Great Representation

Volume 1

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Herts for Learning

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From 2009 to 2018 Rachel was project director of the London Leadership Strategy's Going For Great (G4G) programme, which involved working with leaders of outstanding schools to share good practice and produce case studies, for dissemination to London schools.

Rachel is a visiting fellow at the Institute of Education. From 2016 to 2018 she served on the headteacher board for the regional schools commissioner for the North East London and East of England regions. She is a fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching. She has written and contributed to a number of books. The most recent, *Obstetrics For Schools: A guide to eliminating failure and ensuring the safe delivery of all learners*, addresses the disadvantage gap in education.

Michael Catchpool is the District School Effectiveness Adviser for North Hertfordshire at Herts for Learning. He has over 30 years of experience in primary education. Michael has worked in a variety of school settings and been a successful headteacher in three large primary schools.

Michael has a PhD from the University of Cambridge; his doctoral research was focused on children's engagement with peer feedback and its impact on them as writers. He has a keen interest in the role that drama can play in children's learning, particularly with regard to supporting children's writing; this was the focus of his master's degree research.

Michael served as a presenter and as a mentor for the Aspire programme, run by the National College of School Leadership which focused on supporting and providing guidance for Black, Asian and minority ethnic teachers who aspired to senior leadership positions.

In addition to working in schools, Michael has also been a senior lecturer in primary education.

Michael has previously worked in Hertfordshire as the County Primary English and Drama Adviser, as well as a school improvement partner. He is co-author of several resource books for primary schools, as well as being the author of ten picture books for children.

Contents

Page

7 .....The Great Representation programme

12 .....Introduction

21 .....Case study 1 **Leading change: developing an anti-racist, racially literate culture**
How Wood Primary School

30 .....Case study 2 **Developing a safe and brave space for discussion**
Laurance Haines School

41 .....Case study 3 **Culture for change: opening up safe discussions about race**
Haywood Grove School

50 .....Case study 4 **EDI and "Top Down" leadership**
Saint John Henry Newman School

60 .....Case study 5 **The importance of student voice in developing an inclusive school culture**
Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

71 .....Case study 6 **Towards becoming an anti-racist school**
Marriotts School

81 .....Case study 7 **A multi-layered solution to the complex problem of lack of belonging among BAME students**
Hockerill Anglo-European College

90 .....Case study 8 **Auditing educational provision in order to facilitate a whole-school approach and strategy to strengthening equality and inclusive practices**
St Clement Danes School

102 .....Case study 9 **Great staff representation**
Haileybury Turnford School

112 .....Case study 10 **Increasing the racial diversity of adults in school**
Windermere Primary School

120 .....Case study 11 **Converting the curriculum**
The Thomas Alleyne Academy

Page

130 .....Case study 12 **Unlocking the history curriculum with the untold truth**
St John's C of E Primary School

139 .....Case study 13 **Implementing diversity, representation and inclusion across the humanities curriculum**
John Warner School

147 .....Case study 14 **Seeing and being seen**
St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

157 .....Case study 15 **Achieving diversity and representation across the curriculum**
Broxbourne CE Primary School

168 .....Case study 16 **Representation for all: decolonising our curriculum**
Summercroft Primary School

178 .....Case study 17 **Using books to empower children to stand tall and dream big**
Wheatfields Junior School

187 .....Case study 18 **Representation really matters: making changes to representation in the curriculum**
Ashlyns School

195 .....Case study 19 **Establishing a pupil-led equality, diversity and inclusion committee to develop a school culture of equity**
Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

206 .....Case study 20 **Safe discussion about race**
Herts and Essex High School

213 .....Case study 21 **I, too, am Adeyfield**
The Adeyfield Academy

222 .....Case study 22 **Diversity squared – what's your story?**
Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School

234 .....Case study 23 **STAGS talks**
St Albans Girls' School (STAGS)

THE GREAT REPRESENTATION PROGRAMME

On 25 May 2020, from their lockdown homes, the world witnessed the murder of George Floyd by a policeman in the USA. Although sadly just one individual in a long list of people of colour to die at the hands of the police (on both sides of the Atlantic), this was different too; it was captured on camera. This made it harder to dismiss the reality of institutional racism. It showed and symbolised in stark technicolour the price of racial inequality. Thousands of people in Hertfordshire, as around the world, were inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement to effect change and stand up to racism.

At Herts for Learning, a brave leader, Andrew Brown, urged the organisation to take action. Through a collaborative process, the following statement was written and publicised:

> HfL's purpose is founded on our belief that every young person, through access to a great education, should be able to realise their potential, regardless of where they live or their circumstances. We deplore the murder of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Manuel Ellis and countless others who have lost their lives due to unrelenting racial injustices, and we recognise the uncomfortable truths that we all must face.
>
> HfL acknowledges that systemic racism is a problem that must be addressed everywhere. We have a duty to face up to the difficult conversations that ultimately result in the lifting of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) voices. We know that in Britain, Black children are more likely to experience poverty, have poorer educational outcomes, be excluded from school, be unemployed, and come into contact with the criminal justice system. They are less likely to access the care they need if they are struggling with mental health problems, and Black children are more likely to act as carers for ill and disabled family members and to miss out on support. We know that the Black community is underrepresented in teaching staff, even more so at a leadership level, and we acknowledge that that impacts upon Black children's experience of education. We acknowledge the position we are in today and we refuse to fail to learn.
>
> It is crucial that we take action beyond statements. We welcome challenge on our practices and will not be afraid of robust questioning. Furthermore, HfL pledges that, with immediate effect, we will:

- **Promote the comprehensive review of the curriculum coverage of Black history in Hertfordshire schools, to ensure that, at every key stage, Black voices are heard, Black stories are told and Black achievements and contributions to society are celebrated. It is vital that all Hertfordshire children have knowledge of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Britain's colonial background and how our nations came to be ethnically diverse.**
- **Support school leaders, through our school improvement work, to review the entire curriculum experience to ensure that there is good representation of Black voices and experiences: in and outside the formal taught curriculum, in each subject area, through trips and visits coverage and the profile of speakers.**

- **For all internal recruitment and recruitment that we support schools with, we will minimise unconscious bias by presenting blind view CVs to hiring managers and, where there is more than one stage to the process, conducting all initial meetings over the telephone. We commit to doing all that is possible to ensure that ethnicity is unknown throughout all hiring processes.**
- **Monitor, report and take action upon any differences in successful hires, performance results, promotions and pay between our Black and non-Black colleagues.**
- **Invite all colleagues that identify as BAME to form a BAME forum with a view to creating internal, education tools and lifting BAME voices. This forum will be given an executive-level platform to make robust recommendations that seek to further the cause of ending systemic racism, both internally and with the work that we do.**

HfL recognises that these issues affect the whole BAME community, and we extend these commitments to all affected.

And so began a concerted effort on the part of all at HfL to progress an anti-racism agenda. All staff now set themselves a race equity performance objective as part of the annual appraisal cycle, and all colleagues receive regular training on unconscious bias, discrimination and equality issues; to date we have had keynotes from Pragya Agarwal and John Amaechi at our HfL conferences. A Race Equality Adviser, Toks Olusamokun, was appointed to join HfL in September 2021 (funded by HCC) to support schools with their race equality work, and in September 2022 a second Race Equality Adviser (funded by HfL) will join the Wellbeing Team. Schools, settings and trusts across Hertfordshire are benefiting from race equity consultations, training and advice.

At the same time as HfL was giving serious thought to the steps it needed to take to become an anti-racist organisation, many school leaders across the county were considering how best to support their staff and students in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder and capitalise on the momentum generated by the Black Lives Matter movement to further promote equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in their schools. In some parts of Hertfordshire, leaders were also, sadly, facing a backlash from right-wing political groups in their local community.

As part of a bid for funding from HCC for various Coming Back Stronger from COVID initiatives, the Director of Education, Rachel Macfarlane, proposed a plan for a new annual leadership programme called Great Representation. This would be based on the model of the Great Expectations programme, which had run for the previous three academic years in Hertfordshire, bringing leaders of primary, secondary and special schools together to share great practice and learn from and with each other. Whereas Great Expectations had focused on schools' actions to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged learners and their more advantaged peers, the Great Representation programme would centre on initiatives implemented in participating schools relating to race equity.

The key aims of the programme were to bring together leaders of Hertfordshire primary and secondary schools, (mainstream and special) to:

- **encapsulate the key features, structures and practices of schools (from nursery to secondary) which have a strong ethos of anti-racism, to better understand how schools become great at inclusion, diversity and equity**
- **explore strategies, review literature and hear from expert speakers on how to achieve great representation of people of colour in the curriculum and the school community**
- **share great practice and ensure that schools engaged in exciting race equality practice are contributing to system leadership in Hertfordshire**

In May 2021 all Hertfordshire schools were invited to apply to be part of cohort 1 of the Great Representation programme. The 23 schools selected were those which could best evidence demonstrable impact in an aspect of anti-racist action. They were: Ashlyns School, Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School, Broxbourne JMI School, Haileybury Turnford School, Haywood Grove School, Hockerill Anglo-European College, How Wood Primary School and Nursery, Laurance Haines Primary School, Marriotts School, Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School, St Albans Girls' School, St Catherine of Siena Primary School, St Clement Danes School, St John's C of E Primary School, Summercroft Primary School, The Herts and Essex High School, The John Henry Newman Catholic School, The John Warmer School, The Adeyfield Academy, Thomas Alleyne Academy, Wheatfields Primary School, Windermere Primary School and Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School.

The format of the programme comprised a series of seminars over the course of the academic year, attended by the headteacher/principal and another member of the senior leadership team (SLT) of each school on the programme.

At each seminar, a keynote speaker (or two) gave a presentation or ran a workshop on an aspect of race equity in education, as inspiration, stimulation and provocation for the leaders attending. The delegates then shared and discussed the keynote talks and other reading and research about impactful anti-racism action in schools. They also conducted activities to scrutinise in detail and reflect on their specific context, practices and challenges. Six brave delegates presented to the group, sharing their personal stories of being a person of colour in a racially inequitable education system.

Between seminars, delegates conducted visits with their peers to three other schools on the programme, to learn from their best practice and to form links for ongoing school improvement collaboration. They fed back to the entire group at the next seminar about lessons learnt and good practice that they had taken away from the visits to adapt and implement in their own schools.

Each school on the programme also wrote a case study, over the course of the year, on an initiative that they had successfully introduced and evaluated at their school to increase

race equity. At the seminars, peers read and critiqued these case studies during the drafting and redrafting stages, learning from and with each other. These case studies were then edited and collected into this volume of best practice, to be shared with every school and setting across Hertfordshire. Thus, although only a small number of schools were able to participate in the programme, the impact of the initiative can reach across every school in the form of this book, which is designed to inspire leaders with practical suggestions of initiatives that they might consider, albeit with adaptations, for their own institutions.

The speakers at the six seminars were:

Paul Miller, Professor of Educational Leadership and Social Justice

Sufian Sadiq, Director of Teaching School, Chiltern Learning Trust

Ben Mearhart, The Black Curriculum

Alice Bradbury, Professor of Sociology of Education, UCL

Bennie Kara, Deputy Headteacher, cofounder of DiverseEd, and author

Christine Callender, Associate Professor, UCL

Evelyn Forde MBE, Headteacher of Copthall School and ASCL Vice President

We are grateful to them all for their stimulating, challenging and inspiring inputs.

INTRODUCTION

The case studies in this book centre around three main themes.

The first collection focuses on strategies for creating an anti-racist ethos, developing safe spaces for discussion about race and racism and action taken to increase the racial literacy of staff and students.

The book opens with the **How Wood Primary School** case study. It "demonstrates how change can be effected when leaders prioritise an altering of mindset to achieve a cultural shift in practice. It describes how leaders at How Wood School have worked to establish an anti-racist culture over the past two to three years", focusing on staff wellbeing, relationship building and training. "This was achieved by developing the racial literacy of staff, to ensure that they felt more comfortable discussing sensitive issues about race and ethnicity and empowering them to explore ways to improve cultural diversity within the curriculum and environment. All of this has contributed to establishing an anti-racist culture."

Next is a case study from **Laurance Haines Primary School** which details the actions taken "to develop a safe and brave space for staff to meet and speak about race, equality, diversity and inclusion." Through the establishment of a staff forum, leaders have supported staff to explore the complex issues around race equity. Over time, a set of "principles" have been devised, revised and established:

- to provide an open, safe and brave space for children, staff and parents to discuss EDI
- no judgement: it is a brave space to speak freely
- to acknowledge we all have sub-conscious bias and different cultural experiences; it is safe to speak up
- all have a responsibility to be a part of the conversation – be brave and be a voice
- recognise that certain topics may evoke certain emotions
- call people out (choose to challenge) or call people in (support them to understand, with compassion and patience)

The **Haywood Grove** case study (the only one from a special school in this volume) also focuses on strategies "used to create an anti-racist ethos within the school community, building a culture of psychological safety, and providing the foundations for opening up discussion about race issues and equity. All members of the school community have been encouraged to learn and grow in understanding, and to contribute to challenging the status quo." The study considers in detail the foundations needed to establish a culture of safety.

At The **John Henry Newman Catholic School**, the establishment of an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) Working Party was key to the development of an anti-racist culture in the school community. "The intention of the working party was to work strategically with groups across the school community, including staff and students, to raise the profile of

the EDI agenda and consider how better to represent and respond to the wealth of diversity within and across the school community." Its inception was partly triggered by the head, as in many schools in Hertfordshire (and up and down the country), receiving an open letter from older/ex-students, in response to the BLM movement, questioning the school's work to promote and lead on the issue of diversity, specifically diversity of race and ethnicity. The case study gives a step-by-step account of the EDI Working Party's work.

Another school where an Equality and Diversity Committee has been set up is **Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School**. This group, however, is pupil-led. It was established to "promote and support the use of pupil voice to further develop a school culture that celebrates diversity and challenges stereotypes, and where all pupils, especially pupils from non-White (BAME) ethnic backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and are represented. In addition, the committee would provide a safe space for opening up discussions about equality and diversity." A lead teacher was also appointed in September to direct a number of projects focused on diversifying the curriculum, improving staff racial literacy, celebrating diversity across the whole school and promoting and supporting pupil voice.

Similarly, at **Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School**, leaders used student voice to re-examine policies and procedures with the aim of improving race equity. Here, a new student council structure was established to include EDI Representatives. Outcomes included a rewrite of the school Uniform Policy, Behaviour Policy and Staff Code of Conduct. "Equality, diversity and inclusion, particularly in terms of race, have become a focus entwined in everything done at NBS. Whenever a display is designed, a scheme of learning is written, or a policy is reviewed, EDI is at the forefront of decisions, to ensure fairness and representation for all. Equally importantly, students' views are routinely considered and often, if appropriate, students will be consulted on decisions made."

At **Marriotts School** the focus was on building the understanding of race inequality of all members of the school community, building representation and voice, and building leadership capacity to drive an anti-racist culture forward. Partly motivated by a group of girls going to speak to a teacher of colour, "deeply upset about an incident of racism that they felt had not been taken seriously enough or adequately addressed", leaders developed "capacity and drive for change by creating a personal development (PD) leadership team. This was made up of key members of the senior leadership team (SLT) and strengthened with the appointment of an anti-racist school advocate. The PD leadership team, together with the advocate and the headteacher, worked to develop the school's equality and diversity strategy and action plan." The impact has been wide-reaching.

Another school where action was, in part, triggered by uncomfortable feedback from recipients of education at the school is **Herts and Essex High School**. "In summer 2020 a group of minority ethnic alumni wrote an open letter to the executive headteacher, the headteacher and the chair of governors, which described racist incidents that had

occurred in the school when they had attended." One innovative step the school took was to address mispronunciation of students' names. One member of the alumni explained that "I constantly had to spell and pronounce my name which felt belittling … having to continuously tell the same people how to pronounce a two-syllable name was irritating and upsetting." The school set up a means of recording each student and member of staff speaking their name and making the audio files available to teachers.

The **Hockerill Anglo-European College** has an interesting international context, as the school educates students who reside across the world and has experienced student self-segregating into ethnic groups socially. Leaders "have worked to create an ethos of inclusion and a sense of belonging amongst its students, ensuring that those students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds feel fully integrated, and that students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds mix with each other with ease. This has involved training all staff so that they are aware of the issues and working with them to improve understanding of the very complex issues surrounding ethnicity in the UK."

Another study that focuses on a specific cultural context is the **Adeyfield Academy** case study. Here leaders introduced "key strategies implemented to raise the profile of and aspirations for the school's Black African and Black Caribbean students", a number of whom were vulnerable and at risk of underperforming. They worked to identify the specific barriers faced by members of this group and to address their needs. Their work focused on five key areas: Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Power and Voice, Wellbeing and Belonging, and Community.

At **St Clement Danes School**, staff audited educational provision under four key areas: behaviour and welfare, leadership and management, personal development of pupils, and teaching and learning. The school took action from the emerging data and issues identified to enhance its approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion. An external audit, provided by EqualiTeach, was used as part of an application for an equalities award. A staff working party and student society were crucial to this work.

The next two studies are concerned with strategies to increase the diversity of staff and governing bodies/trust boards.

At **Haileybury Turnford School** "there were two clear aims to this work. Firstly, to have a staff community that is more representative of the student community. … Secondly, to have a higher number of minority ethnic leaders which would, in turn, help with overall minority ethnic teacher recruitment and retention. It was also strongly felt that developing diversity on the governing body was important, so that families from minority ethnic heritages, as well as staff from these backgrounds, had representation." Practical changes were made

to the recruitment processes used at the school to strive to eliminate unconscious bias and to cast the net more widely to attract greater diversity of applicants. A forum was established for BAME staff "to ensure their voices are heard, and to enable the senior leadership team and governing body to respond to any recommendations made." Extensive surveying of staff was conducted, with some differentiation of questioning for key groups (e.g. new staff of colour). The impact of these initiatives has been significant: "More than 10 staff from minority ethnic backgrounds have been appointed to work at Haileybury Turnford School since the start of this work, across a range of different subject areas, and including external and internal recruitment into leadership roles on the extended and core senior leadership team."

The approach adopted at **Windermere Primary School** to achieve greater staff diversity was an interesting one. Rather than anonymising applications, redacting key information to eliminate unconscious bias, the leaders chose instead to ensure where possible that BAME applicants were included on shortlists and, when known to the school, supported to gain the required experience for the post and to write strong applications: "Whilst the recruitment process offers the opportunity to anonymise applications, by choosing not to do this, but rather by proactively including applications from BAME candidates in the shortlisting process, leaders have had the opportunity to interview a much broader range of high-quality candidates." Again, the impact has been striking: "As a result of the school's initiative to shortlist BAME candidates for interview, for the six teaching vacancies arising since 2015, five candidates were shortlisted and two of those were employed. Creating additional opportunities to support BAME employees in career progression has resulted in two more taking on the role of TA in the school." The benefits have also been seen in the progress and attainment of minority ethnic pupils and the racial literacy of the staff.

The remaining case studies are focused on diversifying and decolonising the curriculum.

In some schools, the approach was to diversify the content taught in subject areas. At **Thomas Alleyne Academy**, "Across the school, each department has been encouraged to review their content and resources and to take action to adapt the curriculum. The clear message was that the revised curriculum should reflect diverse narratives and challenge stereotypes and prejudices. This required staff to research and discover new materials to incorporate into their schemes of work." The aim was clear: "to ensure students are equipped with the knowledge necessary to discuss race from an educated viewpoint. Students should be able to challenge stereotypes and empathise with other cultures, thanks to the diversity of the curriculum they study at the school." As part of leaders' groundwork, meetings with focus groups of students in Years 8 and 11 were held, to further understand students' views about the curriculum and the school's culture. The same groups were consulted again, later, to evaluate the impact of changes undertaken.

At **St John's C of E Primary School**, the focus was on one curriculum area: history. Their case study, entitled "Unlocking the history curriculum with the untold truth", tracks the revamp of this curriculum area, from auditing and researching to designing and resourcing and finally reviewing and evaluating (using pupil feedback) against their six clear aims:

- to develop a sequenced and progressive curriculum that represents Black history
- to promote self-awareness and enhance an understanding of identity for pupils of any Black ethnicity
- to celebrate diversity through a Black history curriculum
- to recognise the impact of significant events and figures that have helped shape Black history in Britain
- to enhance the knowledge and understanding of school staff to effectively deliver a coherent Black history curriculum
- to broaden the understanding of all pupils at St John's of the impact of Black history in Britain and beyond

The school is now repeating this process in other subject areas.

Likewise, the focus at **John Warner School** was on the humanities subjects and diversifying and decolonising the curriculum in these areas. This was part of a wider Racial Equity Project (REP) with three foci:

- **Educate:** The REP will ignite and enable our stakeholders to broaden their understanding of systemic racism. Through an ambitious, relevant and rich curriculum, we will challenge perspectives, educate and breakdown structural inequities, and develop positive relationships and behaviours.
- **Empower:** The REP will empower the school community to utilise knowledge and skills to build towards a shared vision of a racially equitable curriculum, through effective teaching, learning and assessment.
- **Enhance:** The REP will create an environment of positive change where all members of our community are able to thrive and flourish in an ever-changing world through a harmonious working environment – working cohesively for the enhancement of the wellbeing of all members of the school and local community.

Students are now exposed to "a more global curriculum, which represents diversity and inclusion. … Other subject areas have already started to apply the same principles to a review of their curricula."

At a number of schools, diversity was approached through auditing reviewing and updating fiction, non-fiction and picture books to ensure diversity. At **St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School**, leaders had a clear rationale for this: "Children cannot be what they cannot

see. In order to achieve true human flourishing, each person needs to have a deep and profound sense of themselves and their potential. The children in St Catherine's needed to be surrounded by stories and images of inspirational Black role models, to counter negative portrayals and stereotypes in the media, or which they might encounter at home." A working party audited reading materials and visual images. Staff substituted "traditional texts with equally high-quality but more representative ones"; some texts were donated by families. The school also "sought to create a 'culture of encounter' – to address stereotypes, misconceptions, unconscious bias and preconceived ideas, through educating children (and their families) about differences in ethnicity, religion, race, language and beliefs." They have done this through establishing National and Independence Days.

Similarly, at **Broxbourne JMI School**, the review of representation has expanded beyond the formal taught curriculum to include enrichment events: "To supplement curricular learning, leaders wanted children to be able to experience and share their and their friends' cultures. To this end, they arranged a 'Cultural Celebration Week' in May 2021. The aim was for children and members of the school community to share aspects of their cultural identity with each other." Workshops with a focus on cultural and racial representation have been arranged to give children varied experiences, and assemblies have been delivered, during anti-bullying week, by a representative of SOCA (Society of Caribbeans and Africans) about the Windrush generation.

Summercroft Primary School leaders have worked on increasing the diversity of their books in order that pupils see "people who are similar to and people who are different from them" because "Staff want every child to feel a sense of belonging, and to feel represented by the learning they encounter throughout their time at Summercroft." They have, however, looked beyond diversity when auditing and choosing books to select texts that ensure that the curriculum is decolonised, seeing it as "their job to educate children about the realities of the past and present in order to fight the stereotypes and generalisations children are exposed to via the media and other sources." They have focused on books for Reading for Pleasure, books for the library, and books linked to topics and the English curriculum.

"Using books to empower children to stand tall and dream big" is the title of the **Wheatfields Junior School** case study. Starting with a review of texts used in English and available in the library, the school's work has extended to an examination of texts used in assemblies. As this initiative has evolved, leaders have set up a "pupil-led Diversity and Equity Group". A clear job description was developed so that children knew what the aims would be and what they were "signing up" for:

- to work within a team to share information about diversity across the school
- to share ideas and ways that children can learn about diversity
- to share ideas and ways that Wheatfields Junior School can celebrate diversity

Leaders received applications from children from Years 3 to 6 who demonstrated a passion and commitment to being involved in driving positive change. In some applications, children referred to being inspired to apply for the role by texts used in school and subsequent discussions. The school is now at an exciting stage, where the work led to date by adults will be enhanced and taken further forward by the children as leaders.

The English curriculum and book choices in this subject area are also a feature of the **Ashlyns School** case study, albeit at the secondary rather than primary phase. Here the curriculum review started with English and geography but has expanded to other disciplines. The study covers "Representation of all student groups, particularly through the curriculum but also in other aspects of the school such as the website, corridor and classroom displays", and in student voice. A student from an Asian background, said: "Sometimes I can go to five lessons a day and not see anyone who looks like me on a PowerPoint or on the walls." It was this statement that has underpinned the work done since and has truly driven the school's work forward. An interesting element of leaders' work has involved consultation with parents as well as students and staff.

At other schools, discrete new units were devised that addressed aspects of race and diversity. The **Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School** case study tells the story of a rich and imaginative unit addressing immigration, devised in response to anti-immigrant sentiment in the community following the Brexit vote. "The project empowered young children with the agency to express their voice and to think critically about the world around them. Many also realised that they could stand up for social justice in their school and the local community. The project also facilitated open discussions for adults, who could reflect on their own perceptions and think more widely about immigration and the challenges faced by displaced people around the world."

Likewise, the final case study, from **St Albans Girls' School (STAGS)**, describes the establishment and embedding of two new curriculum initiatives – "STAGS Talks" and "STAGS Talks About" through the pastoral curriculum. The aims were to:

- create a safe and positive space for students to explore, talk about and discuss challenging issues, including race equality, within and beyond the classroom
- support staff in facilitating such conversations in a productive and inclusive manner

The initiative allowed for a safe space for staff and students alike to discuss EDI through a structured and supportive tutorial and enrichment programme.

You will note a number of common themes and messages across all of these case studies. All of the schools on the programme recognise that striving to create an anti-racist school is a "never-ending journey". Without exception, the Great Representation leaders lack complacency, instead feeling keenly that they have a long way to go in their endeavours.

The “Next steps” section of the case studies shows their determination to forge ahead, embedding and sustaining the impact of the work undertaken to date.

This cohort of leaders will continue to meet in 2022–23 to support each other and to discuss ways in which they can continue to contribute to system leadership. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy and are inspired by their stories.

Rachel Macfarlane

July 2022

A note on language: You will notice that a variety of terms are used in the various case studies to describe and categorise people according to ethnicity or “race” (albeit that “race” is an artificial social construct!). You will read “people of colour”, “minority ethnic”, “BAME” and “non-White”. The language used in this area is highly emotive, eliciting strong opinions and reactions. We spent many hours discussing this very issue on the Great Representation programme. The editors have decided to respect the language choice of the contributing authors, as we are of the firm opinion that it is important for each school to determine its own agreed language and terminology that works for its school community and context.

LEADING CHANGE: DEVELOPING AN ANTI-RACIST, RACIALLY LITERATE CULTURE

How Wood Primary School

Focus area

This case study demonstrates how change can be effected when leaders prioritise an altering of mindset to achieve a cultural shift in practice. It describes how leaders at How Wood School have worked to establish an anti-racist culture over the past two to three years. This was achieved by developing the racial literacy of staff, to ensure that they felt more comfortable discussing sensitive issues about race and ethnicity, and empowering them to explore ways to improve cultural diversity within the curriculum and environment. All of this has contributed to establishing an anti-racist culture.

Aims and rationale

The ethos at How Wood had for many years been an inclusive one. Diversity is celebrated in many ways, including – but not limited to – assemblies, curriculum enrichment days, Black History Month and the PSHE curriculum. However, the school was not actively anti-racist.

By the spring of 2020, the school leadership team, led by a mixed-race headteacher, felt with conviction and some degree of regret that the approach to anti-racism was tokenistic. Race equality and authentic representation were not explicitly considered within the school's vision, ethos or curriculum.

Following the death of George Floyd, resulting in the rising of Black Lives Matter in the UK and the issues this raised, becoming an anti-racist establishment became a priority. The death of George Floyd shone a light on the inequalities and narrowness of mind that exists in our society, and it became imperative to make a positive and active change at How Wood School.

Background context

How Wood School is a one-form entry primary school and nursery, situated in a village very close to St Albans. How Wood caters for a relatively diverse range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. 15% of pupils are Black/minority ethnic, and 19% have English as an additional language (EAL).

The headteacher joined How Wood School in 2006 as deputy head and held this position for eight years before leaving to travel for two years. In September 2016 she was appointed as headteacher.

From the outset, establishing a culture where the wellbeing of the children and staff came first was of the highest priority to the school leaders. Morale was very low amongst the whole staff team due to leadership changes. The new headteacher, understanding the need to move the school forward, recognised that wellbeing of staff needed to be addressed and trusting relationships re-established.

The story

Part 1 – Wellbeing

In 2016 low morale among staff was an issue that needed to be swiftly addressed. The headteacher had excellent relationships with all members of the staff team, developed when she was deputy, so establishing herself as a trusted leader was a hurdle she did not have to jump. On the first inset day, intentionally included within the headteacher's vision was an emphasis on the mental health and wellbeing of children and staff at How Wood School. This became a priority objective on the school improvement plan, feeding into all aspects of school life.

The senior leadership team set about rebuilding professional confidence by being open and transparent. Investment in staff on professional and personal levels was achieved in a variety of ways, including open professional dialogue, extensive opportunities to share good practice, and continual professional development (CPD). Senior leaders ensured that time was given to actively listen to teachers and support staff. A huge amount of consideration was given to reducing unnecessary workload – no paperwork for paperwork's sake. The importance of staff feeling valued could not be underestimated. The leadership team modelled this by being genuinely attentive to the needs of the whole team. Simple gestures such as noticing mood, thanking staff for their efforts, and Christmas gifts for all, contributed to the raising the feeling of worth and wellbeing.

Part 2 – Anti-racism

Events in May 2020 galvanised the leadership team into action. The restrictions pertaining to COVID-19 allowed time for deep reflection and much soul searching. The death of George Floyd, which raised the voices of the Black Lives Matter movement in the UK, also served to focus attention on the racial inequalities within the British education system and the lack of representation of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups in the curriculum.

The headteacher sought to converse with staff members about the impact of racism generally within society, as well as on a more personal level. She found the team open, supportive and unafraid to ask questions. The trusting relationships and psychological safety the staff team demonstrated during these conversations cannot be underestimated

and can be attributed to the strong sense of belonging created through the fostering of a wellbeing ethos.

Indeed, these conversations resulted in the leadership team researching how to support staff and parents to understand the Black Lives Matter movement and the wider implications for education of the children at How Wood. This was an important step towards establishing an anti-racist culture.

During the summer of 2020, work began to unpick how history and geography were taught, with a commitment to redesign these subjects to explicitly teach Black British and Asian history in an authentic, appropriate and non-tokenistic way. Barriers explored and discussed with the staff team were lack of subject knowledge, fear of offending, time, and being in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To address the barrier of lack of subject knowledge and time, two simple steps were taken:

Firstly, all teachers were given the children's book, *Black and British: A short, essential history*, by David Olusoga. This covers the history of Black people from 27BC to 1945, in a child-friendly, easily accessible way. David Olusoga writes, "This is the book I wish I had been given to read when I was at school. … This book is an introduction. It is a place to start learning about Black British history and it will introduce you to some of the thousands of Black people who made their homes in Britain in past centuries."

Secondly, the headteacher registered the school with Hackney's Diverse Curriculum, a very useful resource bank for staff, to support subject knowledge and understanding of Black British history. The following statement, from the Hackney services for schools website, explains the significance of Black British History: "Hackney Education recognises that the curriculum we teach highlights the significance of the Black Contribution as part of the history of Britain. This matters for every child and every adult. These resources are the beginning of building a curriculum that builds belonging and is actively anti-racist."

Now staff had a starting point and felt able to begin to map out their long-term planning of these subjects, taking a thematic approach more suited to creating a culturally rich, ethnically representative history/geography curriculum.

Having discussed with local school leaders the issues staff faced relating to fear of causing offence when discussing race, the headteacher set up a staff meeting to attempt to begin to address this barrier. The content of the training, entitled "Breaking Down Barriers – Making Conversations About Race Easier", is based on lived experiences, offering an insight into what it feels like to be on the receiving end of racism, from the point of view of someone who has both Black and White parents and sees things from both perspectives. It aims to provide an understanding of the importance of open and honest dialogue around race, the language used when discussing race, and the need for colleagues to feel safe and able to have these discussions without fear of offending.

This training was initially delivered to How Wood staff, who evaluated its impact on their overall understanding of racism and feelings of discomfort when discussing race. The following quotes from staff members demonstrate the need for this type of training and for discussion within the wider education system and beyond:

"(The fact that we have) built up trust and mutual respect between all staff and senior leaders over the years made conversations during and following the staff meeting easier. I felt I was able to ask questions, support colleagues and challenge others in a wider context to the school."

Deputy head

"I wasn't aware that someone so close to me had personally experienced such abhorrent racism, but in the sharing of this, it created a safe space where the team were able to share thoughts, feelings and openly ask questions on difficult subject matter without judgement. It brought us closer together as a team."

SENCO/class teacher

"Having grown up in a predominately White background of family and friends, I have never had the opportunity to hear stories of racism first-hand other than reading it in the news and seeing it on TV. The training gave me a greater understanding of the experiences others have had to face in their lives, and some of the stories told and lesson learned have been shared and passed on to my family and friends."

Class teacher

The next step towards racial literacy involved an environmental shift – resourcing the school so that Black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups were authentically represented in the environment. Using recommended reading lists from the Hackney Diverse Curriculum, The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) and Black Asian Minority Ethnic Educators (BAMEed), the school's central and class libraries were resourced with quality texts from a range of diverse authors, which included texts where the main protagonist was not White.

Multi-cultural rugs, ethnic printed soft fabrics/cushions for reading corners, and dolls and small world play toys culturally enhanced classrooms. Displays and environmental print

used across the school included representation from many different cultures. This was a simple yet impactful change to achieve authentic representation.

Finally, the following anti-racism priority was included on the school improvement plan:

Further promoting anti-racism to ensure race equality

Outcomes

- **Staff will model a commitment to anti-racist values and a whole-school approach to race equality.**
- **The curriculum will challenge race inequality; achieve cultural inclusion; respond to the differences in children's lives caused by racism, poverty and discrimination.**

This resulted in all staff having an anti-racist performance management objective in the 2021–2022 cycle, leading to further positive development of race equality. The one-to-one conversations with individuals proved invaluable in achieving racial literacy. One example of this was a discussion with a member of the admin team on how to make the reception and office areas of the school more inclusive and welcoming to all, without being tokenistic. The staff member had never considered this but before the end of the week had ordered a multilingual welcome sign for the entrance and, during both Diwali and Hanukah festivals, hung decorations on the noticeboard in the entrance. This was a small but significant change.

Impact

How Wood School is a better place as a result of transitioning from being an inclusive school to a school that actively promotes an anti-racist, racially literate culture. The change is subtly tangible and permeates through all aspects of school life.

In 2021 Rachel Macfarlane, Director of Education for HfL, visited the school to carry out an anti-racist pilot audit. She left saying, "It was wonderful to visit your school and to see for myself the fabulous work you and your staff are doing on race equality. I was impressed by the inclusivity of your learning environment and your vibrant and culturally rich displays and resources. Thank you very much for making me so welcome. It was an inspiring visit."

The staff team at How Wood School are now consciously aware of racial inequality, leading to a raised awareness of the need for racial equality. This is demonstrated on an almost daily basis and is evidenced in a multitude of ways, from the texts chosen to read with classes, to the displays in classrooms, a readiness and willingness to redesign the curriculum, the music choices made in assemblies, the allocation of parts in school productions (being acutely aware of racial stereotyping) and the use of language and vocabulary in the curriculum.

An example of language use being questioned and considered is given here when the newly appointed language teacher sent the following email to the headteacher (please note K is a Black child):

"When I teach the colour vocabulary in Spanish, I usually get some awkward responses in older year groups, and I never know whether to ignore or address this. The word for black in Spanish is negro or negra, pronounced with Spanish accent. The response from some children is a nervous smile, looking around at others. In Year 6, A grinned and asked me to repeat, which I ignored. A turned to look at K. K looked down at his work. No other children seemed to notice. This happens every time I do the colours and I wanted to know what you would do."

The headteacher and the language teacher discussed this matter at length, resulting in the teacher feeling confident about how to manage this issue in the future. The teacher expressed that it was due to the anti-racist culture at How Wood that she felt able to ask the question in the first place, and provided the following feedback:

"This is the first school I have worked in where I have actually had great advice and open conversation about racism that I felt was genuine and practical when dealing with an incident that occurred in a Year 6 class. It was difficult for me as a teacher to decide whether to let it go, as it was so subtle, or to address it and potentially make one pupil feel awkward and the centre of focus. I had a clear, open discussion with the head teacher about it and left her room feeling equipped, with a rehearsed script, heavily lesson-based, which I could present to children in a calm, balanced way that would make them all think."

Nursery and languages teacher

The children at How Wood are immersed in a culturally rich environment, whatever their background, which fully supports, and has the capacity to nurture, their understanding of equality and equity for all. All children are represented and feel a sense of belonging.

"No matter where you're from or your skin colour, everyone feels included."

Year 5 child

"I am always struck by how inclusive and non-tokenistic the approach is at the school to all children, regardless of race, wealth or ability. Every child can find themselves represented in wall displays, books and activities."

Parent

The Year 2 teacher noted that, "The children recognised that inequality existed whilst being taught about Mary Seacole. They learnt that she was unable to join Florence Nightingale because of the colour of her skin. When the children discovered that she funded the journey herself in order to fulfil her dream, they cheered! It lands with such empowerment and plays into their understanding of the narrative that 'heroes overcome'. Also, as we explore Christianity, Islam and Judaism in RE, it's really important to let the children see racial representation across all three religions. A lot of the online content and resources show a White Christian or Jew and a brown Muslim. It's great to have White children in the class who have an Islamic faith. It's made me really aware of the visuals I use to make sure children don't form unconscious bias with religion and race."

The raising of racial equality awareness has positively impacted on all other areas of inclusion. Having equity and equality at the forefront of all that the school does serves to highlight all the protected characteristics of the Equality Act, particularly age, special educational needs, disabilities, economic disadvantage, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Policies and procedures protect vulnerable learners and are grounded in the equity to equality approach, for example advantaging children from disadvantaged backgrounds (including previously looked after children; children looked after, children known to social workers; Irish Travellers, those with special educational needs) to put them on an equal footing with their peers. The school invests heavily in training and workshops to make sure staff and governors are fully informed about these vulnerable characteristics and understand the approaches to get the best out of all individuals. Leaders work closely with the local community and have been successful in building relationships with hard-to-reach families.

"The work that the school has done with the Traveller community has built trust where historically there was barely a relationship."

Governor (chair, in conversation with Hertfordshire Improvement Partner)

Reflections

The road to establishing an anti-racist culture is empowering and enlightening. Addressing any inequality, whatever that may be, can only have a positive impact on society, so we must always challenge inequality to effect change. At How Wood School, staff believe that:

> **"True respect and trust and valuing all individuals underpin a wellbeing ethos.**
>
> **An establishment that nurtures respect and trust and values all individuals almost by definition is an anti-racist establishment.**
>
> **But it does take work …"**

Next steps

The road to establishing an anti-racist culture is unfinished and must always be built upon and improved. The next steps are:

- **regular CPD for the whole staff team, both internal and external**
- **continuing to work on the curriculum – autumn term 2021 saw the redesigning of the art and design and technology curriculum, to be culturally diverse and representative of the world we live in today; spring term 2022 saw the development of the music curriculum in the same vein**
- **increased parental engagement – by inviting parents and carers into school to share their experiences, customs and celebrations, children will gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the world around them; this also strengthens links within our wider community**
- **continuous resourcing to raise the profile of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups across all curriculum subjects**
- **ensuring all policies reflect the anti-racist commitment of How Wood School**
- **continued discussion and dialogue around race equity and equality**

Cynthia Howe and Naomi Parkins

DEVELOPING A SAFE AND BRAVE SPACE FOR DISCUSSION

Laurance Haines School

Focus area

This case study focuses on actions taken to develop a safe and brave space for staff to meet and speak about race, equality, diversity and inclusion. Over time, key principles have been established at the school for staff to share personal experiences of racism and discrimination; review the processes and policies in place at school; and be the catalyst for some necessary changes in practice around creating an anti-racist culture, where each and every child, parent and member of staff feels like they belong. This culture is evolving and embedding, and the impact of this work is now being felt across the Inclusive MAT schools.

