



Mending Broken Britain? Education's Response



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FOREWORD

*'Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.'*¹

H. G. Wells

One could be forgiven for thinking that, during four days of anarchic rioting in England in August 2011, catastrophe held the upper hand. The soul searching analyses that followed these events led a small group of senior educationalists to organise a conference which aimed to unpick some of the complexities surrounding the riots and to scrutinise education's role in 'Mending Broken Britain'. This report chronicles the processes and the outcomes of this remarkable conference held in late February 2012 at Birmingham City University. It was remarkable that given the seriousness and depth of the disturbances that took place, this was the only national conference that brought together participants from schools, universities, local authorities, youth, probation and health services, not for profit organisations, individual consultants and members of the community. It was remarkable also because it reflected the very best of the 'Big Society'² principles as everybody involved (speakers, organisers, facilitators and scribes) gave freely of their time.

The conference itself was the brainchild of a small working group³ who came together to structure and organise the day's events; a group that was both appalled by the unprecedented nature of the riots, and cheered by the massive positive response both in terms of the country clear ups and the amazing attendance of 25,000 mourners at the funeral service of three of the five fatalities during the riots.

The issue for the organising group was making manageable a huge agenda which so easily could have covered all sectors of the education provision, as well as the wider economic and social issues. As it was, each of the conference areas merited a strategic discussion paper in its own right, but the organisers believed that we must begin the debate in earnest if we are to try to prevent the riots re-occurring. I have tried to write this report so that readers who were not present can get a clear idea of the narrative. I have also added detailed references and attempted to include more recent developments, keeping in mind the spirit and the outcomes of the conference itself. Our overarching aim was simple; we wanted to initiate a much wider debate about education's response to the riots, a response that would go to the very heart of education's role in building a more cohesive society. History will judge if, in any measure, we were successful.

Maurice Irfan Coles
Chair of the Organising Group

¹ H.G. Wells: *The Outline of History* (1920) Ch. 41

² Cameron and Clegg set out 'Big Society' policy ideas BBC News 18-May-2010

³ The conference was organised by Maurice Irfan Coles and Ayshah Ismail, CE4CE; Professor Richard Hatcher, Birmingham City University; Khalid Mahmood, SDSA; Rosemary Campbell Stephens, University of London; Gilroy Brown, Birmingham Local Authority. Pictures were taken and donated by Rabiya Latif, SAMPAD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report, *Mending Broken Britain? Education's Response*, chronicles the processes, content and outcomes of a remarkable conference held at Birmingham City University in late February 2012. In addition, more recent developments have been included, keeping in mind the spirit and outcomes of the conference itself. Surprisingly it appears to be the only national conference that brought together a wide range of teachers and other professionals who believed that education services must articulate a clear role in building a cohesive society and who wanted to prevent a reoccurrence of those fateful and anarchic events of the four days of riots in August 2011. The overarching aims of the conference were to:

- 1) Offer education's take on the factors which had contributed to such a breakdown of order
- 2) Discuss how the sector might best respond so that the possibility of recurrence was minimised
- 3) Examine the possible curriculum responses both in general and subject specific terms
- 4) Offer a number of recommendations

These aims were achieved through a series of three keynotes: Professor Gus John, Professor Mick Waters and Maurice Irfan Coles; and through nine interactive workshops which followed a three part brief focusing on their perspectives of the contributory factors that led to the riots, the contribution their area could make to building a cohesive society, and the recommendations they would make to prevent it happening again.

Throughout the conference there was an incredible synergy and coherence between all speakers and workshops which allowed clustering of the causal antecedents of the riots into three major areas consisting of twenty seven separate factors: societal, economic and educational. In societal terms, conference considered that the prevailing culture encouraged greed and selfishness in all levels of society; that young people were disempowered by a system that rewarded



some and failed others; and that for many there had been a breakdown in family and community values and a great suspicion of the police. In economic terms, high unemployment levels, a lack of clear and accessible routes to lift people out of dead end situations and the Euro zone and banking crisis exacerbated this feeling of hopelessness and added to the sense of 'nothing to lose.'

Educational contributory factors included the lack of understanding about how to educate morally, deficiency in the creative curriculum and an insufficient priority being given to citizenship education. In addition, conference considered that the structural changes, particularly in secondary education, had helped create an educational apartheid and a sense of alienation and disenfranchisement for certain ethnic minority and white working class groups. Again, the position of young people was highlighted in that many believed they had no real voice.

All workshops felt that their area had significant contributions to make in building a more cohesive society, and all offered a series of practical recommendations as to how this might be brought

about. The Local Authority group itemised a large range of areas where their influence could be brought to bear. The Community and Creativity Group considered that more effective and holistic development of communities and creative industries had a key role to play. The Primary and Secondary/Youth Service Groups argued that as schools are one of the key vehicles for the transmission of values, skills and attitudes they must actively consider and promote their role in building a cohesive society. The Religious Education, Faith and Interfaith Group believed that the approaches undertaken in these areas ideally lent themselves to the task. The Citizenship Education Group felt that their area was fundamental to building a cohesive society because it is one of the subjects that directly taught values of education and about nurturing moral development.



