Race and culture:
The presence of absence in the curriculum

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Aims

- This talk aims to
  - Highlight the disparity between the race equality legislation and the failure of teacher education to prepare teachers positively for ethnically diverse classrooms.

  - Demonstrate how good intentions are insufficient and how rhetoric and inaction serve to maintain the status quo, or the absence of presence in ITE and school curricula.

  - Provide a framework to address the absence of presence.

Setting the scene 1
Some statistics

Pupil Ethnicity (January 2011)

- **26.5% primary pupils** were from a minority ethnic group;
- **22.2% secondary pupils** were from a minority ethnic group;
- 16.8% primary pupils had a first language other than English
- 12.3% secondary pupils had a first language other than English

http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001012/sfr12-2011.pdf

Setting the scene 2

Teacher ethnicity

- In November 2011 the data about the ethnicity of teachers in England shows that 93.6% were White;

- 3% Asian;

- 1.8% Black Afro-Caribbean;

- 0.9% Mixed White/Other

- 0.7% other ethnic groups.

- 96.7% of headteachers were recorded as White;

- 91.5% Teaching assistants and support staff were White.

http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001062/sfr06-2012v7.pdf

Setting the scene 3

Ethnicity of future teachers

Student/trainee teachers' ethnicity 2010/11

- **9% Primary trainees** were recorded to be from minority ethnic backgrounds;
- **14% secondary trainees** were recorded to be from minority ethnic backgrounds
- **12% KS2/3 trainees** were recorded to be from minority ethnic backgrounds

http://dataprovision.education.gov.uk/public/page.htm?to-page=viewITTStatistics_characteristics&reportType=characteristics
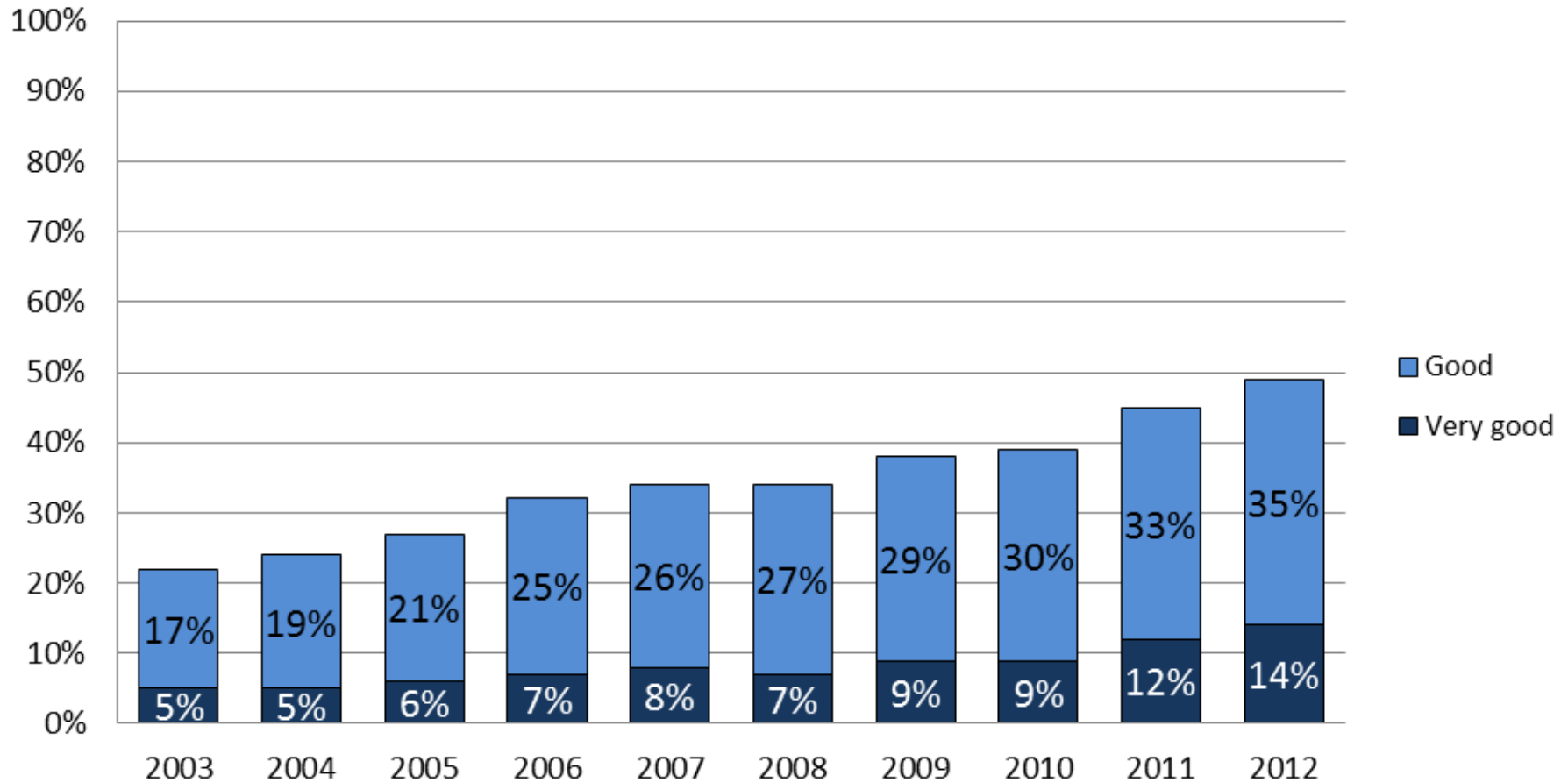
NQT Survey 2012 – Primary