Aims and rationale

In May 2020 people from across the globe were reacting to the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement and demonstrations. The event shocked the world but inspired a reaction from groups of all ages, cultures, nationalities and races. School leaders at Laurance Haines noticed there were groups of staff talking about their own experiences of racial injustice. These staff met with school leaders, asking "What is our stand?", and requested a response to the community. It highlighted the need for a forum to be created, where staff could share their own experiences, and personal reflections on and feelings about the tragic event.

Following consultation with some members of staff, school leaders circulated a written response to the Black Lives Matter movement. In this letter, a commitment to creating safe spaces for conversation around race, equality, diversity and inclusion was set out to the wider community. This became a starting point for school improvement work dedicated to creating a safe and brave forum. Although the commitment to the wider community set out plans to invite all community members to be a part of this conversation, it transpired that the school needed to begin the journey with its own staff, building confidence before inviting children and parents into the conversation.

The intensity of the time around George Floyd's murder, alongside the change to day-to-day living during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown, was influential. The latter provided a time and space to host the conversation for staff. The first forum was attended by a core group, representative of the wider community. Since the first forum, the same core group has attended sessions, with the addition of other members of the school team. Minutes and promotion of the forum encouraged attendance to grow as the culture gradually shifted, developing a stronger sense of inclusivity.

School leaders looked to develop the forum to improve accessibility for all staff. Focus was given to the creation of a set of principles for the forum, creating a safer space for

conversations. The forum was held with increased regularity, supporting opportunities to build confidence in racial literacy and to speak about race and racism. The forum continues to evolve and is now influencing collaborative decision making to impact school improvement.

Background context

Laurance Haines School is a larger-than-average primary school, situated in West Watford. In close proximity to Watford General Hospital and the Holywell Estate, the school draws from an area with an extremely diverse and rich social composition and pockets of severe deprivation, which is not reflective of the vast majority of Hertfordshire.

The pupil and parent community is made up of a number of key ethnic groups, including Pakistani (26%), Indian (12%), White other (11.6%) Asian other (10%) and Black African (7.9%). The school celebrates the many languages that are spoken throughout the school, with the majority of children being bilingual and new to English (64%). Many of the families who select English as the first language are bilingual or multilingual. Over 50 languages and dialects are spoken across the school community. 18% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium and 12% have additional special educational needs. The school community remains transient due to the short-term nature of the length of stay for work for some parents.

Over time, there has been a considerable shift in the composition of the staff team. Through reviewed recruitment strategies, the school team is now far more representative of the parent and pupil community, with only 54% of staff identifying as White British. Although this isn't truly representative of or as diverse as the wider community, it compares favourably with 85.7% of all teachers in state-funded schools in England being White British in 2019 (source: "School workforce in England – Ethnicity Facts and Figures" (2019)).

However, the makeup of the school leadership team is of White ethnicity. Leaders have developed an openness to and honesty about this imbalance. It will remain a key focus for recruitment when opportunities arise, to diversify the leadership team.

Laurance Haines is an incredibly diverse school and inclusive to all that choose to work or send their children here. However, there have been and still are hidden barriers that need to be addressed, such as different points of view around religion, race and ethnicity. There appeared a lack of confidence in racial literacy, leading to an invisible divide between some staff, to the point where there was a feeling that racism was not being dealt with appropriately. School leaders reflected that staff needed space, time and permission to discuss race through the forum.

The story

There is no doubt that the Laurance Haines equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) forum would not exist if some of the team had not been moved and motivated for a call to action for education to be at the centre of any response to the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movements and demonstrations. Three members of the team were confident and proactive in challenging senior leaders, to ensure that teachers were not missing an opportunity to teach children about the events and to open the conversation of race and racism. In order to assess staff confidence and readiness to approach these important yet highly sensitive matters, an initial forum was held. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this session was held online, for staff across the school to join the conversation remotely.

The first forum was attended by a mix of staff, including members of the leadership team, teachers and support staff. It provided a space to discuss possible actions as a response. One of the first reflections was that any work undertaken would need to be in depth, and a long-term commitment to curriculum development was needed, alongside training for staff to confidently approach conversations about race and racism. The forum attendees agreed that any response should not be tokenistic but instead be focused on embedding improvements.

It was swiftly recognised that readiness to be a part of conversations was related to exposure to prejudice and racism: if racism does not affect you, you possibly do not have those conversations. One member of the forum asked, “How comfortable are our staff to talk about and challenge racism?”. Another recognised that, “We all have bias and need to acknowledge it.” Comments and questions such as these would begin to define the purpose of the forum. An initial action resulting from the first forum was to develop a school and trust response to the Black Lives Matter movement, with ideas being shared about the language used and about further EDI initiatives.

Following the communication to the wider school community in response to the Black Lives Matter movement, the invitation to the second forum was extended to staff across the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust (of which Laurance Haines is a member school). This was again held remotely. A basic set of principles for ensuring a safer space for conversation was established, highlighting the following:

- **open for anyone to speak**
- **a safe space**
- **without judgement**
- **in confidence**

The conversations throughout the forum were shaped around the curriculum, the children's experiences, staff diversity across the trust, lack of representation in the leadership teams, and recruitment. A defining moment within the conversation was when the topic of honesty was raised.

Staff reflected on the challenges of being able to speak honestly, as well as the fear of saying the wrong thing. Again, the themes of bias and stereotyping were brought forward. At this stage, only a small number of individuals were confident to address these areas, and there was discomfort felt by others.

"I didn't really know where my place was. I felt vulnerable with this subject. The forum has given me a safe place to make mistakes and to learn. The training and guidance has increased my confidence. I want to grow and I am growing."

Assistant head

The forum was halted whilst the school planned for full reopening and navigation through the pandemic. There is no doubt that, despite needing to focus attentions on the reopening of school in September 2020, pausing the forum was detrimental to the culture that leaders were trying to create. The staff have since shared their reflections on how this became a barrier to attending the forum later on when it was restarted.

"We are tired. We are so used to it, nothing changes."

Teaching assistant and mother of ex-pupils

An EDI survey was shared with staff across the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust, which gathered information about the perspectives of staff on how they felt represented and how the trust supported a truly inclusive and diverse culture.

Example questions from EDI survey:

- **In practice, how committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion is your workplace?**
- **To what extent does the diversity of your school's staff body reflect its student population?**
- **How often have you experienced comments, jokes or behaviour at work that you perceive as offensive?**

Equality, diversity and inclusion survey

MODULE SUMMARY From most to least positive	
Module	Positive responses
Recruitment	86%
Inclusion	80%
Equality	73%
Advancement	67%
Diversity	44%

KEY QUESTION Percentage of responses	
In practice, how committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion is your workplace?	
VERY COMMITTED	47%
QUITE COMMITTED	27%
MODERATELY COMMITTED	23%
NOT VERY COMMITED	3%
NOT COMMITTED AT ALL	0%

STRENGTHS Two questions with the highest results	
During the recruitment process, did you meet or speak with someone from the organisation whom you could identify with?	100%
How comfortable did you feel with your background or identity in the recruitment process?	100%

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT Three questions with the lowest results	
How diverse is the leadership team in your workplace?	16%
To what extent does the diversity of your school's staff body reflect its student population?	45%
How confident are you that the promotions are made WITHOUT bias in your workplace?	50%

Whilst this led to a review and rewrite of the equality plan and a full book audit – reviewing the representation of our community in the texts that were available throughout school – in the months that followed, the school had lost momentum and therefore diluted the togetherness that had begun to be formed through the creation of the forum.

The next forum was not hosted until May 2021, and it was attended by a small number of staff, some of whom were present at the first forum and others being newer members of the school team. However, some key voices from the earlier forum were not present. The forum discussions were focused around a review of the survey results, the lack of diversity across the senior leadership teams and governors and, again, exploring barriers to talking about race and racism. Barriers such as confidence; a lack of subject knowledge; not having a shared understanding between staff around culture, ethnicity and identity; as well as a lack of teaching resources that represented the community were all brought forward. The question "How do we overcome these barriers?" was asked. Staff responded with ideas around an extension of the safe space that had been created in the forum to the children, encouraging staff and children to be brave and remove the fear of getting things wrong. Subsequently, and in readiness for the following forum, the principles of the safe space were reviewed and refined to support staff to overcome these barriers.

The following forum, held in October 2021, began with revisiting the refined principles. Staff discussed the need for key principles to support staff to overcome the barriers. This resulted in the following being agreed:

- **acknowledge we all have unconscious bias and cultural differences – it is safe to speak up**
- **set the agenda – be brave and be a voice**
- **call people out – choose to challenge**

Conversations around defining a glossary of agreed language for EDI, and an agreed mission statement to shape the developments across the trust, highlighted the need for a lens to be focused on race. Following the opening seminar of the Great Representation programme with Professor Paul Miller, school leaders took inspiration from his statement "You see me, you hear me, I belong" and shared this with members of the forum. It was agreed that the statement would be adopted as the mission statement for the EDI work across Laurance Haines and the trust.

With representatives from across the trust joining the Laurance Haines staff remotely for the forum, there was a lack of flow to the dialogue and a reluctance from some in the group to speak openly. As staff who had joined remotely began to drop off and the forum was left with the people that were physically in the room, the conversation returned to a more natural flow. In hindsight, the technology may have enabled others to join, but it also created a clear barrier, which led to a reluctance to openly share thoughts and feelings. It was decided at this point that the forum would in future only operate face to face, rather than in a hybrid fashion.

Leaders made a concerted effort to promote the forum. Staff who had attended the first session but had not returned were then encouraged and supported to do so; they needed to see action and therefore the value of the forum. The next session was held in November 2021 and proved to be another pivotal moment in the journey. Two members of staff showed bravery to talk about personal experiences of racism. This resulted in other members of the forum reflecting on the emotional awareness that is needed when discussing these experiences, and a recognition of the daily pressures, prejudice and discrimination that some members of our community face. The forum agreed that all staff across the school would need to be exposed to the experiences shared and to start their own personal journeys of learning about the language and experiences of EDI. Again, the principles of the forum were refined, leading to the following:

Principles of creating a safe yet brave space to talk about EDI

- **to provide an open, safe and brave space for children, staff and parents to discuss EDI**
- **no judgement: it is a brave space to speak freely**

- **to acknowledge we all have subconscious bias and different cultural experiences; it is safe to speak up**
- **all have a responsibility to be a part of the conversation – be brave and be a voice**
- **recognise that certain topics may evoke certain emotions**
- **call people out (choose to challenge) or call people in (support them to understand, with compassion and patience)**

Impact

Developing a safe and brave space for the school's diverse staff to meet and speak about race, EDI has been the primary focus of the forum.

Despite interruptions and distractions that have slowed down change or improvement work in school, the culture has certainly started to shift at Laurance Haines School. Similarly, there has been some positive impact in the culture across Beechfield School, Cherry Tree Primary School and the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust. As staff have learned together and have felt supported by one another to reflect and shift their own thinking, new relationships have been formed, perspectives have been altered, and staff are now equipped to have uncomfortable but vitally important conversations about race and racism with each other and with children.

"I always believed nothing would change. But people are listening and now I can see change. The forum feels like a safe place to have these difficult conversations"

Teaching assistant

The forum has also provided a space for staff to talk about some truly personal experiences, which have, in turn, helped colleagues to begin in some way to understand about and empathise with the impact that prejudice, discrimination and racism are having on members of our community daily.

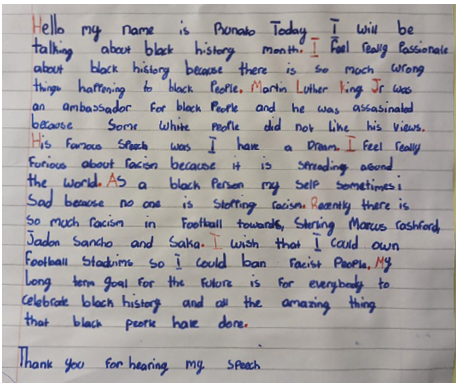
"My boys felt safe in primary but now in secondary they come home with a broken heart. When is it going to end? We have to start younger"

Teaching assistant

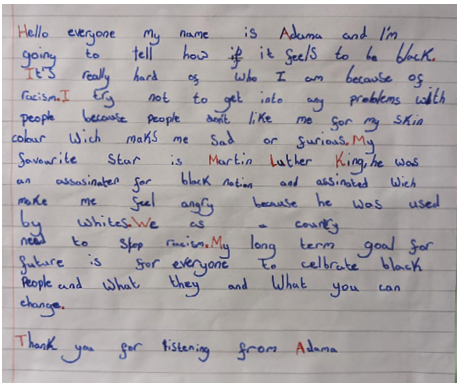
The principles that have been shaped through the forum are now established and are supporting conversations, training and personal growth for the wider staff. The glossary of terms, which has been developed in response to barriers highlighted by forum members, will further empower staff confidence to hold safe and brave conversations of their own with a common and shared language.

> **"If I don't say anything, I am part of the problem."**
>
> **Teaching assistant**

The forum has been the catalyst for a noticeable change in confidence and bravery for seeking, facilitating and taking opportunities to talk about racism with children, and to plan and deliver more diverse learning across the curriculum. Examples include children exploring the history of the rules of chess and why white pieces seem to always play first; various different cultural and ethnic versions of the story of Rapunzel, to inspire children's own written versions of the tale; and children feeling empowered to talk about their experiences of racism and the actions they are demanding society to take to address inequality.


Hello my name is Ronaldo Today I will be talking about black history month. I Feel really Passionate about black history because there is so much wrong things happening to black People. Martin Luther King Jr was an ambassador for black People and he was assasinated because Some White People did not like his views. His Famous Speech was I have a Dream. I Feel really Furious about racion because it is spreading around the world. As a black Person my self sometimes i Sad because no one is stopping racism. Recently there is so much racism in Football towards, Sterling Marcus rashford Jadon Sancho and Saka. I wish that I could own Football Stadiums so I could ban racist People. My long term goal for the future is for everybody to celebrate black history and all the amazing thing that black people have done.

Thank you for hearing my speech


Hello everyone my name is Adama and I'm going to tell how if it feels to be black. It's really hard as who I am because of racism. I try not to get into any problems with people because people aren't like me for my skin colour wich makes me sad or furious. My favourite star is Martin Luther King, he was an assasinated for black nation and assinated wich make me feel angry because he was used by whites. We as a country need to stop racism. My long term goal for future is for everyone to celbrate black people and what they and what you can change.

Thank you for listening from Adama

In turn, pupil voice has continued to open the minds of teachers and staff to the impact of racism on young people and the wider community. Leaders are proud that many of the children are showing signs of being true activists in creating an anti-racist culture.

Forum 18.6.20 (Online) School and trust response to George Floyd's murder and Black Lives Matter movement	**Forum 24.6.20 (Online)** Agreed set of principles for the forum, creating a safe and brave space	**Forum 19.5.21 (Face to face)** Shared survey responses and reviewed principles	**Forum 11.10.21 (Online/Face to face)** Adoption of the mission statement, 'You see me. You hear me. I belong." Request for glossary and agreed language	The forum continues (face to face) to be held monthly and has influenced the school Equality Plan, scripts for challenging racism and influencing CPD to develop racial literacy.

Reflections

What legacy are staff leaving for the school community? They understand that the forum is just the beginning of the school's EDI drive. More action is needed to involve all stakeholders in the conversations and to aim for tangible impact in recruitment and curriculum developments.

Staff have developed an awareness of the emotional response to talking about race and racism, and of the reluctance that exists for some members of the school community to be a part of the forum and the conversations. On one side, there are staff who have been hurt and are left exhausted by the racism that has existed in society for generations. On the other, there are staff who believe that Laurance Haines is a diverse school and that is enough – they may be looking at the culture through rose-tinted glasses. Continuing the forum and investment in building racial literacy across the staff is a long-term commitment, and the true impact may not be seen for years or generations to come.

Upon reflection, leaders have identified that a hidden workload exists for some members of our staff. The forum has only been successful through the bravery and honesty of Black and Asian staff sharing lived experiences. In addition, some of these staff have experienced increased workload due to their involvement in shifting the culture and promoting EDI through resourcing for the curriculum, becoming advocates and a source of support for other staff, and supporting the diverse community of parents. School leaders must remain mindful of this hidden workload as school initiatives around EDI continue and certain staff members are leant on.

The school's journey in strengthening EDI is supported by the developments being central to the school plan, to the performance appraisal cycle and to the CPD programme offered to teachers and support staff across the school. The mission statement "You see me, you hear me, I belong" continues to shape the curriculum and support a sense of belonging for staff, children and parents.

"The training around racial literacy and mindset was so positive – I feel challenged and will look to 'check' myself when slipping in to unconscious bias or stereotyping."

Class teacher

Next steps

Expanding the forum to invite children and parents to play a central part in these conversations is the obvious next step. Staff who have attended the forum share the feeling that involving all stakeholders is essential to creating an anti-racist culture across the school.

> **"Even though my mindset has been opened, there is still a lot of work to be done for those with closed mindsets."**
>
> **Class teacher**

The forum has been focused on race equality. However, its actions will provide a springboard for work in the future around other protected characteristics.

Thinking beyond the realms of equality, diversity and inclusion, the forum has helped to establish some principles around how teams can truly contribute to school improvement. Staff have been listened to without judgement and have subsequently felt integral to the workings of the team and the school. This ethos will support the school's journey, with collaborative decision making being more central to all school improvement work, to curriculum development and to the personal and professional growth we want for all.

Sebastian Gray and Nicola Furey

CULTURE FOR CHANGE: OPENING UP SAFE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT RACE

Haywood Grove School

Focus area

This case study focuses on the strategies that Haywood Grove School has used to create an anti-racist ethos within the school community, building a culture of psychological safety, and providing the foundations for opening up discussion about race issues and equity. The study will illustrate how, with the development of an inclusive ethos, all members of the school community have been encouraged to learn and grow in understanding, and to contribute to challenging the status quo.

Aims and rationale

The Haywood Grove School community aims to be a place where basic human needs are satisfied and where people are treated fairly, empathetically, respectfully and with compassion, and where all can contribute and feel a sense of connection and belonging. An environment is fostered where everyone has the freedom and discretion to reach their potential. The school's designation has always meant that staff have had to be more than just academic leaders; they are community leaders, social justice leaders, creative leaders and curriculum innovators.

To address the challenges to the community from the pandemic, and from the global impact of the George Floyd murder, called for increased reflection on what sort of leadership might be most effective. These horrific events galvanised leaders' resolve to focus their efforts further to create a setting that could confidently be described as psychologically safe, where therapeutic philosophy and practice were as congruent as they could be and, ultimately, where everyone mattered.

In response, leaders identified the foundation of effective anti-racist practice and reviewed how their leadership could bring together and develop the school's culture, therapeutic practices and school community. Leaders directed focus on the school's own "circle of influence" (a concept devised by Stephen Covey in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*), understanding what would be possible in the short term, and identifying and voicing their aspirations for change.

Background context

At Haywood Grove there has been a steady cultural shift in the school environment over a number of years, with a change in school leadership almost a decade ago. Leaders identified a need to change the pre-existing relationships between staff and families, from transactions based on fear and mistrust to ones where there was a sense of mutual

acceptance and everyone belonging, and where the basic human need for connection would be satisfied. Circumstances beyond the school's control had led to it losing its sense of identity, with prescriptive and restrictive regimes disguised as high expectations. In the early days, this felt like a journey towards an unspecified destination. It was, however, one that leaders were prepared to take, trying to build the world they could see, even when others couldn't.

Parents and the wider community were welcomed into school rather than being kept at arm's length, and an "open door" policy served both metaphorical and actual purposes. Everyone was given the freedom to be on first-name terms, providing a feeling of collegiality, friendship and warmth, and a symbolic sense of equality. This would be an environment that would create the optimum conditions for learning and growth and where people could work at their natural best.

Staff research in the fields of psychology, sociology, psychiatry and neuroscience led to the development of a new logo, vision and values. It also led to the remodelling of the school day, the week and the year to increase the things that were held dear – learning time for the children and professional development time for the staff, which included clinical supervision – a replenishing and nurturing process of checking in rather than checking up.

The number of fixed-term exclusions and restrictive physical interventions were reduced through finding alternative solutions, one of which led to the school being the first in the country to embrace a new programme designed to regulate emotional states and behaviour. Staff started to generate interest and develop credibility more widely by achieving bronze, silver and gold awards in Attachment and Trauma-Sensitive practices Award scheme.

With these psychological safety measures being developed, leaders were free from perceived cultural constraint and began to address their response to racism, with the knowledge that previous work had simply not been good enough. They felt the need to strengthen foundations so that they could be brave enough to tackle the injustices they were seeing before them – possibly those they had chosen not to address before.

The story

Defining identity and changing language to provide inclusion safety

Following the period of cultural change within the school, together with the external impacts on the school community, leaders established that there was a need to define Haywood Grove's identity more carefully, to provide clarity for the school and wider community. A more effective explanation of how Haywood Grove works was needed to increase understanding, especially for families joining the community who sometimes perceived

the school either to be a “magic bullet” or “touchy-feely and soft”. Leaders identified a commonality in the diverse pupil cohort (their experience of toxic stress) and moved from describing themselves as non-punitive to inclusive, therapeutic, and attachment- and trauma-responsive, emphasising the power of relationships in supporting the children to reach their potential.

Changing policy to provide inclusion safety

The headteacher, other leaders and governors reviewed the Behaviour and Relationships Policy and the school’s vision and values, ensuring that they reflected the change in emphasised language use and that the associated training reflected the diversity they wanted to see in the workforce and in staff perspectives. In training, they continued to use Rita Pierson’s TED Talk, “Every kid needs a champion” (a school tradition over years), and added further reflective media from Kent Hoffman’s TED Talk, “Every Person has Infinite Worth”. In this he describes how no person is worth more than any other person and defines evil as the view that some people are worth more than other people. He asks the viewer to imagine and reflect upon a world where this idea is institutionalised – so few words with such a profound impact!

Communicating thinking – learner and collaboration safety

And so, underpinned by deep thinking and reflection, the school’s anti-racist work began in earnest in a formal capacity. The headteacher wrote a letter to parents and carers, expressing leaders’ anti-racist intentions. This was also shared with colleagues, who were encouraged to provide feedback and to advise of any changes that they would like to see. This work was extended beyond just children, with staff, parents and carers surveyed and invited to share their families’ heritage and beliefs. There was a sense that engagement from parents would be hard to secure, and so it was encouraging to receive a response rate of over 40% from them.

Collaborative and creative recruitment and progression – learner and collaboration safety

Leaders wanted to celebrate the school’s unique identity and share this, with greater clarity, to attract suitable candidates to make the workforce at all levels more skilled and more diverse. A diverse workforce was fundamental to success. It would provide the innovation and creativity necessary to work effectively with children with increasingly complex needs, as well as being representative of wider society. Leaders wanted a workforce with complementary rather than identical skill sets, so that they could build and sustain a dynamic and effective team that would continually challenge the status quo. To achieve this, recruitment and retention practice and strategy were reviewed. This included a review of advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and appointment, as well as a review of induction, progression and succession. This was undertaken to ensure that the school was

promoting its commitment to being a trauma-informed, inclusive and equitable workplace, and attracting candidates to form part of a "blended family".

Hiring for culture was considered, as long as it wasn't going to be limiting or based exclusively on character, personality, or obvious and immediate "fitting in". Through long and involved discussions, leaders developed the use of what can be described as a kaleidoscopic lens to examine candidates' strengths and weaknesses, viewing information from a range of perspectives to determine suitability, and avoiding stereotypical thinking, bias and snapshot judgement.

Shortlisting and interviewing were undertaken collaboratively, by a range of colleagues fulfilling a range of roles, as a means of professional development and to seek different and sometimes opposing perspectives. The format of each interview differed according to position, and tasks were set to enable cross-candidate evaluation to reduce the risk of internal bias.

Leaders recognised that some of the school's most accomplished workers did not have an academic background and, therefore, did not command salaries that would mean that they would stay for a long time. Experience had taught the senior team that some essential skills can't be measured by certification. Therefore, according to school need, leaders created a career structure for the support staff, providing room for growth and professional development, in addition to spending time spotting talent to extend capacity. For example, they began to train teaching assistants as teachers.

The more leaders considered how to attract and retain a diverse and effective workforce, the more they recognised the significance of ensuring that the process of recruitment was collaborative and undertaken following the trauma-informed principles of safety, choice, collaboration, trust and empowerment. As such, staff were trialled for a day or a week to determine reciprocal suitability and to provide time to evidence practice exemplifying theory. Feedback was then sought, both from candidates and from colleagues.

Volunteers were actively sought, based on previous success of developing unpaid workers. Leaders became committed to finding suitable candidates through informal sources, with consistent success. It is now not uncommon for colleagues to proactively encourage their friends and families to consider working with the school when there is an opening.

To help with this process, leaders surveyed current staff, asking them what it was about Haywood Grove that attracted them to want to work at the school. Whilst some responses were unsurprising, such as location or hours, the most frequent response was about feeling welcome, right from the very start, as well as the flexibility afforded to understanding individual and personal circumstance, preference and potential growth.

This was heartening. It confirmed the importance of strong relationships, visible to all, and how apparent the ethos of inclusivity is to new starters. Colleagues talked about how

accepted they felt in the very first instance, an indicator of a sense of belonging and a key component of psychological safety.

Professional development and accountability – challenge safety

Having made appointments, leaders recognised that there was a need to ensure that they had the capacity to invest time in and afford intellectual space to staff. This would foster their learning in exchange for their willingness and strong commitment to learn, and for an openness to give and receive feedback. There was a desire to help colleagues better translate an appealing theory into workable and effective practice on a more consistent basis.

Leaders focused on ensuring everyone felt valued for their contributions, being mindful of Maya Angelou's words: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel". A staffing structure was devised, which built in the capacity to provide additional mentoring and in-class coaching support from an assistant head. The Helping Hands Curriculum was revised by the head and deputy head, to incorporate a discrete staff curriculum, providing "head and heart" training that included focused wellbeing sessions. Training times were remodelled to protect the integrity of clinical supervision. The development of a robust meeting cycle provided regular intellectual space for discussion, monitoring and feedback, facilitating opportunities to build trust and have honest, open and humane dialogue. Leaders ensured that capability procedures were sensitive, clear and kind, in keeping with trauma-informed practices.

First discussions about race

The school community started its conversations about race through the familiar context of trauma, providing training for all colleagues about racial trauma and discrimination, encouraging thinking about how schools could show respect and celebrate difference and diversity. When this was received positively, with colleagues thinking hard about implementing policy, staff were invited to contribute to the development of a formal policy that would provide a set of principles that would govern the school's responses to racist language. The preparation by leaders for this initial piece of work was extensive. The headteacher undertook some specific training, scoured existing research, engaged HfL's Racial Equality Officer, undertook some coaching on this theme, and underwent what can only be described as a soul-searching exercise. This culminated in the development of a draft document used as a scaffold for discussion.

Leaders were determined that the strategy to engage staff would, in the first instance, be invitational. The response to this verbal call was very limited, with only one colleague offering their time and support. However, on the day of the meeting, despite the limited

initial response, 17 colleagues attended, and a further seven wrote down their thoughts following clinical supervision, subsequently sharing these in person.

The headteacher led the meeting, modelling reflection on her personal journey to a different way of thinking, with the hope that this would support colleagues to feel more at ease in uncomfortable territory. Discussion was nevertheless somewhat stilted, and so the second meeting was organised in class family group clusters, to provide smaller and safer forums for dialogue and debate. This was significantly more fruitful and led to the collaborative development of a policy that felt right for the setting. To maintain momentum, a further session for all staff was organised, this time led by a member of the support staff who had turned the words into a professional document with universal appeal.

Collectively, staff didn't want to leave it there. Their work and thinking were gathering pace. The word "Welcome" – used by staff to explain how they had felt when they first started at the school – resonated strongly with leaders; and an unqualified teaching colleague with a talent for the arts found an acrostic version of the word, which was subsequently incorporated into the school's ethos statement: When you Enter this Loving school, Consider yourself One Member of our Extraordinary family. It was then used as the "One Kind Word" theme for Anti-bullying Week, which encompassed celebratory activities associated with diversity – Everyone Welcome.

This seemingly innocuous but important word was also helpful in an alternative context as part of the school family mantra: "Racism isn't welcome here".

Distribution of leadership

Leaders liken Haywood Grove to a family – albeit, at times, an imperfect family – with each member committed to the same cause, working together in pursuit of meaningful contribution. It is a trauma-informed organisation that prioritises humanising systems that make people healthier and more connected, able to do their best and do their best work.

Towards this end, leaders have distributed leadership more widely, increasing collaboration within the school's distinctive culture so that work is more sustainable and not dependent on only a small handful of people. There is greater provision to bring together ideas towards best practice. More staff make more of a difference and are able to contribute more to the development of the school culture, curriculum and the school's teaching and learning practices. For example, creating a 52-week capacity, by diversifying some of the support roles, provides additional capacity to support families and vulnerable children who need greater access to provision during school holidays. Additional roles, such as play therapists, a dedicated SENCo and a SENCo assistant, add value to the school's therapeutic expertise. Curriculum champions mentor trainee teachers and have

undertaken an internal review of the curriculum through an anti-racist lens. These changes have enabled leaders to start to normalise the expectation that everyone can lead and contribute, which has been vital and will continue to be as the school further develops its anti-racist work. People believe that they will be listened to and that they will be given opportunities for development that are both professional and personal.

Impact

When you start on the journey of becoming an anti-racist school, you start to wonder why you hadn't done it earlier, and at the same time realise that it is a life's work. For Haywood Grove, within the context of the school's distinctive culture, it has felt to leaders like the most natural thing to do, and the impact of some of the actions taken indicate that that the school culture provides a solid springboard for sustainable change. The school now has a staff body that is representative of modern Britain, with 46% of staff from a BAME background and, interestingly, 40% male. This is very unusual for a primary school and so encouraging, especially for the cohort of children. Prospective parents have commented on the advantages of having a staff team with such diversity and, as new staff come on board, they will sometimes voice their satisfaction at seeing people "like me" on the team. There is a recognition that there will be room for growth and development. Staff want to come to work.

Leaders have always thought very carefully about the language that they use to and about the children, and with each other, knowing that: "The way we talk to children becomes their inner voice". The re-energised focus on inclusivity and becoming trauma-responsive has galvanised the staff team in a way that leaders did not envision. The team has become increasingly confident to give and generate ideas and, slowly, colleagues are learning that it is okay to speak up. Addressing concerns about practice has become less stressful, from the perspective of leaders delivering the messages, but also of those who have found that they have been unsuited to the demands of the role. There has been a diminishing sense of failure, and an elevated recognition and ability to reflect that it is okay that the work is not for them.

The foundations laid down as a base from which to grow anti-racist practice are solid, and the work undertaken has been collaboratively formed and proactively engaged with. Leaders have established an ongoing programme of training and will use the Anti-Racist School Award as a scaffold for learning and development.

Distributing leadership has meant that some changes have been implemented rapidly. Staff have reviewed the curriculum internally, and visiting cultural groups have provided children with a greater appreciation of diversity as part of their curriculum experience.

Global Citizenship, as a discrete subject, has been included as an enriching addition to the academic curriculum. Global perspectives are discussed and presented as part of developing children's understanding of current world concerns, including the impacts of climate, environment, and social challenges. Global perspectives are viewed as essential to the curriculum offer, to support children's appreciation of the broader diversity of our planet and our roles and responsibilities.

Reflections and next steps

The school has a long way to go, but it knows its direction of travel. Its work has been underpinned by a psychologically safe culture, and the evidence and strength of this foundation have been tested as the school has moved into unfamiliar territory. There is a widespread commitment to anti-racist values, and staff are working to improve their teaching and learning so that they can challenge racial inequality through curriculum content and open dialogue with children and each other. They have started some preliminary work with the wider community and hope to extend this further, running well-attended focus groups for all members of the school's diverse community. They have commissioned work so that the curriculum is reviewed externally and are committed to regular training for all staff, to keep the conversation going and make this part of everything they do.

This work is not done; but staff are well on the way to broadening horizons for now and for the future.

Catherine Smith and Elizabeth Rixon

EDI AND “TOP DOWN” LEADERSHIP

Saint John Henry Newman School

Focus area

The focus of this case study is on developing an anti-racist culture, through "top down" leadership. The case study focuses on how the establishment of an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) working party is developing an anti-racist culture in the school community.

Rationale

The intention of the working party was to work strategically with groups across the school community, including staff and students, to raise the profile of the EDI agenda and consider how better to represent and respond to the wealth of diversity within and across the school community.

Background context

In the academic year 2021–22, there were 1625 students on roll. 47.07% identified as being of an ethnicity other than White British or White Irish. 25.54% of students speak English as an additional language. This compares with 87.6% of people in Hertfordshire identifying as White and 87.7% in Stevenage (ONS Census 2011, Table KS201EW). It is clear from local statistics that Saint John Henry Newman School (JHN) is more diverse than the immediate catchment from the town.

Over the last 18 months, students have become increasingly aware of the inequalities in society, presented through mainstream and social media. The school has always presented opportunities to address high-profile issues through PSHCE lessons, pastoral sessions and religious education lessons. Despite JHN offering such opportunities, there was a perception amongst the student body that these activities were solely reactive. Students were invited to reflect on, respond to and discuss events of inequality and discrimination in the media, but did not have the opportunity to work proactively in addressing such issues, or to lead on raising awareness and driving change.

The story

This perception of a lack of proactivity was brought to school leaders' attention in spring 2020, when the headteacher received a letter from a group of sixth form students in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. The letter raised questions about how the school responds to, promotes and leads on the issue of diversity, specifically diversity of race and ethnicity within the school community.

Student leadership has always been a strong feature of our school, so this very quickly became a priority; it was vital that the students felt listened to and that their concerns were addressed. In direct response to this letter, the chair of governors charged a group of governors, senior leaders, staff and students to form an EDI working party. Nominations were invited for the post of chair of the EDI working party, and the nominated governor accepted and was formally elected as chair. Nominations were then invited for the post of secretary, and again the nominated governor accepted and was formally elected as secretary. This was the first time that governors, staff and students had worked together in such a way to move this agenda forward, with the intention of making very real change in the school community.

Meeting 1: Formation of the working party and agreed terms of reference

In the summer term of 2020, governors approached an ethnically representative group of teaching staff, senior leaders and students to form the EDI working party. The group consisted of two governors, two senior leaders, six teaching staff and six Year 13 students. As a prerequisite to joining the working party, prospective members were required to read a number of texts purchased for them before the first meeting. These included: *Why I am No Longer Talking to White People about Race*, by Reni Eddo-Lodge, and *How to Argue with a Racist,* by Adam Rutherford.

This group met virtually in July 2020 to decide upon the terms of reference for the group. These were proposed as:

- **to gather information about the approach of the school to equality/diversity and to identify key areas of strength/weakness**
- **to make appropriate recommendations to governors/the SLT, to ensure that equality and diversity is maximised throughout the school's culture, ethos and curriculum**

by:

a. research and reading – identifying an appropriate framework to guide the work, establishing core principles and ensuring the use of appropriate language and terminology

b. identifying key areas of school life that need to be examined further, in the light of an agreed framework and principles

c. considering contributions to the school's development in this area, e.g. external speakers, staff training, specific events

Following the initial meeting, the following terms of reference were agreed:

- **to gather information about the approach of the school to equality/diversity/ inclusivity and to identify key areas of strength/weakness**

- **to make appropriate recommendations to governors/the SLT, to ensure that the school is proactive in combating all forms of racism and that equality, diversity and inclusivity are maximised throughout the school's culture, ethos and curriculum**
- **to monitor, review and revisit the school's approach in this area, as appropriate**

by:

a. research and reading – identifying an appropriate framework to guide the work, establishing our core principles and ensuring the use of appropriate language and terminology

b. identifying key areas of school life that need to be examined further, in the light of our agreed framework and principles

c. considering contributions to the school's development in this area, e.g. external speakers, staff training, specific events

It was clear from the discussion that the working party wanted a focus on *inclusivity* and representation, as well as being visibly proactive in combating all forms of racism, thus becoming an *anti-racist* community.

Meeting 2: Establishing sub-groups

In September 2020 the second virtual meeting of the EDI working party took place. The terms of reference (above) were adopted and approved by all present. The chair of the group then outlined his intentions for the sub-groups, which would report back to the working party. These were proposed as being:

a) Curriculum
A teacher-led group exploring how the curriculum could be expanded, amended and diversified in each of the subject areas. Led by one staff member, this would involve collaborating with subject leaders and identifying additional resources, and then reporting back to the wider group.

b) Language, terminology and attitudes
This second teacher-led group would look at staff and pupil behaviours and use of language and attitudes around issues of race and racism. It would identify what the school does well and possible areas for improvement. The group would devise a proposed code of conduct and a framework to ensure appropriate use of language.

c) Responding to racism/addressing unconscious bias
This group would consider, in light of whatever framework was adopted, how to respond in instances of the framework not being adhered to. This would involve looking at sanctions, considering staff training, and ongoing professional development.

The three working groups were agreed on, and teaching staff and students then volunteered to be part of each of the sub-groups. They were tasked with meeting and formalising an action plan before the next scheduled working party meeting. This presented the opportunity for the EDI agenda to be launched across the school in a whole-school inset session in October 2020. Those students who were members of the working party came into school to work with staff throughout this day. Students led small groups in structured discussion of key questions about where the school was presently in terms of EDI, and their hopes and concerns moving forward. These questions included:

- **How can we ensure the experiences and perspectives of students of colour are heard and acknowledged in our school community?**
- **What can we do to provide a school environment in which students of colour are comfortable to share their experiences and do not feel "othered"?**
- **What barriers are there to meaningful discussions surrounding representation, race and identity?**
- **What can we do in our school community to promote the idea that race is not a "taboo" subject?**

Feedback was collated and shared with the EDI working party. Responses included the following:

How can we ensure the experiences and perspectives of students of colour are heard and acknowledged in our school community?

- Promote diversity which exists within the Catholic faith
- More diverse visual representations of people of colour around the school, e.g. saints
- Avoid generalisation, one person does not represent an entire race!
- Normalise individual differences
- Promote students of colour to be pupil representatives
- Sensitively speaking to students of colour and asking about their cultures and background
- Educate staff on the language to use in the classroom and around the school, e.g. terminology that is suitable, appropriate and inclusive
- Encourage pupil voice – more EDI opportunities for students, e.g. EDI representatives in each year group from across all ethnic groups
- Opportunities for staff to work and plan together, e.g. working group providing an opportunity for voices to be heard

What can we do to provide a school environment in which students of colour are comfortable to share their experiences and not feel "othered"?

