



National Association of SACREs

‘Stronger Together: The Power of Community’

24th May 2018

Dr Vanessa Ogden

CEO, Mulberry Schools Trust

Headteacher MSfG

Islamophobia in the Press



Punish a Muslim Day 2018



UK charity urges vigilance after 'Punish a Muslim Day' letters

People in Bradford, London and Sheffield report receiving notes advocating violence



▲ Muslim women wearing headscarves. The letters said points would be awarded for removing a woman's headscarf. Photograph: Alamy

Muslim communities in the UK have been urged to remain vigilant as

TellMAMAUK
@TellMamaUK

'Punish a Muslim Day' - we continue to receive reports of letters received from across the country. Now into double figures. Please report them into us at Tell MAMA or to 101. We are working with police forces on this malicious campaign.

9:33 PM - Mar 10, 2018

169 362 people are talking about this

emancipation to a school full of girls in headscarves in the Islamic Republic of Tower Hamlets? (And is this the face Britain wants to show the world?)



Michelle Obama paid visit to the Mulberry School for Girls, Tower Hamlets

Obama not: X
www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3130476/Did-michelle-Obama-not-irony-tower-hamlets-speech-KLHAKU-LI-LEJOHN-asks.html

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Tuesday, Jun 14th 2016 10AM 14°C 1PM 16°C 5-Day Forecast

MailOnline



Richard Littlejohn

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LITTLEJOHN: Did Michelle Obama not see the irony in delivering a speech on female emancipation to a school full of girls in headscarves in the Islamic Republic of Tower Hamlets? (And is this the face Britain wants to show the world?)

- Michelle Obama paid visit to the Mulberry School for Girls, Tower Hamlets
- More than 90% of pupils are Muslim from mainly Bangladeshi background
- And majority have no option but to wear headscarves and long robes
- But still it was chosen as the site for the First Lady's speech on equality

By RICHARD LITTLEJOHN FOR THE DAILY MAIL

PUBLISHED: 22:36, 18 June 2015 | UPDATED: 23:02, 18 June 2015

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Of all the schools in all the towns in all the world, why did Michelle Obama visit a girls' school in the

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DON'T MISS

No one is looking at your lips! Kylie Jenner shares VERY sultry photo of herself in black and white bodysuit to



The pupils of the Mulberry School for Girls (pictured) have no option other than to wear the restrictive clothes imposed upon them by their parents and their religious leaders

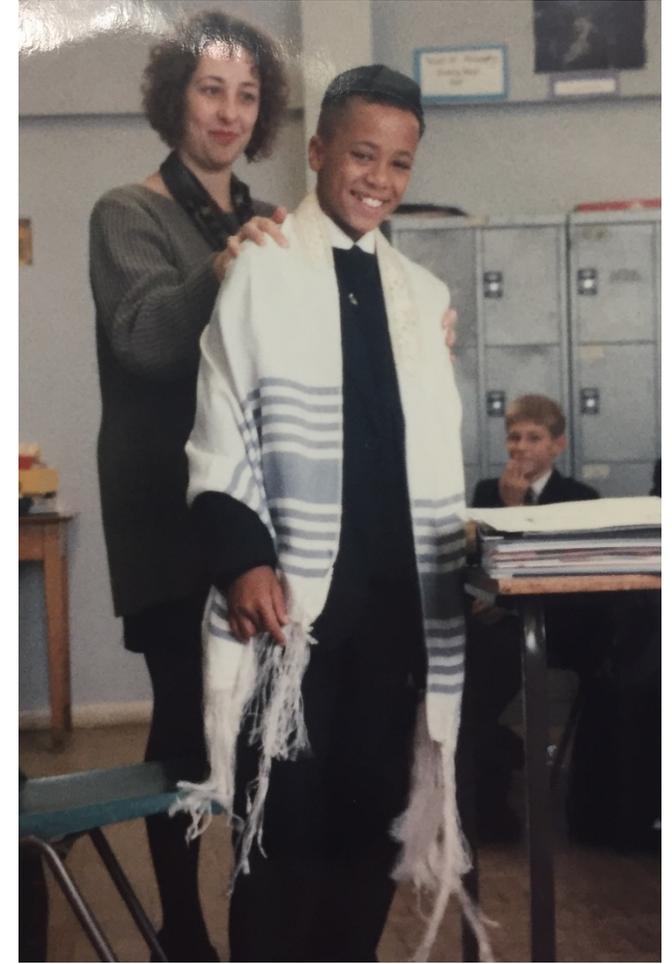
Is this really the image of Britain we wish to project around the globe?