How good was your training in preparing you to teach learners from minority ethnic backgrounds?
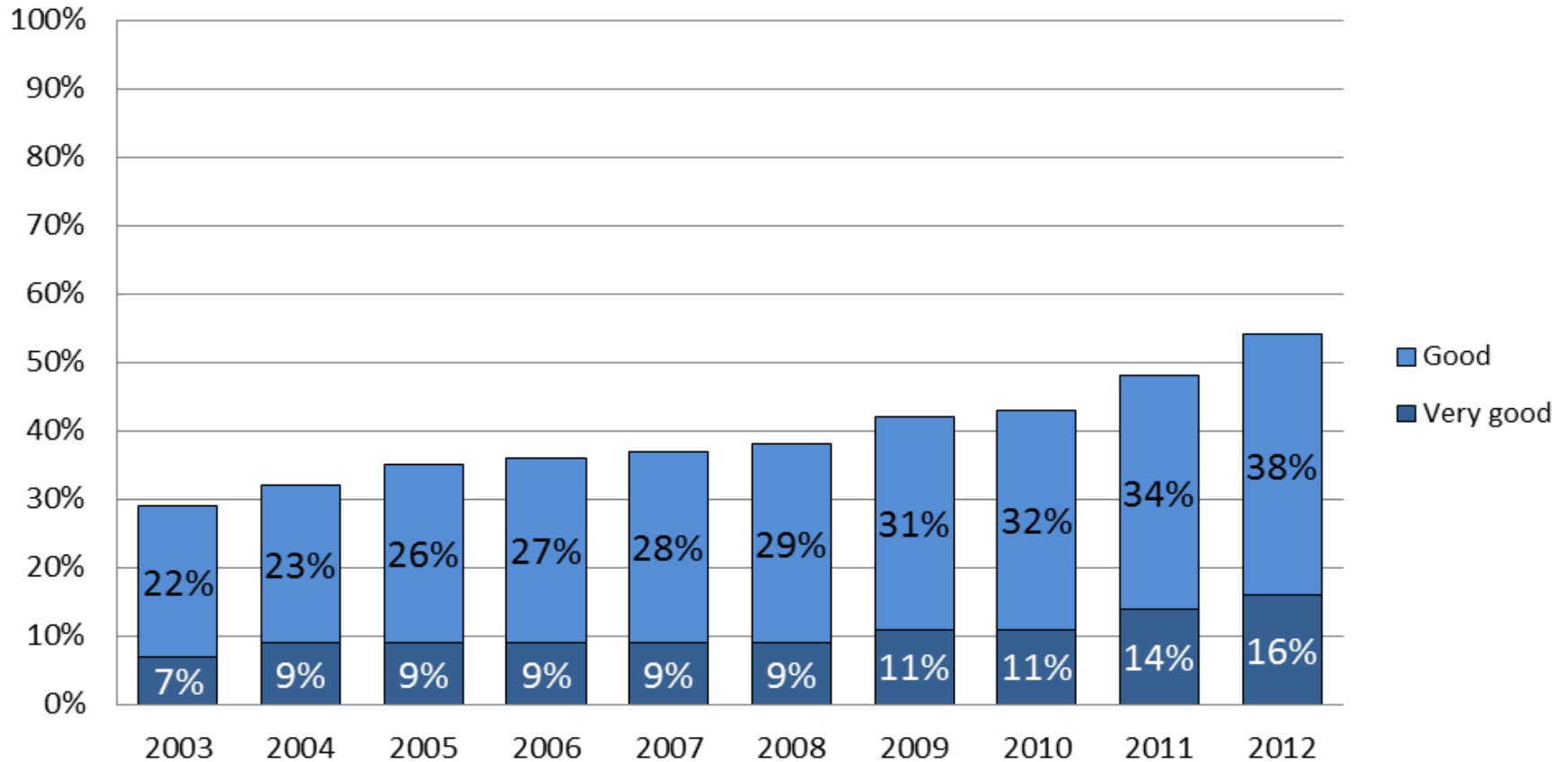
NQT Survey 2012 – Primary