Throughout, conference looked at the current opportunities for the development of cohesive approaches in present government reports and thinking. The Riots Panel report put great store in the role of education, and placed great emphasis upon what they called, '*building character*', and what we called values and moral education. The revised OFSTED Framework (2012) has the Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural (SMSC) development of pupils at its very heart, and the Equalities Act provides a statutory framework for change. In addition, the SEN pupil premium, the Troubled Families Programme and the year of service could be significant. Finally, there was some potential to influence the government's ongoing review of the national curriculum.

Conference made seventeen recommendations calling for a national education debate about the vision and purpose of education with a thorough review of values and moral education at its heart. It also wanted government exceptionally to draft and consult upon an overarching strategic review leading to the provision of guidance for schools. In addition, there were specific recommendations related to OFSTED, to specific subjects and to project and professional development.

The overarching conclusion for *Mending Broken Britain? Educations' Response* was starkly unequivocal: unless action is taken, predictions of more riots will become reality. Education has the key role in creating the moral compass of the nation's youth, a compass that should make rioting of the kind we witnessed in those fateful four days in August 2012, anathema to all young people. This will not happen, however, unless there is a clear strategic direction which encompasses all aspects of education; a direction that is dedicated to building young responsible active citizens who all feel part of our diverse and interdependent society. In our present devolved system this responsibility exclusively lies with the Secretary of State for Education and with central government.

THE CONFERENCE CONTEXT

The most serious and widespread riots on the English mainland in living history were unprecedented. Unprecedented in the scale and rapidity of their spread but more importantly and more worryingly, unprecedented because they had no obvious 'political' or 'racial' genesis. The spread of the Brixton riots of 1981, the spread of the Handsworth riots of 1985, and the disturbances in our northern cities in 2001, were all enflamed by grievances based upon 'racial' and disadvantage factors and by a deep resentment of police whose actions over time provided sparks that lit the fuses. They were, it could be argued, a political response that gave violent voice to pent-up resentment.

The disturbances in August 2011 were very different. There is no denying that the initial cause was the police killing of Mark Duggan on Thursday August 4th 2011, in Tottenham and the Metropolitan Police's slow responses to family demands for an enquiry. For many in the black community this killing was 'an execution', adding fuel to resentment that already existed over the number of deaths of black people whilst in police custody. Feelings were already running high because of the disproportionate use of Stop and Search powers in the black African Caribbean community.⁴



But as the rioting spread to over 60 local authorities the heartfelt pleas of the Duggan family to the rioters to stop were totally ignored; indeed it is highly probable that many of those involved would have been hard pressed to name the man shot by police on that fateful day. The massive amount of data collected by the Guardian/LSE, based upon 270 interviews with rioters and an analysis of more than 2.5 million riot-related tweets confirmed that distrust and antipathy toward police was a key driving force for many rioters, regardless of ethnicity.⁵

Throughout those four days, good people of all ages and backgrounds watched in horror as the incessant media reports gorged upon the unfolding events. Four days of rioting, five deaths, nearly 4,000 arrests, over 3,000 prosecutions and many ruined lives and total agreement on only one issue; there will be more riots.

Legal, central and local Government responses' to previous disturbances were generally characterised by punitive measures followed by the establishment of high level enquiries often chaired by senior figures like Lord Scarman or Professor Ted Cante. National and local reports often led to significant legal, structural and organisational change. Education services, both nationally and locally, affected personnel, curricular and continuing professional development; changes designed to support schools and pupils in promoting a harmonious society, tackling racism, raising attainment and trying to ensure that such events did not reoccur. Hitherto, local authorities often responded to the published reports with some vigour holding their own conferences, devising their own strategies and funding educational and other initiatives designed to address the issues.

⁴ BBC news London 3 May 2011

⁵ See Reading the Riots: Investigating England's summer of disorder: www.guardian.co.uk

The response to the 2011 disturbances has been very different. Central government established a *Riots Communities and Victims Panel*, whose interim report was available at conference and whose final report was published in late March 2012.⁶

The climate of public sector cutbacks combined with the economic recession has meant that local authority responses have, perforce, been far more muted. Ted Cante, Chair of the Institute of Community Cohesion and author of a government review into the 2001 northern city riots, commenting in the Guardian immediately after final report publication, argued that local authorities need to build upon what he called the principle of resilience, *'otherwise you are just waiting for a riot and social breakdown to happen and respond afterwards.'* Local government leaders find themselves in *'a very serious situation'*, Cante warned. The loss of central government funding streams for England's poorest communities, such as the £5.7bn single regeneration budget, leaves authorities with little means to improve deprived areas. *'There are now no programmes for those vulnerable communities. All the evidence we have is that local authorities are also cutting back support to voluntary organisations. Lots are closing down and they were the ones working directly with vulnerable communities.'*⁷

In education this situation is exacerbated by the radical, if not revolutionary, changes that have seen funds and powers transferred from what was left of central education services to schools, to such an extent that local authorities now have little capacity to respond. Add to this the shutting down of centrally funded organisations which were responsible for curriculum development and change, like QCDA, BECTA, Teachers TV, the closing of the National Strategies; along with the removal of inspection of the duty to promote community cohesion from the OFSTED framework, it becomes very difficult see where schools will get curriculum and other guidance from to help them address such issues.