Imagine you were an American looking at this picture in, say, Oklahoma, and trying to work out which, of all the schools in all the towns in all the world your First Lady had just walked into? You might conclude she was in Pakistan, or somewhere in the Middle East.

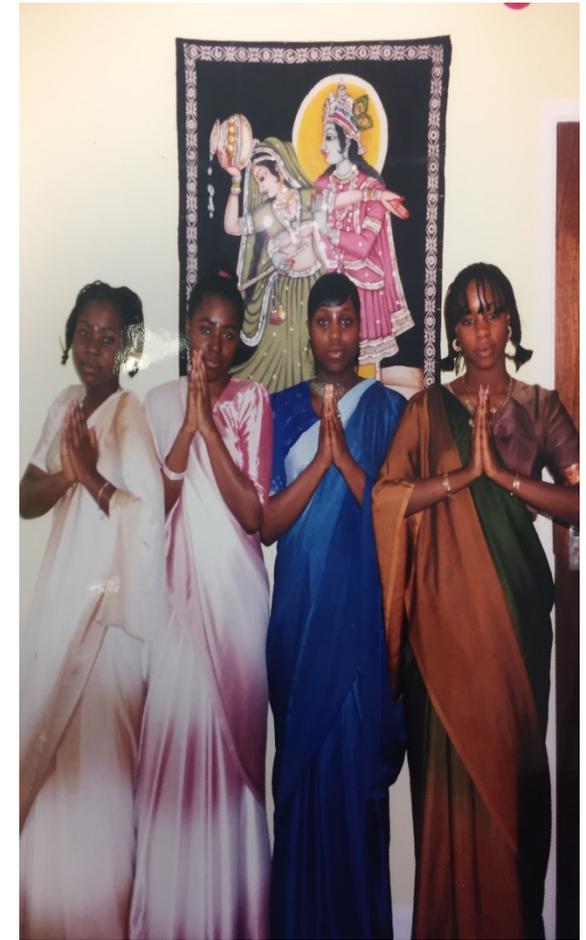
Now try to gauge your reaction when you discovered that Michelle Obama was actually in London. London, England? Get outta here. Hey, Wilma! Will ya take a look at this...

Is this really the image of Britain we wish to project around the globe?

The Role of RE in Schools



The Role of RE in Schools



Muslim girls dressed like shameful secrets

On the day that Conservative co-chairman Baroness Warsi used the privilege of her position to accuse us of anti-Muslim bigotry, I relished my own good fortune in seeing the new production of Matthew Bourne's *Cinderella*.

A Sadler's Wells run (and jump and jive) is preceding a national tour which will include a nearly-sold-out March week at Norwich Theatre Royal. My preview feature is coming soon.

I spend much of my life in theatres, concert halls, art galleries and museums and usually the company is almost entirely white save for Japanese tourists and paid staff. But this time the matinée audience included a large party of Muslim schoolgirls – a pleasant surprise at first and then in part a cause for sadness.

For the British Asian teenagers wore two varieties of school uniform. A minority was dressed like any rather smart female secondary school pupils across East Anglia – and with their long dark hair and golden skin added to well-fitted clothes, and their youthful confidence and vitality, they were a picture of beauty. They seemed to me to bask in brilliant futures and the world already at their feet.

But two-thirds of their classmates looked as if they were on day release from a detention camp. I half expected them to be linked together in a chain gang.

Their sack-like uniform consisted of long tunics, baggy trousers and blankets wound round heads and necks to leave only a fraction of face free.

The idea here is that females must not tempt males into sinful thoughts through glimpsed bodies. But men should be taught to grow up and to behave like civilised human beings rather than the sum of their sexual parts.

