

## QUESTIONS TEACHERS NEED TO ASK WHEN SELECTING TEXTS

Every classroom should be furnished with a range of texts in different scripts so that even very young children begin to appreciate the full range and diversity of languages. We need to examine critically all books available to students so they reflect a balanced picture of our society showing positive images of people from a range of cultures, in everyday situations and activities. The following questions should be asked about the texts we already have, and whenever new purchases are considered.

What proportion of our story books challenge stereotypes of:

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people?
- farmers and tourists?
- cities and country?
- health professionals?
- refugees?

Can we use other books to challenge these stereotypes?

Which of our texts confront issues of difference sensitively?  
Do we take account of progression when we select them?

What proportion of our story books have:

- an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander family?
- an Asian/Australian hero (male/female)?
- a Australian Chinese hero
- a hero with different capabilities?
- a family with two mothers or two fathers?
- parents who are not in paid employment?
- ordinary Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander children going about their everyday lives?
- refugee children?
- children of a dual heritage marriage?

Do children learn that much of 'our' maths and science is not English in origin?

Do children get to talk about books in a way which allows them to uncover any stereotypical attitudes or negative beliefs?

Have we discussed as a whole staff how to answer parents'/caregivers' and children's questions about dual language texts and books which highlight cultural diversity?

Do we discuss bias with children so they appreciate that books are written from a point of view?

### TEXT SELECTION AND USE

Do our texts allow pupils to assume that the important people of history, religion, maths and science were White?

Which of our fiction and non-fiction texts encourage children to value their own culture?

What proportion of our texts are dual language? Do we plan how to use those books to appreciate the script so children recognise the skills needed and the advantages of learning other languages?