- Cultural days – dress, food, owning who you are, opportunity to express and celebrate culture

- Share family experiences/show identity
- Staff wellbeing
- School parliament – diversity of representatives
- Diversity of displays – relating to language, culture, flags, saints
- Avoid tokenistic representations – how do we talk about people and their work and not because of their colour?
- How do we break the barriers of talking about Black issues without being offensive?
- Provide safe/supportive places/people for students to talk with
- Parental engagement to help in understanding diversity and culture
- Audit of school environment – does our environment reflect the diversity within our school?
- Taking the time to learn about people's stories

What barriers are there to meaningful discussions surrounding representation, race and identity?

- Lack of time specifically allocated to this
- How do we diversify the curriculum?
- Lack of knowledge and fear of saying the wrong thing and causing offence
- Knowing the correct language
- How to engage everyone, regardless of ethnicity and culture
- Lack of diversity as a staff
- Parental attitudes and dealing with bias pupils have in their own home/family/community
- Challenge of mispronouncing names
- Ensuring whole-class discussion that doesn't lead to pupils feeling singled out – how can pupils have their voice without feeling singled out?
- Knowing that people interpret things in different ways
- Fear that well-meaning intentions will actually make pupils feel uncomfortable if teachers / other pupils are uneducated about their culture
- Some teachers and pupils preferring to pretend that it's not happening
- Lack of confidence and training for staff

What can we do in our school community to promote the idea that race is not a "taboo" subject?

- Take a whole-school approach
- Set time aside for work to be done in this area
- Celebration of diversity
- Subject areas to include diverse resources looking at opportunities to include and open up conversations about diversity
- Teachers need to feel confident and equipped to lead conversations
- Setting ground rules
- Incorporating diversity into pastoral programmes and PSHCE

Meeting 3: Assigning responsibility for further development

By December 2020, it was clear to the working party that there needed to be coordination of all the new EDI work taking place across the school community, day to day. It was proposed that one of the senior leaders on the working party would take on responsibility for future development of the EDI agenda, and this was undertaken by the assistant headteacher with responsibility for spiritual life. It was also decided that EDI should explicitly feature in the school development plan (SDP), and for the academic year 2021–22 it appears as follows:

Even better if … Aim and intended impact	**Actions**
Aim: to further embed the EDI agenda into all aspects of Catholic life Intended impact: to create a faith experience that reflects the diversity within our school community	• continuation of EDI working party, including recruitment of new staff and student members • implementation of ethos calendar throughout the academic year • sixth form EDI service group to lead on significant dates/events throughout the academic year • the Herts for Learning "Great Representation" programme participation • regular communication of EDI work to whole school

Further to this, there was also formalisation and application of an ethos and awareness calendar, which was approved by the EDI working party and embedded into the school calendar. Alongside the existing liturgical dates, PSHCE themes and awareness days and events, the working party approved a number of EDI-focused days. These include:

- **autumn term 1: Black History Month**
- **autumn term 2: Human Rights Day**
- **spring term 1: Holocaust Memorial Day**
- **spring term 2: Elimination of Racial Discrimination Day**
- **summer term 1: International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia**
- **summer term 2: World Refugee Day**

Meeting 4: Legacy and moving forward

In the spring term of 2021, much of the EDI work was being embedded into school life. The fourth meeting of the working party consisted of updates from the sub-groups and

sharing of CPD and good practice. But, as the end of the academic year came into sight, those involved were reminded that succession planning would be crucial to making further progress. The Year 13 student representatives were focusing on examinations, and it was time to start planning for the recruitment of the next group of students. Applications, hustings, shortlistings and final interviews took place for the incoming student leadership team, and the EDI agenda became much more of a focus in this process, culminating in the chair of the EDI working party being the governor representative in the final interviews with the headteacher and director of sixth form. The school was making it clear that this was still very much a priority for this new student leadership group.

Impact

Meeting 5: Where are we now?

The EDI working party is now firmly established and entering its third year. It has a new team with three new staff members, all of whom have EDI roles within the school (one learning coordinator, an assistant headteacher with responsibility for School Parliament, and the member of staff coordinating the sixth form EDI student leadership team). It is from the sixth form EDI student leadership team that the new student members of the working party have been recruited.

The headteacher recognised the need for the EDI working party, and those working in collaboration with it, to have a formal budget for development. £3,000 was approved for future development.

By the spring term of 2021, and as a result of the work of sub-group C, all employment applications were anonymised, reducing the possibility of any unconscious bias in the recruitment process.

Learning coordinator feedback to the working party indicates that there is a greater awareness of appropriate terminology, an uptake in reporting incidents to learning coordinators or form tutors when pupils perceive offensive or unjust behaviours (EDI WP minutes, Nov 2021), and ongoing work between learning coordinators to ensure a consistent approach in addressing racist attitudes and behaviours.

Much of the work that has evolved as a result of the working party, such as the new (and culturally diverse) form saints, and the ethos calendar, are now part of the fabric of the school. The form saints from the Philippines, Sudan, Poland and South America can now be seen across the homepage banners on the school website, in posters in the corridors and on form boards in every tutor base.

The EDI agenda is firmly rooted in student groups across the school, from the sixth form EDI leadership team to the EDI committee of the School Parliament, which spans Year 7 to

Year 13. Students have the opportunity to share and then feed back on their experiences of what equality, diversity and inclusion looks like for them in school. Most recent feedback echoed that of the learning coordinators with regard to having confidence to report racist behaviour. In one recent informal conversation with the form tutor of a Year 10 Asian pupil, the student shared that, whilst he recognised that there was an increased celebration of Black history, culture and identity in the school, he was yet to see himself reflected within the school.

The committee also has the intention of utilising the library as a hub for EDI discussion and seeking the support of the newly appointed librarian in updating resources to ensure they reflect the diversity of the school community. Finally, one of the three sub-committees is dedicated to working on the celebration of community and contributing to the cultural days of celebration planned for later in the year.

The review process continues in earnest, and the following are currently under review and development:

- **the school code of conduct: the intention that this will be reviewed and rewritten for the September 2022 Year 7 cohort**
- **diversity in recruitment**
- **retention and development of staff of colour**

Reflections

The key question the school has asked is whether its work has addressed the issues raised in the initial student letter. When the student responsible for the letter was asked whether she was happy with the response of the working party, she commented that the issues raised in her initial letter were things that could not be changed overnight, so she was grateful to everyone for the super start. She also stated that she was pleased the working party was working progressively through the points raised. (EDI WP minutes, Dec 2020)

In the recent Great Representation hub group visit, in January 2022, a Year 13 member of the EDI Parliament Committee commented that questions are now being asked and issues of diversity discussed that weren't being addressed when she was lower down the school, and that she was pleased that her younger siblings have the opportunity to engage in this.

The intention was to listen to the concerns of the students and respond in a way that was recognisable to them, yet at the same time the intention is to create a culture where diversity and inclusion is normalised, and where no one sees themselves as being in a distinct or disadvantaged minority.

Next steps

The EDI working party continues to meet regularly, representing governors, senior leaders, staff and students. It will continue to provide a forum for anti-racist discussion in all contexts, including facilitating discussion on curriculum development and asking pertinent questions to ensure the curriculum is fully inclusive of the school's rich culture.

There is also an intention that the work of the EDI working party, and all groups that have arisen as a part of this, are shared and celebrated with the wider community, offering the opportunity for further involvement and growth.

It is planned to focus on supporting pupils from non-White ethnic backgrounds in their further/higher education and career choices, so that all pupils can see their future place in the world. Celebrating the success of all alumni, especially those from non-White ethnic backgrounds, will build on the culture of aspiration and achievement for all pupils, beyond the walls of the Saint John Henry Newman School.

Clive Mathew and Alison Berwick

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT VOICE IN DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

Focus area

The focus of this case study is the power of student voice in supporting an inclusive culture in a diverse school. The students are the life of our school; staff want them to feel safe and supported and part of our community. Leaders also take pride in developing them holistically and giving them the opportunity to express themselves and endorse the school mission. Therefore, their feedback is instrumental in helping the school and society move forward to becoming an anti-racist and fully inclusive environment.

Aims and rationale

Following the death of George Floyd and the rise in publicity surrounding the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, it was clear that the students needed an outlet for their feelings, particularly having been in lockdown in the immediate aftermath of these events. In October 2020 students staged a protest, in and supported by the school, in response to the BLM movement. The students wanted to be heard, and leaders knew that they needed to take steps to allow them the opportunity to express themselves. They realised the importance of listening to the students about their experiences and opinions, and appreciated that their input should become a focus for ensuring all pupils feel included, valued and heard. They were also mindful of the need to educate students about the information obtained from social media pages, to ensure they are fully informed and not exploited by various movements.

Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School strives to be a place where all members of the community are treated fairly and feel included and represented. Staff want students to be critical thinkers, able to evaluate what they see and hear on social media or from others, and to be educated enough to form their own opinions. Staff always encourage students to do what is right and to use their right to protest effectively when they feel they need to. However, they need the skills and knowledge to be able to do this with integrity and purpose.

Background context

The school prides itself on its diversity. The proportion of pupils at Nicholas Breakspear School (NBS) who speak English as an additional language is higher than average, and slightly less than half of the cohort is from a White British background. The school needed to challenge the status quo and address how inclusive it actually was to ensure all pupils feel valued.

On reflection, it became apparent that staff were not always highlighting or addressing the issues important to them. As in most schools in Hertfordshire, recruitment is an issue, especially when trying to recruit colleagues from the Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) community. Limited staff diversity means that students do not always see "people like them", and policies and initiatives are not always fashioned or reviewed by people with their experiences of racial discrimination or inequality.

The story

After the student protests in October 2020, a number of staff made themselves available to groups of pupils who wanted to explain their feelings and the reasons for the protests. It became clear that there were strong opinions amongst the pupils that the school could do more to ensure that policies and actions within the school were fair and proportionate for all members of the school community, and that they promoted an environment of equality.

As a response to the views articulated by students who wished to display their support for BLM, two initiatives took place:

1. a review of policies
2. the establishment of a new student council structure to include equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) representatives

A review of policies

A short-term working party was formed, organised by the headteacher, which consisted of governors, students, parents and teachers, and had a brief to discuss positive ways of increasing representation and understanding of different ethnic groups within NBS. This group fed into changes to the Uniform Policy. Representatives of the staff, pupils, parents and governors gathered virtually for a series of five meetings, to discuss the events of the first half-term, linked to protests at the school over race-related issues within the school.

The discussions were open, direct and fruitful. School policies including uniform, behaviour and the Staff Code of Conduct were reviewed and discussed. A parent wrote up the main findings and passed them to the chair and assistant headteacher (AHT) Catholic Life.

The AHT Catholic Life worked together with the chair of the working party, drawn from the board of governors, and a parent who has expertise in policy making, to redraft the Staff Behaviour Policy, the Pupil Behaviour Policy and the Pupil Uniform Policy. The aim was to reflect the findings of the working party and to ensure that the outcome was a set of documents that reflect the ethos and values of the school community. The final documents were submitted to the senior leadership team (SLT) for consideration and, after that, the documents passed to the deputy headteacher pastoral and relevant sub-committee of the governors for final review.

Behaviour Policy – Derogatory language:

1. It was recognised that students are put into internal exclusion for derogatory comments. The EDI Representatives (students from the new student council structure, see below) suggested that during that time, students should research the reason why any comment is derogatory and give a written apology to the person they offended. The students recognised this did sometimes happen, but that it would be good to explicitly outline it in the policy.

2. There was a strong feeling that sanctions for derogatory comments should be imposed, regardless of what protected characteristic a person might have. For example, a student of colour would not be allowed to use racially based derogatory language, and someone from the LGBTQ+ community would not be allowed to use homophobic slurs. The students acknowledged that the school has zero tolerance of derogatory language and wanted to articulate this fully in the policy.

Uniform Policy – Hair

1. Students recognised that using "natural hair colour" in the policy allowed a wider range of options for White students than for students of colour. They suggested the wording should be "colour from the human hair spectrum". However, feedback from governors and the senior leadership team led to the school adopting a blanket "no hair dye" policy. (This has since been reviewed, in 2022, and now changed because of further student voice input.)

2. The policy states that the shortest hair should be a grade one. However, the EDI Representatives wanted the school to formally recognise that this looks shorter on Afro-Caribbean hair than with European or Asian hair, because of the way the hair lies. They also requested the school look at the wording of the "noticeable steps" regarding hair "fades", because if a student has curly or Afro-Caribbean hair on top, the students felt there would be a more noticeable difference between the top and sides of the hair. This has also now been reviewed and amended.

3. Girls' braids often require clips to manage Afro-Caribbean hair. These are not decorations but essential for maintaining the appearance of the braids. The policy was therefore changed to allow functional clips, but students accepted that these should be black/navy.

4. Facial hair – students requested that the Uniform Policy was amended to specify that boys may have beards but only for genuine religious reasons, for example for Sikhs.

5. EDI Representatives, although acknowledging that these things are allowed, wanted the Uniform Policy to specifically state that religious items are acceptable to wear with the school uniform. Examples include the Muslim hijab, Jewish skullcap, Sikh turban and Hindu Kautuka. They felt that specifically naming these items in the policy

would ensure a feeling of inclusiveness and protect the rights of students from these religions to wear them. This has now been added.

The hair policy was changed in 2021. However, during the autumn term of 2021, it was felt by many in the community that it was still affecting some groups more than others. So in March 2022, after further input from students, staff and parents, the hair policy was once again updated and has become more progressive and accepting of different hair styles and colours, acknowledging the differences in each student's hair. This has been seen as a huge success for the student voice; learners feel that their views have been acknowledged and they have made a real difference to the community.

New student council structure

A permanent, structural change to the student council was organised by the AHT Personal Development for January 2021. In addition to two house representatives per tutor group, a new position was created, called the EDI Representative. There is one EDI Representative from each tutor group in the school, from Years 7 to 13.

EDI Representative meetings were held on a half-termly basis, one year group at a time, in line with COVID-19 restrictions. Staff explained the formal meeting process and the role of the representative, and went through all the protected characteristics with the students.

In July 2021 elections were held for the representatives for the new academic year. Job descriptions were written, including the following for the EDI Representatives.

NICHOLAS BREAKSPEAR CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nurture | Believe | Succeed

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Representative	You will have a passionate belief in making society more equal and fair for everyone. You will be prepared to learn more about people with protected characteristics. You will also be approachable so that students with protected characteristics can tell you of any general concerns (please note all students should always let their tutor know of any personal issues they are facing)	You will attend half termly meetings. You will share your ideas for how students can learn more and understand more about people with protected characteristics. You will help with tasks such as creating presentations, or other learning materials your year group decides to produce.

Quality & Excellence

In Autumn 2021 the EDI Representatives met each half-term. The first meeting was all together (one representative from each tutor group – 36 in total) and was used to introduce the plan for the year. This included choosing one protected characteristic per half-term, and highlighting inspirational people with this characteristic to their peers. The themes were chosen based on events within that half-term. For example:

- **autumn 1 – Black History Month**
- **autumn 2 – International Day of People with Disabilities**
- **spring 2 – International Women's Day**
- **summer 2 – Pride Month**

(Spring 1 will be religious diversity, to celebrate the contribution of people from different religions; and summer 1 will be people of colour, to celebrate all people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.)

For each theme, the EDI Representatives produce presentations celebrating inspirational people within that theme and present them to their tutor groups.

The second meetings of the EDI Representatives (held two year groups at a time) were to further decide some of the themes, as well as to have a discussion about the language used in the school around race. Each year group's representatives discussed the different terms used and their subtle differences, such as BAME, people of colour, and mixed race. They discussed which terms were preferred and which terms they did not think should be used. These results have been collated and discussed by the AHT Personal Development and the headteacher, who will be looking at introducing a language guidance document around race for the staff body.

During each half-term, articles were published in the school newsletter, *NBS Now*, highlighting the work of the EDI Representatives and celebrating the contribution of all people to the community and the wider world. Here is an example from October 2021:

> Black History Month is the time for everybody to be educated on the impact Black people have had on society and the world. Black History Month is a way of remembering important people and events in the history of the African diaspora. We celebrate Black History Month to commemorate the contributions that Black people have done unto the world and to show that their doings have not gone unappreciated.
>
> The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Representatives from each tutor group researched inspirational Black people who have made an impact on society today to express why they are so important. The EDI Representatives have also produced presentations to show to each of their form groups, addressing Black History Month

and the importance of bringing awareness to our whole school community, in order to fulfil the school mission - to build a better world.

The EDI Representatives have also made posters (relating to department areas) which have been creatively designed regarding important Black figures. The EDI Representatives have been very hardworking with their research and are looking forward to sharing it with the rest of the NBS community around the school.

The Catholic Social Teachings teach that human dignity must be protected and a healthy community can be accomplished only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a crucial right to life and a right to those things essential for human decency. This term Bosco House have been presenting assemblies on this theme to the rest of the school. We are also looking forward to the Black History Month assemblies that the Student Leadership Team will be leading in the coming weeks. As the future of this country we should help make each of our voices heard and ensure that, no matter what physical differences we may have, we remember that we are all equal and play an important role in society.

By LM, Year 9

All students are exposed to inspirational people from different protected characteristics through the tutor-time presentations given by the EDI Representatives. The presentations contain the EDI Prayer (written with the EDI Representatives in 2021), details about that half-term's theme (e.g. Black History Month) and why it is important that it is celebrated, and information about the inspirational person chosen by the student themselves. The presentations are designed to expose students to and celebrate key people, and also to spark discussions around the issues faced by different groups of people. The feedback from these sessions has been very positive. One Year 7 form tutor said of their EDI Representative's recent "Inspirational People with Disabilities" presentation, "It was well received and the students talked about disabilities and how they shouldn't stop you from doing what you want to do. Also we talked about visible and non-visible disabilities."

The views displayed by our students have also led to diversity holding a higher status in all elements of school life. For example:

- **Spotlight Series – talks from various people employed in a wide range of careers – carefully chosen to ensure students see a diverse range of people in a variety of roles**
- **student photographs around the school – students need to see other students like themselves celebrated within the community**
- **curriculum – all departments have reviewed their curriculum to ensure diversity**

- **library – consideration is made to ensure a range of authors from diverse backgrounds**
- ***NBS Now* – regular articles regarding the EDI Representatives' work, highlighting issues as well as inspirational people of all backgrounds to our wider school community (parents and governors)**

Impact

Equality, diversity and inclusion, particularly in terms of race, have become a focus entwined in everything done at NBS. Whenever a display is designed, a scheme of learning is written or a policy is reviewed, EDI is at the forefront of decisions, to ensure fairness and representation for all. Equally importantly, students' views are routinely considered and often, if appropriate, students will be consulted on decisions made.

The exposure of students to people from all backgrounds through the tutor-time presentations ensures they are not just living in their own "bubble", or in the predominantly White demographic of the school's location and staff body. Students see people like them in a variety of successful roles and positions, from different careers to sports and in history. Students see that any incidents of racism, or the use of derogatory language against any of the protected characteristics, are dealt with swiftly and with the seriousness the situation requires. Students understand that policies have been reviewed by different parties, with a focus on ensuring fairness and inclusion.

The following are some quotes from current students about the work done within the school since the protests of 2020.

"I feel the school has massively progressed since the protests last year. The school has adapted and changed in one way by adding more diverse books in the library like both Black and White authors."

"I feel the work of the EDI Representatives has changed the school and it has helped students become aware of some of the problems society faces."

"I think we have done a lot to stop racism in the school and all the students have a good understanding of what racism is and why it's a horrible thing to go through and that there would be severe punishments."

"I think the EDI Representatives are making an impact in the community because when we are doing the presentations in form time, we are raising awareness about all of the things that might not be well known, for example when we do a presentation on racism it will raise awareness and people could be inspired by it."

"Since October when the EDI Reps did their presentations on Black History Month, I had recognised that a lot of younger people have realised that its important."

"As an EDI Rep I hope that my job will make an impact on the school as I slowly work and strive to do better."

These quotes show that the students appreciate the work done by the school in listening more to them, but most importantly the involvement of the students themselves in continuing the conversation and raising awareness of these issues in the school community.

Students now feel empowered to speak up against racist behaviour, knowing that they will be listened to and that the behaviour will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

Reflections

Students want to be heard, want to see people like them, and want to have fair policies that allow them all to feel that they are being treated as equals. Student voice has helped to teach adults to view things from others' perspectives, and consider other people's experiences and the importance of representation in all aspects of school life.

The work of the EDI Representatives has made a real difference to the whole school community. The raising of awareness has been extremely important in ensuring students feel represented and can see inspirational people like them being successful in the world around them.

An important lesson learned throughout the course of this action is the influence that social media has on students, particularly when it comes to race. Social media was responsible for both the actions that led to and the encouragement of the protests within the school. It was also subsequently used in a negative way against students involved, which, thanks to other students' using their voices, staff were able to deal with effectively. Leaders have since used these protests as a spark for positive change; however, social

media can still cause issues and tension between pupils. It is the responsibility of the staff to teach students to be critical thinkers, to evaluate what they see and hear, and to be able to form their own opinions. The work of the EDI Representatives is going a long way in raising awareness of and celebrating the differences between us all; however, leaders are aware that there is still a lot of work to do in this area.

Next steps

The work of the EDI Representatives, although successful so far, could be developed to further raise awareness within the community of people with protected characteristics. Staff would like the EDI Representatives to lead group discussions around racism or homophobia. A noticeboard will be given over to equality, diversity and inclusion, and the EDI Representatives will be responsible for finding or designing posters, articles and other pieces of information for the school community to see.

Staff will also develop the EDI Representative meetings to use the students' input to plan and implement the celebration of some of the main events celebrating diversity across the year. For example, an NBS Culture Party has been suggested, allowing students to share aspects of their heritage with the community, to include music, fashion and food.

The headteacher and AHT Personal Development are planning a staff inset day on diversity for October 2022. They will be inviting members of the student body to be part of this inset, placing them at the centre of what the school community does, and for them to realise the passion the staff have to always strive for better representation and awareness in the school. Leaders will also introduce to staff the common language around race that the EDI Representatives helped to influence.

A wall within the school building has been allocated as the NBS Community Wall, where leaders will be placing pictures of a wide range of students from the school, to represent and celebrate the diversity of the school community.

To help improve the diversity of the staff body, the wording of job advertisements has been changed to include phrasing encouraging those from a diverse background to apply. Leaders will also be using the BAMEEd network to help publicise that the school is open to candidates from all races and ethnicities, to encourage diversity in the profession. Leaders know there is a long way to go to ensure that students are represented across the staff; however, by taking these first steps, they hope to start moving forward in this endeavour.

In conclusion, the protests of the students in October 2020 were a catalyst for positive change within the school. Listening to the students and acknowledging the importance of their voices is now helping to ensure that Nicholas Breakspear keeps striving to be an anti-racist, inclusive and fair environment for every member of our community.

"Empowered by the presence of God and each other,
we nurture our unique gifts to build a better world.

This is our NBS Community."

Liz Hunt and Declan Linnane

TOWARDS BECOMING AN ANTI-RACIST SCHOOL

Marriotts School

Focus area

Marriotts School is committed to improving representation of people of colour – both staff and students. This case study tracks the key strategies put in place to begin to create an anti-racist culture. All Marriotts students should feel supported, represented and celebrated. The project focused on building understanding of all members of the school community, building representation and voice, and building leadership capacity to drive this culture forward.

Aims and rationale

Marriotts is a "harmonious community" (Ofsted 2016) with a well-embedded ethos of kindness. Data suggested that incidents of racism were rare in the school. Three key issues, however, led school leaders to review practice and re-evaluate the "status quo":

Year on year, a small cohort of Black African students leave the school at 16 to attend a local Catholic school for sixth form. Ostensibly, this is due to family preference for a school of religious character. Exit interviews, though, revealed that some students did not always feel adequately "seen" or represented in Marriotts' predominantly White British school community, and this motivated them to apply for the Catholic school.

In the summer term of 2020–21, a group of girls went to speak to a teacher of colour, deeply upset about an incident of racism. They felt this had not been taken seriously enough or adequately addressed. They felt more comfortable raising this with a teacher of colour. This was then brought to the headteacher. Further discussion between the girls and the headteacher revealed that, on occasion, incidents of the use of racist language were being dealt with informally and inadequately by staff members. Students rightly felt that staff required further training.

In addition, following lockdowns, the school began to see a slight increase in incidents of racism in school. The emergence of these issues coincided with the first anniversary of George Floyd's murder. Leaders recognised that they had not yet done enough to develop a coherent and planned approach to tackling racism. Leaders agreed that a whole-school approach was required. Further work was needed to educate students, staff and families around this issue.

The first aim was to develop capacity and drive for change by creating a personal development (PD) leadership team. This was made up of key members of the senior leadership team (SLT) and strengthened with the appointment of an anti-racist school advocate. The PD leadership team, together with the advocate and the headteacher, would work to develop the school's equality and diversity strategy and action plan.

The second aim was to develop a common understanding of the issues that students and staff of colour were experiencing. The school needed to ensure that these students felt understood, supported and heard. Leaders took a proactive approach to this:

- **hearing from and educating students (assemblies, PD curriculum and PD strategy)**
- **training staff (inset time)**
- **communicating with the whole community about the commitment to being an anti-racist school (displays; and parental, student and staff messaging)**
- **implementing more robust systems for tackling incidents of racism that were understood by all**

The third aim focused on leaders seeking to provide a school experience that was inclusive and representative of all students through the taught and wider curriculum. Student leadership opportunities were created to ensure that all members of the school community feel supported, represented and celebrated.

Background context

Marriotts is a very large, mixed, non-selective comprehensive school in Stevenage. In the latest inspection data summary report (IDSR), the percentage of disadvantaged students was in quintile 2 and SEND students in quintile 1. The school serves a complex community and, whilst the overall school deprivation indicator is in quintile 3 and broadly average, many students come from the most deprived wards in the county.

Marriotts was given notice to improve by Ofsted in 2012. Over the last nine years, under new leadership, the school has been on a journey of improvement from a very low base. In October 2016, the school was judged to be good and, following a reinspection in November 2021, remains good in all areas.

Marriotts' inclusive culture provides excellent conditions for all students to thrive and achieve, regardless of their needs or abilities. The school's ethos is driven by its student mission: Aim High, Work Hard, Be Kind. Differences are respected, recognised and valued. Diversity is seen as a strength, and stereotyping and prejudices are actively challenged.

The school roll represents the diversity in the local area. The school has 15 of 17 possible ethnic groups represented. This is higher than average. The predominate ethnic group is White British (75% of students). Students of colour achieve and progress well (A8 54.19 and P8 +0.7 in 2021) and enjoy coming to school (their attendance is above national average).

Prior to launching this project, the anti-racism agenda was addressed through the PD curriculum. The approach was not sufficiently coherent or thorough. Racism was not

addressed with adequate depth. Issues were raised, but little time was given to exploring the impact on individuals and society. There was a need to overhaul the PD curriculum, audit faculty curricula and revisit the equality and diversity strategy.

Racist bullying incidents, as shown in logs, were relatively low in number. This masked the true picture. On occasion, "jokes" and stereotyping were being dealt with informally by staff, rather than being appropriately escalated. Racist incidents were followed up by year leaders, rather than escalated to the headteacher. Not enough attention was given to tracking the issues. Staff training around this agenda was therefore not fit for purpose.

Representation of students of colour was ad hoc and often limited to Black History Month. Forums and societies for students of colour did not exist. During lockdown, at a national level there was far more circulation of racist material via social media. This led to further incidents coming into school.

The story

Stage 1 – Uncovering the "ground" truth

In the summer term of 2021, the headteacher received an email from a teacher of colour stating that a group of girls in Year 9 had approached her to disclose their concerns. A group of White male students in the year group had made a Black power sign, with intent to mock. This had been addressed by the head of year. The girls felt that this incident had been brushed under the carpet.

The headteacher then met with the group of girls at length on two occasions. The girls disclosed several concerns about racism in the year group and about staff responses to this. Issues included:

- **social media comments stating that "we shouldn't be talking about Black Lives Matter because all lives matter"**
- **a comment stating that Muslims are terrorists**
- **a comment stating that Black people crave attention and are more likely to be criminals**
- **repetition of the N-word, quoting song lyrics and feeling that this was acceptable**
- **comments made about students' hair**

Students felt that the fact that some of these incidents had been dealt with through use of detentions sent the wrong message to the student body – racism should not be treated as simply a behaviour issue. Students felt that, when they tried to address these issues, other

students became defensive, stating they were not racist and tried to "make out that they are the victims". The students were also experiencing microaggressions for speaking up. Following this meeting, certain incidents were reinvestigated, leading to exclusions and parental meetings.

Stage 2 – Building understanding

The headteacher then worked with the students and the member of staff who had brought this matter to her attention, to create a series of extended assemblies and staff training sessions. Assemblies were delivered the following week. During the assemblies, the headteacher acknowledged to all year groups that there were incidents of racism occurring at Marriotts. It was acknowledged that more needed to be done to address this matter. The Black Lives Matter movement was explained and the "all lives matter" misconception addressed head on. The assembly used several video clips selected by the students to unpack this issue.

One particular video clip was shown, focusing on how to tell someone that something they said sounded racist: www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0Ti-gkJiXc. The assembly then explored the theme of "It's not about who you are, it's about what you said or did". When challenging incidents of racism, students were urged not to accuse someone of being racist, but of having done or said something that sounded racist. Scripts were provided to aid such conversations.

Finally, clear messages were given about the fact that racism would not be tolerated and that all incidents of racism would now be dealt with directly by the headteacher. Significant sanctions would be in place, as outlined in the behaviour policy, and this would be carefully tracked. Reporting mechanisms and follow-up procedures were explained. An appeal was made to all students to act as allies and to raise issues as they occurred. A "report a concern" button was added to the school's website.

Following these assemblies, several disclosures from other year groups were shared and addressed. Student and staff responses to the assemblies were positive. The directness with which this matter was addressed was appreciated. There were some negative responses from a small number of students and parents, and this was tackled through 3Rs (reflect, resolve, reconcile) meetings and parental meetings.

In tandem with these assemblies, at a training session, staff discussed and agreed on how to handle incidents of racism; how to escalate them; and how they would be dealt with, recorded and reported. Core messages from the assembly were then shared with all parents and with governors, to ensure renewed procedures were understood by all key stakeholders.

Alongside this work, the sixth form team met with a small number of students of colour in Year 11 to find out their reasons for moving to other sixth form provisions. Their experiences echoed those of the students in Year 9. They also felt that representation of people of colour in the curriculum was limited to Black History Month or in reaction to news stories. This then led to a re-evaluation of the curriculum.

Stage 3 – Building leadership and management capacity to drive change

To ensure that the school had appropriate drive for the strategy, the senior team first aimed to build capacity in leadership and management, to drive the change across the school. Leaders advertised internally for and appointed an anti-racist school advocate. The advocate works with senior leaders in the development of whole-school policy, protocols and provision. They are a champion of equal opportunities and anti-racism and a visible contact for students and staff. They also support the running of working groups and student committees.

Leaders felt it was important for this role to be held by a person of colour, to bring integrity and lived experience to the role. Through the recruitment process, it was important to reassure applicants that the school's response to race inequity would not be tokenistic and that there was a real commitment to change. The role of the advocate is to highlight issues to leadership; the responsibility to resolve these issues remains that of the leadership team.

In order to drive the wider development of the equality and diversity strategy across the school, a PD leadership team was established. This is made up of key members of SLT and the middle leadership team. The first task of the team was to evaluate current provision and then formulate a strategic action plan.

Stage 4 – Re-evaluating the curriculum

Although Ofsted recognised in 2016 that "The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding", the development of the PD curriculum is an evolving process that is reactive to changing local and national contexts. The school's PD provision forms part of the wider curriculum. It enhances students' character, wellbeing, social interactions, interests, wider skills, confidence and resilience, and permeates across the school. It exists in the everyday interactions that students experience around the school.

Due to the breadth of the PD curriculum, leaders needed to implement a tighter framework. They established "The Marriotts 6 pillars of personal development", of which equality and diversity is a key strand. Central to this pillar is developing a common understanding of diversity in the school, local and national communities, and understanding the benefits that this brings to all. The school's anti-racist strategy sits within this strand.

Once the framework was in place, heads of subjects conducted a full faculty curriculum audit to assess and address curriculum coverage of each of the six pillars in their areas. They then used this to redevelop the taught personal development curriculum. This underpins personal development lessons, form time and assemblies. This has created a common approach to PD across the curriculum.

As a result of the audit, the school now:

- has a greater diversity of texts from writers of colour signposted and studied in English lessons
- has a unit on the American civil rights movement in history lessons
- delivers regular assemblies and form times focusing on lived experiences and how to actively challenge racism

Stage 5 – Representation and celebration

To ensure that students of colour felt represented and celebrated, leaders created several opportunities for students to come together, be heard and be seen. They launched a student anti-racism committee, which focused on encouraging diversity and put initiatives in place to make the school a safe place for everyone, irrespective of race.

The sixth form members of the committee have led its Black History Month assemblies and form-time activities, which are now much more comprehensive. They are supporting work towards achieving the anti-racist school award. The committee has also supported the development of the "Lifeskills curriculum" and is helping leaders to develop representation across the whole curriculum.

The group is led by one of the senior student team, supported by a member of the SLT. They chair the group, lead decisive action and ensure that people of colour have an active voice in the school community. Using student leaders ensures that the student voice is not filtered and diluted.

Impact

Aim 1: The PD leadership team has been established and is implementing the equality and diversity strategy. The anti-racist school advocate has added significant capacity, and he states, "I really feel I can make a difference in this role and have an impact across the school."

Aim 2: Significant work has taken place to build understanding and tackle racism. The most telling evidence of impact is what Marriotts' students of colour have to say regarding being a student at Marriotts:

> **"I feel the school has changed its way of educating students about racism. It is now tackling casual racism that is prevalent in today's society much more head on. Students are now prompted and encouraged to talk to staff about issues around race and these are taken seriously. This is a marked change from my experiences as a younger student."**
>
> **Year 13 Student**

> **"Although I have experienced racism outside of school with my parents, I haven't in school. Marriotts always feels safe."**
>
> **Year 8 Student**

> **"I really enjoy coming to Marriotts as a guest student. I feel much safer in the school community."**
>
> **Year 12 guest student**

This has been further echoed by the fact that reports of racism are now relatively rare (five to date in 2020–21 and 2021–22) and are dealt with swiftly by the headteacher. This year the number of students of colour in the sixth form is at a record high – an increase from 12 in Year 13 to 29 in Year 12, including several students who have returned to the school after attending other provisions. They are an active voice for change in our school community and speak highly of the ethos of the school.

There are high expectations for positive social behaviours within the Marriotts community, and a harmonious approach is always sought, enabling students from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds to socialise and work together. Visitors to the school recognise this: "A culture of mutual respect is palpable across the school. The

value of tolerance permeates all aspects of school life, creating a harmonious and inclusive community" (Ofsted 2016). In November 2021, Ofsted stated, "The school has been innovative in valuing and supporting pupils with protected characteristics" and "They [the pupils] value difference".

Aim 3: Students report that the school is beginning to have impact on improving representation across the curriculum and wider curriculum.

> **"Marriotts has most certainly improved on the way they deal with racism since I have been here (since Year 7). They aim to educate their students on racism and respecting people's cultures in form time and life skills lessons. Some constructive criticism was given towards the Black History Month response last year and they definitely took on board what the students had to say and this year the school allowed us to get much more involved in creating and presenting assemblies etc. Committees have been set up to help the students get much more involved in social issues. In the future I think it is important for the school to continue these practices and educate students even more on racism. The school has made me feel very comfortable in expressing who I am as a person and my culture by creating safe spaces like committees, expressing that racism is totally unacceptable and by allowing me to create presentations for the school and sixth form."**
>
> **Year 12 student**

This was echoed in the recent Ofsted inspection. The report stated, "Sixth-form students have been instrumental in establishing committees to raise awareness of difference. They help support pupils and give them a place to talk and discuss. Pupils say this has helped improve their self-esteem."

Reflections

The school stance on anti-racism is now clearly established and understood by all. Teachers and staff understand how to deal with issues, and the issues are appropriately escalated to the headteacher. Careful records of incidents are kept. Messages are consistently drip-fed through to the student body. Ongoing work is calendared to drive this work forward.

The school has launched a forum for students of colour to provide a safe space to talk about any issues of concern. This is led by a teacher advocate and ally and supported by staff members of colour.

Representation has increased across the curriculum and the wider school. A staff working party and student committee are completing an anti-racism curriculum audit. They are working to establish an anti-racism charter and policy, outlining what is acceptable and unacceptable language and how use of inappropriate language will be challenged.

Next steps

There is still much to do to build Marriotts' anti-racist culture. The school will continue to reinforce messages through assembles and the form-time cycle, using outside speakers and student and staff representatives. The student and staff committees will work to achieve the anti-racist school award from Leeds Becket University. Working towards this award will continue to inform and drive developments across the school.

Faculty leaders will continue to work with the PD leadership team to develop faculty and wider curricula. The staff forum will share experiences of colleagues of colour and build staff voice around this agenda. The school is seeking to recruit a more diverse governing body to support leaders in this area of their work.

Marriotts School is only at the start of this process, and leaders acknowledge that this must remain a key focus of all members of the school. Staff want to work together to ensure that no students or members of the community ever experience a lack of school support when sharing their experiences of racism.

Marriotts' vision is for "every single student to reach and exceed their potential and leave us with the qualifications, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they need to move on to the next stage of their lives". If the school is to equip students to take their next steps, then they must be equipped to be allies of the anti-racist agenda.

Bethany Honnor and Jennifer Leach

A MULTI-LAYERED SOLUTION TO THE COMPLEX PROBLEM OF LACK OF BELONGING AMONG BAME STUDENTS

Hockerill Anglo-European College

Focus area

This case study describes how leaders at Hockerill Anglo-European College have worked to create an ethos of inclusion and a sense of belonging amongst its students, ensuring that those students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds feel fully integrated, and that students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds mix with each other with ease. This has involved training all staff so that they are aware of the issues, and working with them to improve understanding of the very complex issues surrounding ethnicity in the UK.

Aims and rationale

The major aim was to foster in all the students a sense of happiness with their identity, and to encourage all students to enrich and enhance their own identity and their experience of college life by embracing and celebrating difference. Staff have worked to understand the barriers to this, and to develop strategies to help students overcome impediments to their full and meaningful integration. The main areas of work were firstly around decolonising and developing the history curriculum; secondly, connecting BAME students more strongly with the culture of the school; and thirdly, engaging the students around the issue of self-segregation.

The background to this work was the increasing awareness of how prevalent racism is in the UK. Since the death of George Floyd in the USA, problems much closer to home have emerged, highlighting levels of racism in society and in UK institutions. Issues surrounding the UK's involvement in the slave trade have also highlighted how the effects of the past still live on in the present. It was essential that the school faced these issues and came up with strategies to deal effectively with them.

Background context

Hockerill School was a co-educational boarding school from 1980 until the mid 1990s, when it became Hockerill Anglo-European School. In 1998 the then principal transformed the school into Hockerill Anglo-European College and established a sixth form for the first time. This was a radical transformation because the sixth form offered only the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. The school also became one of the country's first specialist language colleges and, because of the UK's membership of the European Union, the school started to attract a wide variety of nationalities into its student body. The number of BAME students slowly increased, but there was rarely any focus on meeting the needs of those students specifically. Despite a considerable number of

BAME students holding leadership positions such as head boy, house captain and prefect, feelings of alienation among these early cohorts were reported by alumni years later, when the college actively engaged in discussions with them (in 2020). The school existed, and to a large extent still exists, in a traditional White middle-class area, from which it draws the majority of its day students. Among the boarding community there has been an increase in numbers of BAME students, and this has expedited the school's improvement journey.