How good was your training in preparing you to work with learners with English as an additional language?

Year	Very good	Good
2003	5%	17%
2004	5%	19%
2005	6%	21%
2006	7%	25%
2007	8%	26%
2008	7%	27%
2009	9%	29%
2010	9%	30%
2011	12%	33%
2012	14%	35%

http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/n/annual%20survey%20of%20newly%20qualified%20teachers%202012.pdf

External frameworks

- Race Relations Amendments Act 2000

- Equality Act 2010

- Teachers' Standards 2012

Racism... what racism?

Football racism row flares up as Luis Suárez snubs Patrice Evra handshake

Sir Alex Ferguson says Uruguayan player is a disgrace and should not play for Liverpool again [The Observer](), Sunday 12 February 2012

John Terry faces Anton Ferdinand racism finals

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-16825874

So what's going on?

Facts about race in the UK

- Since the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, 89 more people have lost their lives at the hands of racists in the UK.

- While nearly 300 Black Caribbean students received the necessary outstanding A-level grades in 2009, only one of them gained entry to the University of Oxford.

- Chinese boys are among the highest performing groups in our schools. After university, however, they can expect to earn 25% less than White graduates.

From www.runymedetrust.org

One Mile Away

Dylan and Zimbo grew up in inner city Birmingham on opposite sides of town, and since they were teenagers have been indoctrinated with the gang lifestyle. Now in their 30's, they're attempting to turn back the tide of gang violence with their social enterprise, 'One mile away'.
They have appeared in a new film also called 'One Mile Away' which is released in selected cinemas from 29th March, and will be shown on Channel 4 in April.

'When we were young the images we see of ourselves are all negative….'
'You only see that you can be one thing.. If you see you can be anything.. the skys the limit innit'

Saturday Live BBC Radio 4 16/3/13 http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01r91qh

Who are they?
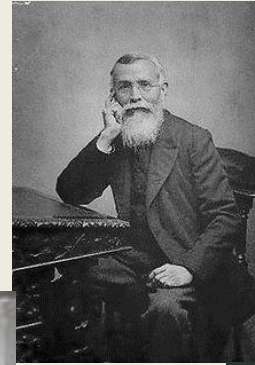
Student teachers

Student teachers' starting points regarding race and ethnicity

- **Naïve** - *'if there's one they are invisible'; 'it doesn't matter to me where they come from'*;

- **Scared** – Shocked when they met racism in school or in the classroom from either staff or children *'I thought everyone was neutral. I don't know what to do about racist language'*;

- **Getting there with guilt -** school policy determining educational outcomes,
  a. Shirley and the very average Black boy,
  b. New pupils with English as an additional language in the lowest set;

- **Getting there but frustrated**
  a. students were very aware of issues related to race, ethnicity and racism through exposure, experience, personal, political conviction; yet they felt 'powerless' in some situations to act on their convictions.
  b. Sean and the 'pc shield'.