There are subject membership organisations like the Association of Citizenship Teachers, the RE Council, the Citizenship Foundation and the PSHE Association, all of whom provide a much valued service to teachers and schools, but their capacity and reach is limited and they cannot offer a strategic holistic response. Certainly in the new and very diverse world of a devolved school led improvement system, with its vast array of academies, trust, clusters, networks, families and collaboratives, and now free schools, coupled with a government who appear ideologically opposed to offering central guidance, it becomes very hard to see where schools will get wider strategic and practical advice from and indeed what imperative they will have to seek it. The desire to have a considered and measured debate about these issues and to offer some direction was two of the conference's central drivers.

⁶ After the riots: The final report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel (<http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Riots-Panel-Final-Report1.pdf>)

⁷ Guardian 29.03.12

THE CONFERENCE PROCESSES AND PROGRAMME

The decision to host a conference originally arose out of a request from Rosemary Campbell Stephens concerning how the local Birmingham community might be best supported after the riots. An initial meeting led to the realisation that this issue could not be addressed in isolation from the wider perspectives of education and other services responses'. Discussion about, and comparison with, education's reaction to disturbances over the past three decades reinforced the decision to hold the first and only national conference designed to unpick the educational implications of what appeared to be a real life *Lord of the Flies* scenario, where for a period of time, society's normal moral codes were waived by some in favour of a dangerous and violent anarchy.

The advisory board of Curriculum Enrichment for the Common Era (CE4CE) unanimously agreed to include the conference organisation as part of their strategic plan and added their support, with members acting either as organisers, speakers, facilitators or rapporteurs. The small planning group met several times, agreed an overarching programme and approached Professor Gus John and Professor Mick Waters to be keynote speakers.



Determined to model the conference on interactive principles, nine workshop facilitators agreed to participate and to follow a three part brief:⁸

1. From your perspective, what are the contributory factors to 'Broken Britain'?
2. What contribution can your area make to build a cohesive society?
3. What recommendations would you make to central government, local government and your sector educators?

The nine workshops offered included those dedicated to:

- Primary, Secondary and Youth services
- The role of Religious Education, Faith and Interfaith
- The part Local Authorities and community/ supplementary organisations might play
- And to the potential of particular areas like Citizenship, Creativity, and Social Media.

Rosemary Campbell Stephens acted as host throughout, introduced the conference aims, floated between workshops and then summed up the key unifying themes from all the workshops. Maurice Coles concluded the day with a final keynote, '*Bringing it all Together.*'. All those involved waived any fee and participant charges were £30. Any expenditure shortfall was met by Coles' own small charitable company, Promoting Community Cohesion. The post conference report, though written by him, was closely scrutinised, amended and agreed by all members of the organising committee, speakers and facilitators.

⁸ The programme for the day can be downloaded from www.CE4CE.org

THE CONFERENCE

The overarching aims of the conference were to:

1. Offer education's take on the factors which had contributed to such a breakdown of order
2. Discuss how the sector might best respond so that the possibility of recurrence was at the very least, minimised
3. Examine the possible curriculum responses both in general and subject specific terms
4. Offer a number of recommendations to central and local government, to schools and organisations that support them.⁹

Professor Richard Hatcher warmly welcomed delegates on behalf of Birmingham City University, set the historical and present context and introduced Rosemary who outlined conference's intended outcomes. For Rosemary, like so many of the organising committee, her professional life had been spent in addressing issues of cohesion, equality and diversity. A key community and educational player, her association with Professor Gus John went back decades.

Gus delivered a heartfelt and emotional presentation, *A Generation Betrayed*. Beginning with the issues related to Stop and Search and Section 60 powers and the killing of Mark Duggan he provided a deep historical analysis as to what had happened to members of the black community over a forty year span. Citing John Lambert's research in 1970 he demanded to know what had happened to a community that arrived with such high aspirations and low incidence of criminality to the present when *'the recorded age of those involved in gun and knife enable crime is getting lower and lower and consequently there is a growing number of school aged children killing one another, often while in school uniform.'*



Gus's causal analysis ranged from *'the corrosive effect of racism on our psyche and on our collective consciousness as people,'* through the negative impact of a materialistic and selfish culture, to the development of a fear of children who were brought up with no sense of boundaries or respect for others and who were adversely influenced by the *'grotesque influence of the culture of the street'* that so often displaced the values and the culture of the parents. Gus argued that respect for self and for others was fundamental and that it *'grows by giving it practical expression in all aspects of daily living.'* How' he asked, *'have we failed to guide and assist our children in standing for something and in letting that*