It gradually became evident that there were four main problems. There was a lack of understanding on the part of the adults about the background and culture of the BAME students, who did not see themselves reflected in the school's leadership structure. Secondly, this was also evident in the school's curriculum, which was quite traditional in key stages 3 and 4, with a somewhat more outward-looking approach in key stage 5 in the spirit of the IB diploma. The third problem was that there was a disconnect between the BAME community and the culture of the school. The fourth problem grew out of the first three, because alienation from the school's culture led the BAME students to effectively self-segregate, despite the college having an extremely international and multicultural community. It was these four problems – lack of staff understanding, lack of representation in the curriculum, alienation from the school's culture and the obvious self-segregation among BAME students – that the school faced in May 2020 when George Floyd was brutally murdered and the Black Lives Matter movement, founded in 2013 after the murder of Trayvon Martin, became prominent worldwide. This, and the increasing awareness of racism in the UK, triggered the start of our self-analysis and journey forward.

The story

Problem No 1: Lack of staff understanding

At the start of the school's journey, there was no overt racism among the adults working at the school. However, once staff started to unpick attitudes, customs and regulations, it soon became apparent that racist attitudes were implicit just below the surface. An example of this is the rules and regulations surrounding the hair of members of the BAME community. Ever since Black Africans were shipped from the slave forts of West Africa, like the one at Elmina in Ghana, the White slave traders removed the identity of their slaves by shaving their heads. The White slave owners continued this control by regulating hairstyles, stipulating that hair be covered or shaving the heads of their female slaves. Upon reflection, leaders realised that they were doing something similar with the rules that forbade traditional Black hairstyles and insisting on the BAME community wearing their hair in traditional British ways. Staff meetings raised these issues, and the school rules and regulations about hair were changed to allow the BAME community to express their identity through hairstyles that reflected their ethnic roots. Staff training raised these and

many other issues, and now, every year, new staff go through an induction process that raises issues of implicit racism and addresses them head on.

Problem No 2: The curriculum

In 2017 the school had already embarked on a process of decolonising the curriculum. There was a complete review of the history syllabus, wherein Year 7 teachers replaced the UK-centric material with a comparative study of ancient civilisations, to include India, China, Egypt and Central America. This was followed by a "Migration Through Time" unit, looking at the experiences of refugees. A Year 8 unit on "The Empire and the Slave Trade" has been revamped and updated to include real-world issues, including debating the Rhodes Must Fall movement.

In Year 9 a post-1945 unit has been introduced, which covers social history, answering the question, "How did the world become the world?" This asks searching questions about the role of people of colour as exploited labour in creating the world as it is today, with all its inequalities. A major aspect of this particular unit is that students choose their area of investigation, which goes a long way towards making ethnic minority students feel ownership of learning and that their history is valid too.

In key stage 3 science, emphasis has been placed on recognising and celebrating the work of BAME scientists. There are graphics on display. The library has played a key role in fostering curriculum innovation, ensuring that all faculty heads regularly undertake an audit of stock, updating it with more relevant titles so that all students feel that the library reflect their interests.

A special programme has been created for Years 10 and 11. This programme is built around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and focuses on creativity, activity, service and enrichment (CASE). Presentations about decolonising the curriculum were given to Year 10 and Year 11 students, with the focus on English and the humanities. This has been a catalyst for in-class conversations between staff and students about the validity of the material being covered in those subject areas. The students are expected to identify a real-world problem and to propose solutions, which are then interrogated by an audience of their peers. Students are encouraged to choose a passion project, and for many BAME students this has become the platform where they can talk openly about issues related to their identity. The focus is explicitly on the marginalised and disadvantaged. The arts have always played a very special role in the school, and it is in these areas where ethnic minority students have felt most recognised. The latest drama production, *Noughts and Crosses*, has cast ethnic minority students in the lead roles and builds on a unit called "Outsiders", while music has focused on "exploitation". The religious education department has launched a review and introduced a "What is it like to be a British Muslim?" unit in Year 8.

The process of decolonising the curriculum also extends to enrichment. All year groups enjoy whole days off timetable with special programmes laid on. Since 2020, civil rights issues have been included. The two most recent days have focused on the right of and the nature of protest, with direct reference to the civil rights and Black Lives Matter movements. These have been very well received by the students, especially an activity that involves planning a protest.

The school's sixth form curriculum also addresses systemic racism. The approach, however, is more conceptual than in key stages 3 and 4. In key stage 5, the co-ordination of Theory of Knowledge has played a pivotal role in students interrogating knowledge. The course has been restructured under the heading "Power and Knowledge". In it, various real-life events are examined and analysed, and historic and current racism exposed. Questions are raised about whose works get published where, when and why in different academic disciplines. Students are also encouraged to read texts about racism in different contexts, for example *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins. The role of refugees and racism is examined through all the key stages.

The sixth form is also home to the largest number of students of any school in the world taking social and cultural anthropology, with about 100 students taking the course at any one time. The course has a huge focus on colonialism, slavery and the links with the economic benefits for the colonising powers. An excellent example of these links is the book *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* by Sidney Mintz; this book adopts a neo-Marxist approach to the slave trade and the capitalist economies of the colonising countries. Social anthropology has also contributed greatly to the understanding of how cultures try to impose their own traditions on those people who come from different ethnic backgrounds. An excellent example of this is the study of skin whitening and hair straightening – both extremely sensitive issues for the BAME community. The fieldwork undertaken by BAME social anthropology students has often centred on issues surrounding their origins and identity and has thus helped them to be proud of who they are.

Enrichment and library talks have given sixth form students the opportunity to share their extended essay research, and three very successful talks have been held, with sixth formers presenting to KS3 and KS4 students. Barrister Hashi Mohamed, author of the acclaimed work, People Like Us, has also presented to sixth formers. Additionally, the school has completed a project in partnership with the Ideas Foundation, entitled "The Power of Hair".

Problem No 3: The school culture

Alienation from the school's culture has manifested itself in BAME students often being reticent in class discussions and not putting themselves forward for leadership roles;

in other words, not using their voice. A staff working party was established in 2019 to address this directly, and the sessions are still ongoing. Mini research projects were undertaken by a cross-section of colleagues who could offer perspectives in their roles as teachers, boarding staff, extracurricular supervisors and support staff. The main causes of alienation, as identified by the working group, were that fellow students did not have enough knowledge about different cultures in order to engage meaningfully with their peers. This has been addressed to some extent through a conscious effort from boarding staff to room students, so that they share with people from different cultures. A second issue was that the students did not feel they saw themselves represented in the staff.

Language is also significant for the school's minority ethnic students, in terms of the language(s) they share or do not share with the rest of the school community. Many of the school's BAME students have links to Nigeria, and a member of staff trialled a Yoruba Language and Culture Club. To begin with, there were about six members, all of them students of Nigerian heritage. Within weeks the numbers had doubled, and those students who attended were taking along a White friend. The teacher in charge of the club prioritised social integration by focusing on games, and the language focus included analysing idioms and telling jokes. This had a very positive impact and, within weeks, the club had more than twenty attendees. The college has recently reviewed its Language Policy to further emphasise a commitment to mother-tongue language.

Mindful that the curriculum was being overhauled in quite a significant way, Black History Month was presented as a celebration. The library led the way in showcasing texts with BAME protagonists and celebrating the achievements of BAME academics. The girls' boarding houses celebrated Black History Month by asking parents of BAME boarders to contribute an artefact or an item of food that represents their culture, raising its profile. While most cultures are celebrated in the school, a real effort has been made to highlight aspects of BAME cultures. The boys' boarding houses created boards to honour and celebrate diversity within the community.

Efforts are being made to attract BAME staff to work on the academic side and also the boarding side of the school. There is an increasing number of BAME staff, particularly working in the boarding context, and this was explicitly well received by the alumni, who said they wished they had enjoyed the opportunity of living and working with such diverse staff, who they consider to be very positive role models. South Africans, Nigerians and Chinese are among those recently represented. The school governors have been motivated since December 2020 to put the college's equality statement into action when recruiting and promoting. All the school's job advertisements include an equal opportunities statement.

Although this was not identified by the working party, the act of addressing under-representation has contributed to BAME students feeling that the school better reflects their histories and aspirations. The school has renamed its houses/equips; they

used to be Brunel, Da Vinci, Goethe and Pascal, but are now Nelson Mandela, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Alan Turing, and Mary Seacole. This has been another step in reframing how the school is perceived by students and to demonstrating and celebrating idealism and excellence among the BAME community.

Problem No 4: Self-segregation

Self-segregation has been a barrier to integration, and several discussions have led school leaders to believe that this issue is best addressed by working alongside the students. In various contexts, including the Afro-Caribbean Society, The Equality and Diversity Club and the Model United Nations, students have echoed each other's views that the BAME students felt, and to some extent still feel, highlighted and identified as a problem because they tend to socialise only with one another. They felt they were perceived as loud, aggressive and defiant, as opposed to their White counterparts, who were perceived as more co-operative and compliant. They made it clear that they self-segregate because they feel the need to be with people like themselves, who understand, who help them fit in and who provide them with emotional safety and cultural understanding.

It was decided to give the students the context and the space to discuss these matters openly, and one of the school's longest serving counsellors – himself a member of the BAME community – has been asked to facilitate the discussion. This has yielded results as many colleagues have reported anecdotally that BAME students feel recognised, included and understood more profoundly than they did prior to the sessions. Two of these discussions have taken place thus far, and students have recognised that the school is determined to address the issues because they have had opportunities to air views, to offer suggestions and to nominate members of staff who they would like to be involved to take this forward.

Impact

The issues around a lack of adult understanding have been successfully addressed. Whole-staff training, raising awareness of every aspect of explicit and implicit racism, followed by annual induction for all new staff – both teaching and auxiliary – have together brought a comprehensive range of issues into the open. The staff are genuinely determined to do everything in their power to eliminate any form of racism – explicit or implicit.

The second most significant results have been in the area of the curriculum. There is now a more open conversation between colleagues as to how to ensure that the curriculum throughout the key stages addresses fundamental issues that have an impact on BAME students and their sense of belonging. These developments are evident in key stage 3, but at key stage 4 the results have been outstanding. This is due not only to changes in the

established curriculum but most especially to the introduction of CASE, where students have taken advantage of the opportunity to openly and explicitly address issues of identity and belonging.

There has also been significant impact at key stage 5, largely because the IB diploma syllabuses are, by definition, focused on ethnic issues. This is especially noticeable in history, theory of knowledge, and social and cultural anthropology. BAME students now feel a great deal more comfortable studying the IB diploma than they felt previously in key stages 3 and 4. Across the key stages, significant work has been undertaken in languages, the arts and humanities. Some very laudable work has been started in science; yet more is to be achieved in the other subject areas. All curriculum areas have endeavoured to do something, even if it is simply to change classroom displays to be more representative.

As regards alienation from the school's culture, progress has definitely been made, but further work is still needed. The Uniform Policy has been revised to explicitly focus on equality. On the whole, BAME students no longer feel discriminated against because of their hair, which is not to say they feel celebrated. They feel that the school needs to go further to make them feel appreciated, hence projects like "The Power of Hair". Some BAME students have commented that they perceive a positive difference in staff's attitudes and behaviours towards them.

As regards self-segregation, the school still has a long way to go. Self-segregation is founded upon not just Hockerill's culture but rather the culture of the wider society, whereby minority ethnic students continuously feel at a social disadvantage outside their affinity groups.

Reflections

Thus far, this has been a very valuable learning journey for the school. Leaders have had to have difficult conversations, to face some uncomfortable truths, and to rethink the culture of the school. Efforts to combat under-representation have in many ways been catalysed and aided by the events of 2020. The challenge will be to maintain this as a priority when set against other conflicting and competing priorities such as dealing with the pandemic. Another challenge will be to maintain momentum when this particular, vocal cohort of students has departed. Many of the projects have been concentrated around the sixth form or have consisted of single events. These will have to be scaled up and embedded to become part of the school culture.

Next steps

The school has developed a three-year equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) action plan which incorporates the following:

- **Developing a more relevant curriculum across the whole of KS3 and KS4**
  The newly appointed assistant principal (curriculum) and the director of innovation are undertaking an EDI audit of the whole curriculum.
- **Engaging students more directly by providing regular opportunities for open discussion**
  Three of these sessions have taken place, and staff are in the process of scheduling others.
- **Celebrating diversity more frequently and more visibly so it becomes embedded in the culture**
  This means taking every opportunity to ensure all students feel they belong by celebrating diversity more frequently, and more visibly so that it becomes embedded in the school culture. This means taking every opportunity to share ethnic minority students' festivals, cuisine, customs and traditions; for example, halal meat has been introduced and Chinese New Year is being celebrated with an evening of traditional games and food.
- **Ensuring that all staff are passionate advocates of equality, diversity and inclusion**
  CPD slots will be set aside for staff to learn about positive aspects of cultures, how to engage constructively and meaningfully with ethnic minority students, and how to recognise, avoid and confront microaggressions. The list of unacceptable terms collated by the students will also be shared across the staff.
- **Appointing more BAME staff to leadership positions**
  Recruitment practices will be reviewed to cast the net as wide as possible and to guard against tokenism.

The school has developed a clear EDI statement, which leaders intend to share across the community, starting by putting it on our website:

> The college is committed to providing a high-quality, inclusive education based on the principles of equality and solidarity among all peoples and the equal value of all human beings. We want to foster in all our students a sense of happiness with their identity and to encourage all students to enrich and enhance their own identity and their experience of college life by embracing and celebrating difference.

Shamiela Davids and David Woods

AUDITING EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN ORDER TO FACILITATE A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH AND STRATEGY TO STRENGTHENING EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

St Clement Danes School

Focus area

This case study describes the process by which St Clement Danes School audited its educational provision under four key areas: behaviour and welfare, leadership and management, personal development of pupils, and teaching and learning. The school took action from the emerging data and issues identified to enhance its approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

Aims and rationale

In response to movements such as Black Lives Matter and feedback from previous students on their own, individual experiences, the school required a method to investigate and evaluate current practices to highlight where change, implementation and revision were required. The aim of this audit was to ensure everyone in the school community experienced dignity, kindness and equality of opportunity. Any areas highlighted by the audit as requiring development were then further evaluated and actions put in place to ensure they were met.

To ensure an objective approach (and calling upon the aid of experts within this field), the school used EqualiTeach for the audit by applying for the Equalities Award. Through discussion with EqualiTeach, it was decided that the school already met the bronze criteria and that silver would present a challenge. The silver award aims to "build upon strong foundations to ensure that equality and diversity practice flows through all aspects of the school". The award provided a platform through which to examine the school community and develop a strategy to move forward together.

Background context

Black Lives Matter protests shone a light not only on the prejudice that exists within our society but also on the very real experiences of the school community. Having heard from past students of their own experiences, leaders wished to examine the school's practices, teaching and leadership, to see how they could diversify the curriculum and enable all of the school community to thrive. In order to ensure changes were meaningful and informed, they hoped the audit would allow them to reflect and evaluate, and to formulate a clear strategy and action plan. Limited due to the lockdowns taking place in how much they could engage with students in person, leaders felt this the best time to allow them to delve into policies and practices to begin establishing a firm foundation on which to build.

The school's senior leaders chose to use EqualiTeach to help them do this, as the audit for the award would allow them to evaluate provision for EDI. The set areas for review meant they could identify and revise all areas of the school, including policies, staff CPDL, systems and approaches for analysing data, as well as the teaching and learning environment provided.

St Clement Danes is in a largely White British area of Hertfordshire. This is reflected in the staff body; however, the student cohort is changing. In 2019, 76.3% of the sixth form, and 72.8% of students in Years 7–11, identified as White British.

The EqualiTeach Silver Equalities Award was designed by a "team of equality and education experts" and endeavours to provide support and guidance for schools to effectively promote EDI. The award supports schools in fulfilling their statutory duties to:

- eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations (Equality Act 2010)
- promote community cohesion (Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)
- safeguard children and promote spiritual moral, social and cultural development (Education Act 2002)

The story

Following an initial meeting with a representative from EqualiTeach, the school was given 18 months to complete the necessary audit. The first steps included discussion as a senior leadership team (SLT) and with the governing body about the approach that would be taken. An SLT lead for equality and diversity was appointed from the existing team, as well as a governor link. The Danes Educational Trust, of which St Clement Danes is a part, also appointed a governor for diversity, and it was agreed that the HR lead would also take a lead role to help revise policy and examine staff recruitment processes. Therefore, the initial lead team approached the audit from differing angles and could offer different perspectives.

The audit began by examining evidence in the four categories set out by EqualiTeach, as well as a timeline being set for the actions to take place.

EqualiTeach provided the school with a virtual platform that the SLT lead worked through systematically. For each area, subcategories were given, with listed evidence to be provided in order to show that each indicator had been met. An example is opposite.

Leadership and management	
	Equalities indicators
2.1	Equality is core to the school's ethos and values and communicated to all in the school community.
2.2	The school is working towards specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-related (SMART) equality objectives.
2.3	All members of the staff team receive continuous professional development on issues of equality, bullying and safeguarding.

For each indicator, if evidence could not be provided sufficiently, actions were recorded by the SLT lead to form an action plan in order to be able to produce that evidence in the future.

Equality indicator	Actions needed	Evidence provided at the end of the process for indicator approval
2.2 The school is working towards specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-related (SMART) equality objectives	Objectives need updating in order to be SMART End of autumn term: • source and evaluate objectives at other schools for comparison • discuss with SLT • take revised targets to working party for review • assign an SLT lead for each objective to ensure they are monitored and measured End of spring term: • share with all staff at training session, invite feedback • share on website and put into school comms • work with the Danes Educational Trust on a Danes' Vision for Equality and Diversity	Process followed as outlined, resulting in the policies now on the school website: www.stclementdanes.org.uk/186/policies-key-information/category/34/diversity-and-inclusion

To involve staff and students to move forward together through consultation, leaders set up a staff working party and student society. Both groups began with volunteer members and expanded during the year. The staff working party now comprises staff with various roles and from a range of backgrounds, including support staff, heads of faculties and newly qualified teachers. The student society currently has 15 members and works alongside the LGBTQ+ society and Bold Voices ambassadors. The society is open to all students in the sixth form but, due to the level of interest (and keen to raise the profile of their work), the school appointed its first diversity prefect to join the existing prefect team. Both the working party and society enabled further discussion and discourse, in addition to giving input into discussions about the actions the school would take.

For example, one of the school's actions in meeting the indicators for "Personal development of pupils through exploration of identity and different cultures", was the formulation of a diversity calendar. Both groups worked together to consider dates that could meaningfully be acknowledged and explored during the school year. The calendar went through a series of drafts; members of the working party took these to their own departments for revision before the final version was agreed. The calendar then informed the SMSC and assembly programme. Both the society and working party also gave feedback to the school's vision statement and equality objectives, before they were shared in whole-school training and on the website. This form of consultation and inclusion of staff and student voice would become integral to the process.

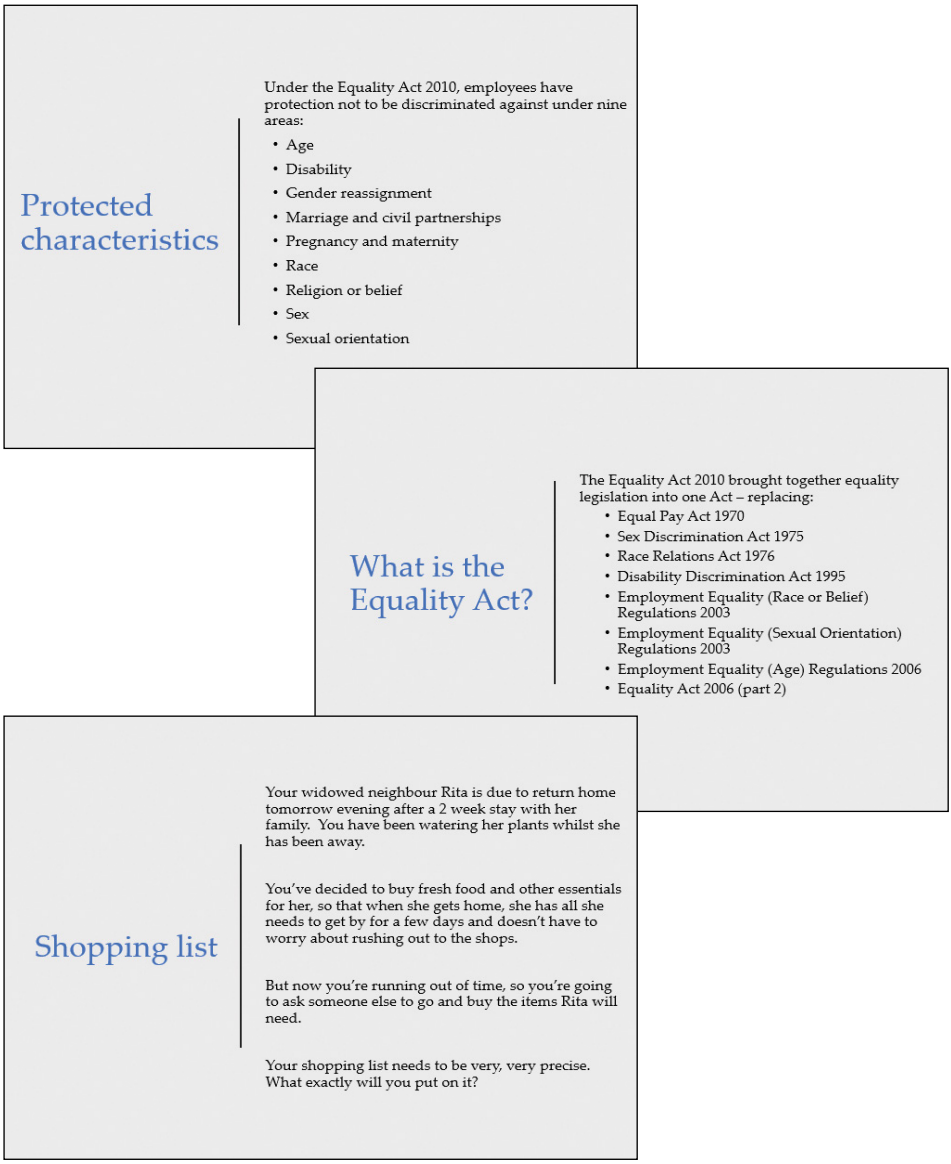
The mission statement from the headteacher now reads:

"At St Clement Danes School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers; and to embrace the difference they bring to our school community. We want everyone in our school community to experience kindness and respect, and to be treated with the dignity they deserve."

In order to meet the indicator for staff leadership and management, leaders had to address the CPD that was provided at the school. Heads of faculties attended and disseminated training at the start of the year on "Why Black Lives Do Matter: Considerations for Schools" by Rachel Clarke; this training introduced reviewing curricula, considering barriers to learning and why Black students are significantly less likely to be entered for higher tier papers when they have the same previous academic outcomes and are more than 2.6 times more likely to be excluded from school. Many of the faculties had already begun curriculum work in light of events in the media; and in the course of the audit, leaders found numerous examples of good practice to share. Writers, artists and figures studied now include Chinua Achebe, Kara Walker and Indra Ové.

Through the course of the audit and consultation, it was felt that further CPD would be welcomed. Leaders led their first session internally, initially to the SLT and the governing body, and then to all staff. CPD focused on the Equality Act 2010, unconscious bias, and the school's own particular equalities objectives and needs.

Examples of slides used:



This training was then built into the school's induction process for all new staff. EqualiTeach also provided a two-hour workshop for staff to:

- recognise the barriers that can prevent people from successfully promoting EDI, including unconscious bias
- understand their equality duties as set out by the Equality Act 2010
- explore techniques to effectively challenge prejudicial attitudes and behaviours
- discuss best-practice short-term and long-term approaches to responding to prejudice, using case study examples

A short baseline assessment questionnaire was shared with staff before the session to help tailor the training. The workshop was lively and interactive, creating a safe space for an open and honest approach to training.

Analysis of the personal development curriculum highlighted the need to update delivery of the topics "radicalisation and extremism". In the summer of 2021, leaders provided a number of workshops for Year 11 students. One workshop, called "Reject Racism", delivered by EqualiTeach, explored what is meant by the term racism and considered real-life examples. During the session, students discussed structural racism and the impact racism has on people's lives, and were empowered to challenge and work for change in the future. The response to the workshop was overwhelmingly positive, and the school plans to build upon student engagement as school life returns to normality.

Evaluation of the wellbeing and behaviour policies led to discussion with the pastoral deputy headteacher and personal development lead. Leaders endeavoured to respond to ideas and issues raised by both the student society and the staff working party. To hear further voices and contributions, leaders used surveys and questionnaires with staff, parents and carers, and students. These included questions on being true to your identity and comfortable within the community. Questions also explored the way in which discrimination is tackled.

Whilst this elicited positive responses from staff (example of data below), leaders felt that further action had to be taken for the students.

How confident are you that the senior leadership team would take action to prevent discrimination, if concerns were raised internally?

	122 responses
Very confident	52 (43%)
Quite confident	46 (38%)
Moderately confident	18 (15%)
Not very confident	2 (2%)
Not confident at all	0 (0%)
Don't know	4 (3%)

Average **4.3**

Positive responses **83%**

The student survey for key stages 4 and 5 revealed that 87% of students felt the school was “friendly and welcoming”, and 85% felt accepted by staff (and 81% by students). However, only 75% felt confident in reporting prejudice or offensive language. Following the survey, the deputy headteacher explained in an assembly the process that takes place when a complaint is made. Assemblies were also delivered on the bystander effect and being proactive within the community. Students raised that they would like more assemblies on other cultures and faiths, which was addressed within the assembly and SMSC programme. Communications from the school are also now more inclusive, be it letters, the monthly newsletter, headlines, or social media platforms.

Leaders introduced a prejudice-related incident form to ensure prejudice was tracked and addressed consistently, specifying the type of prejudice that had been displayed. Equality impact assessments were also implemented, for all policies to be judged against as they came up for review. Work also began into how staff record and analyse data (both for students’ attainment and attitudes to learning) and how they look at exclusion and bullying reports. Management of data for staff and recruitment procedures were revised. The annual staff survey now incorporates questions on inclusivity and identity.

Impact

The school began work on the Silver Equalities Award in October 2020, and it was gained in May 2021.

Leaders have had overwhelmingly positive feedback from the process:

"Congratulations, first of all, on the school's silver award; I'm so proud of this school, being a Black parent, the issue of equality is close to my heart."

Parent

"I am very proud of being appointed as the first diversity prefect of the school and feel that the student body is much more active and engaged with issues arising from our work over the last year."

Student prefect

"I appreciate what the school is trying to do to open up discussion and become more inclusive."

Key stage 4 student

"I enjoy assemblies and our SMSC discussion; we are looking more at issues around race, gender and the things we need to talk about."

Student

"It was impressive to hear the extent of initiatives that have been put in place. It's also really evident that you and the school have grasped this issue and are making a real difference."

Chair of governors

Student responses to the workshop:

What did you learn from today's workshop?

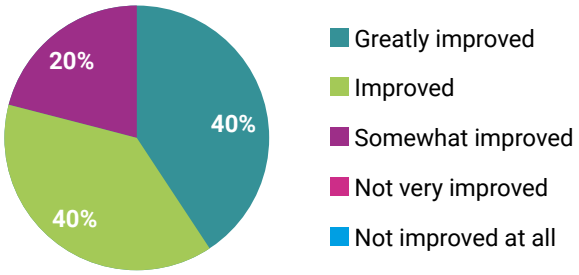
- Discrimination against Roma/Traveller people is a major issue
- Racism is not just to do with skin colour
- The difference between racism and colourism
- A wider range of both personal and systemic forms of racism to broaden my knowledge on the issue
- About microagressions: when they are used and why
- How to stand up to racism and teach others that stereotypes are not reality
- That black people in the UK are more likely to be stopped and searched after having done nothing wrong
- GRT community are protected under the Equality Act
- How to describe people's ethnicity more accurately
- How important it is to not make stereotypes
- About housing and how that plays a part in racism and discrimination
- What institutional racism looks like
- That the word "Oriental" is outdated
- I learnt more about the Roma Community
- Statistics like, "black women are 4 times more likely to die in child-birth"

"It was amazing to see the students' confidence to take part and grow throughout the session. You created a very safe environment where students didn't feel afraid to share ideas."

Teacher

Response to staff training

To what extent has the training improved your understanding of how to promote equality and tackle discrimination?



Further comments

- Thought that 3 hours sounded very long for a course, but actually it was very much needed and went quickly!
- Nicely done.
- It was very useful – thank you very much indeed.
- Time well invested. Many thanks.
- Such a lot of information, very good to consider but hard to take it all in at one go!
- Thanks so much for this fantastic training.
- Brilliant delivery, thank you very much.
- Thank you for such an informative presentation.

Reflections

In the process of conducting this audit, leaders have established student and staff engagement and opened up discourse around diversity. Whilst they are thrilled to have achieved the silver award, they know that their efforts must and will continue. What is clear is that, whilst the school has made significant changes, long-term impact can only be achieved by embedding these approaches and principles into practice and the curriculum. Staff need to keep discussion open, students engaged, and equality objectives at the forefront of the school development plan.

Next steps

To further engage students, alongside the school's Bold Voices programme (which focuses on gender and sexual orientation), leaders are introducing the Agents for Change programme in February 2022 for younger students in key stage 3, and the school is looking at ways to actively involve parents and carers further.

CPD this year is more embedded into teaching and learning briefings and staff meetings. In particular, this now seeks to explore further the language used and the way in which staff confront behaviours and microaggressions. Curriculum work is also ongoing; the history department continues its work in exploring Black History in the UK, as many students are currently more familiar with the civil rights movement of the USA.

The assembly and SMSC programme aims to explore wider issues, such as Inter-Faith Week, the removal of statues (debated by students) and the appropriation of Black culture. The headteacher has invited Black alumni to contribute their voices to assemblies; this

began with a previous deputy head girl who reflected on her time in the school for Black History Month.

The school's journey is ongoing and it remains committed to this work. The audit process was a reflective process that enabled St Clement Danes to move forward.

Toby Sutherland and Sarah Doyle

GREAT STAFF REPRESENTATION

Haileybury Turnford School

Focus area

This case study illustrates how Haileybury Turnford, a secondary academy in Cheshunt, has developed its anti-racist practice, leading to greater race diversity on the staff and governing body.

Aims and rationale

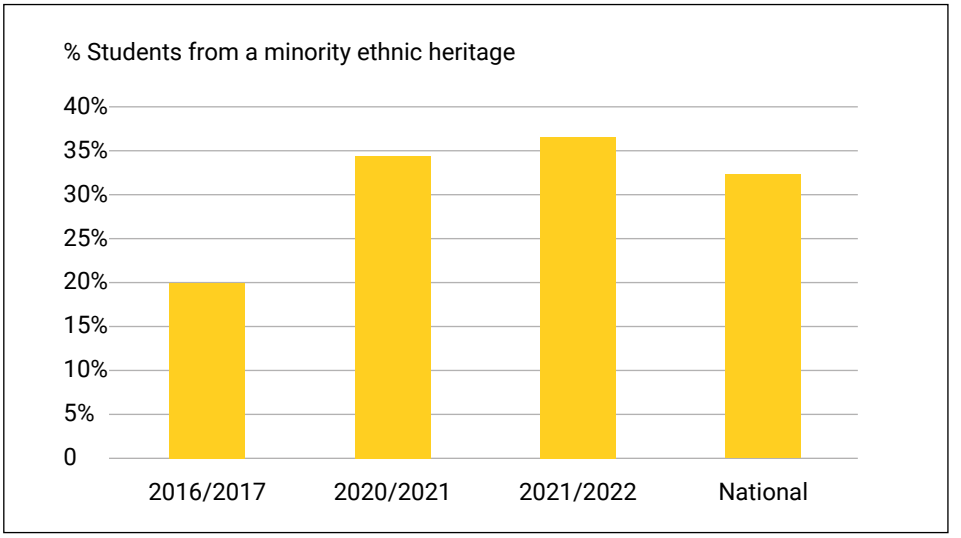
There were two clear aims to this work:

Firstly, to have a staff community that is more representative of the student community, as it had quite quickly become more diverse in recent academic years, with a greater number of students from a wider range of minority ethnic heritages. It was felt very important that the school's staff community should reflect the ethnic diversity of the Turnford and Cheshunt local communities, which have seen much in-migration in the past five years. Prior to this, the communities were strongly White British. Leaders believed that having a staff body that was fully representative of the student community it serves would provide a greater likelihood of support to students of all backgrounds and, in turn, would create a more inclusive school culture, in which all individuals can be successful.

Secondly, to have a higher number of minority ethnic leaders, which would, in turn, help with overall minority ethnic teacher recruitment and retention. It was also strongly felt that developing diversity on the governing body was important, so that families from minority ethnic heritages, as well as staff from these backgrounds, had representation.

Background context

Historically, the Turnford school community has been White, with very low levels of ethnic diversity. In 2016–17, less than 20% of the student population was from a minority ethnic heritage. By 2020–21, the student community had 34.1% of its students from a minority ethnic heritage. This grew further to 36.6% by autumn 2021. This compares to the national picture of 32.3% of students of minority ethnic heritage in 2020. There had not been an explicit focus on diversity at all within the school, and a working class, often male macho culture appeared to be the prevailing one, with pockets of low achievement amongst White British boys in particular.



In the past there had been very low numbers of staff with minority ethnic heritages, other than in the mathematics faculty, and a lack of ethnic diversity in middle or senior leadership positions across the school. This under-representation mirrored the national teacher workforce picture.

In "School workforce in England: November 2020" (DfE, 2020) 15% of teachers described themselves as being in a minority ethnic group. This was an increase from 11% in 2010. Haileybury Turnford had a much lower level of staff – both teachers and support staff – with a minority ethnic heritage in 2016–17, which was the issue the school wished to address. The research by Professor Alice Bradbury, at University College London, "What makes minority ethnic teachers stay in teaching, or leave?" (2021), was important in shaping leaders' thinking about the importance of the school's staffing.

The story

A Black Lives Matter statement was issued by the school on its website, following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. It was felt strongly that it was important for the school to explicitly communicate how it felt about this issue so that there was no ambiguity. Other schools and organisations were also sharing their own statements at the time, and it was important that all stakeholders could read the school's position.

Led by the headteacher, who worked closely with the human resources manager, there was a deliberate, strategic focus on developing staff ethnic diversity in the school, including in leadership roles. This had started prior to May 2020 and has continued with an increasing

commitment since then. There was also a deliberate decision to start to address ethnic diversity at governor level, as part of a conscious development of an anti-racist culture.

Initial work took place to change recruitment processes, to strive to eliminate unconscious bias in recruitment processes, and to explicitly state in job adverts and on the school website that applications would be welcomed from a diverse talent pool. The main barrier was the lack of candidates from minority ethnic heritages applying to posts advertised. The school started to advertise with BAMEed Network via their monthly newsletter. Staff also made contact with NEU, NASUWT and ASCL BAME networks for teachers and leaders, and the school was able to circulate vacancies through the ASCL BAME network.

During 2020–21, there was strong encouragement to all colleagues who identify as Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) to participate in a Staff BAME Forum, established to ensure their voices are heard, and to enable the senior leadership team and governing body to respond to any recommendations made. BAME staff attendance at the forum was low initially, but numbers increased in 2021–22. This was facilitated by working closely with interested colleagues and encouraging them to promote the forum to their peers. At present, the forum is coordinated by an assistant headteacher, who identifies as BAME. The rationale for this was to ensure that the forum had a very direct link to the senior leadership team, to ensure viewpoints were heard. The aim in the longer term is for a non-SLT member of staff to lead this group, and for the group to set its own agenda and to directly feed back to senior leadership team meetings.

An important piece of work has been the development of a staff survey to gather perceptions about race, diversity and anti-racism relating to the school. Leaders have sought feedback from new staff who identify as BAME about why they applied for their roles, and about their experiences since joining the staff. Feedback was also sought from members of staff who had worked at the school over a number of years to find out about their perceptions as to how the school had changed in recent years.

The first two questions below were asked of colleagues who identified as White British:

- **Have you noticed any changes to the ethnic diversity of the student and/or staff community?**
- **What impacts have there been on the school community as a result of such changes?**

The next set of questions were asked of all staff:

- **Are people from minority groups accepted and made to feel welcome at Haileybury Turnford?**
- **Do you consider yourself to have sound knowledge and understanding of White Privilege?**
- **Do you think Haileybury Turnford is an inclusive place to work?**

The questions below were asked to new members of staff who identify as BAME:

- **Why did you apply to Haileybury Turnford?**
- **What has your experience been like as a teacher of colour in our school and how could those experiences be made better?**

Students who identify as BAME were also consulted. Questions asked included:

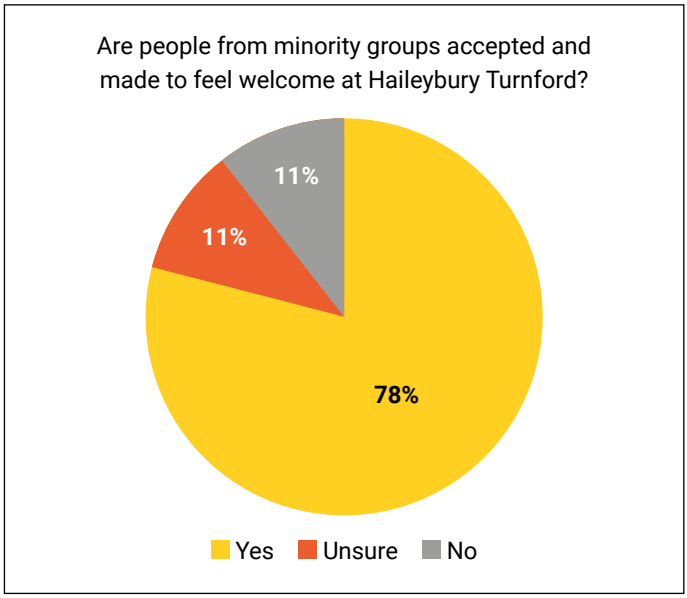
- **How do you know that our school respects people from different backgrounds, for example, people of colour?**
- **Have you experienced racism at Haileybury Turnford?**
- **Would you feel confident to report a concern if you were experiencing racism?**

To give strategic direction to the school's work at governing body level, and to symbolise the central importance of this work, the decision was made to establish a link governor with responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion. The link governor responsibilities began in 2020/21. The intention is for this governor to attend BAME Forum meetings to ensure that the governing body hears the voices of staff who identify as BAME.