In the interview discussion about a lone BME pupil in a predominantly White school the following emerges from one tutor who says,

- It's difficult one because what you want...in a way your goal is actually to make them invisible,

- VL: Umm in what way..? What do you mean by that?

- Because what you've been saying is, we have got 30 children in the class and let's say we have got all different ethnic origins and different needs and one thing or another, but we don't need to, because if everybody is well integrated and everybody is well supported, so nobody stands out as being in need of anything specific. That's surely what we are actually aiming towards, to have a group where we are not, **where somebody does not stand out like a sore thumb, we are not catering for those persons' needs.**

  What we want is, everybody is getting what they should be getting in terms of access to learning, access to curriculum, and support for any particular needs, so it is this accepting different, difference, which is what..we are getting there. You're not getting people saying 'well I'm not doing that, I don't believe in this' so we are accepting differences and it's then saying...

Tutor interview cont'd

……**.well...I can see what you're saying, but I think we have got to be careful that…, was there any evidence that this child's needs were not being met, in any shape or form? Or was it just the fact that student did not know enough about the child?**

Will these views enable all children's needs to be met?

Draft National Curriculum 2014

- Who is represented within the NC?

  - Science KS1-2 – there was an absence of female and Black or minority ethnic scientists
  - *This has improved with the addition of Jane Goodall, Ruth Benerito and Alhazen to the PoS in KS2*
  - History – Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale at KS2
  - *Olaudah Equiano, Mary Seacole, Gandhi, Nehru and others in KS3 PoS.*

- What does this say about us as a nation?

- The student teachers' understanding of how 'race' and ethnicity affect pupils' learning and achievement is largely unchallenged and not developed beyond their everyday (mis)understandings.

- ITE tutors are not the agents of change but serve to consolidate and perpetuate the dominant discourse of inaction which can be further reinforced on school placement. The status quo is maintained.

- **It is no wonder that some newly qualified teachers feel ill-prepared for the cultural and ethnic diversity in their classroom.**

Why is there an absence of presence?

My research with student teachers and teacher education tutors shows

> ➤ A failure to acknowledge ethnic diversity within the teacher education curriculum.

> ➤ There is a lack of knowledge and experience about ethnic diversity amongst student teachers and teacher educators, especially in predominantly white areas.

> ➤ That good intentions and inaction are pervasive in initial teacher education, especially in areas of low ethnic diversity.

> ➤ A prevailing stance such as the teacher is a 'good', 'ethical' and 'liberal' person we don't need to worry/bother about all this...

> ➤ There is a fear... of being accused of political correctness

We fail to engage student teachers, teachers, teacher educators and children sufficiently well with issues related to race, ethnicity and racism and thereby maintain the status quo rather than better prepare teachers and children for an ethnically diverse UK/world

Possible ITE solutions

- At the University of Chichester
  - Citizenship specialism on primary course
  - Equality and diversity 'module' for all students

So what can I do?

- Be **CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE and CHALLENGE the dominant discourse**
- How?

Ask yourself and others the following questions

1. Do I value ethnic diversity? If so why? If not why not?
2. Do I/we believe in ensuring the presence of Black and minority ethnic (and all) people?
3. Why do I/we believe what I/we believe?
4. Do I want to change my position/perceptions? If so why? If not why not?
5. Who do I/we choose to represent/not represent in our curriculum?
6. Who will/will not be inadvertently included or excluded in my/our classroom(s)?
7. Do the resources/examples in my school/classroom/lecture/seminar represent ethnic diversity and diversity in all its forms?
8. Why should they be there?
9. Do I draw children's attention to presence/absence?
10. Do we discuss this openly? Why? Is it important to do this with children/students?

Because every segment of society counts

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