*something reflect the basic human values of : Respect, Fairness, Justice, Interdependence, Compassion and Integrity.'*¹⁰

⁹ Speakers and facilitators biographies can be downloaded from www.CE4CE.org

¹⁰ Power point presentations from Professors Gus John and Mick Waters, Maurice Irfan Coles and Don Rowe can be downloaded from www.CE4CE.org

For Gus, the solution was as multifaceted as the problem, and was dependent on family, community, school, society and young people themselves coming together to help raise aspiration and attainment predicated upon a number of building blocks for developing what he called, *The Holistic Self*. Though Gus's presentation covered issues related to the black community he argued that so much of it applied to other disadvantaged groups. He like, all main speakers and workshops emphasised the fact that there were many more people who were not involved in this level of violence.

There was an amazing synergy between Professor Gus John's presentation and that of Professor Mick Waters. Coming from very different backgrounds they both offered analyses and recommendations that cohered remarkably. Mick provided a considered analysis of the wider issues facing the education service, pointing out the paradoxes of a system that was data and attainment driven. For him there is an overemphasis on a culture which saw '*pupils as currency*' rather than valued them in their own right; a system driven by markets and ministers, by league tables and points rather than one which emphasised that achievement was more than just high grades and career options. For Mick, raising aspiration was about achievement but it was also about '*the aspiration for worth, the aspiration to contribute*' and, '*the aspiration of spirit.*' He wanted young people to experience a curriculum that accredits achievement, not merely exam results, personal competence, civic contribution reflection and enterprise, initiative, adaptability, resilience and stick ability-all qualities much sought after by employers.¹¹

Mick's '*bits of data*' about juveniles brought before the court, highlighted some of the more precise challenges facing the education service.

Of juveniles brought before the courts:

- 46% live in the 10% lowest income homes
- 42% in receipt of free school meals
- 66% have Special Educational Needs
- 36% excluded from school at least once during 2009/10
- 11% achieved five A*–C GCSEs including English and Maths
- 62% have at least one previous offence.

Possible causes of the riots included the changing nature of our culture where greed, materialism and demands for immediate gratification appeared to be uppermost, underpinned by a sense of the division between us and them, between the haves and have nots. He cleverly juxtaposed and brought out the parallels between '*thoughts from some young people*' and '*thoughts from some teachers.*' Both felt that vocational courses did not count; there were no jobs, and that funding was a major issue. In addition, young people lamented the reduction in sport and creative activities and teachers, the limited measures upon which they were now judged.

Mick outlined '*our hopes for our young*' and ended by highlighting his view as to what was to be done. He wanted '*an education spring*' where everything was challenged, a spring that recognised the dangers of treating pupils as currency. There must be a clearer sense of purpose, a purpose

¹¹ Ibid 10

which involves young people as a positive part of their communities, that engages employers and which had faith and moral education as its bedrock. In short, he wanted *'a better baccalaureate.'*

Maurice Irfan Coles concluded the day with the final keynote which attempted to bring it all together. He offered a holistic and analytical view of the education service. For him and for participants, an education service must have an overarching *'teleological vision, a sense of what an educated person should look like after some 12 years of compulsory schooling.'* This vision must be translated into a series of clear and explicit values which underpin the notion of an educated person. These values in turn are predicated upon processes that demand that young people, their parents and their communities must be at the heart of any educational service.

Vision, values and processes are integral to a curriculum whose skills and attitudes, content and knowledge must help young people to navigate the complex minefield of multiple identities and prepare them for life in a globalised, interdependent and fast changing world. Education structures at all levels must be fit for purpose and support young people to achieve and attain and take their place as active citizens. Assessment systems, whether at examination level, or wider via OFSTED must be geared to examine critically what it values most. Teacher training, both initial and continuing, must be geared to this teleological vision. He itemised the areas of present government thinking in which he believed there were some opportunities to address these issues. Maurice ended by outlining thirteen recommendations, largely based upon conference's main findings, to be delivered to a range of organisations and individuals who controlled these systems and structures.¹²



The bulk of the conference was, however, dedicated to workshops where participants were offered a reasonable amount of time to get to grips with their own areas of interest and expertise. Each of the workshops followed the brief which began with their analysis of some of the contributory factors that led to these frightening disturbances. Debates were deep and wide ranging but the twenty six recorded points can be summed up three overarching but overlapping clusters: societal, economic and educational.

¹² Ibid 11

THE CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

Societal factors

It was considered that:

1. The prevailing culture encouraged greed, materialism and selfishness at all levels of society
2. The celebrity and quick fix culture elevated negative role models
3. Young people felt disempowered by a system that rewards some and fails others
4. For many there had been a breakdown in traditional family and community values
5. The influence of social media had been instrumental in spreading but not causing the riots
6. The mainstream media's 24 hour coverage encouraged 'copy cat' rioting in other locations
7. Distrust of the police and their initial inability to respond to lawlessness provided rioters with a massive adrenalin rush that encouraged their deviant behaviours
8. Perceptions of racism and Islamophobia increased the sense of alienation and undermined the sense of self as British citizens
9. There was a lack of support for communities to work together
10. There was a lack of opportunities for cross generational communities to enjoy community events together.