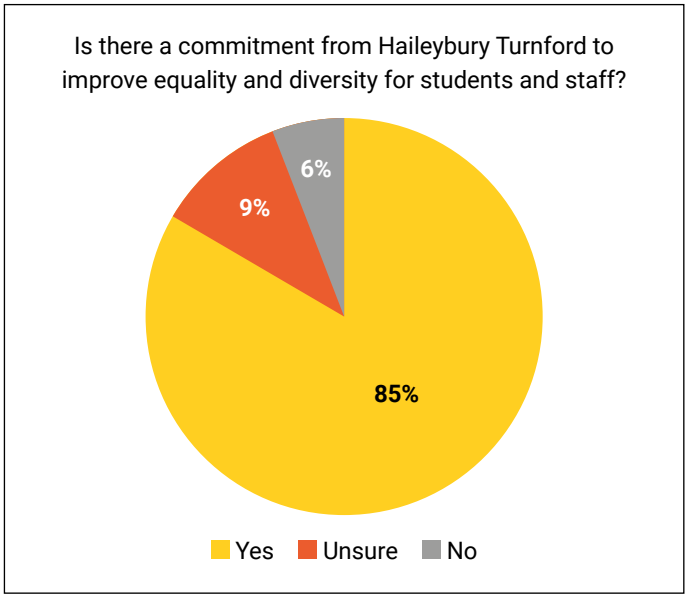
Impact

More than 10 staff from minority ethnic backgrounds have been appointed to work at Haileybury Turnford School since the start of this work, across a range of different subject areas, and including external and internal recruitment into leadership roles on the extended and core senior leadership team. There are now staff members from minority ethnic backgrounds in a wide range of staff teams across the school. Retention has also been improved by actively supporting minority ethnic heritage colleagues to participate in CPD and professional learning opportunities. The school's link governor has attended the BAME Forum and started to develop trust and strong relationships with BAME staff. The next step is to further facilitate awareness of anti-racism with the governing body to ensure effective leadership in this area.

The staff survey was completed by staff from a range of ethnic backgrounds, although not all staff who identify as BAME completed it. From the survey, 36 out of 46 respondents (78%) felt that people from minority groups are readily accepted and made to feel welcome at Haileybury Turnford. Five respondents (11%) were not sure, and five respondents disagreed (11%).



39 out of 45 respondents (85%) felt that there was a commitment from Haileybury Turnford to improve equality and diversity for students and staff. Only three respondents disagreed (6%). Four respondents were not sure (9%).



More qualitative feedback from individual staff members was gathered in autumn 2021, to find out more about staff perceptions about anti-racism and what it is like being a minority ethnic heritage member of staff at Haileybury Turnford.

Responses from new minority ethnic heritage colleagues included the following:

"I applied to Haileybury Turnford during my PGCE, after having experienced training in a few other schools. The welcoming culture was an essential factor as friendly and approachable colleagues were a necessity; I wanted to feel comfortable, confident, and supported in my role – all standards which Haileybury Turnford has provided."

"I applied to Haileybury Turnford because of my experience as a trainee teacher in this placement. My department members were incredibly welcoming and supportive, constantly sharing ideas, resources and advice. I therefore thought this was a fantastic place to complete my early career teaching years, where this nurturing culture would allow me to progress and be supported."

"As a teacher of colour, your best hopes are that no one treats you as 'a teacher of colour'. HT treat their employees fairly, and I have not experienced discrimination or prejudice during my time here."

New colleagues were very positive about the working environment and culture at Haileybury Turnford. However, a microaggression was reported as part of the feedback process, and this reinforced the importance of ensuring anti-racism training takes place with all staff. The importance of anti-racism training was also reinforced by the fact that only 23 respondents (50%) who completed the staff survey considered themselves to have a sound knowledge and understanding of White Privilege and only 13 respondents (28%) felt that work colleagues have a good understanding of White Privilege.

When examining the responses from new colleagues about how their experiences could be made better, a theme emerged about people of colour in senior roles:

> **"I think that the noticeable lack of representation in the senior leadership is incredibly problematic. I have certainly noticed it and students have also made it clear that they notice it as well. This is potentially problematic for students that cannot ethically or culturally relate to those members of staff at the top level. It is also problematic in terms of progression for teachers of colour, as many may question whether there is room to progress."**

Staff who had worked at the school over a number of years said the following, indicating a recognition of how the school has changed:

> **"When I first started at this school the vast majority of students and families were White British and now our school community is richly diverse … students are increasingly more accepting of people who are different from themselves and have a greater awareness of how their beliefs and actions can impact positively or negatively on other people."**

> **"I have noticed the staff body has become more ethnically diverse, which is positive and welcomed … this ensures students from different ethnic backgrounds have positive and aspirational role models in the school community."**

Student reflections were similarly positive about the school's diversity:

> **"Everyone treats each other the same … lots of teachers are of a different heritage."**

> **"In the main, there is little racism in the school, I don't feel like an outsider and Haileybury Turnford is a multi-cultural community."**

It is clear that both staff and students recognise that the school has an ethnically diverse student and staff community, and this is seen very positively. Staff who have been employed at the school for a number of years very clearly recognised the changes to the student and staff bodies and felt greater ethnic diversity was a very positive feature of the school community. It was clear that both students and staff felt that greater ethnic

diversity was important in actively promoting anti-racism and ensuring all persons felt included in their school community. Equally, it was recognised that there was more that could be done, specifically to improve the ethnic diversity of the staff profile.

It has proved more difficult to add diversity to the governing body, and this work is still ongoing.

Reflections

Making a clear statement and stating the school's proposed actions, following the murder of George Floyd, was a very important step to show the school's view and intent. A number of staff members gave this feedback to the headteacher following the publication of the school's statement. This reinforces the view that it is essential for the school to explicitly state its anti-racism position, to ensure all stakeholders are clear about its stance.

Staff recruitment has continued to be very challenging, when advertising for many teaching posts, due to the lack of well-qualified candidates of any heritage. Nevertheless, the location of the school, in Cheshunt, close to London, has been a distinct advantage when recruiting members of staff of colour, due to the greater ethnic diversity of communities in London and the prevalence of more ethnically diverse persons living in the local area compared with some other parts of Hertfordshire.

It is difficult to track exact proportions of staff of minority ethnic heritage due to incomplete data (it is optional for staff to declare their ethnicity).

Next steps

It is a key priority to further develop the profile, membership and involvement of the BAME Forum so that it has a significant role in shaping school policy. From this, leaders wish to develop a more focused action plan, involving all interested BAME staff, and to share it as explicitly as possible with all stakeholders. The aim is to also establish BAME Allies to support the anti-racism work. In addition, there is still much more work to do to ensure the governing body is more ethnically diverse. This will require specific targeted advertising to recruit ethnically diverse candidates who are parents and/or live in the local community.

The aim is to recruit at least one BAME postholder to the school's KS3 Pastoral Team, where BAME staff are not represented in pastoral leadership roles. This is important to add greater diversity to this part of the staff team, and to ensure students have staff member(s) of colour to go to, and speak with, to provide them with support.

Leaders will ensure that the school website has photographs and short biographies of staff of colour, so that potential applicants see someone who looks like them. Leaders also intend to ensure staff members of a BAME background are part of the interview process, where appropriate.

Leaders wish to develop the school's anti-racism work so that all stakeholders have appropriate training to help a full understanding of the systemic and institutional racism that exists and is embedded in society, and to ensure that there is no institutional racism at Haileybury Turnford.

Developing an anti-racism culture in school will be a central pillar of the school's work in the coming months, clearly focused on in the school improvement plan, with external training and support to facilitate this work. Then school is currently planning this work with Diverse Educators – Promote Equality (www.diverseeducators.co.uk/promote-equality).

Robin Newman and Navpreet Shivalkar

INCREASING THE RACIAL DIVERSITY OF ADULTS IN SCHOOL

Windermere Primary School

Focus area

This case study outlines the strategies used at Windermere Primary School to raise the profile of the Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) community within the school, because the demographic diversity of the children was not reflected in the staff and school leadership teams.

Aims and rationale

The school is situated in St Albans – an affluent, urban area with very little racial diversity. However, the school itself has a very diverse demographic, with 38% of pupils from a BAME background and 24 different languages spoken at home.

With a predominantly White staff team and an exclusively White British governing board, the staff and governors were not representative of the pupils they served. Leaders therefore embarked on an ambitious strategy to develop and enhance the profile of BAME adults within the school community, with the specific aim of recruiting staff and governors from a variety of ethnic minorities.

Background context

Prior to this, in 2015, the school had two Bangladeshi employees: one midday supervisory assistant (MSA) and one newly appointed teaching assistant (TA). At this time, 58% of pupils were not White British. Minority ethnic pupils and parents commented that they sometimes felt staff did not understand their culture and did not accommodate their cultural needs.

Although the school has always had a rich and diverse community, the predominant ethnic minority was Bangladeshi (18% of pupils). Leaders noted that pupils from an Asian background joining the Reception class initially made slower progress compared with their White British counterparts. At the end of Reception, only 14% of Asian pupils achieved a good level of development compared with 81% of their peers. By the end of Year 2, better progress had been made, and 60% of Asian pupils achieved age-related expectations, compared with 73% of other pupils.

Windermere Primary School had regularly supported ex-pupils and their family members who required work experience as part of their extended studies, by offering placement opportunities. One such Bangladeshi student, who was studying for her Level 3 CACHE (Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education) qualification, was encouraged to

apply for a TA vacancy. Having been appointed to work in Reception, her focus was on supporting language development, and integration for Asian pupils in particular.

Throughout her placement, this student had shown herself to be hard-working, diligent and able to respond well to feedback; however, her application lacked both the detail and the polish of those from other applicants. Having given her an initial opportunity to gain experience, and recognising that she did not have the home support to provide a higher standard of application, school leaders used positive action – or "the Rooney Rule" – to shortlist her in a situation where her application compared less favourably.

Her eventual appointment was highly successful and initiated a recruitment practice that would bring benefits across the school.

The story

School leaders had identified that one of the barriers to learning for Asian children centred around early language skills; many pupils were starting school with limited receptive language skills in English and extremely limited expressive language skills. Employing a bilingual TA supported the children's transition to an English-speaking educational setting.

A further barrier to learning was limited parental engagement. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation ("Parental Engagement", 2021) indicates that good parental engagement in early years settings has an impact of up to five months' progress. With the school's Bangladeshi families, mothers in particular tend to have a more limited command of the English language. Older siblings often stand in for parents at parents' evenings, and casual "at the classroom door" conversations become challenging. For families, this can add to a sense of alienation from professionals and an education system that seems not to understand or value their own culture. The employment in 2016–2017 of a local Bangladeshi woman in the Reception class immediately improved parental engagement with the school's Asian families. They felt able to approach her with their concerns and listened to her explanations of how to help their children with basic skills.

Staff welcomed the new appointment and benefited from exposure to a different culture. Recognising the benefits for the whole school of this positive action, senior leaders were encouraged to continue the initiative.

Providing opportunities to BAME students for work experience has continued to demonstrate the school's commitment to diversity for its pupils. It has provided students with valuable experience and access to professional references, whilst also helping leaders to identify candidates for future vacancies. These opportunities have included welcoming volunteers from the local BAME community and working with local colleges to provide placements.

Senior leaders found that one of the barriers to this initiative was that applications from members of BAME communities too often lacked sufficient detail about the applicant's skills and experience, thereby failing to make the candidates stand out from the crowd. Experience showed that, whilst BAME candidates might not demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of the English language and might not complete application forms to a high standard, this did not mean that they lacked the necessary qualifications and skills to be serious contenders.

Safeguarding was, and remains, paramount; applications with gaps or lacking references could never be accepted. However, whilst the recruitment process offers the opportunity to anonymise applications, by choosing not to do this, but rather by proactively including applications from BAME candidates in the shortlisting process, leaders have had the opportunity to interview a much broader range of high-quality candidates. One example of this is to overlook grammatical and spelling errors from BAME candidates, accepting that they might not have the home support to identify these errors in their application.

Initially, many applicants were applying for roles such as MSA, which suited their home responsibilities and their formal qualifications. Usually women, they faced the additional challenge of trying to provide professional references, when they had been at home raising their families for some years and no longer had access to current or relevant professional referees. Where this was the case, a safeguarding risk assessment was undertaken. Based on the role of the applicant and the personal references provided, this meant that sometimes additional references were required or additional contact with referees was necessary to confirm references.

Furthermore, recognising key skills and personal qualities, leaders offered these employees further opportunities, experiences and training. Paul Miller calls this "White sanction". He defines White sanction as a deliberate act, "where the skills and capabilities of a BAME individual are, first, acknowledged and, second, endorsed or promoted by a White individual, who is positioned as a broker and/or mediator acting on behalf of or in the interests of the BAME individual".

In the autumn of 2017, one of the school's Bangladeshi parents, whose youngest child had just started school, was first approached by senior leaders to see if she would be interested in applying for an MSA vacancy. She was successful in her application, and her firm but fair interactions with pupils at lunchtimes meant that, when one of the class teaching assistants was absent, she was quickly offered an opportunity to gain some in-class experience. She enjoyed this and expressed interest in any future vacancies. When a vacancy arose, colleagues helped her to complete the application to the required standard. Although senior leaders acknowledged that she lacked the TA experience of some other applicants and would require some support and additional training for the role, they used their knowledge of her commitment to the school, and of the skills that she brought with

her, to “sanction” her appointment. In this role, she is not only a successful adult role model for BAME pupils, but she has also encouraged other BAME members of staff to put themselves forward when opportunities arise.

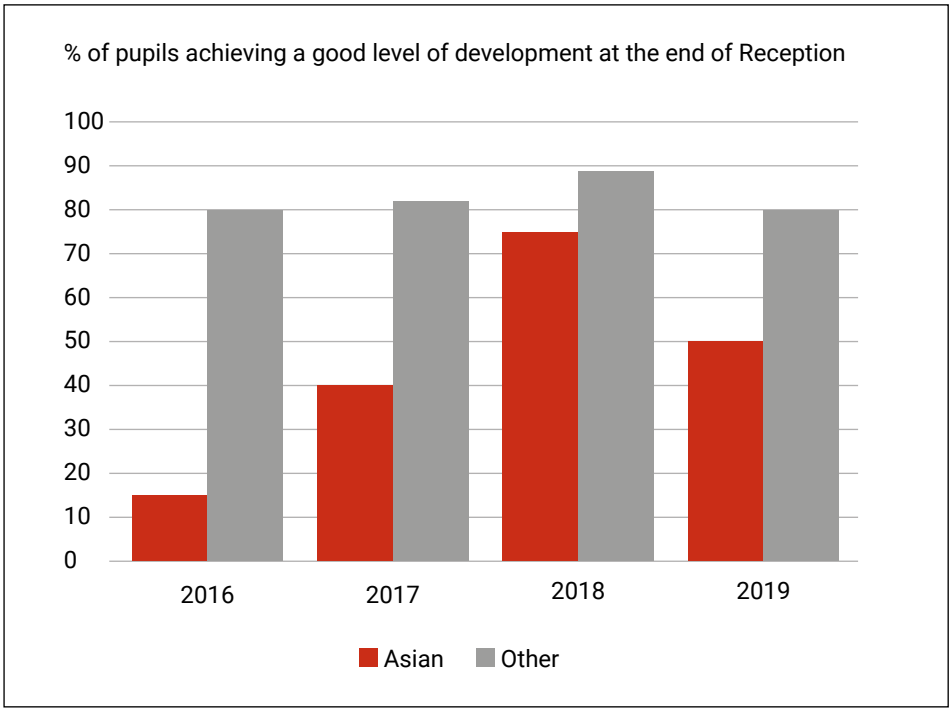
Recognising the success of this recruitment initiative, senior leaders were keen to employ a BAME teacher. This proved to be more difficult as most applicants were White British. However, BAME candidates were almost always interviewed, even if this meant increasing the number on the shortlist. One candidate said at interview that he had applied because his mother worked in the school kitchen for the catering company and had said how friendly and welcoming the school staff were.

Ultimately, the choice of a class teacher must be the best teacher, irrespective of their ethnicity. Therefore, it was not until 2018 that leaders were able to appoint a teacher from a BAME background. Indeed, with another teacher going on maternity leave, the school was able to welcome two BAME teachers that year: one Asian and one Chinese. Since then the number of BAME applicants for teaching posts has also increased. An advertisement for a maternity cover teacher in 2021 attracted a number of applications from candidates from BAME backgrounds, and two out of the three shortlisted applicants were from BAME backgrounds.

With a successful drive to have a staff body that is more representative of the school community, leaders next turned their attention to the school’s leadership. With no vacancies on the staff leadership team, the focus was on the governing board. Two vacancies arose as parent governors’ terms of office came to an end. Enlisting the help of the chair of governors, specific parents were approached and asked to consider standing in the parent governor election. Ultimately, three candidates were nominated: one Bangladeshi, one Chinese and one Russian. The Bangladeshi and Chinese parents were duly elected to the governing body in 2018, providing a more representative school leadership. Some adjustments have been made to ensure that proceedings are inclusive, for example, meetings are avoided during Ramadan. It is also recognised that a Muslim governor will need to join a meeting later or remotely to allow for daily prayers.

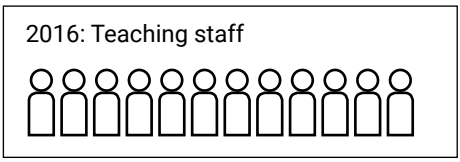
Impact

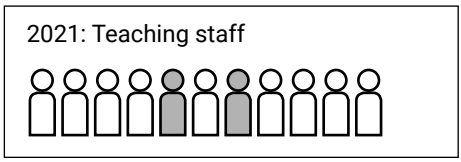
Whilst it is difficult to specifically attribute the improvement in Asian pupils’ attainment and progress to the appointment of a Bangladeshi TA in Reception in 2016, the data from the end of Reception suggests a clear impact on pupil outcomes. The percentage of pupils from Asian backgrounds achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has been increasing each year, relative to the consistent outcomes for other pupils.

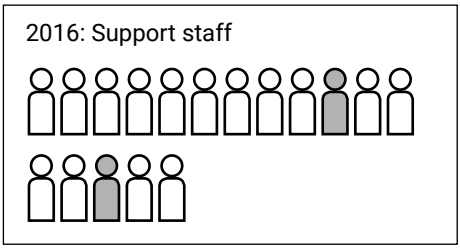


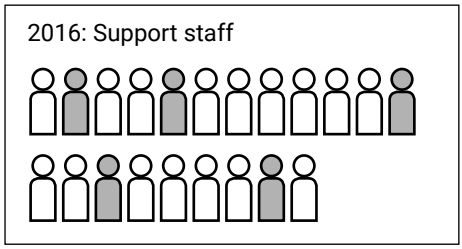
As a result of the school's initiative to shortlist BAME candidates for interview, for the six teaching vacancies arising since 2015, five candidates were shortlisted and two of those were employed.

Creating additional opportunities to support BAME employees in career progression has resulted in two more taking on the role of TA in the school.







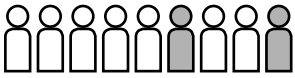


The school has benefited from a better understanding of the concerns and interests of members of BAME communities. BAME teachers are able to empathise more easily with some of our pupils, particularly when discussing issues of racial abuse and Black Lives Matter. BAME staff are also able to influence policies and the curriculum. Their advice and support have helped with the school's focus on ensuring that celebrating diversity is an integral part of the school's ethos.

Targeting BAME parents to stand in parent elections for the governing board has resulted in two out of the nine governors appointed being from a BAME background

2016: Governing board members

2021: Governing board members



Children and parents have benefited from having a greater representation within the school's leadership (governing board). Governors have encouraged the senior leadership team to review the school's curriculum in order to increase diversity. Having a governor from the local Asian community has not only provided support and advice for the school's leadership team, but it has also broadened the school's links with the wider community. In the summer of 2021, the school offered its facilities to the St Albans Youth Project. Run by Sopwell Community Trust, a BME registered charity that promotes activities that foster understanding and inclusion between people of diverse backgrounds to build a stronger community, the St Albans Youth Project offered a range of activities to young people who were eligible for free school meals.

Reflections

When the school's first BAME teaching assistant was employed in 2015, it was expected that communication with parents would improve and children's early language skills would benefit. However, the whole school has benefited from a greater awareness of cultural differences, a review of the school's teaching and learning provision, and improved links with the local community.

A BAME employee said:

"The warm, welcoming environment of Windermere has made me a valued member of the school community. My confidence has flourished as I was given the opportunity to become a teaching assistant when I lacked the traditional qualifications needed. The guidance, support and experience given to me by the school has helped me grow as a teaching assistant. I feel that my skills have been recognised and nurtured within the school.

"The staff and students in Windermere have not only accepted me as part of the school but the inclusive nature of the school has allowed me to practice my faith without judgement. This is due to the fact that I felt comfortable and safe to pray during my break times. I feel that the Windermere is representative of respect and tolerance, which are key to our British values."

Next steps

Senior leaders will continue to offer development opportunities to BAME staff, so that they can continue to be aspirational role models for pupils at the school.

Utilising the skills and knowledge of BAME staff to educate colleagues will ensure the curriculum meets the needs of the school's demographic.

Davina Raftery and Polly Bentley

CONVERTING THE CURRICULUM

The Thomas Alleyne Academy

Focus area

This case study focuses on work at the Thomas Alleyne Academy to create greater race diversity and representation in the curriculum. It outlines how staff have improved the curriculum and why they felt this change was necessary. In various meetings across the school, it was acknowledged that the curriculum could be redesigned to include greater representation from across the world to enhance the experiences of all students in every classroom.

Aims and rationale

The commitment to prioritise this work was made in the aftermath of the events of May 2020, including the murder of George Floyd. The strength of feeling across the school and community further increased leaders' desire to improve the curriculum, to better reflect the diversity of the community, staff and students. After senior leadership team (SLT) meetings and department meetings, the school reviewed and redesigned the curriculum across all departments. The main focus of the curriculum redesign was to include greater representation in the lessons and topics taught, as well as promoting and celebrating underrepresented role models and historical figures of colour. The intention behind the curriculum redesign was to challenge stereotypes and develop students' ability to discuss race and culture, using appropriate language and frames of reference.

Background context

Leaders' reflections and conversations with students led them to conclude that the curriculum being provided by the school reflected and reinforced some of the White and Eurocentric biases that can be commonly seen across the UK education system. While some departments, such as geography, art and RE, had included a diverse range of topics and case studies in their provision, this was not consistent across the school. Some texts and resources, such as *Of Mice and Men* were outdated and reinforced negative stereotypes or failed to shine a spotlight on relevant issues in relation to race and racism.

Across the school, each department has been encouraged to review their content and resources and to take action to adapt the curriculum. The clear message was that the revised curriculum should reflect diverse narratives and challenge stereotypes and prejudices. This required staff to research and discover new materials to incorporate into their schemes of work.

In focus groups, the students delivered clear and insightful feedback to the deputy headteacher that they felt the curriculum did not cover race and racism in sufficient depth. For example, one student said that it "should not be Black children's job to educate White people about racism" and argued that "if you are old enough to face racism, you are old enough to learn about racism". This confirmed leaders' belief that the curriculum was a key area for review and improvement.

The story

The emotions that swept through the UK, and across the world, in May 2020 were a powerful motivation for change. The school responded to the issues highlighted in the media and listened to the voices of those affected by racism in our country and community. The first stage was to gather the SLT and discuss the events occurring in the UK and in the community.

Leaders' concern was how staff and students would be affected and how they could support them as a school, both in the present and in the future. The headteacher attended training provided by the Association of School and College Leaders in April 2021. This training highlighted key areas of focus such as improving racial literacy and developing a more diverse curriculum. The headteacher spread this information to the SLT to review how they could incorporate these targets into their areas of responsibility. The SLT updated the school development plan to include celebration of diversity as a core feature of the curriculum. In May 2021 the curriculum was reviewed in depth to identify areas for improvement. The school also committed to implementing a long-term plan to train staff in racial literacy.

The school's message delivered to curriculum leaders, in line with Herts for Learning guidance, was that the curriculum would need to be reviewed, as a priority, and be reshaped to ensure it both reflected on and prepared students for the issues being identified around race and racism in the UK. Curriculum leaders held department meetings to begin this process in June 2020. Over the subsequent months, departments designed and implemented new units of work and sourced new materials to better reflect the diversity of their subject areas.

In response to requests from Year 11 students at the school, staff opened dialogue through establishing focus groups with Year 11 and Year 8 students. The purpose of the focus groups was to further understand students' views about the curriculum and the school's culture. The Year 11 focus group included self-selected students who felt passionately about the topic, while the Year 8 focus group was formed of students selected or recommended by staff. Both focus groups were hosted by the deputy headteacher. Each focus group included six to eight students from different backgrounds, both White and non-White.

Their feedback told staff that they could include more explicit teaching about racism in lessons and that more diverse texts and materials were needed in a range of subjects. The feedback from students was insightful and provided leaders with valuable information about the lived experiences of students in the school from myriad backgrounds. Students in the focus groups stated that they wanted to be more involved in Black History Month, and that they felt that references to Black history in the curriculum were too often focused on Black American history, rather than Black British history.

Perhaps the most significant feedback was that students felt that racism was not taught about explicitly in school. They believed this left many staff and students in the school uneducated on areas such as how to identify racism, how to challenge stereotypes, and how and when to report racism. Students explained that they felt racism was "not worth reporting, as staff in the school did not appear confident at addressing incidents appropriately".

Students gave specific feedback that more could be done in PSHE and English to tackle racism. Students said they felt uncomfortable studying *Of Mice and Men*, due to the prevalence of racist language throughout the book. The focus group also said that students responsible for racist incidents should be educated to prevent further incidents. This has encouraged the school to consider how to deal with racist incidents and how this process is communicated to students. Interestingly, the Year 8 students did not share all of the concerns raised by Year 11. This suggested that progress has been made at the school in a short period of time (the focus group interviews took place in 2021), but it was clear there was still more work to do.

Middle leaders were given further feedback and guidance in curriculum leaders' meetings, to support them with developing their schemes of work. Key points were emphasised to staff about the importance of the work they were undertaking and its wider importance to students and the culture of the school. Discussions were facilitated around how to discuss race in a classroom setting, and staff were provided with advice about how to locate new materials and topic ideas for their subjects. One outcome from the discussions was an understanding about the confidence levels of staff within the school when talking about race.

These meetings proved very useful, as numerous staff were able to talk confidently about the changes they had made so far. The curriculum leaders were able to support one another in developing their schemes of work into areas that they initially lacked confidence in teaching. This has been identified as a key barrier in the implementation of the new curriculum. Staff confidence and comfort in exploring issues of race and racism within the context of their subjects is crucial to effective discussion in the classroom. As staff at the school continue to become engaged in discussions about race, they will progress their vocabulary, knowledge, and skills to host such discussions in their own classrooms.

Leaders are prioritising supporting all departments to develop their knowledge of a more diverse range of topics, and to become more assured and adept at discussing race in their classrooms.

All of these facets are contributing to evolving the school's anti-racist culture. The school's story and body of work is ongoing as staff continue to learn more, which can be embedded into curriculum provision. Improving racial literacy and overcoming White fragility will be key areas of focus for the school in removing barriers to continue developing our excellent anti-racist curriculum provision in the future.

Impact

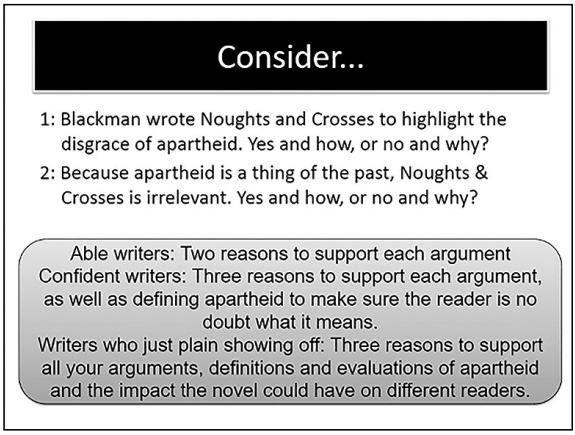
The outcomes of this work are clearly visible in the revised curriculum. Leaders have conducted an audit of the major changes that departments across the school have made to their schemes of work. Each department has devoted time and energy to revise and improve their subject areas, leading to a significant whole-school impact. Students are now experiencing a broader range of topics than before. They are also being challenged to explore key issues around race and racism in the UK and the rest of the world in a way that they had never been asked to before.

Some key changes of note include refreshing the texts studied by the English department. *Of Mice and Men* has been removed from the curriculum, and now students explore a range of texts in a unit titled "Telling Tales", which is focused on exploring short stories from other cultures. A senior member of the English team said, "We started teaching the 'Telling Tales' short stories to Year 9 last year as a standard literature text and quickly realised that there are a wide range of opportunities to explore various cultures and our own prejudices, so we have made it a creative writing unit where students can consider their own ideas about diversity."

Department	Overview	Specifics
Drama	New scheme of work	Introduced "Mask" scheme of work
		New scheme to be introduced about important historical figures, e.g. Rosa Parks This is being reviewed to include more British figures
English	Selected texts focused on improving diversity in KS3	*Noughts and Crosses*
		Telling Tales anthology (short stories from other cultures)
		My Sister Lives on a Mantelpiece – explores Islamophobia
		KS4 – *Poetry Anthology* – poems from different cultures
History	Specific units and lessons added	Black and Asian immigration element added to Civil Rights unit in Year 8 (Windrush)
		Empire and Colonisation unit in Year 8
		Colonial Troops element in Year 9 WWI unit
		USA civil rights and slavery also already covered by curriculum
Tutor time	Reading list	Texts include *Black and British* and *Mohinder's War*
		Black composers – "Music Calendar" played for forms each morning during Black History Month
		Specific sessions based around #proudtobeblack Black History Month theme delivered to students about identifying racism, being an ally and challenging problematic views around race
Maths	Links to history of mathematics	Lesson content is linked to previous civilisations, to give context for students of the history of maths
Geography	New units plus addressing misconceptions	Unit comparing countries within Africa – clarifies that Africa is a diverse continent and dispels myths about Africa being one generic place
		Unit covering migration and refugees, including definitions of "refugees" and "asylum seekers"
		Development unit includes positive examples from non-White countries as well as explaining challenges linked to history (colonialism)
		Range of case studies used to explore different countries from all regions across the world
		Inclusion of positives of different countries/areas, e.g. squatter settlements in Mumbai

Department	Overview	Specifics
Design and technology	Design and manufacturing skills and study of designers	Bronze castings from Nigeria, China and India, to compare methods and designs
		KS4 study of Yinka Ilori, designer of Nigerian heritage, and planned visit to museum showcasing his work
Music	Schemes of work, displays and cross-curricular activities	Black History Month playlist sent to all form tutors
		Year 7 Djembe drumming
		Year 8 Blues, rock 'n' roll, samba
		Year 9 Reggae plus free choice in song writing, often representing hip hop / grime / rap
		Year 10 BTEC – Motown, with other areas being explored and introduced
		Year 11 GCSE – African drumming; Brazilian samba; Caribbean calypso; Indian raga; bhangra; Greek, Israeli and Palestinian folk music
		Selecting videos and images to represent a range of races in lessons
		World music display and BHM display in music classroom
Hospitality and catering	Recipes and discussions	Religious dietary requirements
		Growth of multicultural shops/restaurants, including halal, in the UK
		Recipes from different chefs and cultures, especially in Year 9 ("Food Across the World")
Art	Redesigned curriculum	More diversity of artists studied, including explanations about their barriers and struggles linked to race and culture; example: Nnenna Okore, Nigerian artist
		Project focused on self-identity and politics, which provides space for diversity themes
PSHE	Redesigned curriculum	Specific lessons in Year 7 about respecting differences and being proud of your own identity
		Year 8s taught about respectful relationships and being an ally
		Year 9s taught about inequality in UK society and stereotypes

This change alone benefits students by giving them a wider reading experience without the discomfort that can be caused by reading texts such as *Of Mice and Men*. Students in English lessons now also study *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman, a book that challenges perceptions of racism.



This slide from a lesson on *Noughts and Crosses* challenges students to consider the purpose of the book. The slide also encourages students to reflect on whether apartheid is consigned to history or whether we may still see evidence of it today.

Other specific examples include changes to the PSHE curriculum, where Year 7 attend lessons exploring how fair society is. Students consider the difference between equity and equality and begin to understand how people may experience difficulties in their lives. This is explored in more depth in Years 8 and 9, when discrimination is discussed and students study the evidence for racism in the UK. Students are able to discuss the issues of inequality in the UK and come to their own conclusions based on the evidence. In geography, misconceptions about Africa are explicitly challenged to dispel the myths about the continent and provide students with a clear understanding of its diversity.

Through all of the subjects across the curriculum, the intention is clear: to ensure students are equipped with the knowledge necessary to discuss race from an educated viewpoint. Students should be able to challenge stereotypes and empathise with other cultures, thanks to the diversity of the curriculum they study at the school.

Leaders arranged additional student focus-group meetings to gather feedback about the progress made and the areas that still required improvement. The first focus group was held in December 2021, organised and hosted by the head of PSHE. The group was selected from a list of students who had volunteered to participate. The group consisted of six Year 8 students from a range of backgrounds, who were able to speak eloquently about

their experiences in school. Students reported that they enjoyed the range of cultures and religions explored in RE and felt that "RE is really good because we talk about different religions and the teacher does it really sensitively so nobody gets offended". The students also explained that they really enjoyed specific cultural events in school, such as Black History Month activities in form time, and Hispanic week, where each subject linked their content to Hispanic countries and culture.

Students spoke positively about the school's culture of anti-racism and stated that they each had a trusted adult in school that they could report concerns to. However, there was consensus among the group about being confused about what constitutes racism, so this is something that has been addressed with an assembly about casual racism and its impacts. It is hoped that this assembly will empower more students to report casual racism in school, and help them better understand the languages and behaviour that are appropriate in school.

Reflections

The changes made to the curriculum have been immensely positive and will contribute a great deal to the students' school experiences. However, staff racial literacy is an area that leaders have identified as needing improvement.

Lessons will be fully effective only once the teachers delivering them have the confidence and knowledge to discuss race fluently and confidently. This is a long-term process, which will require training and regular discussions amongst staff to develop comfort in conversations.

Racial literacy has been outlined by many experts as fundamental to delivering an anti-racist curriculum. Leaders recognise the need to strengthen that area of the school. They also recognise the importance of feedback from students on key issues. The feedback the focus groups gave was invaluable and incredibly insightful; this spoke to the knowledge the students have of such issues. Since the initial focus group meetings, dialogue has been opened between the SLT and students around matters of race. As Thomas Alleyne continues to grow as an anti-racist school, leaders will remember the importance of listening to students' concerns and suggestions.

Next steps

The next steps for the school will include work on developing staff racial literacy. Leaders are planning for future staff training sessions on improving racial literacy. As staff confidence develops, more meaningful discussions about race will be facilitated across

the curriculum, and staff will continue finding new resources and topic ideas to embed into the curriculum.

One significant reveal from the Year 8 focus group was examples of poor communication or understanding around cultural issues between staff and students, causing confusion for the students involved. For example, one student described an experience when a PE teacher had asked her to remove a bracelet of cultural significance. Due to a miscommunication, the student felt upset at her culture not being respected. The teacher could have communicated the Health and Safety issue more clearly to find a respectful and safe compromise. The teacher then took it upon themselves to find out more about the cultural significance of the bracelet, but this did not alleviate the tension. The student said, "I felt uncomfortable that the teacher had gone away and researched my culture without telling me or asking me about it." Leaders recognise that they need to support staff to be able to ask questions and have conversations about culture and race sensitively and knowledgeably. Racial literacy training will provide a base to underpin such conversations in future.

In addition to training staff, leaders will also need to regularly review the curriculum provision, with a focus on race and diversity. Through regular reviews, they will be able to support departments that are struggling to include more diverse topics, while at the same time monitoring how effective the changes are. They plan to ask clear questions about each subject area such as:

- **Are opportunities to discuss race and racism being taken?**
- **Are classroom discussions being led confidently?**
- **Are key issues being explored in depth and with sufficient knowledge?**

Lastly, diversification of the curriculum is not substantial enough. For meaningful change, the school needs to decolonise the curriculum, stripping back the material and questioning longstanding assumptions in each subject. Staff must be mindful of how and why certain figures have achieved prominence in our curriculum over others. They must be prepared to remove as well as to add to the curriculum in order to create a curriculum that is truly diverse and fair in its representations of the world.

The school staff are passionate about the mission to create a diverse, decolonised curriculum that meets the needs of the students and society, and challenges stereotypes and assumed truths that are currently inherent in most of UK education.

Matthew Cox

UNLOCKING THE HISTORY CURRICULUM WITH THE UNTOLD TRUTH

St John's C of E Primary School

Focus area

This case study describes the development of a primary history curriculum that represents Black history.

Aims

There were six main aims to this piece of work:

1. to develop a sequenced and progressive curriculum that represents Black history
2. to promote self-awareness and enhance an understanding of identity for pupils of any Black ethnicity
3. to celebrate diversity through a Black history curriculum
4. to recognise the impact of significant events and figures that have helped shape Black history in Britain
5. to enhance the knowledge and understanding of school staff to effectively deliver a coherent Black history curriculum
6. to broaden the understanding of all pupils at St John's of the impact of Black history in Britain and beyond

Rationale

In September 2018, an off-the-shelf, topic-based curriculum was implemented to support with curriculum consistency and coverage. This gave the staff both the time and energy to focus on the personalised development of English, mathematics, religious education and physical education. Since September 2018, the school has reviewed this topic-based curriculum through staff feedback, pupil voice and various audits, to develop a personalised approach to both the pedagogy and content of the curriculum. In the academic year of 2020–21, the headteacher prioritised the target "to review the school's history curriculum to incorporate a broad and balanced Black history" in the school development plan. This followed a curriculum audit that showed that the history curriculum was not sequenced to the standards expected. Furthermore, it was evident that there were no links to Black history. In contrast, the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) offer and development of personal, social, health and citizenship education had developed to a high standard, which promoted diversity and celebrated difference. Therefore, leaders concluded that the history offer did not match SMSC and PSHCE, giving mixed messages.

Background context

Over the last four years, the school community has changed significantly for a number of positive reasons, such as improved early identification of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the strategic and phased regeneration of the school, and its enhanced reputation due to raised standards. (In 2018 the percentage of children achieving a good level of development in early years was above the national average for the first time in over four years. In addition, the percentage of children at the end of Year 6 meeting the higher standard (working at greater depth) in statutory assessment tests had also increased significantly.)

The table below demonstrates how the school dynamics have changed.

	EAL	E-FSM	SEND SUPPORT	EHCP	BAME
2017 – IDSR	8.5%	5.9%	7.4%	0.5%	21.4% (IDSR DATA)
October 2021 – CENSUS	4.5%	9%	13.9%	1.8%	26.2% (SIMS DATA)
Percentage (-/+)	-4%	+3.1%	+6.5%	+1.3%	+4.8%

The story

In September 2017 a new headteacher arrived at St John's, and a revised staffing structure was implemented by September 2018. This provided greater capacity for distributed leadership and better opportunities for career progression, and addressed concerns regarding teacher retention.

Through a staff consultation in the first term of 2017–18, the school curriculum was identified as a key priority to address, to ensure a clear progression and accurate pitch throughout the school. It was important to ensure that the curriculum matched children's needs and the local context. The school team researched a variety of off-the-shelf providers, to have a foundation to build on.

Since September 2018, leaders have been gradually reviewing, refining and consequently moving away from the prescribed off-the-shelf curriculum adopted. This has been achieved by personalising and designing a curriculum for each subject area in manageable phases.

In May 2019 a Governors' Strategy Day took place, which helped to shape a new vision and set of values for the school. The school's vision – "Finding the light in ourselves and each other" – is inspired by John's Gospel and takes on a universal context of seeing the

best in everyone, seeing the best in all situations, following the right path and celebrating difference.

Through the values of hope, joy, love, forgiveness, faith and goodness, the school has formed a solid foundation to embed a secure learning culture. Through its vision and values, it became increasingly evident that the school's pastoral, social and emotional beliefs were not represented in the history curriculum. Although difference was celebrated, this was not demonstrated through a diverse curriculum.