Michelle Obama Visit

Partly as a result of our long-standing commitment to women's education and community empowerment, we were selected in June 2016 to host a visit from the First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama. Mrs Obama joined us at Mulberry to launch her **Let Girls Learn** campaign



Article in Times Newspaper

Headline: The girls who would rule the world (in headscarves)

THE TIMES

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What life is like for Muslim girls in Britain

Helen Rumbelow

July 21 2014, 1:01am,
The Times



From left: Maria Armin, Bushra Hussain, Kawshara Chowdhury, Sujina Khatun, Promme Reza and Ramlah Mohammed, pupils at the Mulberry School for Girls
KI PRICE

THE TIMES

The girls who would rule the world (in headscarves)

Liberated, charming and fiercely ambitious, these teenagers defy lazy preconceptions about British Muslim women, say Helen Rumbelow Monday July 21 2014

"This is really important we're just normal people" says the girl sitting in a London school. Normal? I'd like to agree, but really, I can't. This 17-year-old couldn't be more unlike the image of what a typical teenage girl should be: a basketball player, mathematician, uninterested in settling down and gunning for a career in the City. If that weren't strange enough, she took up wearing a scarf over her hair because it looked nice, but fast for a reason totally unrelated to achieving a bikini body. In the British public consciousness she basically doesn't exist: a unicorn in a hijab. "We still" says Kawshara Chowdhury leaving my scribbles, as she does every day of her life and meeting it with a confident flourish "watch The Big Bang Theory." It's hard to imagine if you've not one, the life of a young British Muslim woman. It can be even harder to envisage your future if you are one. Census figures show that one in twenty children under five in England and Wales is a girl raised a Muslim. But for such a booming population, we know almost nothing of her. She's not on TV, in films, music or novels. Instead, what we know is based on two extremes: the sad-eyed slave girl whose headscarf is a symbol of her forcible oppression, and the swinging terrorist. It's a fundamentalist take on the old Madonna/Whore view of woman. This week our view on Muslim youth will be shaped by government reports into the alleged "Trojan Horse" plot to introduce extremist Islamic practices into some Birmingham schools. All summer we have heard from male governors, teachers and pupils - but still Muslim girls are peculiarly hidden. Of course it's easy to assume - don't we all? - that it's due to an ingrained meekness. So I meet a bunch of six teenage Muslim girls all of them at a secular state girls' secondary called Mulberry School for Girls, in Tower Hamlets, east London. It's important to state up front that this outstanding school is about as far from Trojan Horse as you could possibly get. Because of its catchment area nearly all students are Muslims, nearly all of Bangladeshi origin and I've never seen any school I'd like to send my daughter to more, nor that would inspire her to kick more ass in public life. In fact, when I arrive it has the air of futuristic fantasy, in which power roles are utterly reversed. The school that day was hosting a "Model United Nations" in which dozens of London secondary schools fielded debating teams. It was unnerving at first to see most of the UN hierarchy dominated by girls from Mulberry in headscarves. Then I observed the session, in which Muslim girls after girl politely but devastatingly wiped the floor with blonde boys in suits, and I realised why. We haven't caught up to how strong these girls are. Their voices boom. The latest statistics show that Bangladeshi academic attainment is now on a sugar-accelerated, taking just five years to go from way below white pupils' average to surpassing it, due largely to the success of Bangladeshi girls. The next assault is on Oxbridge and professional fast-tracks. Their faith and feminism are intertwined. They are the first generation to reclaim the term as something to shelve next to Catin Moran, as it's got Zach Efron in it" and



the Koran is a book that inspires their right to female power. Charming. But, my goodness, force, these girls bring to mind nothing less than the pioneers in the first waves of female suffrage in this country; fearlessly breaking into universities and jobs. First, when we gather in a side room, I ask the group to name a famous Muslim heroine. "Our teachers!" says one. They're not famous! I say. "Not a Muslim but Angela Jobs!" ventures another. It's a tough question, they conclude. The kind of lives they want haven't been lived yet. "We don't need a Muslim role model!" says Kawshara who is studying maths, further maths and physics A levels and is considering applying to Cambridge before a career in banking or engineering. "But having one would be reassuring. To think you can go up there yourself." Do you feel ignored? Sujina Khatun, 17, who after a law degree, says her goal is "to break the City", sighs "I don't feel ignored; I feel that we've recognised for the wrong reasons. I think there needs to be attention on the actions of minority views." How are you misrepresented? "That we don't have aspirations. That we are oppressed on the more extreme end. The lack of Muslim women in the media to look up to." When we talk about their cultural base Sujina is embarrassed to confess: "I've got to say Taylor Swift; she had to see Bad Neighbours, as it's got Zach Efron in it" and