Economic factors

It was considered that:

1. High levels of youth unemployment and frequent employment related rejections discouraged high aspiration and could lead to a lack of hope, ownership and engagement
2. The euro zone and banking crises exacerbated this feeling of hopelessness
3. There was a lack of clear and accessible routes to lift people out of dead end situations
4. Generally though not exclusively, high levels of economic deprivation added to the sense of 'nothing to lose'.

Educational factors

It was considered that:

1. In the education service generally there was an insufficient understanding of how to morally educate
2. In primary schools there was a lack of a creative curriculum and insufficient stress on core values and expected behaviours
3. The ending of funding for creative and sport partnerships removed a key outlet for participation and achievement
4. There was insufficient priority given to education for responsible citizenship
5. There were no protocols and teaching about the usage of social media
6. The narrow focus of OFSTED constrained schools' creativity
7. Recent criticisms of teachers had led to a lowering of morale and a sense of de-professionalization

8. The fragmentation of secondary education had helped to create an educational apartheid where some schools succeeded and other failed
9. There was no shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities between parents and educators
10. The serious educational under attainment of certain minority ethnic groups and the white working class elements contributed to their sense of alienation and disenfranchisement
11. Young people believed that they had no real voice and were not listened to
12. Cuts in the youth service closed another door on possibilities.

It is always easy to speculate as to why events occur and to apportion blame, but the twenty six contributory factors point out the huge complexities of why so many people rioted across such a wide swath of the country, and why they considered they had license to loot, burn and even kill.



Trying to provide solutions is a much more complicated and intricate task, made even more difficult by the parlous state of public finances, which effectively rules out any simple solution that involves throwing money at the problem. It is perhaps now more a matter of opening a wider debate and reprioritising expenditure. Conference did not disappoint in this. All workshops felt that their area had significant contributions to make in building a more cohesive society and all offered a

series of practical recommendations as to how this might be brought about. Again, for ease of reference it helps to cluster the suggested contributions.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BUILDING A MORE COHESIVE SOCIETY

These have been clustered into three groups: the first examines the specific contributions of the local authority and of the community/supplementary sectors; the second looks at the general areas of the primary and secondary curriculum; and the final sectors unpacks aspects of RE and interfaith, citizenship and the role of the social media.

The Local Authority Group:

In spite of the present somewhat parlous financial and personnel state of Local Authorities, the group believed that, should the local political prioritise this agenda, local authorities could still have a key role to play in contributing to building a more cohesive society. They could maximise local authority influence by:-

- Working creatively with the '*Creating the conditions for integration*' and other government policies
- Developing a shared vision of a cohesive community with a clear sense of belonging
- Helping to determine a common agenda which would empower local communities
- Exploiting the *Localism* agenda
- Employing the *Equalities* Legislation
- Encouraging Collaborative Partnership between schools
- Engaging with all the networks in their local area
- Facilitating community dialogue with schools
- Sharing best practice
- Engaging and supporting networks that were outside the authority's immediate sphere of influence
- Utilising their safeguarding agenda to support vulnerable groups and individuals
- Using the opportunity afforded by Raising the Participation Age
- Identifying prospective NEETS
- Targeting young people considered to be susceptible to negative influences in an explicit values led programme such as that in Bradford
- Prioritising the Young Person Voice to give them a central role in the debate
- Adopting a whole family approach which supports schools to develop effective partnerships with parents
- Being creative with the Common Assessment Framework.

Unsurprisingly, much of the Local Authority Group contribution overlapped with the views of the Community and Creativity Group.

Community and Creativity Group:

They believed that more effective and holistic development of communities and creative industries had a key role to play in contributing to building a more cohesive society.

Closer relationships between educators and the creative industries and communities could help by:

- Providing a greater sense of 'self' for children and young people who would come to see school and home as a continuum of values
- Bringing communities themselves together to form clusters of interested parties
- Strengthening family training and the identification of a clearer and more proactive role for parents in the personal development and values education of their offspring
- Providing young people with the means to develop their own projects and offer direction and support concerning funding opportunities
- Supporting families and communities in helping to reduce exclusions
- Offering a curriculum that was based upon the principles of creative teaching and learning.

The Primary, Secondary and Youth Services Group:

Schools are one of the key vehicles for the transmission of values, skills and attitudes. They are not merely the means by which society imparts bundles of knowledge content which young people have to absorb and regurgitate at regular assessment intervals. Everything that is within the primary and secondary curricula needs to be examined in the light its potential impact on the sense of individual and collective self, as well as its potential to provide enhanced life chances to all our pupils. Primary and secondary schools that do not actively consider and promote their role in building a cohesive society do young people an enormous disservice.