Auditing the history curriculum

The headteacher asked staff to map out their curriculum topic titles and to identify all diversity and Black history links. Through this audit, staff quickly identified that the core links were limited to English and PSHCE. Staff were then asked to look through their history support materials and to map out their topics and key learning objectives across the year, along with any diversity and Black history links.

Exploring the history curriculum in further detail was essential in order to review what was working well and to support the identification of next steps. It also enabled the headteacher to create a simplified, whole-school history long-term plan with accuracy.

When teachers reviewed their own content alongside their peers', they identified the following challenges to address within the current history curriculum:

- There wasn't a clear rationale underpinning the curriculum.
- The curriculum focused on traditional topics, and individuals who did not represent the diversity of Britain (past and present) or the school community.
- Where there were links to other cultures, these were outside of Britain and lacked coherence with the wider delivery of the history curriculum, feeling like add-ons and having limited impact.

These activities brought staff together and secured their buy-in to making important changes.

Researching to move forward

The next step was to review the history programmes of study and long-term overview of the history curriculum. Going back to basics and engaging with such important documents was invaluable; it helped to remind everyone of the requirements, but also allowed staff to "lift the ceiling" and challenge the narrow thinking behind traditional units and common place characters.

Leaders then looked to resources from the Primary Historical Association to help them to develop the substance behind their planning. The Association's "Progression in

history" document facilitates planning for the development of learning across five key areas: chronological understanding and knowledge, historical terms, historical enquiry, interpretations of history, and questions that relate to all concepts that underpin all historical enquiry. This document was crucial to supporting the curriculum design process.

Finally, reading David Olusoga's book Black and British was pivotal to understanding how core aspects of British history can be taught through enhancing units with untold stories. This seminal book, alongside various articles surrounding the timeline of British Black history, led the headteacher to finding out about Hackney's Diverse Curriculum – the Black Contribution. Its content was taken into consideration when drafting a new long-term plan for the school.

Designing an enhanced history curriculum for St John's

The first step prioritised the sequencing of the curriculum and having a clear intent. Staff subsequently mapped out the following themes in order:

- **changes within and beyond living memory**
- **the contributions of important historical figures**
- **the local area, which includes the parish church**
- **Stone Age to Bronze Age**
- **invaders and settlers**
- **ancient civilisations**
- **migration and activism**

Black history is interwoven in all of the above themes, with key changes being the inclusion of the Benin Empire, providing a wider spectrum of historical figures, and tackling topics such as Windrush and activism.

Topics were then sequenced for Years 1 to 6 and shared with teachers for consultation. Having already secured the buy-in of teachers by involving them in the process and being transparent, the draft was agreed, with no changes required.

Enhancing the delivery of the history curriculum

With an agreed curriculum in place, it was important to support teachers in the delivery of these carefully sequenced plans. Leaders have achieved this through enhancing the diversity represented in the school library; quality texts were identified as being crucial to supporting the learning process. In turn, confidence has been developed amongst staff through having Hackney's Diverse Curriculum available to support the delivery of certain aspects of the curriculum, such as untold stories, the Windrush generation and activism topics.

As a team, it was agreed to plan school trips to complement learning in history and to involve the school community in sharing their experiences with the children. It is the aim of the school to provide an immersive experience that inspires learning and brings history alive.

Since the introduction of this adapted history curriculum, teachers have taken responsibility for developing medium-term plans, which are monitored and supported by the school's humanities team. This is achieved through a strategic approach to curriculum development. This ensures that the curriculum development is sustained and monitored efficiently.

As a result of this process, in the summer term of 2021 teachers requested to repeat the process for geography, art and design technology (the remaining subjects in the off-the-shelf curriculum). Not only were they keen to repeat the process, but they were also keen to accelerate it. Teachers have been empowered to take full ownership of personalising the curriculum in a coherent manner across the whole school.

Impact

18 children across Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 were surveyed over a three-year period on their views about representation at St John's. All children who were surveyed were of non-White British ethnicity. Before conducting the survey, the purpose of the activity and key terms used were explained to them. All children were reassured that their answers were confidential and that there were not any right or wrong answers. They were assured that it would be quite feasible and appropriate for different children to have different views.

The full breakdown of the characteristics of the group surveyed was as follows:

- **nine boys and nine girls**
- **five children in Year 4, seven children in Year 5 and six children in Year 6**
- **seven ethnicities, and one child whose parents had not given an ethnic category when data was collected**

Pupils were asked to respond to three key statements, and the changing findings over time are shown below.

Statement 1 – I see myself represented in school life

Three years ago, 61.1% of children surveyed identified themselves confidently within the fabric of school life, whereas that figure has now increased to 83.3%. There was a significant increase, over time, in the percentage of pupils choosing the category of "very strong" as their response. The figure rose from 5.6% to 33.3%. This increase was the result

of a number of pupils changing their original assessment of “solid” to “very strong”. Five children (27.8%) scored this statement the same on both occasions, with two of them giving consistently low responses (1 and 2) and three other children giving consistently high ones (3, 4 and 5). Out of the 15 children who scored the school as making progress, the average increase up the scale was 1.4.

There is a notable positive increase shown in children being able to identify themselves within the fabric of school life.

Statement 2 – Differences are actively celebrated

Three years ago, 66.7% of children surveyed stated that the school positively celebrated differences within the school environment, whereas that figure has now increased to 94.4%. The biggest shift in confidence levels appeared where children assessed the school in the “growing” and “very strong” categories. In the original survey, 27.8% chose the “growing” category. This figure reduced to 12.5% in the most recent survey because a number of pupils changed their assessment up from the “growing” category to the “very strong” category. The percentage of children choosing the “very strong” category rose from 33.3% to 61.1%. The responses in these two different categories have decreased by almost 50% and increased by 50%, respectively. Nine children (50%) scored this statement the same on both occasions, with eight of them being consistently high (4 or 5) and one other child remaining at the growing stage (2). Out of the nine children who scored the school as making progress, the average increase up the scale was 1.6.

The growing positivity of responses over time is likely to reflect greater representation through PSHCE lessons and the focus within SMSC. When reviewing the individual responses, it is clear that lower responses were given by children of Asian ethnicities. Leaders’ next steps need to be to include more Asian British history in the curriculum.

Statement 3 – I feel confident talking about identity without fear of being treated unfairly

Three years ago, 72.2% of children surveyed stated that they felt confident in talking about their identity, and this has now increased to 83.3%. Although the increase over the three-year period is not as significant numerically as for the other two statements, a big shift in “very strong” confidence levels stands out – a move from 16.7% to 38.9%. Although the results are positive, the group that assessed themselves low on the scale (27.8%) has only reduced to 16.7%; this represents two children. Nine children (50%) scored this statement the same on both occasions, with seven of them being consistently high (3, 4 or 5) and two remaining at the “very little” stage. Out of the nine children who scored the school as making progress, the average increase up the scale was 1.2.

This statement saw the lowest average increase in confidence levels over time. It also demonstrated the lowest shift from the low categories (1 and 2). Therefore, as a next step, leaders want to focus on this area with staff and explore strategies to develop confidence in talking about identity without fear of being treated unfairly.

Evaluation

Aim 1. Develop a sequenced and progressive curriculum that represents Black history
The history curriculum is now carefully sequenced, with a meaningful chronology implemented, which is personalised to reflect the local area and the Black school community. There is a clear progression of skills embedded with high expectations, which teachers have taken ownership of and plan to further refine.

Aim 2. Promote self-awareness and enhance understanding of identity for pupils of any Black ethnicity
All pupils of Black ethnicity are able to see themselves in the positive contributions of significant individuals and events in history, which has raised aspirations and self-esteem.

Aim 3. Celebrate diversity through a Black history curriculum
Pupils surveyed reflected that there has been a notable shift in the history curriculum and see themselves represented, whereas previously that was not the case.

Aim 4. Recognise the impact of significant events and figures that have helped shape Black history in Britain
Children and staff are beginning to dispel the myths associated with Black history and key historical terms such as migration, e.g. migration to Britain didn't begin after World War II and Black history is not just a part of British history – it is British history.

Aim 5. Enhance the knowledge and understanding of school staff to effectively deliver a coherent Black history curriculum
Staff have experienced a positive discomfort in learning new content, which has resulted in a growth in confidence to teach important issues and concepts. Teachers have engaged with new support materials to facilitate excellent learning opportunities for our children.

Aim 6. Broaden the understanding of all pupils at St John's of the impact of Black history in Britain and beyond
All pupils have a greater sense of our school value of love and our British values of mutual respect and tolerance. This has resulted in a greater appreciation of Black history amongst all pupils.

Designing the curriculum was a positive experience. Staff delivering the curriculum have needed to upskill their knowledge as they have gone along, due to the content being new

for many. The newly designed history curriculum has brought up many questions for staff, which have created good opportunities for open dialogue, such as how to deliver content sensitively and what is age-appropriate.

Next steps

Plans are afoot to develop the history curriculum further to incorporate British Asian history. Leaders want to work with core stakeholders to develop a language for learning in history, race and anti-racism. They aim to enhance the SMSC offer through a strategic approach to discussing race and anti-racism. They plan to create a bank of materials of untold stories such as that of Roy Hackett, whose activism influenced the Race Equality Act.

Leaders are liaising with the Race Equality Adviser at Herts for Learning to co-construct a Race Equality Framework that formalises the school's approach to being truly anti-racist, and which is embedded and sustainable, regardless of the personnel in the school. This will address recruitment, curriculum design, school policies and SMSC, to name just a few targeted areas.

Simon Horleston

IMPLEMENTING DIVERSITY, REPRESENTATION AND INCLUSION ACROSS THE HUMANITIES CURRICULUM

John Warner School

Focus area

This case study focuses on the school's Racial Equity Project (REP) and, in particular, work to review and adapt the humanities curriculum, improving diversity, representation and inclusion.

Aims and rationale

The aim of this project was to create a culture of anti-racism by improving diversity and representation across the school, thereby ensuring that staff and students are supported in understanding and addressing racial inequities. The REP can be summarised by 3Es:

Educate: The REP will ignite and enable our stakeholders to broaden their understanding of systemic racism. Through an ambitious, relevant and rich curriculum, we will challenge perspectives, educate and break down structural inequities, and develop positive relationships and behaviours.

Empower: The REP will empower the school community to utilise knowledge and skill to build towards a shared vision of a racially equitable curriculum, through effective teaching, learning and assessment.

Enhance: The REP will create an environment of positive change, where all members of our community are able to thrive and flourish in an ever-changing world, through a harmonious working environment – working cohesively for the enhancement of the wellbeing of all members of the school and local community.

Background context

Inspired by Black Lives Matters protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, and by some concerning reactions to these protests in the local area, the senior leadership team started the process of proactively addressing racism in the summer of 2020.

To help facilitate this positive action, the school identified an external consultant (Rachel Clarke from the organisation Promote Equality (www.promoteequality.org)) to provide advice about the best ways to approach this important area. It was agreed that the initial phase would focus on raising awareness, and on training the staff and governors who would be engaged in the delivery of the REP. Developing racial literacy with the staff was a crucial first step in addressing better assumptions and misconceptions that are symptomatic of a colour-blind organisation.

Extensive training, coaching and support were provided to equip the staff involved with a good level of understanding of societal racial injustice, common language, and the foundations to enact change. Four sessions of staff training were delivered to senior and middle leaders, with a view to developing strategies that could be passed on within their pastoral and curricular teams.

The REP that the school embarked on would seek to cover all aspects of provision – to effect a culture change and establish the school as an anti-racist organisation. It was agreed that a key part of the early stages would be to review and adapt areas of the school curriculum that have the most direct relationships with the themes and content of equity, diversity and representation.

A framework was developed, with a timeline for the 2020–2021 academic year, to move into the next phase of the REP. The specific area of focus in this phase was to review and adapt the curriculum, starting with the humanities faculty – history and geography.

The story

The history curriculum

The opportunity to redesign the curriculum at key stage 3 was embraced by the history department. Keen to move away from a narrow, Euro-centric approach, staff explored ways of amending the existing provision and including new topics that would provide a wider contextual lens on established historical topics, as well as introducing students to histories that have previously been untold.

The study of slavery within the wider topic of the British Empire was identified as an area that would benefit from immediate review and revision. Learning from successful teaching and learning approaches, adopted for teaching tragedies of humanity such as the Holocaust, teachers applied the same practices when developing their approach to teaching about slavery. Moving away from outdated and simplistic lines of enquiry such as “What did it feel like to be on a slave ship?” – a question that is unfathomable to answer – students are now encouraged to scrutinise the historical evidence available to draw conclusions about real experiences; the focus is on education rather than conjecture. The study of the British Empire (Year 8) has been extended to include a case study of the Congo, to appreciate the existence of precolonial African empires and to assess the impact of European (British, Belgian and Portuguese) involvement. Engagement in the Oxford outreach programme, exploring the role of transatlantic slavery in the American Revolution, has created further opportunities to connect with teachers in both the US and the UK. It also ensures that the teaching of precolonial and colonial African history is representative of diverse voices and experiences.

This widening of the lens has been reflected in history through tasks at key stage 3, called "Meanwhile, Elsewhere", which encourage students to explore global parallel histories to discover what else was happening in different societies at the same time as the prescribed syllabus being studied. Examples include:

- **Alongside the study of the Battle of Hastings in 1066, students are asked to complete a homework task on the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 in the Byzantine Empire.**
- **Students explore the Mali Empire of Mansa Musa in the 14th century, while studying the Hundred Years' War in Europe.**
- **Students investigate the rule of Ivan the Terrible in Russia, to enrich their study of Henry VIII and the break with Rome.**

Another area of further development was the Aspire Programme (enrichment aimed at talented and higher-attaining students), which provided the perfect opportunity for students to continue to explore Black history beyond the curriculum, tying in well with Black History Month. From a history perspective, students engaged with an array of primary sources, which gave a collective overview of the events of the Bussa Rebellion in Barbados. This was then supplemented by a geography session, which looked at the development of *identity* within the curriculum.

The geography curriculum

The starting point was to engage with the concepts of *representation and identity* as core within the curriculum.

The aim to interrogate the concept of representation persistently across the geography curriculum was an important early goal.

Developing *representation* led not only to ensuring the incorporation of more diverse case-study examples, but also ensuring that the representation of diverse peoples today could be interrogated by students. This has enabled teachers to challenge students across topics, be those representations of migration within the media, of the Middle East within film and literature, or people within local regeneration studies. They recognise that engaging with these concepts from the beginning of secondary school highlights prejudices learnt subconsciously within wider society.

Students now progress through the school, actively challenging racism within the UK, regional orientalist thought and global indigenous discrimination. They are supported to question what they have learnt, to unlearn misrepresentations and create new knowledge. Furthermore, the concept of representation challenged external attitudes towards race and the long-term pursuit of an equitable knowledge.

In contrast, the concept of *identity* was engaged to address more internal perceptions of ethnicity within the school and those knowledges that mandate the understanding

and questioning of students' own identity. Staff place emphasis on geography being the manifestation of wider processes, to impact the creation of "place". Thus, the understanding of identity (and the processes that create identity) is especially important for students' understanding of both the subject of geography and themselves.

From the beginning of their geographical studies in Year 7, students study a "personal geography". They then engage the local geographies that have shaped their lives while growing and then present these to the class. In Year 9, for example, students move on to explore "Is changing places a blessing or a curse?", and the way in which identity is bound within places and the changing of places. Students build knowledge of how identities are so often manipulated to maintain structures of power within the UK. Understanding how identity is shaped is not only important for minority ethnic students in their understanding of themselves, but also educates all students on the change that is needed in the future.

Elsewhere in the school, the geography department is striving towards a racially equitable school curriculum through both Eco-Club and assemblies. One of Eco-Club's core goals is focused on citizenship, raising awareness about the importance of inclusion and working to build a sense of community within the school. This includes raising awareness of global activism, engaging in global competitions and understanding threats to the environment and to the world's citizens.

Assemblies are also used to raise awareness in other areas such as climate change and the census, thereby working to represent ethnic minorities in a fair and more positive light.

Impact

Impact within history

Year 7 students, in their first lesson on the Mali Empire, were asked to give their initial thoughts about the history of Africa and were then asked to reflect on these at the end of the lesson. The comments reflected the significant gap in knowledge and cultural capital that surrounds the study of global history and the damaging impact this ignorance can have on our diverse society.

Initial thoughts:

- **"My thoughts on African history is that Black people struggle to have a normal day-to-day life."**
- **"I don't know anything about African history."**
- **"I thought Africa was a poor continent and people couldn't find any water."**

Have your initial thoughts changed? How so?:

- **"Africa was very rich."**
- **"African history is much wider than what I thought it was."**
- **"I have changed all of my first thoughts."**
- **"Africa was powerful."**

The history department is now increasingly able and confident to challenge stereotypes within lessons and around the school. Teachers are also now able to offer students a global education in history, rather than the narrow British-centric national curriculum. Students enjoy learning about the history of other countries and cultures; they are inquisitive in lessons. Additionally, the Aspire Programme has been successful in providing an additional opportunity to further embed the REP across the school community.

A good start has been made, judging by the very impressive and articulate responses from the six Aspire Programme students, who had an enlightening conversation with the headteacher about their study of the Bussa Rebellion and the wider importance of being exposed to global history.

Impact within geography

The new curriculum for racial equity in geography remains within the first 18 months of its development and, as a result, long-term evidence of impact is not yet available. However, subjective observations of impact, from teaching both the new and old curriculum, indicate that students have increased knowledge of the inequality that exists on multiple scales and the understanding of processes that have manifested such inequality (for example, colonialism and neo-colonialism).

There is now increased student questioning of the knowledge that is presented to them. For example, when presented with new articles or reports, it is commonplace that students will not only look at the date of writing but also seek understanding of the author and context of their writing.

Equally, students' reading of extended texts has become an active process, as they have become critical in their reading rather than passively accepting knowledge presented. Because they are questioning more of what they see in the classroom and daily life, they have increased their own access to decolonial and alternative knowledges.

Students have developed an increased sense of purpose for studying geography as a whole, as they have gained a clearer understanding of how the subject analyses the impact of multiple processes upon specific place. The project has increased the geographical knowledge of all students, not just that of Black, Asian and ethnic minority students.

Reflections

The REP has provided significant opportunities across the school to review curriculum provision and expose students to a more global curriculum, which represents diversity and inclusion. The initial focus on the humanities subjects made sense due to the clear opportunity to engage with explicit content that could broaden cultural capital and representation. Other subject areas have already started to apply the same principles to a review of their curricula.

The early engagement with external consultation ensured staff had access to crucial training and discussion around this important yet sensitive area of provision. This gave staff the confidence to take positive action and reflect on the necessity of opening up the curriculum to previously hidden voices and topics. This emphasis on creating a community of enquiry within the staff, by sharing and recommending relevant reading and facilitating ongoing professional development, has been a crucial element to the REP and will help generate sustainability across the school.

The opening up of the curriculum has had an immediate positive impact on the cultural awareness of students. One challenge has been around the availability of resources that are pedagogically sound as well as focused on more diverse content. The majority of published resources have typically been linked to the national curriculum and either do not reflect the desired coverage or give no more than a nod to more diverse stories. As such, staff were required to either adapt or create resources, to ensure appropriately high levels of classroom delivery.

While the REP has been exceptionally positive for the school community, it has exposed challenges – both predicted and unforeseen. The school has worked hard on keeping stakeholders informed of the REP at all stages. Governors, parents, staff and students have largely been supportive of the initiative, but pockets of resistance have emerged, with questions being raised about prioritising an anti-racist agenda. Having a solid understanding of the educational, legal and societal justification for positive action has allowed school leaders to respond confidently to such challenges, although the wider issues around diversity, inclusion and representation continue to be hijacked by those pushing political agendas.

Next steps

Next steps for history

There are plans to disseminate the professional development course, "Teaching of trans-Atlantic slavery in the age of revolution", to other members of the history department. The subject leader for history plans to work with the subject leaders for geography and religious education on cross-curricula links within humanities, to give students wider coverage of a particular topic. The history team will continue to review and refine the curriculum, particularly interweaving REP opportunities into key stages 4 and 5. They will also continue to make use of whole-school opportunities outside of lesson time, such as assemblies and form-time activities, to deliver the decolonised history curriculum.

Next steps for the Aspire Programme

Leaders will continue to look to embed REP within the curriculum of the programme. They will use the *Aspire* journal to communicate with parents and improve the selection, attendance and participation of ethnic minority students in the programme. There are plans to have a structured conversation with all students about their Aspire experience in humanities and their current history and geography units. Staff will set up "before" and "after" questionnaires to measure impact.

Next steps for geography

Leaders want to improve the racial literacy of teachers, both in terms of deconstructing the barriers that exist to minority ethnic students within the school; and identifying, integrating and learning from knowledge beyond traditional western geographies that remain absent from the curriculum. There are plans to integrate content beyond the GCSE specification more directly within key stage 4 geography studies in order that students' knowledge and engagement evolve as they move through the school. Teachers will create a long-term bank of evidence to enable them to evaluate the impact of the curriculum upon student understanding over time.

Next steps for the whole school

Leaders plan to re-examine how certain subjects are taught through a western or colonial lens. They will arrange visits to schools with established anti-racist cultures (e.g. Harris City Academy, Crystal Palace). Leaders also aim to increase the representation of diversity on display boards in all faculties across the school and murals around the school for the house system.

Jeremy Scott and Grace Yesufu

SEEING AND BEING SEEN

St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

Focus area

This case study focuses on the actions taken at St Catherine's to create increased representation of racial diversity in written and visual materials and displays used throughout the curriculum, and to celebrate the heritage of all pupils.

Aims and rationale

"We cannot close our eyes to any form of racism or exclusion, while pretending to defend the sacredness of every human life."

Pope Francis, June 2020

"Our Catholic faith does more than condemn racism; it also calls us to challenge racism, to eliminate its causes and to heal the wounds it brings."

Bishops of Archdiocese of Southwark, June 2020

As Catholic leaders, the senior leadership team (SLT) at St Catherine's were compelled to respond to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement with robust action. The school's mission statement is, "Be who God created you to be and you will set the world on fire". However, the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 made it clear that systemic racism and unconscious bias were preventing many Black people from living the lives they deserved. As educators, the SLT felt a duty to be a part of the solution, by addressing some of the causes of racism and helping to heal the wounds of the children in their care. Leaders were determined to avoid "tokenism" and instead sought systemic, long-term change. They wanted to ensure that the school would be a place where all felt welcomed, affirmed and encouraged, and where everyone is respected as the person God has created them to be.

Background context

St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School is located in South West Hertfordshire. It converted to academy status in 2012 and is part of a multi-academy trust, the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust, alongside four other primary schools and six secondary schools. The school is typically oversubscribed and has approximately 260 pupils on roll.

Over time, there has been a significant change in the composition of the cohort. When the previous headteacher left in 2014, 35% of the school's pupils were non-White British. This percentage has increased by 18% to 53% pupils. In 2014, 20% of pupils spoke English as an additional language (EAL), which has risen to 33% in 2021, with 52 languages spoken at home.

The story

The SLT comprised three White British women, so before any meaningful change could be made, it was essential that the voices of the Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) community were sought and heard. The urgency of the BLM movement meant that, despite the challenges of COVID-19, the SLT immediately engaged a working party consisting of parents, governors and staff (the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Party – "the Working Party"). This group met virtually and a broad action plan was drawn up. One of the key focus areas was around inclusive representation and education around heritage.

As a Catholic school, historically the prominent message was that everyone is equal in God's eyes and therefore equally deserving of love and respect. Race was irrelevant. The significance of the race, heritage and identity of each individual was not adequately acknowledged. As one staff member said, "I don't see the colour of children's skin. I just treat everybody the same." The complexity and sensitivity around the subject of race meant that many staff felt it was best to not focus on it. They were concerned that they would cause offence by drawing attention to difference or enquiring about heritage. In the past, the focus was on what makes us the same. However, increasing representation meant shifting mindsets towards actually recognising and celebrating difference. Discussions within the Working Party highlighted that ignoring race was in reality detrimental. Instead, the school should be promoting in the children the sense that their race and heritage are a fundamental part of them being "Who God created them to be".

Children cannot be what they cannot see. In order to achieve true human flourishing, each person needs to have a deep and profound sense of themselves and their potential. The children in St Catherine's needed to be surrounded by stories and images of inspirational Black role models, to counter negative portrayals and stereotypes in the media, or which they might encounter at home. Another key aspect of representation was giving pupils the space to talk about and celebrate their heritage, as part of their unique identity.

The Working Party proposed a two-pronged approach:

1. Routine and interwoven use of materials (texts and images) throughout the curriculum and around the school, usualising different cultures and counteracting the Euro-centric and White-centric, narrow, exclusive approach ("The way to undo unconscious bias is

to expose people subconsciously to a wide range of positive representations of Black people," said one Working Party member)

2. Education about and celebration of different backgrounds, cultures and heritage ("Bringing the world to the school," said another Working Party member)

Aim 1: Representation in reading material and visual images

An internal audit showed that reading material (both in the school library and in classroom book areas) was limited, and books related to other cultures were often stereotypical and outdated. In some cases, these were promoting a negative and damaging view, such as the stereotype that all people in Africa are poor. There was a shortage of positive images, and over half of the staff felt that the reading material provided to children was limited in its diversity. A staff survey also indicated that they lacked knowledge of appropriate texts and confidence in where to look for more diverse curriculum material. This reflected wider trends – in 2017 only 1% of children's books had a non-White main character ("CLPE Reflecting Realities – Survey of Ethnic representation within UK Children's Literature", Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, 2020).

To immediately address some of the identified issues, the SLT researched and compiled a wish list of appropriate books and invited families to donate them. The aim was to include books that dealt with racial issues, promoted anti-racism and activism, or had BAME protagonists and characters. A starting point was booksfortopics.com, which provided appropriate lists of books for different age groups. Amazon was also a source of inspiration and enabled the creation of an online wish list, which could be accessed by the whole school community. This initiative was enthusiastically embraced by families and resulted in over 50 books being gifted. A sticker was placed on the inside of each book, with details of who had gifted it. This encouraged greater "buy-in", as families donated books that resonated with them (such as a family of Ghanaian heritage purchasing *The Ghanaian Goldilocks* by Pizzoli and Howell). The SLT introduced a Book of the Week and filmed story times for the children to access in lockdown.

Leaders held a staff meeting about racial diversity, where they modelled substituting traditional texts with equally high-quality but more representative ones. Teachers were inspired and began to proactively seek out engaging reading material, and English subject leaders redesigned the reading core texts for the whole school.

The impact of this was immediate, and the positive feedback only stood to strengthen the school's resolve to make this a high priority on the school development plan. Following a science lesson around Marie Maynard Daly's work on food and its effect on the heart and circulatory system, a parent of a Year 6 pupil commented:

"As I was preparing her work this morning, I noticed how affected I was by the focus in science, to a point where I was tearful. It's misguided of anyone to not recognise the value of representation. It's good to be seen. At this stage in her transition, it helps when my daughter can see herself in the world beyond her bubble. I want her to be able to see possibilities and her worth and value. These images help to do that."

As new reading material was published, leaders continued to add to the library (for example, through BAMEed book lists).

As well as considering depiction in literature, the SLT audited the images used in the learning environment. One issue identified was specific to the nature of St Catherine's as a faith school. Throughout the building, the numerous images of the Holy Family (Jesus, Mary and Joseph) presented a White family, with Caucasian features. To ensure all pupils could see Christ as their Christ, who came for them, conventional images of Christ were replaced with pictures of the Holy Family from around the world, within different cultural traditions.

Leaders were keen to highlight Black people who were prominent in their field of work or expertise, especially Black Britons, and to include current and relevant figures who were making their mark in society. Feedback was sought from parents to ascertain what was working, as well as to gain input for future actions.

"I really appreciated the review of reading and learning materials to show a wider range and to be more inclusive."

Parent in feedback survey

Aim 2: Celebrating diversity and heritage – Creating a culture of encounter

The school sought to create a "culture of encounter" – to address stereotypes, misconceptions, unconscious bias and preconceived ideas, through educating children (and their families) about differences in ethnicity, religion, race, language and beliefs.

A simple but powerful way of celebrating the diverse heritage of the pupils was suggested by one of the members of the Working Party, namely to mark the independence days of heritage countries. However, it became acutely evident that the minimal information around ethnicity collected when pupils first joined the school was at best unhelpful and at worst reductive. The school's management information system did not allow for specific ethnicities to be recorded. A designation of "Black other" or "Any other Asian", ignored the rich heritage of families.

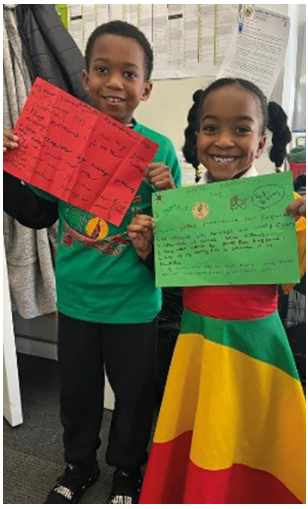
Parents or guardians are the primary educators of a child, so it was essential that they were an integral part of the process. Following a short Google Forms survey, sent to all families, it was ascertained that pupils within the school hailed from over 50 different countries. In addition, many families identified as having multiple (in several cases three) different heritage backgrounds. This survey is now sent to all new starters, so the SLT have detailed information on the composition of the community.

When designing how best to mark independence days, it was paramount that the outcomes were multifaceted, to:

1. educate about colonialism and the effect of the colonists on native communities
2. educate about different cultures around the world
3. celebrate the heritage of our families

4. create a culture of encounter – through first-hand engagement, to dispel the concept of the "other"
5. instil pride in pupils about where they have come from and about the contributions of that country to the world

In the weekly newsletter, the head references upcoming national or independence days and invites contributions from families. On independence days, children and staff wear national colours or national dress and bring in flags, food or personal items associated with their culture. Families can contribute to a PowerPoint, which is shared with the whole school, and pupils speak about their own experiences of visiting their heritage country and of being of dual/multiple heritage.



"I love the opportunity for children to come into school on cultural feast days, relevant to them, and celebrate with their class."

Parent, Year 2

"My friends all asked me about Grenada. It makes me feel special to wear different clothes. I am excited to celebrate my day!"

Pupil, Year 3

"I liked it when I taught my class about what it's like in Nigeria."

Pupil, Year 4

Impact

The school website, along with a highly active social media presence, was the perfect vehicle for communicating the school's vision and ethos around issues of race and diversity. The impact of the project is not to be underestimated, as one comment from a prospective parent evidences:

> **"Can I make a point about how happy I was to see your curriculum page regarding the Black Lives Matter movement and Black History Month? Reading your statement actually brought a small lump to my throat – thank you for all you are doing. I come from a mixed-race family and moving to Hertfordshire from London I was really concerned about how much diversity my son would be exposed to daily … This really meant a lot to me to see, so on a personal level, thank you for all that you are doing for the children for this important work. It is genuinely life changing."**

The change in mindset was exemplified by this year's Black History Month. Again, listening has been key to continue to develop and improve practice. Feedback from Black History Month 2020 included a request for there to be a greater emphasis on the achievements of Black Britons. In previous years, like at many schools, the choice of Black figures studied was driven by the most readily available material (stock PowerPoints, which could be lifted directly off the internet). Many of these focused on global leaders and world shapers like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Barack Obama and Rosa Parks. While the magnitude of their impact on the world is clear, true representation means people similar to themselves on the screens in front of them. They needed to feel a closer affinity for those they were learning about – to be inspired by their actions and believe that they too could do such things.

Therefore, on the theme of "Proud to Be", children heard about contemporary, British inspirational Black figures. Again, every aspect of the curriculum was explored, with children gaining an appreciation of Black politicians, musicians, athletes, sportspeople, artists, poets, authors, scientists and innovators. Examples included Kadeena Cox OBE (Paralympic gold medallist), Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock MBE (award-winning physicist),

and Sir Steve McQueen CBE (artist and director, winner of the Turner Prize and the first Black filmmaker to win an Oscar for best picture). Pupils created their own "Proud to Be" journals, chronicling their learning.

Parental feedback evidences the impact these changes have had.

"I absolutely love how diverse this school is. The school greatly acknowledges that all children and their families have different backgrounds, different ethnicities and different needs and this is clearly evident in the school curriculum and regular school activities. We honestly cannot ask for more. Thank you! My child really enjoyed her presentation during the Independence Day/week. Activities like this proves to the children that the school values the children's cultures."

"We have been very pleased to see the focus on understanding of the different heritages within the school population, such as teaching Black history and celebrating independence/national days. Our girls have benefitted from it a lot, as I'm sure other kids have."

Reflections

All pupils, regardless of their heritage, have benefited from the work carried out to increase racial diversity and representation. Parental feedback indicates diversity and inclusion are now a growing strength of the school.

"I think you outline the equality and diversity in a fun and friendly way, which in turn encourages the children to accept and treat everyone as one."

Parent

"I am extremely grateful to read of the school's dedication to promote equality for all – one of the biggest reasons why we chose SCOS for our son."

Parent

Pupils feel represented and are inspired by learning about Black achievements.

> **"It makes me so proud seeing what Black people have done. It makes me feel proud to be Black and like I can do anything."**
>
> **Pupil, Year 5**

Next steps

The SLT has a clear vision for establishing a deep-rooted culture of acknowledgement, awareness and celebration of racial diversity. Leaders are committed to embedding initiatives into everyday practice. Over the next year, the school will undertake accreditation for the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Quality Mark in order to put in place a specific EDI development cycle and ensure sustained progress in this priority. In addition, the SLT will broaden its focus beyond racial diversity to ensure equity, inclusion and representation are a cornerstone of everything done within the school.

> **"Certainly great steps in the right direction. I applaud your valour in confronting issues on equality, diversity and justice as a school leadership team."**
>
> **Feedback from a Working Party member**

Stephanie Taylor and Nicola Kane

ACHIEVING DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Broxbourne CE Primary School

Focus area

This case study focuses on creating greater race diversity and representation in the curriculum, alongside improving and creating opportunities to teach about, and address, other aspects of cultural and social diversity. By "curriculum", we mean not only the subjects taught and learnt within the school but also other learning opportunities such as assemblies, external workshops and experiences. In order to do this, the school addressed three key aspects: curriculum choices within the classroom, resources, and representation in the wider school environment.

Background context and rationale

Broxbourne CE Primary School is a one-form intake Church of England primary school located in Broxbourne, South East Hertfordshire. The student body has a predominantly White British composition, with 24% who identify as from a minority ethnic group or as BAME. Of this number, 19% are children of colour. This is broadly in line with the composition of Broxbourne, according to the Hertfordshire.gov website (based on 2011 census data). The composition of staffing is predominantly White British; and the teaching staff, including the senior leadership team, identifies entirely as White British.

Children from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve well academically at the school. Both internal and external data show that almost all of these children attain ARE (age-related expectation) or GDS (working at greater depth) across the curriculum and also make expected or better progress. Attainment and progress for children from ethnic minorities is in line with, and sometimes exceeds, that of children from White British backgrounds.

Whilst this is the case, leaders recognised that representation of minority ethnic groups and other protected characteristics was not notably evident in the curriculum coverage; instead, it was predominantly White and Euro-centric. The senior leadership group and staff team sought to review and improve this aspect of provision so that all children and families would feel included and represented at the school.

This was identified as a focus for change in spring 2020, and work began to audit and address this concern, including initial plans for a Cultural Celebration week in May 2020. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the intended work was temporarily sidelined. This important focus was then accelerated by the tragic circumstances of George Floyd's death and the world's reaction to this. Within the local area, there were clashes at a Black Lives Matter protest in Hoddesdon, which shocked the school and local community. This incident highlighted that racism was evident in the local area; and school leaders felt a moral responsibility to address this, both immediately through letters to the school community and assemblies (virtual and within school, for

those who could attend) and as part of long-term systemic change for the future academic and social education of the school's pupils.

It was also important to recognise and listen to the concerns of parents, especially those from minority ethnic groups. A number of these parents did contact the school to express their concerns and worries and their desire for change. They wanted greater awareness from the school community of racial and social prejudice and for this to be addressed within school.

The story

Curriculum choices within the classroom

The first action undertaken was an audit of the curriculum to establish how racially, socially and culturally diverse it was. Each class teacher was asked to assess their current curriculum overview and identify where learning took place that did – or could – address cultural, racial, ethnic or social diversity or representation.

It was identified that, whilst there was some representation of diversity regarding faiths, cultures, ethnicities or races (often in RE or geography), there were a number of additional opportunities that could be introduced. As well as time in staff meetings being given to address these changes, individual meetings occurred between class teachers and a member of senior leadership to identify opportunities for change. Subject leaders were also encouraged to make recommendations and suggestions within their subjects.

In some situations, only a small refocus was necessary. For example, in Year 2, where the book Silly Billy was already studied, a set of Guatemalan worry dolls was purchased. The class teacher, when teaching it the next year, took care to discuss the dolls' cultural significance with the class.

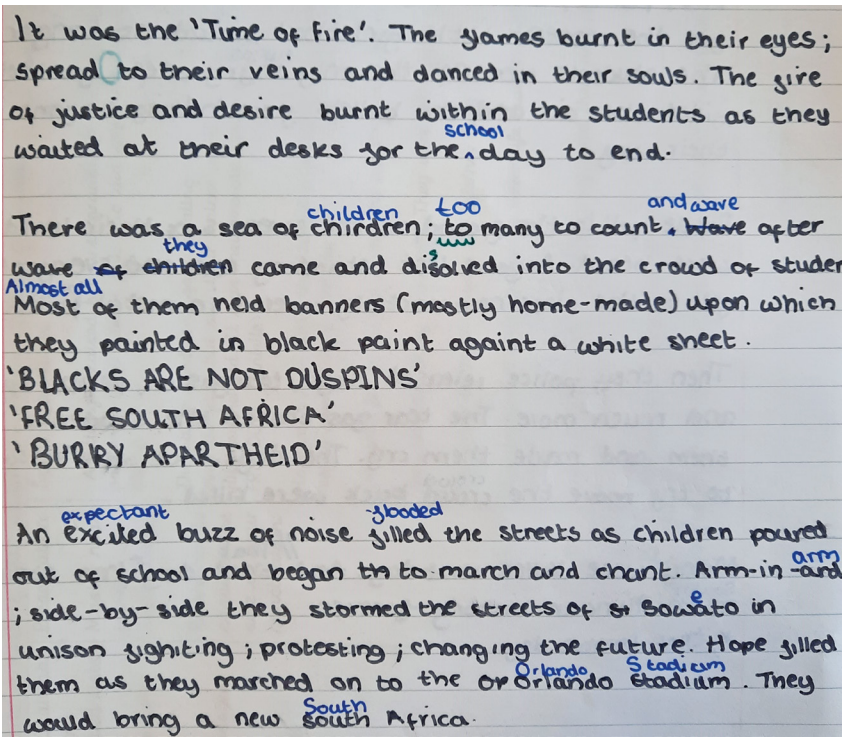
For other subjects or areas of learning, a greater shift was needed. Leaders identified further opportunities to introduce racially, culturally and socially diverse content and focus into the curriculum. The intention was to introduce significant figures and events that complemented and linked with the existing curriculum, as well as to make wholesale changes to some areas to strengthen the diversity of the curricular offer.

