

# Activity Sheet 2.2

## Dover Interviews

Jan (14 years) and Jozef (11) are cousins from Slovakia. They spent a year in Folkestone before moving to Dover. Neither of them attended school during their stay in Folkestone.

Pavel is one of Jozef's friends. He came from the Czech Republic and has been in Dover 1 year and 1 month. He came with his family and they were upset during the interview because they had just heard they had been turned down for asylum. They had one week in which to appeal and were worried in case they had to return.

Jozef

'Here I have loads of fights. Boys are always saying "come on and fight me" sometimes just because I am rubbish at football. I used to enjoy school a lot more back in Slovakia but we had to come here because there were problems at home. There, at one time lots of skinheads were throwing sticks at our windows, here the worst it's been is young kids, 8 or 9, throwing eggs at our house.'

Jan

'I didn't mind missing school because I never really enjoyed it very much. I do like P.E. in my new school and I get help with my English from a special teacher. The only other Slovak person in my whole school is my sister and she often gets into fights but I keep out of it.'

Pavel

'There are about 12 other children in my school who come from the same place as me. I was lucky because I had learned a little English before I came here. I do have some problems here – there are about 5 boys who swear at me but I just ignore them. Once when I was playing football they said "Go away Paki." My headteacher is very nice and she tells them off, she told them "Once more and I'll exclude you." But it's much better here than at home. At school in the Czech Republic me and my brother and sister were very intelligent but the teachers would say "You are black – you are not Czech." When I told my teacher I wanted to be a policeman, like the FBI in the films, she said "No, you're black, if you arrested someone they would tell you to 'Shut up nigger.'" I was only 10, I didn't understand why people were so nasty to me, I think maybe there were only about 100 people in the whole country who weren't racist. Even when we phoned the police they ignored us.'

## Questions

1. What are the main problems experienced by the children in England?
2. How does this compare to their experiences before they came to England?
3. What would you do if one of these boys joined your class?
4. Why do you think some people responded so negatively to these children starting at their school?
5. What could the school do to make things better?
6. What could other students do to make things better?