Primary schools lay the foundation of our core values. They provide the ideal opportunity to teach young people how to learn, and to encourage the skills of lifelong learning. In addition, they can engage with parents and the community pro actively cementing the alliance of home, school and community. Secondary schools need to build upon the primary foundations and need to make students feel that they have a contribution to make to the society in which they are living; they need to be encouraged to be citizens not consumers. Youth Services can, in their informal settings, reinforce these values and can allow those who are disadvantaged and disaffected a safe environment in which to articulate and discuss their grievances.

Religious Education, Faith and Interfaith Group

They believed that the approaches undertaken in these areas ideally lent themselves to building a more cohesive society. Education, of course, is value laden not value free, but the key question was whose values do schools impart? RE, with its interfaith approach, provided a key vehicle because it:

- Was predicated upon the values and skills of respect and tolerance
- Enabled children of all ages to DO, to ask the question why?
- Was based upon the key skills of dialogue, of listening and of enquiry

- Encouraged young people to grapple with key existential questions about the nature of being human, about the nature of self and the values they hold
- Allowed young people to realize that one needed to mend things at individual level first because, '*Charity begins at home*'
- Was orientated both inwards and outwards
- Provided a safe and democratic environment in which to deal with issues that may cause conflict, encouraging a genuine platform to question and think
- Taught young people about each other's religion and their practices, stressing the differences and similarities from a range of different cultures.

Citizenship and Social Media Group

Citizenship education should be fundamental to building a cohesive society because it is one of the subjects that directly taught values education; because it is about nurturing moral development. Though all key stages it aimed to teach the following values and attitudes:

- Justice and fairness
- Care; concern for others and the common good
- Respect; belief in human dignity and the rights of others
- Responsibility for oneself and for the wider society
- Tolerance with a strong acceptance of diversity
- Critical mindedness including 'talking truth to power'
- Reflectiveness with an ability to reason morally
- Confidence with a sense of agency and 'moral courage'
- Respect for democracy; for persuasion, not for coercion.

The role of the social media was perhaps more ambiguous. It certainly had the potential to be more double edged. On the one hand it enabled dispersed and minority groups to be better connected. It could be a powerful force for the good, enabling positive participation of all groups, especially those who are hard to reach. It could provide positive young role models. On the other hand, without proper school training, which at the moment was non-existent, it had the potential to be used as it was during the riots, as a key communication vehicle to alert would be offenders about the whereabouts of the police and the best place to engage in unlawful behaviours.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COHESIVE APPROACHES

Throughout, conference looked at the current opportunities for the development of cohesive approaches in present government reports and thinking. They were delighted to see that the Riots Panel Interim put great store in the role of education, a position that was reaffirmed and given more body and substance in the final version. The panel placed great emphasis upon what they called, 'building character', and what we called values and moral education. Both echoed the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking in a specially recalled Parliament in August 2011, when he argued that the disorder should lead people to look again at education that had become '*less and less concerned with a building of virtue, character and citizenship*'. For the Archbishop, '*...a good educational system in a healthy society is one that builds character that builds virtue.*'¹³

The final Riots Panel report was equally explicit in its recommendations:

'We propose that there should be a new requirement for schools to develop and publish their policies on building character... We also recommend that OFSTED undertake a thematic review of character building in schools.'

For the authors, the key to avoiding future riots was to build communities that work; communities where:

- '*... everyone feels they have a stake in society...*'
- '*... individuals respect each other and the place they live i...*'
- '*...public services work together and with the voluntary sector to spot those who are struggling at an early stage and help the...*'
- '*...opportunities are available to all, especially young people...*'
- '*... parents and schools ensure children develop the values, skills and character to make the right choices at crucial moments...*'¹⁴

Although the usage of the term 'character education' can be seen as problematic especially in the light of the US expertise of detailing a number of character competencies, it is unlikely that people would disagree with such general sentiments. To date however, the only response from government seems to be limited to a statement put out by Eric Pickles, the Secretary of State for Communities who, speaking on behalf of all his colleagues on March 28th 2012 said:

*'We will look seriously at their findings and respond on those actions aimed at Government in due course. Many of the recommendations in the report are aimed at communities, local government, schools and the police and we would urge them to look carefully at the report.'*¹⁵

It would appear that the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, is still considering his response. There is perhaps a major problem here. Present government dislikes devising detailed strategies believing that government should outline the bigger picture and local institutions, like

¹³ See <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2152/archbishop-speaks-in-house-of-lords>

¹⁴ Ibid 5

¹⁵ See www.communities.gov.uk/issuesandresponses/newsroom/2117124

schools, local authorities and communities, should then be free to devise their own customised responses.

This is clearly the thinking behind the Communities and Local Government's paper, *'Creating the conditions for integration'*, which was available at conference and which came in for some trenchant criticism. For government *'integration means creating the conditions for everyone to play a full part in national and local level'* but crucially for them, this demands a rebalancing activity from centrally led to locally led action, from the public to the voluntary and private sectors. For conference, responding effectively to the Riots absolutely required exceptional action.