In Year 1 history, when considering "the lives of significant individuals", pupils had been taught about Florence Nightingale and Neil Armstrong. In summer 2020, the Year 1 teacher had already adapted this to include Mary Seacole. This was then extended further to cover Guion Stewart Bluford Jr (the first African American in space) and some other notable astronauts. These changes opened opportunities for children to "see themselves" and to challenge misconceptions that only certain people could be celebrated or successful.

In Year 5, as part of the local area history study, in which World War I was already covered, staff added learning about Walter Tull, a Black footballer and the first Black army officer to lead White British troops into battle. As part of this learning, the media and societal treatment of Tull, as a Black player, is directly addressed and studied and compared to modern-day attitudes towards racial inclusion.

Staff also made changes to curricular content where there were opportunities to do so. It was evident that English lessons provided huge opportunities to expose children to authors, characters, significant figures, settings, ideas and concepts that would provide a more diverse learning experience. In spring 2020, Year 6 first studied the books *Journey to Jo'burg* and *Mixed*. Both these texts introduce aspects of racism – most specifically related to apartheid in South Africa – through fiction and provide opportunities for discussion about discrimination on a more systematic level. Children are given opportunities to see "beyond themselves" – to talk and write about important global concerns and to develop their understanding of not only individual matters but also more national, global and systematic issues.

Below is an extract from a child's piece of writing based on the Soweto youth uprising:



It was the 'Time of fire'. The flames burnt in their eyes; spread to their veins and danced in their souls. The fire of justice and desire burnt within the students as they waited at their desks for the school day to end.

There was a sea of children; too many to count and wave after wave ~~of children~~ they came and dissolved into the crowd of studen Almost all Most of them held banners (mostly home-made) upon which they painted in black paint against a white sheet.

'BLACKS ARE NOT DUSPINS'

'FREE SOUTH AFRICA'

'BURRY APARTHEID'

An excited expectant buzz of noise filled flooded the streets as children poured out of school and began ~~to~~ to march and chant. Arm-in-arm; side-by-side they stormed the streets of ~~st~~ Soweto in unison fighting; protesting; changing the future. Hope filled them as they marched on to the ~~Or~~ Orlando Stadium. They would bring a new ~~south~~ South Africa.

To further these opportunities, an aspect of the geography curriculum in Year 6 has now been changed from “Sustainability” to “Our changing world”, where discussion of how political choices can affect human geography will now encompass learning about South African townships.

It was understood and recognised that, in some cases, these curricular changes could be challenging to plan or teach and may require sensitivity when teaching them. In addition to the initial meetings that occurred for each year group to identify and make appropriate curricular changes, support was provided to staff at the time that they were planning and delivering these units. This support continues to be in place as staff adapt and improve their practice with the experience of previous teaching.

An example of this is Year 3 learning about Malala Yousafzai. Using a book called *Malala’s Magic Pencil*, Year 3 children wrote diary entries about Malala’s experiences and the importance of access to education for all. Before delivering these lessons, the class teacher worked with the deputy headteacher so that she was confident that her pitch and coverage was in line with the school’s expectations and she felt positive in addressing any questions that were likely to be asked in relation to the text and content.

Alongside RSE (relationships and sex education) teaching becoming statutory in 2020, the school chose to raise the profile of PSHE, ensuring the consistent and regular teaching of the subject by professionals who have been supported and developed in this role. This has led to higher-quality PSHE teaching, wider and deeper coverage, and greater appreciation by the children of the importance of this subject. Within this subject, cultural identity, celebrating difference and understanding society are covered and built upon at age-appropriate levels. This is ensuring that each child develops greater knowledge and understanding about important social, emotional, cultural and global concerns.

Resources

In addition to the curricular offer within lessons, the school’s reading provision was reviewed and changes were made. It is well known that representation is important and, if most of the books sent home featured White, male, Western protagonists, what kind of message was this giving?

In July 2020, a review was undertaken of the books that were available in the school and, as suspected, most of these featured White Euro-centric or White American-centric central characters. It was decided that this needed to be addressed, and staff considered a number of ways to achieve this.

When selecting new, levelled home reading provision, a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion was at the forefront of decision making. Collins Big Cat texts were chosen, due to their coverage of stories from diverse cultures; stories based in different countries;

information texts about various places, events and interests; and texts – both fiction and non-fiction – featuring protagonists of varied races, cultures and ethnicities.

As well as wanting the set reading books to be representative and diverse, staff also wanted this to be the case for the library and class library books that the children read for pleasure. Since financial constraints restricted the school's ability to fully restock the library, in addition to buying books from school funds, staff also looked at other methods of diversifying the literature stock.

In September 2020, leaders introduced a "Birthday Book" initiative, whereby the school would be gifted a book on a child's, staff member's or parent's birthday. This gave families the opportunity to contribute a favourite text or one that would promote a particular issue in terms of diversity. In support of this intent, the chair of governors chose to donate a book, *The Place for Me: Stories from the Windrush Generation*, for her birthday book. One parent governor told us, "I deliberately choose books which I think feature an under-represented group so they can feel included."

The community has supported this initiative extremely well, and the school receives approximately four books a week. These include books that represent or cover aspects of life, culture or interests that are important to individuals, as well as books that school staff may otherwise not have known about. Examples include *Hair Love*, *You Must Be Layla* and *Chapatti Moon*. The *Little People, BIG DREAMS* series has also been extremely popular.

For those families who wished to support this initiative but were unsure of which books to choose, staff provided suggestions through an "Amazon Wishlist" of suitable texts. They created a list of books – both fiction and non-fiction, and suitable for every age within the school – that addressed the wish to diversify the school's reading provision. This list is regularly updated and families continue to use it, both for Birthday Books and when they wish to generously donate something to the school for any other reason.

Staff also used this wish list to gain new resources following an audit of the learning environment and school resources. The audit was undertaken to ensure these were equally racially, socially and culturally representative. After the audit, any items that were considered immediately important were purchased by the school, such as dolls of varied skin tones, to replace or add to resources that the school already owned. Other desirable and relevant items, for example foreign language games, were added to the wish list.

Representation in the wider school environment

To supplement curricular learning, leaders wanted children to be able to experience and share their own and their friends' cultures. To this end, they arranged a "Cultural Celebration Week" in May 2021. The aim was for children and members of the school community to share aspects of their cultural identity with each other. Prior to the event, leaders sent a

letter out to the school community inviting family members to share aspects of their culture with classes. Almost every class had at least one visitor during the week who shared a story, food, song, clothing or tradition with the class. In addition, there were workshops, including Bhangra dancing, for all children and whole-school homework for each child to consider and share their own cultural identity or something important to them.

It was very gratifying to see how some children grew in confidence and recognised their own self-worth during this week. Many children expressed how much they had learnt and how they had appreciated the chance to understand something new about their friends, classmates and the world. A current Year 4 child stated, “I liked listening to my friends and learning about their culture. I learnt about the Nigerian flag and I told the class about India and Sri Lanka.” Another said, “My favourite thing about cultural week was when my friend showed us Greek outfits that she wears and we played an egg game they play at Easter. It was so fun.” A child summarised that she had learnt that “each person is so special and it is important to celebrate who you are.”

In addition to this week, when opportunities have been available, the school has taken advantage of workshops to allow children varied experiences, with a focus on cultural and racial representation, even during lockdown. For World Book Day 2021, Year 6 took part in an online workshop organised by the Anne Frank Trust; and for Census Day, key stage 2 pupils were set an online lesson called “Equality, Representation and the Census”, which was presented by David Olusoga and discussed the treatment of Lascar sailors.

In this current school year, so far, Year 4 and Year 6 have undertaken Caribbean drumming workshops run by Steel Pans in Motion as part of Broxbourne Council's Windrush grant. Early Years 2 have had a parent in to support learning about Diwali; and Year 6 attended another online workshop run by the Anne Frank Trust – this time for anti-bullying week – which included the author Onjali Q. Raúf and poet Shagufta K Iqbal.

Additionally, assemblies have been delivered, during anti-bullying week, by a representative of SOCA (Society of Caribbeans and Africans) about the Windrush generation. There are plans for the speaker to return for focused work with Year 6 pupils when they study the Windrush generation as part of their "Changes in British Society" history unit. The local police community support officer also delivered assemblies about hate crime. The school also, as part of a harvest celebration, supported the Bishop of St Albans' Harvest appeal, "Water is Life", to bring safe drinking water to the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

During the time of this work, leaders have worked to ensure that the community is kept updated on the school's progress in this area. A video, letters and newsletters have all been used to inform parents and carers about what has been done to increase diversity, inclusion and representation. After a survey sent out during spring 2021 suggested that some parents had been unaware of the changes made, the headteacher has included more regular updates within newsletters, in addition to separate letters to ensure greater visibility of the topic. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) has also been a topic of discussion at full governing body meetings over the year. A named equalities governor has been appointed to support this priority.

Impact

Through the curriculum, children are learning to celebrate, value and respect all people as unique individuals. They are also learning about inequality and that this should be challenged. As is stage-appropriate, they are taught to develop their own opinions on social issues and express these respectfully, including how to challenge things they consider to be inappropriate or immoral.

The Year 5 biography writing unit was changed to focus upon Katherine Johnson, a female African American mathematician, whose calculations at NASA were critical to the success of the first crewed space flight. Her story has been inspirational to the children, as evidenced by the pupil voice gathered when reviewing the impact of this unit. Whilst they had learnt about her a number of months previously, the children – now in Year 6 – were

able to easily recall their learning and spoke passionately, with knowledge and confidence, about her life story and the impact that she has made on society:

"She showed that even if you face difficulties, you can overcome them."

"Your skin colour or gender should not prevent you from being what you want to be."

It has been notable that, whilst the move towards greater inclusivity and diversity within the curriculum was initially driven by school leaders, it is now at the forefront of the minds of all staff who are actively looking for and taking opportunities to ensure representation. An example of this is Year 2's artwork, based on the work of the artist Faith Ringgold. Her work was added to a unit focused on "colour", where children are expected to undertake simple colour mixing and to choose appropriate colours, tones and shades for purpose. The teacher reported that, during these lessons, children were supported in discussing colour in relation to skin tone, and the painting used "brought up a lot of important discussion points".

Their work was displayed in the reception area at the entrance to the school. By placing it there, all visitors are instantly made aware that anti-racism is a key focus for the school, and that diversity and inclusion are embedded across the curriculum.

Reflections

The work undertaken to date has been welcomed by the vast majority of the school community. A large number of parents have commented, during parents' evenings or in conversation with members of staff, that they are grateful that their child is being exposed – in an age-appropriate manner – to global issues that will improve their understanding of the world they live in.

One parent said, "It's hard, as a parent, to want to share difficult things with your child but they need to know what's going on outside the 'Broxbourne bubble' so they can make a positive impact in the 'real world.'"

In support of work on EDI, at Christmas the PTA took care to ensure that the books they gave to each child as gifts had diverse representation. This action confirmed to leaders that the school community both recognises and welcomes the school's focus on inclusivity.

There was, initially, concern from some parents that children would "lose their innocence" if diversity and representation were overtly taught. There was a belief from some that school should "let children be children". These responses, from the anonymised survey sent out – alongside some other evidence of confusion about what, exactly, was being taught – reaffirmed how vital it is that communication with families is clear, regular and specific. By showing that the school's anti-racist and inclusive messages are embedded throughout the curriculum and explaining how these are shared with children, leaders can reassure parents that pitch and exposure are age-appropriate, well-considered and treated sensitively.

It must be recognised that not every member of the school community has welcomed the school's focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. It is, for this very reason, that this work is so important. Staff are working collectively to ensure every child receives a comprehensive anti-racist and anti-discriminatory education within school, regardless of their experiences outside of school.

During a pupil voice session, one Year 6 child eloquently explained, "Sometimes, children learn racist language at home or their families think racist behaviour is ok. It's important that they learn about discrimination at school so they can make their own minds up and change so that other people don't suffer because they don't know better."

Whilst the school's focused work illustrated that the previous curricular offer was not as culturally and socially diverse as it should have been, leaders believe that it has now been significantly and holistically enhanced through the actions and decisions taken. As with all curriculum changes, it takes time to embed these adaptations and ensure the opportunities are fully developed and are enhancing learning outcomes. As this happens, changes will be made to ensure that provision is always "fit for purpose".

Even after only a year, staff are vocally more confident with subjects and the content they are teaching. Having covered them previously, staff are taking steps to improve matters further by recognising additional opportunities for learning or discussion. It is important that, as a team, staff ensure that their own learning continually evolves and that, if more appropriate or better books or resources become available or teachers become aware of a more suitable or current topic or event to study, there is the option and scope for these changes to be made.

Next steps

The school's work on ensuring appropriate representation is ongoing; it will continue to evolve and be refined. Leaders will continue to work to provide an inclusive learning provision for children, with resources, lessons and teaching that will help them become responsible global citizens. Leaders intend for cultural celebration events to become a regular fixture on the school timetable.

In the coming year, staff hope to establish a diversity advocates' forum. This will also help the school promote, explain and share its work so that community stakeholders, such as parents, family members and volunteers, have greater knowledge and understanding of actions that have already occurred. It will provide an opportunity for the school's leaders to gauge the impact of their actions, as well as to receive support, and further ideas and opinions, about how to continue to move their work forward.

Chloe Clifford and Paul Miller

REPRESENTATION FOR ALL: DECOLONISING OUR CURRICULUM

Summercroft Primary School

Focus area

This case study will illustrate how staff at Summercroft Primary School have worked to create greater race diversity and representation in the curriculum, through the inclusion of high-quality content and high-quality texts.

Aims and rationale

Staff have been working on anti-racism, diversity and decolonisation of the curriculum for the past few years. There was no one catalyst that started the journey, but rather a growing realisation from staff that an unacceptable percentage of the school's books, topics and resources focused heavily on the White experience. However, as with many schools around the world, the murder of George Floyd was a stark reminder of the inequalities of society and a propelling force, which led staff to unpick the curriculum and look at the changes that were needed to fully decolonise it.

Leaders strongly believe that the curriculum and school should reflect the diverse society in which we live. Children must have the opportunity through their learning to see both "windows" and "mirrors": people who are similar to and people who are different from them. Staff want every child to feel a sense of belonging, and to feel represented by the learning they encounter throughout their time at Summercroft. Staff also believe it is their job to educate children about the realities of the past and the present in order to fight the stereotypes and generalisations children are exposed to via the media and other sources.

Leaders are conscious that the local area has previously lacked diversity but is becoming increasingly more diverse, and this is celebrated. It has never been more important for everyone to feel accepted and included, and to be empathic towards all. This case study will detail the steps that leaders have taken to create better representation within the curriculum.

Background context

Before staff embarked upon this journey, the curriculum focused too heavily on a primarily White experience. Although the school was following the national curriculum, opportunities to teach Black history were not exploited. For example, in the key stage 2 history curriculum, one bullet point states that pupils should be taught about "a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history – one study chosen from: early Islamic civilization, including a study of Baghdad c. AD 900; Mayan civilization c. AD 900; Benin (West Africa) c. AD 900–1300."

Although the non-statutory guidance provides examples of where there are opportunities to teach history that reflects the BAME community, the school was not choosing to do so.

A more formal review of the curriculum highlighted the areas where it lacked diversity. Leaders looked at the overarching topics across the school, the themes within them, and the texts and resources that staff were using to teach them. Many books that were being selected were those that had been used historically – some had been taught for over twenty years. They featured primarily White characters and were written by White authors. The school library was in need of updating, not just because of the lack of diverse authors and characters, but also because a number of books reflected out-of-date language.

Currently, of children whose parents have chosen to disclose their ethnicity, 20% of the school's children self-identify as BAME and a further 10% self-identify as White non-British. 15% have informed staff that they speak a language other than English as their first language.

The story

The first priority was to tackle the lack of diversity in books. Leaders chose to start here because they knew it was an immediate way to begin to incorporate more diversity into the curriculum. There were three parts to upgrading the book offering:

- **books for Reading for Pleasure**
- **books for the library**
- **books linked to topics and the English curriculum**

As part of another project the school was taking part in, leaders introduced Reading for Pleasure time. This involves teachers reading a high-quality text to children for 15 minutes, every day. This text should not be linked to the current topic or English unit, but simply a book to enjoy together. Leaders asked teachers to make this highly valued time that was never skipped. Teachers could choose the books they wanted to read to their class, the only parameters being that the books must either be by an author of colour or have a person of colour as the main character. This continued throughout the year, resulting in each year group having six to seven high-quality diverse books, which they now read each year. The English lead and librarian were on hand to help teachers to make their choices.

Below are the initial six books that were selected by teachers.*

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Ellie and the Cat **by Malorie Blackman** When she's turned into a cat, we get to see Ellie for who she really is behind the sadness of missing her dad, while she's given the chance to make some unusual new friends and, ultimately, find a place to belong.	***Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet*** **by Zanib Mian** Offers insight into the life of an ordinary Muslim family. Zanib Mian has said that she wrote the book to counter negative stereotypes of Muslims.	***Anisha, Accidental Detective*** **by Serena Patel** Comic capers explode when science-mad Anisha must solve a mystery ahead of her Aunty Bindi's "Big Fat Fabulous" Indian wedding. The story shimmers with the vibrant exuberance of an Indian wedding, the special warmth of family and friends, and action-packed amusement.

Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Runaway Robot **by Frank Cottrell-Boyce** When Alfie goes to airport lost property, he finds more than he bargained for. A lot more. Because there's a giant robot called Eric hidden away on the shelves. Can Alfie find a way to save Eric from destruction – before Eric destroys everything around him?	***The Boy at the Back of the Class*** **by Onjali Q. Raúf** Touching and clearsighted child's-eye view of the problems facing refugees. The arrival of a new boy in class sparks a funny, moving and quietly powerful story for young readers.	***High Rise Mystery*** **by Sharna Jackson** Sisters Nik and Norva would agree that they are slightly obsessed with murder mystery series on the television so, when a body is discovered in their block of flats, they are sure they are the right people to discover the truth.

*Book descriptions taken from Lovereading4kids.co.uk

When purchasing the books for the library, staff focused on increasing the school's selection of diverse non-fiction and fiction. To improve the non-fiction offering, they worked with a Hertfordshire-based book shop, Bookwagon, to find a range of high-quality texts. These included titles such as *Timelines from Black History: Leaders, Legends, Legacies; The Story of the Windrush; Respect: Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul*, and many more. Staff ensured the texts were from a range of genres and provided children with exposure to Black history and inspirational people of colour, both past and present.

With the fiction books, leaders wanted to improve the diversity in both picture books and chapter books. They took advice from the school's HfL Teaching and Learning Adviser, other educators, groups via social media (such as Elevate.uk2020), diversebooks.org, and shortlisted books from diverse book awards, to help find a good selection of texts. As well as focusing on shared books for communal areas, leaders provided each class with £250 to improve the book offerings in their own classrooms.

Staff ensured that bookcases in classrooms and around the school included front-facing books, actively choosing books that reflected diversity. This means that children and adults can see the wide range of diverse books available to them easily, and know that everyone is being represented by the literature staff choose to celebrate.

The third step towards upgrading the book offering was to ensure that books for topics and English units were diverse. Staff began by looking at their existing topics and finding opportunities to include more diverse figures and texts. For example, in the Year 1 topic, Heroes, which includes work on space and astronauts, they introduced the text *Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13*. In the Year 6 topic, Adventurers, they used the text *Fantastic Female Explorers: Truly Amazing Tales of Women Exploring the World*, and looked at the achievements of Jin Jeong and Misba Khan. Staff were able to add high-quality, diverse texts to almost all topics and are continuing to look for additional books to support these.

To promote the inclusion of diverse texts beyond the classroom, staff made diversity a focus when selecting books for values assemblies. This means that children not only see representation across the curriculum, but also across the wider school.

The next step was to analyse the existing curriculum and look for opportunities to incorporate more diverse topics. Leaders knew that they wanted to continue teaching "umbrella" topics but felt that the format of just six topics per year was too restrictive. As a result, they introduced main topics and mini topics. Main topics last for six weeks, mini topics for three, and they alternate throughout the year. Introducing more topics meant that teachers could still ensure coverage of the national curriculum, whilst having more time to include local and diverse learning too.

Year Group	Main Topic 1 6.9.21 – 15.10.21		Mini Topic 1 1.11.21 – 19.11.21	Main Topic 2 22.11.21 – 28.1.22	Mini Topic 2 31.1.22 – 25.2.22		Main Topic 3 7.3.22 – 6.5.22	Main Topic 4 – first half 9.5.22 – 27.5.22		Main Topic 4 – second half 13.6.22 – 1.7.22	Mini Topic 3 4.7.22 – 20.7.22
Year 1	Happily Ever After	Arts Week 18.10.21	Never Eat Shredded Wheat	Heroes: Ada Lovelace, Katherine Johnson & Marcus Rashford	Josephine Baker: The Dancing Spy	STEM Week 28.2.22	Unity in the Community	Going Wild	Diversity Week 6.6.22	Going Wild	Record Breaker – Ranulph Fiennes
Year 2	UK Tour		Monarchy	The Great Fire of London	Pole to Pole		Forests	Coasts		Coasts	Mary Seacole
Year 3	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory		France Vs UK	The Ancient Egyptians	Frida Kahlo		Mountains	The Stone Age to the Iron Age		The Stone Age to the Iron Age	All About Japan
Year 4	The Amazon		Bishop's Stortford: Then and Now	European Tour	Pride (The Story of Harvey Milk)		The Ancient Greeks	The Roman Empire		The Roman Empire	Windrush
Year 5	Natural Disasters		Space	Water Around the World	Malala Yousafzai		The Anglo-Saxons and Vikings	Africa: Past to Present		Africa: Past to Present	The Silk Roads
Year 6	Survival		The Impact of Colonisation: Cecil Rhodes	Biomes	Caribbean/UK Comparison		Suffragettes	Immigration and Refugees		Immigration and Refugees	Secondary Transition Project

Teachers tweaked existing topics and designed new topics with diversity at the forefront. As the whole-school curriculum overview shows, a number of topics focus specifically on a diverse figure. For example, Year 1's Dancing Spy looks at the life of Josephine Baker, a Black entertainer, French Resistance agent and civil rights activist. Mary Seacole's contributions are explored in Year 2, whilst Year 3 learn about the achievements of Frida Kahlo. Year 5 are immersed in the inspirational actions of Malala Yousafzai, a topic made more powerful by its recency.

In addition to the diverse figures that the pupils will learn about, staff also included topics that look more at the experiences of people of colour. Africa: Past to Present ensures that the school meets the statutory objective of children learning about a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history by teaching the history of the kingdom of Benin. However, staff wanted to avoid the "othering" that could happen when teaching about a historical culture, so they decided to continue the topic into today's Africa. Children learn about the myriad countries that make up Africa and the differences between them, as well as the countries' rich culture and resources. The topic The Impact of Colonisation: Cecil Rhodes not only allows local links but provides opportunity for children to question the concept of the Great British Empire and look at the huge impact on the indigenous people and the repercussions that exist to this day. A topic on immigration and refugees aims to build empathy and look at places of conflict around the world.

As previously mentioned, staff also looked for any opportunity to include diversity within all topics. For example, in Heroes, children learn about Marcus Rashford. As part of their UK tour, Year 2 explore the incredible architecture of Zaha Hadid. People from a diverse range of backgrounds can be found in every topic, from famous mountaineers and adventurers, right through to representation in the fairy tales of Happily Ever After (which features the text *Fearless Fairy Tales* by Konnie Huq and James Kay). The curriculum is now far more reflective of society and inclusive of the achievements and history of everyone.

There have, of course, been barriers to overcome on the journey. One of the initial challenges that staff faced was a lack of resources linked to the pre-existing topics. Teachers have had to work hard to tweak existing resources, or prepare completely new ones, to ensure that they are representative. This has been a significant time commitment, as well as a monetary investment when it came to purchasing high-quality texts to enhance the topics.

A second barrier, which has more recently emerged, has been a lack of confidence and racial literacy amongst staff. This is not something that has ever been explicitly taught. Aishnine Benjamin of The Black Curriculum writes:

> **"What are the implications of not being taught racial literacy? As an adult, do you feel comfortable talking about race? … Have you ever said 'I don't see colour' or 'I don't see race' in order to make a person of colour feel comfortable? … Perhaps you aren't aware that by saying 'I don't see race' you are inadvertently putting a negative value on that person's race by suggesting it's not important to you. … And if this is your position then it probably isn't your fault – because no-one taught you how to be racially literate."**

For many of the staff, this is reflective to some extent of their experience, and some have expressed concerns that they are worried about "saying the wrong thing". Leaders have organised training in racial literacy to help overcome this barrier and have plans to create a glossary of language so that they can ensure consistency of approach and enable staff to feel more confident.

Impact

Increasing the diversity in the curriculum has had a great impact on the children in the school. Staff have noticed a rise in levels of engagement with reading since introducing so many new texts.

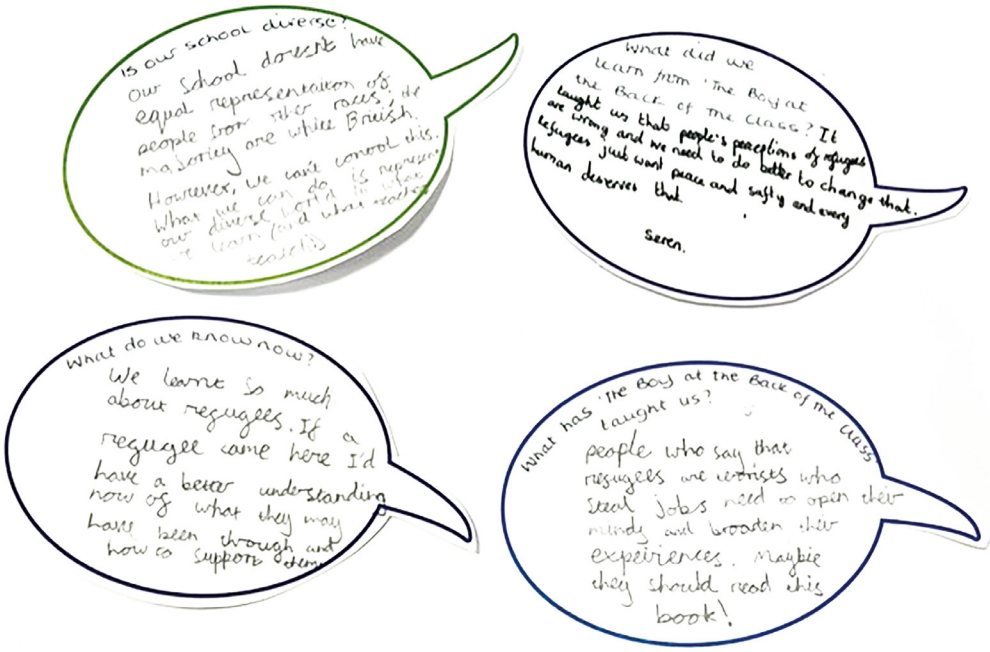
A Year 6 teacher noted the following:

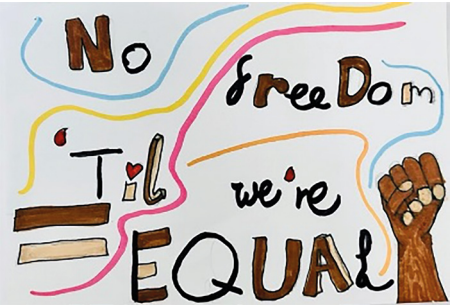
> **"Since introducing more diverse books into my classroom, I have noticed all the children in my class, but particularly children from BAME backgrounds, are more interested in finding books to read. They often select books with BAME characters and have started waiting lists for many of these books because so many of them are excited to read them."**

Children see themselves represented in books. One Year 4 boy was overheard saying, “That kid looks like me,” pointing towards *Look Both Ways* by Jason Reynolds, a book with four Black characters on the front cover. He immediately selected the book to read, despite not having read the blurb or having an idea of what the book was about.

Children were also observed demonstrating understanding towards others after sharing books. Year 3 read *The Proudest Blue* by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali, a picture book about a girl’s first day wearing a hijab. During discussion about the book, children commented, “It must be so special to wear your hijab to school for the first time,” and, “I bet she felt really proud.”

Year 5 read *The Boy at the Back of the Class* by Onjali Q. Raúf, a child’s perspective on the refugee crisis. This led to a lot of thoughtful and introspective discussion, including children and the teacher making links to the real world. These are some examples of the pupil voice that resulted from these conversations.





The Year 6 children talked passionately after their topic around Cecil Rhodes. They were outraged about the trickery he performed on King Lobengula and made vehement arguments for why the local road, Rhodes Avenue, should be renamed. They were also inspired to create placards to protest against the racism in our society.

Overall, staff can already see an increase in the empathy and acceptance that the children are showing towards others. They are more aware of inequalities in the world around them and want to know what they can do to create better equity in our society. Children from BAME backgrounds feel more valued and have access to a range of books that reflect their experiences.

Reflections

Updating the curriculum has been an eye-opening experience, and staff have reflected that it has made them more thoughtful when planning topics, ensuring that they are representative. Staff have had to be careful to ensure that creating a more diverse curriculum does not become tokenistic or inadvertently create further “othering”.

Leaders have found that the children are far more able than they had anticipated to reflect thoughtfully about sensitive subjects such as enslavement, even in the younger years. They are also more engaged and keen to make links to their real-life experiences.

Staff knew from the beginning that adding diversity to the curriculum was necessary; however, seeing the positive impact that it has had on the children, and on the wider school community, has solidified how important it is. It has opened up important conversations between children, staff and parents, which previously may not have happened.

Next steps

Leaders recognise that they are only at the start of a journey. They will continue to revise the curriculum and the texts used to ensure that they are representative and current, including diverse and recently published authors. To further develop the curriculum, they intend to continue to create resources for key topics (particularly history) that reflect diversity of the time. They also want to focus on forging links within the community, with a focus on reaching out to parents of colour and other figures from the BAME community.

Whilst it is incredibly important for children to see representation within our curriculum and books, it is even more important that this is reflected in the inspirational figures they meet in real life, and staff know that the children will benefit hugely from having diverse role models in school. Implementing a diverse curriculum is only the first step in becoming an anti-racist school, and staff look forward to taking this further, including by creating pupil EDI representatives in the school and increasing diversity on the staff and governing body over time.

Emily Richardson and Stephen Jess

USING BOOKS TO EMPOWER CHILDREN TO STAND TALL AND DREAM BIG

Wheatfields Junior School

Focus area

This case study focuses on work to ensure that diversity is positively represented in the resources used in the school's curriculum in order to open up conversation and discussion around race and diversity.

Aims and rationale

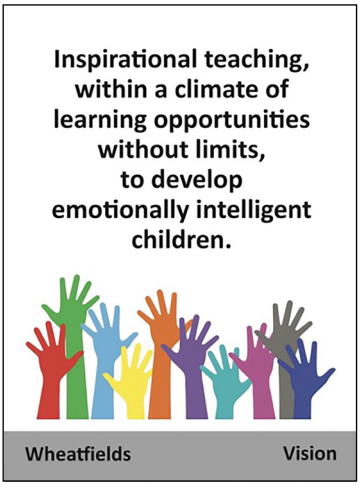
Over the last three years, leaders have undertaken substantial work to review the school's approach to the teaching of writing across the school, moving away from a published scheme, with a focus on ensuring that high-quality texts are used to engage and inspire children's writing. This work had shown positive impact not only in English lessons but also in standards and engagement in writing across the curriculum. In summer 2020, during the first lockdown, the killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement acted as a catalyst to prompt staff at the school to further scrutinise the texts that they were using, to evaluate how much they represented diversity and whether they gave enough opportunity to promote anti-racism in the curriculum.

The aim was to provide the children with a curriculum where diversity was well represented so that pupils would leave the school having had learning experiences that helped them to develop anti-racist attitudes. This would enable them to foster positive, respectful relationships with people from any background. Leaders wanted the children to have a wider exposure to the diverse experiences of others and also to see reflections of themselves in the texts available to them. Ultimately, they wanted to use books as a medium to enable all children to stand tall and dream big.

Background context

Wheatfields Junior School is a three-form entry school in St Albans. The school converted to academy status in September 2020, becoming part of the Alban Academies Trust. The vast majority of pupils are White British and from professional, middle-class backgrounds. Parental aspiration is high.

The school vision is:



The school has always participated in events such as Black History Month; and celebrated diverse figures through history, such as Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. However, leaders wanted their diversity and equity work to be an implicit part of the curriculum and not just an "add-on" or "box-ticking" exercise.

Since the introduction of the use of the Jigsaw resource to drive the PSHE curriculum, particular themes such as "Celebrating Difference" and "Being Me in My World" have impacted positively by providing opportunities to discuss and explore racism in this aspect of the children's learning. The staff team were all committed and passionate about developing this work.

The story

At the start, the English leads and the school's very knowledgeable librarian worked together to undertake an extensive review of texts available to children in the school library, particularly focusing on how people from different ethnic backgrounds were portrayed. This involved a rigorous audit of existing texts and the removal of a number of very outdated books, which included stereotypical representation and inappropriate language. This audit also highlighted that those texts that were being used to include some representation of racial diversity were limited to obvious choices, with traditional authors such as Malorie Blackman, or characters such as Handa from *Handa's Surprise* by

Eileen Browne. Staff wanted to ensure that children were able to see themselves and their families represented in the characters and illustrations used.

This happened in the summer term of 2020. Senior leaders included this work as a key priority in the school improvement plan for 2020–2021. The governing body were very supportive of this initiative and approved that a significant budget be allocated to enable the purchase of a wide range of age-appropriate, quality texts over the summer, ready to use in the new academic year. The school's work around diversity became a standing item on the full governing body agenda so that governors were fully abreast of developments.

Texts chosen were carefully selected to include content that allowed children to explore the experiences of others; for example, through picture books and novels focusing on the experiences of refugees and world religions, and which included Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) individuals as main characters and positive role models. In September 2020 inset time was dedicated to allowing all staff an opportunity to explore the new resources and to consider how these could be used to effectively enhance the children's learning about equity and anti-racism.

The librarian proactively ensures that displays in the library promote diversity. She continually ensures that these books are rotated and are prominent, so that children are drawn to them when visiting the library. She also ensures that she is very aware of themed weeks and upcoming events, for example anti-bullying week or religious festivals such as Diwali or Hannukah. She uses her expertise to direct children and teachers, when they visit the library, to books that will be of particular interest and relevance to them and their classes.

The next step was to review how texts containing diverse representation could be woven into the English curriculum, ensuring that the same high quality that had already been established was maintained, focusing on diverse characterisation, settings and authors. As part of every unit of teaching in English, staff include "link reading" texts. It was important that high-quality examples of these were chosen so that teachers and children had access to a broad range of diverse texts. Lockdown in Spring 2021 provided leaders with an unexpected opportunity to allow children to enjoy virtual visits from two authors from diverse backgrounds, who had written texts that the children were using in their learning; Humza Arshad and Baroness Floella Benjamin. The children were very inspired by these.

Senior leaders then undertook an audit of the whole curriculum. Subsequently, curriculum leaders began work to identify opportunities where children could learn about diversity, and where positive BAME role models and influential figures could be incorporated into their curriculum areas. This is an ongoing, evolving aspect of their work to develop the curriculum. Examples of how this has been taken forward, so far, include teaching the children about the experiences of Black and Asian soldiers in the World Wars; exposure to music from different cultures; using Mercator projection of maps in geography; including different representations of Jesus in RE lessons (Black, Middle Eastern and White); learning about diverse scientists and computer scientists; and raising awareness of diverse, successful athletes in PE. Teachers have also ensured that, when they are creating any resources such as problems in maths, they include names of children reflecting different ethnicities rather than the traditionally used "White British" names.

Senior leaders recognised that it was important that time was given to enable staff to share their own experiences of diversity with each other and to reflect on their own understanding of diversity, equality and equity. This was in order to support them to feel comfortable when talking about issues surrounding racism and inequality with other adults, as well as when talking about these issues in classrooms with children. Whole-staff training sessions were arranged, where language around diversity, prejudice and stereotypes was explored. In addition, a series of questions to explore staff members' own educational experiences have helped set the work in context. Care has been taken to help make staff feel comfortable about terminology and gain an awareness of unconscious bias.

In order to ensure that the drive to promote anti-racism and wider diversity maintained a high profile across the school, weekly whole-school assemblies focusing on this have taken place, often using a carefully selected text. This has provided a further forum for children to reflect and have the opportunity to discuss issues, and to reinforce positive messages about the importance of equity and respect for all. Examples of assembly foci have included discussion about what we mean by diversity, equity versus equality (which

is a key principle in the whole-school approach to therapeutic behaviour management), experiences of refugees, and Ramadan.

Following on from the rich discussions with pupils, and the obvious interest and engagement in these assemblies, children were invited to apply to be part of a pupil-led Diversity and Equity Group. A clear job description was developed so that children knew what the aims would be and what they were "signing up" for:

- **to work within a team to share information about diversity across the school**
- **to share ideas and ways that children can learn about diversity**
- **to share ideas and ways that Wheatfields Junior School can celebrate diversity**

Leaders received applications from children from Years 3 to 6 who demonstrated a passion and commitment to being involved in driving positive change. Examples of reasons why children wanted to be involved included:

"I have a really diverse family."

"I like helping children and I want to make sure every voice is heard."

"I want people to admire the fact that they are different and not make people think that just because they are different they are not special."

"I think it is important for the school to celebrate that everyone is unique and different."

"I am mixed race myself and I want more people to recognise diversity in our school."

"I have the biggest urge to stop racism and discrimination."

"I think it's important to celebrate different religions, cultures, heritage and beliefs."

In some applications, children referred to being inspired to apply for the role by texts used in school and subsequent discussions. For example, one child noted that he had

felt shocked when the protagonist in *Sulwe* by Lupita Nyong'o had tried to rub off her skin colour.

The school is now at an exciting stage, where the work led to date by adults will be enhanced and taken further forward by the children as leaders.

Impact

The impact of the school's work can be seen immediately on entering the school library, where visitors have commented on how prominent books relating to anti-racism and diversity are. A recent governors' visit report noted: "There is a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction books, including a great many that are new and current, covering topics such as religion, anti-racism and wellbeing. Promotion of diversity has clearly been carefully considered."

The school worked towards the HfL Wellbeing Quality Mark last academic year. During the validation visit, staff and pupils were spoken to about the work going on in school, and the subsequent report noted:

"Subject leaders have started to map the good practice that is already in place but also to identify next steps, including teaching content and resources. Opportunities to teach about Black communities in Britain have been identified and will be further developed. PSHE lessons in Year 6 have included discussion about 'White privilege'. The library is superbly resourced, including a whole range of fiction and nonfiction books depicting a range of cultures and written by accomplished BAME authors." The report also noted: "Pupils articulated a strong sense of inclusion across all aspects of the school and one pupil commented, 'Everyone's completely different and that's a good thing.'"

Evidence of impact is also clear through staff feedback:

"Children have felt free to ask more questions for clarity and understanding. They have a better understanding of how it feels to face discrimination."

"It has naturally prompted discussions that involve elements from a variety of cultural backgrounds that I don't think would have come up as often otherwise."

The positive impact on children includes examples such as a reluctant reader being enthused to read after encountering “radioactive samosas” in Humza Arshad’s book and commenting: “I like this book. Samosas are my favourite food and the family are from Pakistan like my family”.

Another child shared that she had been inspired to read *Agent Zaiba* by Annabella Sami, saying, “I chose this book because the girl on the cover looked just like me”.

