

EDUCATION

A BOOK based on the experiences of children in Bristol and entitled *If Racism Vanished for a Day* has been launched.

It draws on research with pupils from three schools and aims to raise awareness as well as offer advice to teachers and parents on how to discuss racism and its impact on the wellbeing and mental health of young people.

The children, who were aged 10 and 11 and in their last year of primary during the UWE Bristol study, said: "We made this book because racism is not OK, and we want people to understand the way it affects us. Our book is about what it would be like if racism vanished for a day, and we hope that reading it will help people think about how they can change what they do. Racism is a really big deal. It shouldn't have existed in the first place."

Some of the youngsters, who are now at secondary school attended launch events and signed copies of the book, which features their drawings and thoughts. Among them were

Book captures children's experiences of racism



Sade, Mariam, Anaya and Julia, now students at Fairfield High School and formerly pupils at

May Park Primary School.

Researchers said it had been the first funded project of its kind to actually ask children's experiences of racism rather than just assuming them. The team found that children experience racism in multiple contexts and with multiple groups - at home, when out and about, and in school. They experience racism from within their family, between friends, and from strangers and known adults.

Lead researcher Dr Verity Jones, Associate Professor at UWE Bristol, said: "For many teachers and educators, racism may feel like a highly politically charged area of debate and one that they feel uncomfortable or unsure of how to approach. We hope this book, which provides accompanying teachers notes and questions for children to discuss, will bridge a gap in reading material currently available."

The impact of racism on younger children's mental

health and wellbeing has been consistently overlooked in research in the UK, according to the UWE Bristol academics.

The researchers initially heard from 80 children who took part in a workshop led by artist Luci Gorell Barnes. This was followed by focus groups with over 40 children and interviews with their teachers.


The study highlighted that many children are deeply affected by institutional racism as depicted by the media, and found there is an urgent need for schools to develop greater racial literacy. It also recognised that racism is complicated and is experienced in different ways.

The project was funded by the mental health research network Emerging Minds.

The *If Racism Vanished for a Day* book is available in print from respectprojectbristol.org or as an e-book at https://issuu.com/uwebristol/docs/if_racism_vanished_for_a_day

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