"this is going to sound really teenager-ish but I like Oasis girl!" they sound like 17-year-olds all over the western world. Yet they don't see people like them on screen, and this makes them more thoughtful. Normal teens suffer from adults obsessing over how they look and by turn underestimating and fearing them. Muslim teenager girls suffer all these things, but doubled. All of their grandmothers, pretty much lived a rural life in Bangladesh. Their mothers typically married young and arrived in London to work in textile factories, after leaving school in Bangladesh at 14 or so. These girls' lives are unfathomably different again from their mothers'. Their ambitions are partly feminist. Nearly all live in council flats; they all say the first thing they would do with career success would be to buy their parents a house. One girl Ramlah Mohammed, 17, who speaks five languages and wants to be a UN interpreter, says: "I don't see marriage anywhere in my life, I think the goal I want to achieve are far greater than marriage - and kids, no way. The way I'm thinking right now I feel like life is too short." Kawshara says: "Intimidation is something you get when you go into a workplace with people from Oxbridge. It's more just scared - this new. You can't talk to someone in your family about university; they haven't been. That's why you have your teachers to talk to. It's comforting the intimidation goes away a little bit, you know you're as good as these people."

Sujina has grown up in a flat overlooking Liverpool street station, watching the hordes of city workers rush past her door and mentally placing herself among them. "It is disheartening to walk through the streets when going to my local Tesco and see so many white, middle-class, perhaps Oxbridge-educated, men. When I go to work experience there are very few Muslim or ethnic minority women. It is daunting to be the first one to go to open evenings where you see middle-class parents with their sons, and you're just walking around trying to find the right place. But it just makes you more determined to get your goal." I ask if they are feminists and I'm met with a resounding loud "yes!" They know without me even having to ask, that their answer will also have to explain the fact that five out of the six of them are wearing headscarves: only Maria Armin, 16 is not. "Our religion promotes equality" says Maria. "Some say the Koran is sexist, but my favourite quote is: 'All women and men are equal like the teeth of a comb.' That for me is essential. I've taken a quote like that and made it the core of what I believe. My views on feminism come from Islam and vice versa." But, I say does it weigh heavily on you that if you lived in some Islamic countries they would use this same religion to restrict your lives? Muslim girls - "But will they wear a headscarf?"

is: more it is important to separate the history of Islam from the practice of it today. Many people don't know that women's right to vote and own property goes back much further in Islam than in the west. Yes, you look at Saudi Arabia and do see people that are oppressed. If they did interpret the Koran properly, as men and women are equal, then things would be very different." Sujina says that her headscarf shows her "submission to my religion", not to a man, but it's a subtle point that she is aware people find difficult. The schoolgirls speak at last of feminist overtones - one headscarfed girl participated on stage at a Ghazalabany talk - and they always are met with raised eyebrows. Sujina, like Kawshara, initially started wearing the headscarf almost as a fashion choice - at this school almost half the girls wear one. "As you get older you become more conscious why you're wearing it. I want to be recognised for my own merit. If I beautified myself I wouldn't be recognised for what I truly had." But, I say, in City-less-Ram, I can only imagine this choice will make it harder for her to integrate. Sujina: "Life would be easier but not as fulfilling." Kawshara says that now she's worn one half her life, it's become an identity, almost like a pair of glasses: "For me, I think it might sound a bit weird, if I didn't wear it I'd feel exposed, I wouldn't feel myself. I feel safer wearing it." What surprised me is that the girls say they rarely talk about the headscarf thing between themselves, other than a "bit of banter" when the weather is hot. It's a private decision, and it's a note that a member of staff interjects in our discussion repeatedly, that the headscarf decision is "a choice" and not dictated by the Koran. Maria is cheerfully bold in justifying herself, using the same "don't judge me on my appearance" line to different effect. "A lot of people say they wear a headscarf for that feeling of safety," says Maria "I'm not wearing a headscarf is more of a feminist statement. Why should I wear a scarf to feel safe? I want to live in a world where people are going to appreciate me for my thoughts and opinions rather than the way I look. A lot of people think you should wear a scarf for people to think in the right way. Well really you should be thinking in the right way not taking into account a scarf." Maria's older sister wears a headscarf in her sales job as it gets her noticed, an "icebreaker", but at the same time Ramlah says her older sister was in a university seminar and a girl came up to her and said patronisingly: "It's so nice for someone like you to have an opinion." Sujina "We do get a glimpse of that when we go to events, when we're a group of girls with brown skin and headscarves. The expectations are different." One of their friends in a headscarf agrees. She was once in a conference with a load of Liverpoolians and had to reassure them: "I like Big Bang Theory!" They were like, "Oh OK, that's a normal person." The Big Bang Theory, I say, has come up about three times. Will we know acceptance has been achieved once we get a Muslim girl on The Big Bang Theory? "Yes!" says Maria, to laughter - and I feel she's half-grinning all outsiders want to see or talk about when they look at Muslim girls - "But will they wear a headscarf?"