Their paper, however, outlines very broad areas in which they will act, areas which conference felt had some potential for the development of cohesion. These include:

- The National Citizens Service
- A year of service
- The pupil premium which will provide £2.5 billion by 2104-2015 for schools to improve the progress and attainment of pupils from poor backgrounds and which could be particularly crucial and useful because of the high level of rioters who had Special Educational Needs
- A national interfaith week
- Positive for youth
- Troubled Families programme will tackle some of the most entrenched social problems in our country by getting members of 120,000 families off the streets, back into school and on a pathway to work.

In addition, three other areas were identified which schools could exploit to help build cohesive communities.

1. OFSTED's concentration on the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development of pupils
2. The Equalities Act
3. Potentially, the next steps for the government's national curriculum review

In OFSTED training, SMSC is often referred to as 'the golden thread', the *idée fixe* that runs through the complete framework and allows inspectors to make judgements about the effectiveness of the school. The schedule contains seven explicit SMSC references and schools should be unable to achieve the coveted 'outstanding' grade in behaviour and safety, or in leadership and management unless they can demonstrate that their curriculum contributes *'very well to pupils' achievement and to their spiritual, moral social and cultural development.'*¹⁶

Further, the outstanding grade descriptors state that:

*'The school's thoughtful and wide ranging promotion of the pupils spiritual, moral social and cultural development enables them to thrive in a supportive, highly cohesive learning community.'*¹⁷

¹⁶ The evaluation schedule for the inspecting of maintained schools and academies OFSTED January 2012

¹⁷ Ibid 16

Overlay this concentration on judgements concerning how schools support vulnerable groups and those with special educational needs, which include many of the rioters; how it responds to any extremist behaviour; and how it prepares pupils for life in modern democratic Britain and a global society and you have a very powerful cocktail that requires schools to build cohesion.

The position related to the implementation of the Equalities Act (2010), although complicated, is similarly explicit. The Spring 2012 edition of *Race Equality Teaching* is dedicated to the act, with particular reference to the specific duties. It contains comprehensive articles related to disability, prejudice, Islamophobia, Special Educational Needs and OFSTED. In his piece, Robin Richardson, unpacks the meaning and implications of the key concept that local and central government and school governing bodies have 'a duty to have due regard to the act' when dealing with people with particular protected characteristics. As the DfE put it their guidance to schools:

*'Having due regard means that we need to think in advance about the potential implications of our decisions, seeking not just to eliminate negative outcomes but also thinking about potentially positive ones.'*¹⁸

Conference generally, and the Local Authority group in particular were keen to work further on the implications due regard and of positive action in dealing with the underlying riotous issues.

The position is not quite so straightforward when it comes to the government's ongoing review of the national curriculum, and separate review of PSHE. Much of the national curriculum report of the expert panel is structural, covering areas related to key stages, and to the balance between and what they are calling the slimmed down national curriculum and basic curriculum. There is also a greater concentration on essential knowledge and less emphasis on values and attitudes. They do however, offer a number of insights that potentially could be used to develop cohesion. Their extensive research into high performing jurisdictions (i.e. successful education systems in terms of attainment) reveal that such jurisdictions are *'explicit about the practical and functional contributions that education makes to national development'* and the ways in which their schools are expected to contribute to the economic, cultural, social and personal domains.¹⁹

The latter two include clear expectations that the school curriculum must enable pupils to participate in families, communities and the life of the nation; and that it should promote the intellectual, spiritual, moral and physical development of individuals. Interestingly, they recommend that government should publish and debate a *'statement expressing the contributions of education to national development...with a view to setting explicit, high level expectations to frame the greater autonomy now to schools under the Government's wider reforms.'*²⁰

Using slightly different language, this recommendation mirrors one of the major demands of conference; that government initiate a national debate about the vision and purpose of education.

¹⁸ *Race Equality Teaching* Volume 30 number 2 spring 2012 published by Trentham Books

¹⁹ *Framework for the National Curriculum: A report by the Expert Panel for the National curriculum review* DfE December 2011

²⁰ *Ibid* 19

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although groups were asked to make recommendations to a range of stakeholders including central and local government, colleagues found this a difficult task in such a devolved system with in effect, so much power concentrated in the hands of the Secretary of State for Education. The recommendations, therefore, were largely addressed to central government, with the exception of a very particular set offered to local government which was outlined earlier in the contribution to cohesion sections. Again, the recommendations are clustered for ease of access:

The Debate

- 1) There should be a national education debate about the vision and purpose of education.
All groups independently and most strongly recommended that government initiate such a debate, a recommendation that mirrored that of the government's independent curriculum review panel. This debate should be predicated upon the premise that the voice of young people must be central to recommendations and proposed solutions; for pupil agency was seen as one of the key aims of any education system.
- 2) This debate should include a thorough review of values education and how we teach moral education through the medium of areas like RE, PSHE, Citizenship Education and personal development through character building activities.
- 3) This debate should also include at its very heart, parents, members of the community and the supplementary sector.

