forum Secretariat, *Report on the National Forum for Early Childhood Education*, (Dublin: Stationery office, 1998), 8.

[iii] Giddens (2001) refers to society as "a system of interrelationships which connects individuals together....All societies are united by the fact that their members are organised in structured social structure social relationships according to a unique culture. No cultures could exist without societies. But equally, no society could exist without culture".

[iv] Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race and Membership of the Traveller Community

[v] The National Forum on Early Childhood Education took place in Dublin Castle on 23rd-27th March, 1998. It was the first time that major agencies involved in the early childhood education sector in Ireland were invited to come together to engage in discussions about key issues affecting the education of young children in Ireland. Thirty-two organisations made presentations to the National Forum, while a further twenty-two organisations were represented. The Forum secretariat was devised of Professor Dervilla Donnelly-Chairperson, Professor John Coolahan-Secretary General, Dr. John Bennett, Dr. Tom Kellaghan, Dr. Maeve Martin, Ms. Ann McGough, Dr. Anne McKenna, Mr. Peter Moss and Dr. Maire NicGiolla Phadraig (The National Forum Secretariat, 1998)

[vi] According to the White Paper (1999) there is no universal definition of quality in early childhood education provision. It does however outline some of the variables associated with quality, for example, existing Child Care regulations require that pre-school providers comply with minimum standards concerning adult-child ratios, insurance, size and condition of premises. There is also a Quality in Education (QE) mark awarded to providers who satisfy the required standards. The QE mark is not awarded to primary schools who provide infant education. (DES, 1999: 53-54)

[vii] 'Pavee' means Travellers in Cant - the native language of Travellers

[viii] Groups and individuals who advised and contributed to the publication of *The Guidelines on Traveller Education* include Maugie Francis, National Education Officer for Travellers; Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers; Advisory Committee on Travellers Education; Co-ordinating Committee for Traveller Education; Parish of the Travelling People; Pavee Point Traveller Centre; Traveller's Women Forum; Irish Traveller Movement; Inspectorate and Administrative Staff of the Department of Education and Science.

[ix] The compensatory education movement was founded in the 1960s on the assumption that many students, because of their minority and poverty status and their low academic achievement, are disadvantaged and should be provided with extra help and programs to "compensate" for those disadvantages. (http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EdReformStudies/EdReforms/chap7a.html, accessed November 21st, 2005)

[x] For example, the Centre For Cross-Border Studies and Lift Off-A Cross Border Primary Human Rights Education Initiative (http://www.amnesty.org.uk/ni/liftoff/index.shtml)

[xi] (Shaffer (2000: 462) refers to self-disclosure as "the act of revealing private or intimate information about oneself to another person").

[xii] The term nigger is offensive or derogatory to a black person, especially one of African race (Penguin English Dictionary). The word nigger itself means 'black' in Latin.