"Liberated, charming and fiercely ambitious, these teenagers defy lazy preconceptions about British Muslim Women."
Helen Rumbelow, The Times Newspaper

Mulberry Schools Trust Visit to the White House and Civil Rights Trip

The visit followed an invitation to the White House and the school organised a Civil Rights trip which provided the students with the tools they need to become agents of positive social change on a global scale.



1. **To educate** students about the Civil Rights Movement, allowing them to engage with the grassroots movements to really understand the American Civil Rights Movement.
2. **To engage** students in discussion about civil rights with leaders and politicians as well as young leaders of their own age. Students will question how relevant an issue civil rights is today, at home and abroad.
3. **To inspire** students to become passionate about civil rights issues so that they become active in their own communities as they learn about the history of the organisations they interact with and how they started out; deepening their understanding of their role as British and Global Citizens.
4. **To encourage students to act** as ambassadors to their peers and local community by using various platforms within the school to feed back on their experiences on the programme and share the knowledge they have gained. This will raise consciousness of civil rights issues within the local and school community, and ensure that the positive impact of the programme is felt by all.



Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2018

Mulberry has performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival since 2008 and this year will be taking a new play to perform which explores religion, identity and nationalism.



MULBERRY THEATRE COMPANY PRESENT

**CRY GOD FOR HARRY,
ENGLAND AND ST GEORGE!**

A NEW PLAY

03 - 11 AUGUST
(EXCL. SUN 5TH)
4.35PM (45MINS)

A WORLD PREMIERE FROM THE FIRST BRITISH STATE SCHOOL EVER
TO WIN A FRINGE FIRST AWARD.

"I didn't say we could change the world. I just want us to stand up for ourselves."

Sayara always thought she'd be a great leader. But most of the cast of her all-female, East London production of Henry V don't really want to be there, and Sayara is too wrapped up in her own ideas to listen to any of theirs. When their community comes under threat, Sayara and her friends must learn what leadership really means, and what you need to sacrifice to stand up for what you believe in.

 @Mulberrytheatre

TICKETS: £8 (CONCESSIONS £5)
FAMILY TICKETS: £20 (2 ADULTS & 2 CHILDREN)
2 FOR 1 OFFERS ON 3 & 4 AUG: £5 (CONCS £3)

The Female Lead

The Female Lead creates a variety of spaces to present these stories including a book of 60 amazing women from around the world (launching in February 2017), an online and social media presence, and an outreach programme for girls in schools, celebrating female role models who shape the world. The project is led by data science entrepreneur Edwina Dunn and award winning photographer Brigette Lacombe

Mulberry was featured as part of the campaign and developed a set of classroom resources for use in schools in the UK and internationally



Girl Leading Programme

Girl leading was Mulberry's first residential girls' leadership development programme. We ran this event in support of Michelle Obama's Let Girls Learn campaign.



Partnership of Equals Programme

Conference in October 2018 at Queen Elizabeth II Centre which will bring together 400 young people from the UK to discuss gender equality and what it means to have a 'Partnership of Equals' in today society.



Mulberry
Schools Trust
warmly invites you to

Partnership of
EQUALS

A gender education programme

As a school, we recognise that young people have the power to change the world: corridors and classrooms all over the country are filled with young leaders ready to craft a fairer future.

Yet, in the world beyond school, not all young people are given equal chances to fulfil their potential: in 2018, young people are growing up in a gender unequal world where women and girls are often denied equal pay and equal representation in leadership, and men and boys are often denied the chance to explore their emotions.

Designed in collaboration with students at Mulberry and Green Spring Academy Shoreditch, 'Partnership of Equals' brings young people together to strive for gender equality.