

Bradford Family Album
Shaheen Hafeez: Patterns of Belonging

Transcript 2

But like my children and the grandchildren, it is different because our generation was the one where we got told off in a way, and we got restricted of what we could wear, because wherever we went, it was the Asian way.

When we were at school, when I first came to England and we went to school, there was only another brother and sister in our school, all the rest were English. We had no English at all, no language at all. So, it was just like, we could hear them, but we couldn't understand what they were saying. So, they used to take us out from the classroom to teach us in a different way.

I remember when we had the first Maypole dance. I remember the first one, and my mum made me a dress, it was like a frock, green with gold, really gold things on it, and a pyjama underneath. And then everybody else wore, like, shorts and tops and you know, like it wasn't that 'dressy-dressy', whereas I felt, I felt as though my culture stood out. I mean, it was like, I was different. And I felt it at that time, I felt because I was, I was different.

But then, you know, when children say they get bullied at school, I don't remember ever getting bullied for anything. Maybe, I don't know whether children were different or children were all English still, but they were, they never, I didn't get ever bullied. They used to say they were Asians and they did, but me and my brother, we were, I don't know, I don't know, we've had a quite a good, alhamdulillah, so very good. So yes, that was another thing that my mum had made for me in, in school, first school thing.

You know that everybody stares at our things, 'So what do you think you're wearing?' or things like that. But at that time, I mean, I don't know, I might have, I might have stood out. But I do remember being different.