The Strategic Response

- 1) Government should draft and consult upon an overarching strategic response involving a range of stakeholders.
Conference was aware that government was loathe to initiate any strategic response but believed that such a serious situation demanded coherent intervention. The present confusing structural situation with a plethora of different types of schooling and limited local authority responsibility, personnel and resources meant that the Secretary of State for Education alone had the power to develop a coordinated response. If ever there was a time for government to act exceptionally, this was surely it.
- 2) This strategy should provide some guidance as to how core values might be promoted throughout the whole school and between schools so that as pupils move through successive stages of development, schools provide a consistent message related to expectation and behaviours.
- 3) This strategy should also include some guidance about the teaching of moral education to young people with Special Education Needs

Subject/Area Specific

- 1) Citizenship Education, PSHE and RE required promotion and not demotion as they were key vehicles for involving young people in building a better and more cohesive society.
- 2) The teaching of moral education requires urgent review and moral education should become one of the fundamental components of Initial Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development.
- 3) Greater emphasis should be placed on and greater status given to personal, social and creative skill sets.
- 4) More use should be made of young people as positive role models, using exemplars like the Young People's Parliament, and examples of good practice be shared from schools where young people effectively used the moral autonomy offered.
- 5) It was imperative the issue of the use of social media be addressed urgently. This should form part of the revised national curriculum and should include protocols for social media usage, and parental and teacher education

Project Development

- 1) Government should initiate small scale projects designed to develop lessons for schools specifically related to the riots.
- 2) Government should fund Curriculum guidance designed to support white working class pupils, the ignored minority.

Professional Development

- 1) Schools should take these issues on board through effective use of training in order for their staff to become better reflective practitioners.
- 2) Schools needed INSET to ensure that pupils, staff and parents are clear about their expected behaviours and understanding so that it is embedded throughout the curriculum and at home.

OFSTED

- 1) OFSTED should examine its criteria as to what makes a good school in order to widen its present over concentration on results, and to give more emphasis to SMSC and the positive development of attitudes designed to create a more harmonious and cohesive society.

The Network

- 1) An electronic network to be created, dedicated to promoting a better understanding of these issues, coupled with a mechanism for sharing good practice.

CONCLUSION

The overarching conclusion for *Mending Broken Britain? Educations' Response* was unequivocal. Education should have a key role in creating the moral compass of the nation's youth, a compass that should make rioting of the kind we witnessed in those fateful four days in August 2012, anathema to all young people. This will not happen however, unless there is a clear strategic direction which encompasses all aspects of education, a direction that is dedicated to building young responsible active citizens who all feel part of our diverse and interdependent society. Many powerful voices are calling for a national debate about the fundamental role of education with some cogently arguing that our present system is simply unable to deliver such a democratic vision.²¹

What is clear however is that our present devolved system, with no central organisations having responsibility for curriculum development and support, and local authorities lacking the capacity to undertake their own school supported development means the onus of responsibility falls entirely on the Secretary of State for Education. For conference, this was a time for government to act exceptionally and to produce a coordinated holistic response. The consequences of inaction of course, remain to be seen but conference believed that doing nothing would lead to more riots; a view shared by many young people, by senior members of the clergy, by politicians and by senior policemen. All would echo the prophetic words of the late great James Baldwin in his 1963 essay about race and religion in the USA, '*God gave Noah the Rainbow sign, no more talking, fire next time.*'²²



But let us end on a positive note. The conference was a great success and showed the enormous commitment of educators in dealing with these complex and worrying issues. Given support and strategic direction, education could make a significant contribution to Mending Broken Britain. Therein lays the hope. Let participants speak for themselves with far more eloquence than this report could hope to muster:

"It was inspiring to be part of a groundswell committed to placing being human at the centre of our aims for the school curriculum, and determined to struggle for justice and equality in society."

"I found the day very stimulating and thought-provoking ... and it is supporting and challenging my thinking in relation to the work I am doing on Closing Achievement Gaps."

²¹ For a deeper analysis of this issue see , *From Exam Factories to Communities of Discovery* by Frank Coffield and Bill Williamson (2012, Institute of Education)

²² *Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin (1963 Dial Press)

“Just a quick note to thank you and everyone else who created such an interesting and thought provoking conference. As one who plans and delivers conferences I know what hard work they are. It ran so well - and enabled hard pressed folk to have a space to really think about what is needed to achieve a more empathetic and aware society.”

“I really enjoyed the event and found it really thought provoking. Whilst the issues are extremely challenging, there was a lot of energy and a real sense that by working together we can make a difference.”

“I found the conference stimulating and encouraging, a very positive experience in these times of extreme gloom - to be in a room full of people engaged in challenging the status quo and ready to campaign to rescue education from the clutches of those who, in Mick Waters memorable phrase, see 'pupils as currency'.”