There is now much greater representation of BAME groups in our curriculum. There is also an increased awareness by staff of the need to explicitly include positive role models, and to provide opportunities to explore the cultures and histories of these groups with children.

Reflections

As a result of the work undertaken to date, there is a genuine commitment from leaders, staff, governors and pupils to continue to promote strong anti-racist messages through the curriculum, in lessons and in the wider curriculum in the school.

The school community is now a place where more open and honest conversations about racism take place. Children have a much better understanding of the importance of equity in society, and of the challenges and prejudices people experience as a result of racist attitudes. BAME children in the school have commented on and positively benefited from seeing themselves represented in the books used in school.

The pupil-led Diversity and Equity Group are determined to continue the work begun to make the school anti-racist. They recognise that they may face challenges at times, making an analogy of being “in the learning pit”, but they are willing to persevere so that the values of respect and inclusivity are instilled and there is a celebration of diversity in our community.

Next steps

Leaders now plan to further develop the curriculum to ensure that the children have a really secure understanding of the contribution of BAME people to our society, both historically and currently. They intend to build on the work around anti-racism and widen this to include raising awareness and understanding of the nine protected characteristics in their teaching.

Going forward, they recognise the need to continue to support the staff team, through further training, to feel confident to discuss issues around stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination with the children. They plan to harness the passion and drive of the pupil Diversity and Equity Group to help lead this work and to develop ways of communicating the importance they place on this with the whole school community.

Janice Tearle and Penny Laskar

REPRESENTATION REALLY MATTERS: MAKING CHANGES TO REPRESENTATION IN THE CURRICULUM

Ashlyns School

Focus area

The focus area for the school's work on racial equality and anti-racism over the past year has been representation, particularly through the curriculum. This therefore forms the theme of this case study.

Aims and rationale

The aim was, through the curriculum, to better represent students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds who attend the school. In addition, the aim is to help all students understand a world much wider and more diverse than the one they experience each day in school and in the area in which they live.

Ashlyns is a school where just over 89% of our students identify as White. Prior to the death of George Floyd and the accompanying gaining in pace of the Black Lives Matter movement in summer 2020, work had begun in some curriculum areas on the representation of different groups in the curriculum, which will be explored as part of the case study. The events of summer 2020 were a catalyst for further change.

Representation of all student groups – particularly through the curriculum but also in other aspects of the school such as the website, corridor and classroom displays, and in student voice – became a key priority and is a part of the school improvement plan. Although staff have been working on this across all subjects, the authors have chosen English and geography as the focus for this case study, with some additional discussion of design and technology, and philosophy, religion and ethics.

Background context

Ashlyns is a secondary school of around 1,450 students, including a large sixth form, serving the town of Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire. It is the only state secondary school in the town and is heavily oversubscribed, which means that the majority of the student body live in Berkhamsted, an area where around 90% of the population is White. As the school serves a predominantly White student body from a predominantly White area, the responsibility of staff is to educate students about racism and anti-racism, the importance of celebrating diversity, and respect and inclusivity. It is the duty of staff to show students a world outside of Ashlyns and the local area. It is also an important part of their role as educators to ensure that every single student attending the school sees themselves represented in the curriculum, in their classrooms, in the corridors, in the calendar, in the role models provided, and on the school's website.

Leaders set out, therefore, in the year following the summer of 2020, to evaluate what the school already does and to improve upon it. They were particularly concerned about how BAME groups were represented in the curriculum. They wanted to avoid what could too easily be tokenism, such as celebrating Black History Month but doing little throughout the rest of the year. They wanted to audit and carefully explore the representation of people from BAME backgrounds, ensuring that they were providing positive stories and role models as well as exploring very difficult aspects of British history, such as slavery.

The story

In 2019 the English and geography subject leaders began auditing their curriculum for representation of different groups and made some key changes. A key concern of the KS3 lead in English was that the students were reading books only by White authors, featuring White protagonists, often writing solely about the White experience. Therefore, she set out to review the curriculum. The Learning Resource Centre also reviewed their offer and made some significant changes.

In English, the first novel studied in Year 7 had been *My Sister Lives on the Mantlepiece*, which is a book set in the aftermath of the July 7/7 bombings in London. It explores some very difficult issues surrounding Islamophobia, and the feelings of a White family towards the Muslim community and Islam after the death of one of their children in a terrorist attack. The department had originally brought in this book to bring diversity to their curriculum, and it had been well received by students. However this is an excellent example of a well-intentioned decision that did not work in practice as well as originally intended. The book may have explored some very important and challenging issues, but it did so by stereotyping Sunya, the Muslim character who takes the role of educating the narrator by becoming his best friend.

Following feedback from Muslim staff and students, the English department made the decision to replace the text with *Coram Boy*. This book is linked to the history of the school, which started life as a foundling hospital and explores contemporary issues of class and race in a historical setting. There was some resistance in the department to this change, illustrating perfectly that change in this area can be challenging against the context of a "colour-blind" mentality.

Another text exploring issues surrounding race and equality – *The Other Side of Truth* – was added as the central text in Year 8. This parallels the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and explores the experience of asylum seekers in Britain. "I believe in the power of stories," writes the narrator; "If we keep quiet about injustice, then injustice wins." This is a powerful message that the English department was eager to explore, and which students have greatly benefited from. "I learned about apartheid when I was studying this book. I was

horrified by it and it isn't that long ago," said one student. "I liked it because the main characters were of a similar age to me and that really made me think about how frightened I'd be if I had to leave home and go to a different country," said another student. This was in response to two lessons that explored the emotions of the characters leaving to make the difficult journey to the UK, and one lesson that asked them to consider what they would pack from their own homes to begin such a journey. Other students commented on how the book helped them understand the plight of asylum seekers, giving them a much better insight into the challenging circumstances that asylum seekers face.

At the same time, the geography team were looking at their coverage of the continent of Africa in particular. Significant changes have been made to the exploration of development, with lessons and discussions exploring historical reasons for lack of development in parts of Africa and examining the effects of colonisation.

As part of this work, discussions and debates have been introduced around the implications of colonialism, for example inviting students to consider arguments for and against the removal of statues of colonists. The aim of this work is to ensure that there is no "glossing over" of some of the more difficult and complex historical factors that play an important part in "development".

Students are now supported to consider closely how "development" should be classified and described, and how divisive labels might be, discussing in particular the use of the Brandt Line. They are asked to question the traditional view of rich versus poor countries and discuss the argument that "We should stop dividing countries into two groups. It doesn't make sense anymore." (Rosling, Factfulness: *Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World*) Much use is made of this book and *The Almighty Dollar*, rather than more outdated textbooks.

Significant work has also been done on the presentation of African people and how they live, disabusing students of stereotypical notions they may carry, for example, about living conditions and water retrieval. The unit begins with an exploration of Africa's diverse landscapes, showing students its deserts, lakes and mountains, and dispelling any misconceptions from traditional images students may have seen. Focus is given to an examination of Africa's fastest growing economies, teaching students about convergence and the hypothesis that countries with a lower GDP will have faster economic growth. Case studies of dynamic and growing economies – such as those of Nigeria, Kenya and Morocco – are used to illustrate growth and development and to challenge stereotypes. Both the units on Africa and on development aim to show developing countries in a more positive and holistic way.

By the time of George Floyd's death in 2020, the Ashlyns curriculum – particularly in KS3 – was becoming more representative in its content in these subjects and others. However, it was the events of the summer of 2020 that were the catalyst for further and more

significant change across the curriculum. The aim of ensuring that all students could see representation of themselves and their backgrounds became a school priority. The SLT leader on race equity undertook extensive training and research, and the first action was to gather views from stakeholders from BAME backgrounds. This led to a series of meetings with parents, students and staff, which were invaluable in their content and provided both extremely important information and some very galvanising statements. One student in particular, from an Asian background, said: "Sometimes I can go to five lessons a day and not see anyone who looks like me on a PowerPoint or on the walls." It was this statement that has underpinned the work done since and has truly driven the school's work moving forward.

Leaders then conducted a training session with subject leaders, with the overall aim of improving representation in the curriculum across all subjects. All subject leaders were asked to do some reading beforehand to inform the session, and they came having read "Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race" – an article (later a book) by Renni Eddo-Lodge. The aim of the session was to work with subject leaders to think about representation as a whole, teaching parallel stories across the curriculum and ensuring representation of students from all backgrounds in their departments' teaching. For example, English subject leaders, who use images in presentations frequently as a stimulus in creative writing, worked on being very specific in internet searches to ensure representation of all backgrounds within their range of images. Subject teams carefully reviewed their classroom and corridor displays, ensuring that they represented people from different ethnic backgrounds, particularly where role models could be provided. The impact of this was clear when one of the school's focus group students commented on the positive portrayal of a Muslim girl in her religious studies classroom, saying it made her feel like she belonged.

The English department continued to develop the work they had been doing, using non-fiction resources about the Black Lives Matter movement and protests to develop skills in KS4 students when they returned after the summer. As part of the English department's continued drive to use texts to show different points of view and writing from different cultures to their students, the school invested in Bedrock, a vocabulary programme where students read a wide variety of different materials. Exploring diversity through the texts is a key priority for Bedrock. The programme's creators use stories, names and cultural celebrations from around the world and authors of different nationalities and ethnicities, including Booker T Washington, Elizabeth Keckley, Alice Dunbar Nelson, Frances EW Harper, Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins, Khalil Gibran, and James Weldon Johnson. Bedrock also focuses some of its content on famous people of colour, including Mary Seacole, Mahatma Gandhi, Malala Yousafzai, Mohammed Ali, Ozwald Boateng, and Barack and Michelle Obama. As all KS3 students work through two years of Bedrock, they are exposed to and explore a great deal of very diverse material in that time.

In philosophy, religion and ethics (PRE), significant work has been done on representation of students from all backgrounds. An aim of the PRE curriculum is to show each religious community as a spectrum of different races, ethnicities and nationalities in order to demonstrate the global, far-reaching influence and power that faiths have. Examples of this range include the displays and imagery used in the classroom, as well as curricular content, where the department integrates images and sources of wisdom and authority that are organically multi-racial and multi-ethnic.

Staff often use leaders from a BAME background as faces of sects, denominations and groups they lead; for example, the resource on different denominational attitudes to abortion shows both images of and quotes from Reverend Sonia Hick, the first Black female president of the UK Methodist Church. Staff have also introduced a unit on anti-racism to Year 8, which seeks to promote the rationale, scholastic justification and need to combat all forms of racial prejudice, using case studies from both Christianity and Islam that go well beyond Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

In design and technology, units on challenging stereotypes have been introduced into the Years 9 and 10 textiles curriculum. As part of a portraiture unit, students are introduced to Bisa Butler, a textile artist who celebrates the personal and historical narratives of Black life. Students use their knowledge of her work to create inspirational homewares inspired by someone they admire. Examples of inspirational figures include a range of figures from different backgrounds, with a focus on BAME to provide students with ideas for their own work.

Impact

The clearest impact can be seen in the changes made to the curriculum across the school. There is no subject where the effects of the work has not been felt, although in some places the change has been more significant and greater than in others.

Students from BAME backgrounds have commented that they can “see themselves” in a more obvious way than before. One commented on the fact that the Learning Resources Centre (LRC) always ensures that the books on display contain works by authors from BAME backgrounds, both in the LRC itself and on the LRC webpage. He said that the vast majority of his reading material at home had previously featured White protagonists, and that this had influenced him to an extent that he had noticed he featured White protagonists in his own stories. He is now more aware of the importance of reading material featuring characters from BAME backgrounds, and he commented on how positive it is that younger students would never have experienced anything other than the school’s current LRC displays and recommendations and their work on representing students from all ethnic groups.

When asked about the changes to the English curriculum, students from a focus group talked positively of the introduction of *The Other Side of Truth* and of the removal of *My Sister Lives on the Mantlepiece*. One student commented, "I really liked *My Sister Lives on the Mantlepiece*, but it's by a White author and I feel like we need to be sure that we are hearing the experiences of Black writers telling Black stories so the other books you've chosen are better."

They also confidently talked about the different stories and viewpoints told and used through Bedrock Vocabulary. A Year 8 student commented, "I'm happy that students are starting to see things from someone else's point of view. Because they are White, some of my friends will never fully get some of the problems I live through. I have been frustrated that they can dismiss them, but these stories show others have had similar experiences."

Students were positive about the non-fiction work linked to protests and the Black Lives Matter movement. However, they seemed largely unaware that *Coram Boy* was written by an author of colour and did not clearly remember explorations of race and racial prejudice within the novel. They also talked about the teachable moments in *Of Mice and Men* – studied in Year 9 – and wanted the English department to clearly explore the use of the N-word and the book's relevance to today rather than discussions around the depiction of race in history. The focus group students also talked positively of work they had done in geography on development, and were able to articulate ideas about the divisiveness and Euro-centricity of portraying some countries as rich and others as poor. They also talked positively about migration and their studies of the impact of the Windrush generation but noted that this still seemed to be about the impact of the Windrush generation on a White British society, rather than the experiences of people migrating themselves.

Another pleasing impact is that the student panel wants to have an input into future work on the curriculum and has valued the changes that have been made. The panel has grown as students have involved other BAME peers who are also keen to provide their feedback and effect change. This has become a key part of the school's equalities plan and a priority in the school improvement plan. Ten teachers, across a range of subjects, have chosen this area to be part of their performance appraisal.

Reflections

It seems important to note here that the school began a significant part of this work during the pandemic, when it was challenging for schools to find inset and training time that was not linked in some way to delivering remote learning or working on recovery following the worst of the pandemic and the two periods of lockdown. This has meant that change has not been effected as quickly as leaders would have hoped. However, they feel confident

that they are now some way into this journey, and the parent and student focus groups agree.

The changes described in this case study are just the first steps in a much longer journey towards race equality, effective representation of all students in the curriculum, and the teaching of an anti-racist curriculum. One of the areas that the focus group has been most keen to see change to is the history curriculum. In KS3 this is taught using a chronological approach, from Roman Britain at the start of Year 7 to the Holocaust at the end of Year 9. Students have fed back that the first time they learn anything about Black history is when they study slavery in Year 9. Leaders aim to adjust the history curriculum to reflect parallel Black history stories.

In order to continue to effect wholescale change, further staff training is needed, with the aim of empowering and enabling staff to address those teachable moments that are of such significance. It is only through every teacher capitalising on each teachable moment that the true foundations of race equality in school can be solidly built. With this in mind, whole-staff training has been booked for March 2022, and leaders look forward to being able to work with all staff on such crucial work.

Next steps

The school's next steps involve further extending and developing racial literacy through the pastoral curriculum and the tutor time programme, working with tutors every step of the way. This will enable important teaching and discussions, and empower teachers to feel more confident in the teaching of challenging material.

Leaders will continue to work with middle leaders to embed representation of all student groups firmly throughout the curriculum. Staff will use the concept of parallel stories, in the history curriculum in particular; an extensive programme of work is planned here. Leaders will deliver whole-staff training on representation and anti-racism, with the aim of empowering and supporting teachers to manage teachable moments more effectively.

Rebecca Kingston and Sarah Gee

ESTABLISHING A PUPIL-LED EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A SCHOOL CULTURE OF EQUITY

Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

Focus area

This case study focuses on the establishment and work of the pupil-led key stage 4 and 5 Equality and Diversity Committee at Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School, which was part of the journey to further develop a culture of equity.

Aims and rationale

The aim of the pupil-led Equality and Diversity Committee is to promote and support the use of pupil voice to further develop a school culture that celebrates diversity and challenges stereotypes, and where all pupils – especially pupils from non-White or Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) ethnic backgrounds – feel a sense of belonging and are represented. In addition, the committee would provide a safe space for opening up discussions about equality and diversity.

A broad research evidence base highlights the significant impact that representation and a sense of belonging has on pupils. Crenna-Jennings, in "Key drivers of the disadvantage gap: Literature Review – Education in England: Annual Report 2018", identifies that "findings from experimental studies suggest that a sense of belonging is one of the most important determinants of whether an individual decides to enter, continue or abandon a pursuit". Moreover, that "belonging is associated with positive attitudes towards school, which are in turn positively predictive of attainment".

Crenna-Jennings. W. (2018) "Key drivers of the disadvantage gap: Literature Review" London: Education Policy Institute.

Furthermore, as identified in "The Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils: Good Practice", a research project of schools in Lambeth undertaken in 2017, celebration of cultural diversity and pupil voice were all included in the key success factors (Demi and McLean, 2017).

Demie. F and McLean. C. (2017) "The Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils: Good Practice". London: Schools Research and Statistics Unit, Lambeth Education and Learning.

Background context

Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School is a non-selective girls' school with a catchment area concentrated on Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City, but which stretches to Potters Bar to the south and to Knebworth and Codicote to the north. Approximately 41% of the intake come from non-White (BAME) ethnic backgrounds. This is significantly larger than the local

population, which is approximately 20% BAME. The school values reflect commitment to equality and diversity; and an understanding of, commitment to and celebration of diversity underpin its work. However, GCSE attainment data from 2017 to 2019 showed that pupils from some specific ethnic groups, such as those identified as mixed heritage – White–Black Caribbean and Gypsy/Roma – more often had a lower or even negative average Progress 8 per pupil (although it is noted that the number of these pupils is very small in each demographic category across all years, so the sample size is limited).

In the School Improvement Plan 2019–20, leaders set themselves the following objective: *To further promote and celebrate cultural diversity, especially BAME, and to create a culture where protected characteristics are recognised and understood.* While some of this work was curtailed by COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, KPIs regarding BAME attainment, engagement in enrichment and behaviour were largely positive.

The Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020, and subsequent conversations with current and past pupils, highlighted that a more focused whole-school approach was needed. The pupil perception was that the issues around equality and diversity that were important to them needed to be a higher priority in the school. In particular, the lack of diversity in the curriculum and overemphasis on euro-centric role models and celebrations were raised as issues. Leaders wanted to ensure that all pupils feel a sense of belonging and being fully represented within the school community, to enable them to enjoy the journey and fully achieve their potential. There was a disconnect between the school values and the lived experience of the pupils that needed to be addressed.

A lead teacher was appointed in September 2020 to direct a number of projects focused on diversifying the curriculum, improving staff racial literacy, celebrating diversity across the whole school, and promoting and supporting pupil voice. A key focus of this work was the establishment of a pupil-led Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) to lead on celebrating diversity, promoting equality and raising awareness, to ensure that the school's work would be sustainable. The committee would become a key mechanism for embedding race equity within the school culture.

The story

Stage 1: Establishing a pupil-led Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC)

In the autumn term 2020, a core group of pupils – approximately 20–25, from key stages 4 and 5 – was established as the EDC. The EDC would take the lead on delivering assemblies, activities and focus weeks. It was decided to initially offer the role just to key stage 4 and 5 pupils as the committee was to be a key leadership group within the school community. At all times, the EDC would be supported by the lead teacher. It would initially meet twice per

half-term. The creation of the EDC was publicised during form time, via assemblies and using posters around the school on the pupil noticeboards. Interested pupils were asked to complete an application form, which required applicants to:

- explain why they would like to be a member of the Bishop's Equality and Diversity Committee
- give at least one idea/event they thought the school could undertake to promote equality and diversity in the first year

This application process was important in ensuring that the pupils who were involved with the committee were appropriately motivated and committed to positively promoting equality and diversity. 20 pupils applied to be committee members, all of whom demonstrated through the application form that they were engaged with promoting positive change.

Pupil responses included:

"I'd like to be a member because it's important to promote and teach diversity at all times in order to instil a broad social mindset so that marginalised groups don't have to go through discrimination."

Year 10

"I believe in equal rights for everyone and that everyone should accept themselves and others for who they are as everyone is different in their own unique way."

Year 11

"I think that it is very important that people get treated fairly no matter what religion they follow and no matter where they come from. Every culture and every skin tone is beautiful! It is important that we know that and realise that we are all special in our own way. Therefore, I would like to be a part of promoting diversity and equality in BHGS."

Year 10

If there had been more applications, then the application form would have been used to select the members who demonstrated the highest levels of engagement, motivation and positivity towards the new initiative.

Year 11 members of the Equality and Diversity Committee

Stage 2: Establishing priorities

Prior to the first meeting of the committee, where the lead teacher and the committee would establish their priorities for the year, leaders conducted a whole-school pupil survey in collaboration with the head girls and the school council. It was agreed with the lead teacher that the head girls would provide a supporting role to the committee, and that the senior leadership team would act as the link between the committee and the school council. The school council is made up of pupil representatives from each form group and is a well-established part of our school community. Working with the school council, a well-established vehicle for pupil voice would ensure that it was possible to gain whole-school feedback and, in return, the work of the committee would have a wider impact. The head girls' school council pupil survey asked pupils two key questions:

- **How well do you think Bishop's promotes equality?**
- **Do your forms know who they can go to if they are faced with discrimination?**

Pupil responses included:

> **"We need more assemblies focusing on all types of equality e.g. Pride Month, Black History Month and a club that people can go to if they are being discriminated against."**
>
> **Year 8**

"School promotes equality quite well, but we feel that we should learn more about other cultures in history other than just Britain."

Year 9

"More assemblies and lessons, please, that promote and tackle issues such as racism."

The feedback from this school council survey revealed that pupils across the school felt that the school promotes equality and diversity quite well, but that they wanted greater positive promotion of diversity throughout the school, especially through the use of assemblies and events. There was clearly a focus on wanting to learn about and celebrate diversity. Most form groups were aware of how to access pastoral support but raising awareness of how to deal with discrimination was also highlighted as an area for improvement.

Using the feedback from the pupil survey and the committee members' own ideas, the first committee meeting involved establishing the priorities of the group for the year. As identified by the lead teacher, the three key areas of responsibility for the committee were to be focused around celebrating diversity, promoting equality and raising awareness. This helped guide their initial discussions and plans. Using this feedback and guidance, the committee created an initial calendar of events, which included:

- **Human Rights Day**
- **World Religion and Culture Week**
- **LGBTQ+ History Month**
- **Ramadan assembly**
- **Pride Month**

The committee also decided that they wanted to raise awareness of how pupils should respond to racism, prejudice and discrimination, and how to report incidents, so it was agreed that these would form part of particular assemblies and resources provided to form groups. They also decided that there should be flexibility to respond to events and issues, should they arise throughout the year. Therefore, it was agreed that the lead teacher and committee would meet twice per half-term – once at the beginning and once at the end – to plan and reflect, but that they would have short meetings when planning events and assemblies, and would communicate via email and via a specially created Google Classroom outside of meetings.

Stage 3: Implementing Strategies

Prior to the establishment of the committee, most of the committee members had been involved in creating and leading on the Black History Month celebrations with the lead teacher, so it was agreed that further events, celebrations or focus weeks/months would follow the same format:

- **a whole-school assembly**
- **digital and physical posters**
- **two to three form time activities**
- **if appropriate, a House competition**

It was agreed that all members of the committee would be responsible for creating the resources for each event; and tasks were assigned to each member of the committee, using a shared Google document. The main assembly slides were created using shared Google slides. A deadline for completion of the resources was agreed, and the lead teacher was responsible for ensuring that the deadlines were met.

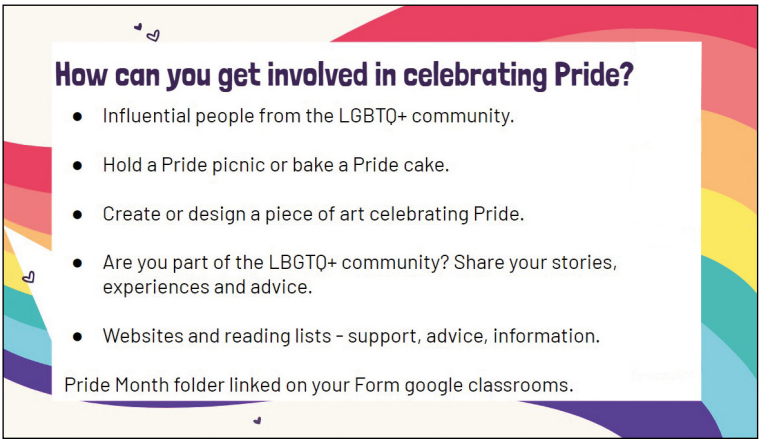
Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions prevented year group assemblies from being held in the hall, so it was decided that all school assemblies would be recorded virtually and would be delivered during form time. This involved a digital platform, "Loom". Further challenges were presented with the school closure in January 2021, but the school's suite of digital resources ensured that the work continued. The lead teacher continued to hold committee meetings via Google Meets on Google Classroom, and the pupils were able to continue to create their resources by using shared documents and slides. As a result of the school closure, the assemblies, form activities, resources and competitions had to be delivered to form groups via Google Classroom, and the activities and competitions would need to be completed from home, so some revisions were required. In addition, there was the added challenge of recording the pupil voiceovers for the assemblies. The lead teacher did this using Google Meets to "meet" the pupils and record their speeches, and then play and edit these using Loom.

Following the return to school, the committee continued its work, and it was now possible to have in-person meetings. However, assemblies remained virtual for the rest of the academic year. In May 2021, the committee was involved in a Black Lives Matter Forum with local schools and started planning a project on raising awareness and tackling microaggressions, which they will deliver in the next academic year.

Impact

Despite the challenges of school closure and virtual assemblies, the committee were able to successfully plan and deliver a wide range of events and focus weeks/months that celebrated diversity, promoted equality and raised awareness of key issues:

- **Human Rights Day assembly – focus on fighting discrimination**
- **World Religion and Culture Week – address cultural appropriation vs cultural appreciation**
- **LGBTQ+ History Month – focus on initialisation, history and personal experiences**
- **Ramadan assembly – focus on awareness**
- **Pride Month – assembly and celebration – focus on influential people**



World Religion and Culture Celebration

World Religion and Culture Virtual Exhibition!

BHGS Recipe Book!

Good Morning/Afternoon Greeting!

The EDC has successfully promoted equality and diversity through the celebration of diversity and has raised awareness of some important issues in order to promote equality. The positive involvement and engagement in the activities, and competitions of significant numbers of pupils across the whole school, indicate that the events and focus weeks/months were well received by the school community. This is also reflected in displays around the school. Feedback from staff highlights that pupils are engaging with conversations around equality and diversity during form time, and positive responses were received to a follow-up pupil survey, which asked pupils to reflect on the work of the committee.

The pupils were asked:

- **What do we do well to promote equality and diversity?**
- **What could we do more of, to promote equality and diversity?**

Pupil responses included:

"Lots of assemblies and themes incorporated into lessons. Display boards and posters. Culture of respect and equality."

Year 8

"Teachers promote equality and diversity. There are strong sanctions for racism. Lots of different enrichment activities that bring different cultures together."

Year 11

"The school is engaging with the topic and messaging around what is and isn't acceptable has become clearer."

Year 10

The committee members feel they have had a positive impact on the school community and have a real sense of pride in their role as ambassadors for equality and diversity within the school.

Committee members' responses include:

"I am proud to be part of a group that is promoting positive change."

Year 10

"I am pleased we have a place to discuss issues and to help educate others."

Year 12

Staff have also commented positively on the work of the committee:

"It has been important for pupils to see their peers lead on topics of diversity, such as Black History Month and religious festivals; students have ownership of these topics, and this enhances their role in the school community".

In addition, further applications to join the committee have been received throughout the year, and there are now 27 pupils from key stages 4 and 5 on the EDC.

Reflections

The feedback from the committee members and the pupil survey have been extremely positive. It is clear that the work of the committee is having a positive impact on the whole school community. Moreover, the pupils are agents for change, and this has positively impacted on their personal development and is inspiring other pupils to join them. The school is more explicitly celebrating diversity, raising awareness of equality and creating a culture that is open to conversations about key issues such as racism. This is particularly pertinent considering that a significant amount of this work was affected by COVID-19 measures. Leaders acknowledge that there is scope for broader discussions about

equality and diversity and challenging stereotypes. Pupil feedback indicates that they would like greater opportunities to explore and celebrate diversity.

Next steps

There has also been considerable interest from pupils in key stage 3, so one of the next steps is to create a key stage 3 Committee led by the lead teacher and two key stage 5 pupils from the original committee, who will facilitate links between both groups of pupils.

Leaders are also looking at ways in which they can support a consistent focus on equality and diversity – in addition to assemblies, activities and competitions – perhaps through the use of digital screens, social media and a newsletter to follow up assemblies and focus weeks/months.

Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) and Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) attainment data from 2020 and 2021 shows positive average Progress 8 per pupil for all pupils, including BAME pupils. However, a more robust source of evidence of impact on attainment and progress will be provided by the summer 2022 external examinations data.

Samantha Maisey and Alf Wood

SAFE DISCUSSION ABOUT RACE

Herts and Essex High School

Focus area

This case study describes a project undertaken at Herts and Essex High School to open up safe discussion about race with students, including the alumni.

Aims and rationale

Herts and Essex High School is committed to creating a culture of safe discussion about the experiences within school of minority ethnic students in order to:

- foster understanding of how the school has historically not effectively addressed matters concerning race, including racist incidents
- enable all students to feel courageous in challenging racist behaviour in the knowledge that it will be addressed, taken seriously and dealt with appropriately

Background context

In summer 2020 a group of minority ethnic alumni wrote an open letter to the executive headteacher, the headteacher and the chair of governors, which described racist incidents that had occurred in the school when they had attended. This included testimonials from several ex-students, including:

- **microaggressions such as students asking to touch Black students' hair**
  One ex-student wrote of "Being told that I 'didn't sound very Black' or that I had 'White people hair'". Another described "… someone's hands would be in my braids, accompanied by … the age-old debate of 'Is it fake or is it real?'"
- **students not reporting racist incidents as they believed they would not be addressed appropriately**
  An ex-student wrote that "There were several racist incidents that I felt I couldn't report to staff as I felt it would not be taken seriously."
- **mispronunciation of students' names**
  One member of the alumni explained that "I constantly had to spell and pronounce my name which felt belittling … having to continuously tell the same people how to pronounce a two-syllable name was irritating and upsetting."

On receiving the open letter and testimonials, leaders were determined to open up safe discussion about the issues raised so that they could bring the school community together to reduce and effectively address these types of incidents.

The story

Leaders embarked on this work with an understanding that safe discussion about race must be informed and supported if it is to be meaningful and impactful. They undertook a range of activities to facilitate this.

Sharing the testimonials

The open letter and testimonials were shared with all staff and governors. There was an agreement that, if staff were to bring the community together, they needed a cohesive strategy to support safe discussion about race, including a greater collective understanding of the experiences of the ethnic minority background students.

Hearing from our alumni and current students

Anti-racism groups were established within the school, the groups including members of the alumni, current students, staff, current and ex-parents, and carers and governors. Initially, the meetings were focused on learning more about the experiences within school of the alumni and the current students from ethnic minority backgrounds. They quickly evolved into strategic groups, which now recommend, monitor and evaluate developments in the school to tackle racism and to create an anti-racist school. These recommendations have been embedded formally in the Annual Development Plans for 2020–2021 and 2021–2022.

Understanding the context

In the autumn term of 2020, leaders undertook a survey about race and racism with all students, to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of the current students between the period September to December 2020. Some of the responses are shown below.

	% of minority ethnic students who responded "Yes"
Either online or offline, in school, or in relation to school, have other students said something unkind or rude to you connected to your race/ethnicity?	14%
Either online or offline, in school, or in relation to school, have other students joked about people of your race/ethnic group?	26%
Has a member of staff mispronounced your name?	33%

In order to understand more about these experiences, senior staff spoke with the students who responded "yes" and, overwhelmingly, the students were positive about having this opportunity for further discussion. For example, in one conversation with an assistant headteacher, a Year 8 student explained that some teachers mispronounced her name and she felt unable to address this. The assistant headteacher met with the student to support her and conversations took place with her teachers to ensure her name was pronounced correctly. In addition, the results of the survey were shared with the anti-racism groups, staff and governors to inform discussions on race and racism.

CPD training

In September 2020, Nikki Cunningham-Smith delivered training to all our staff to support them in having safe discussions with students and each other about race. Prior to the CPD session, Nikki read the testimonials and met with alumni so that the training was tailored to the school's setting. The training focused on supporting staff's understanding and awareness of unconscious bias and microaggressions.

In September 2021 this training was revisited, to maintain momentum and to ensure that new staff were confident in discussing race with students, each other and parents and carers. However, this time it was delivered by members of the alumni and current students, demonstrating how far the school had moved forwards in terms of its confidence in discussing race. One of the current students wrote an article for the school newsletter about this training, explaining that "We have been working with senior members of staff, as well as the Herts and Essex Alumni group … At the beginning of the autumn term (2021), myself, another student and the alumni group presented to all staff about microaggressions within the education setting … we discussed what microaggressions are, how to spot them and what staff can do in these situations …" Staff feedback showed they found it extremely powerful to hear first-hand the experiences of these ex- and current students, and to consider with them case studies and scenarios about discussing race in school and dealing with reports of racist incidents.

Research & Development Group

Herts and Essex has a tradition of teacher-led research, and all members of the teaching staff and several support staff are members of research and development groups, which for teaching staff is linked to a performance objective. In 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 one of these research and development groups had the objective of creating an anti-racist school through Behaviour for Learning policy and practice.

Members of this group engaged in productive research discussions on race and anti-racism with alumni, current students, staff, governors and other schools, informed by the information and training as discussed above. Consequently, changes have been made to

the school's Behaviour for Learning policy, as detailed below. Members of the Research and Development Group have also supported safe discussion with and between students, through the use of "Show Racism the Red Card" resources in tutorials and PSHEE lessons. The student Diversity and Inclusion Group, which comprises representatives from the current students, quality assures these resources in conjunction with the members of staff who oversee this project. This has supported discussions in school about areas such as: *What is Racism?, Media and Race, History of Racism, What is a Hate Crime?* and *Positive Role Models.*

Voice recording of names on SIMS

The testimonials of the Black alumni and results from the 2020 survey showed there was work to do in pronouncing students' names correctly and with sensitivity. Therefore, a major focus for 2021–2022 was to record staff and students' names on SIMs for sharing with all adults. One of the ICT technicians was given this as a responsibility within their role.

Impact

In relation to the aims regarding the creation of safe spaces for discussions about race, the following has been achieved:

i) To foster understanding of how the school has historically not addressed effectively matters concerning race, including racist incidents

The sharing of information from the testimonials, combined with the survey of current students and powerful CPD delivered by a variety of people – including our alumni and current students – has created the base for informed and supported discussions about how to make positive progress regarding race and racist incidents. This was recognised by the alumni in a meeting of the Anti-Racist Committee in April 2021, one year after the open letter was sent, when it was agreed that the effective work undertaken by the school should be shared with the wider community. As a result, the alumni contributed to an item for the local newspaper in which they explained that the school "… has displayed an active commitment to making the learning environment more inclusive and anti-racist" and that "So much progress has been made just one year on from the initial call to action … The commitment from the senior leadership team and staff is commendable."

ii) All our students and members of our community to feel courageous in challenging racist behaviour in the knowledge that it will be addressed, taken seriously and dealt with appropriately

The work of the Research and Development Group has led to the inclusion of microaggressions in the school's Behaviour for Learning policy and also an escalation of the sanctions awarded for racist incidents. This was implemented from September 2021 and was shared in advance with students, staff, parents, carers and governors. There has been a corresponding focus on interventions for students who are the victims of racist incidents, including coaching. There have also been interventions with the perpetrators of racist incidents, including conversations with members of the alumni about the impact of racist incidents on students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

This keen focus on dealing with racist behaviour has led to an increase in the number of racist incidents that have been reported to staff at Herts and Essex, as students become increasingly confident that they will be dealt with effectively. Leaders hope that, as the work on anti-racism becomes embedded in the school, the number of these incidents will decrease.

Academic year	Number of racist incidents managed by the school	Number of students who received a fixed-term exclusion for a racist incident
2016–2017	1	0
2017–2018	0	0
2018–2019	0	0
2019–2020	4	4
2020–2021	4	3

The recording of students' names has also been a powerful way in which staff have signalled and acted on a commitment to ensure all students know they belong at Herts and Essex. The recording has been undertaken on a voluntary basis and, by February 2022, 93% of the students had chosen to record their name on SIMs. It is an expectation that staff will listen to these recordings to ensure names are pronounced correctly.

Reflections

This is proving to be a transformative project for the school. Through the strategic planning of informed and supported discussions on race, this work is becoming embedded in the culture of the school. A second survey of students about their experiences since September 2021 shows that the school is making progress, whilst also highlighting the need for leaders to continue their important work:

	% of minority ethnic students who responded "Yes"
Either online or offline, in school, or in relation to school, have other students said something unkind or rude to you connected to your race/ethnicity?	13%
Either online or offline, in school, or in relation to school, have other students joked about people of your race/ethnic group?	13%
Has a member of staff mispronounced your name?	15%

Next steps

Leaders are committed to continuing their work on encouraging and enabling informed and supported safe discussion about race and racism at Herts and Essex High School. This is reflected in their continued strategic planning.

The school has recently introduced a system for students to report incidents through a "reporting box" and a "tellme@" email address. Staff will monitor the impact this has on encouraging students to engage in discussions about racist incidents in school. Based on successful models in the workplaces of several of the school's ethnic minority alumni, leaders would like to introduce a system of mentoring for ethnic minority students, using members of the alumni as mentors.

Emma Kirkham and Jigna Patel

I, TOO, AM ADEYFIELD

The Adeyfield Academy

Focus area

This case study focuses on steps taken at The Adeyfield Academy to create an anti-racist culture and shares the key strategies implemented to raise the profile of and aspirations for the school's Black African and Black Caribbean students. Staff at The Adeyfield Academy recognise that in society minority ethnic communities face intolerance and racism, and staff are committed to an inclusive, supportive and ambitious approach for Black African and Black Caribbean students.

Aims and Rationale

> **"Within education literature recently four main schools related factors have emerged: stereotyping; teachers' low expectations; exclusions and Headteachers' poor leadership on equality issues"**
>
> **(Demie 2003:243)**

In the school's Ofsted inspection in February 2018, the following areas for development were identified:

> **"Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. They do not provide work which enables pupils to fulfil their potential."**

Therefore, the aim was to ensure high expectations of and outcomes for Black African and Black Caribbean students, by raising their profile in the school community. This would involve tackling inequalities and addressing barriers. A range of in-school barriers were identified:

- **A number of Black African and Black Caribbean students had poor self-efficacy and confidence, which affected their ability to seek challenge in their learning.**
- **A significant number of Black African and Black Caribbean students had a lack of knowledge of further education.**
- **A small number of Black African and Black Caribbean students across Years 7–11 presented behavioural issues, putting them at risk of exclusion or disengagement in the classroom.**
- **A number of Black African and Black Caribbean students had a lack of resources (including digital access and equipment), especially highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

- **A small number of Black African and Black Caribbean students had more than one barrier, being categorised as SEND, PP, CLA or PLA.**
- **A number of Black African and Black Caribbean students had not been identified due to reporting of their data when being admitted to the academy.**

Staff also identified a number of external barriers affecting some of the school's Black African and Black Caribbean students, including:

- **coming from a household where parental education ceased at 18**
- **lack of parental capacity and/or understanding of how to support their children's reading and writing**
- **lack of parental engagement with school**
- **limited access to cultural capital**
- **coming from a family that lacked a sense of belonging in the wider community and had experienced racism in the local community**

Based on the identified barriers and Ofsted findings, leaders identified and agreed five main aims:

- **to ensure staff have high expectations so students strive to be 5 Star Students**
- **to ensure staff identify at-risk students and use their knowledge of the barriers these students might face to empower their teaching; for example, addressing weak numeracy and literacy, which may influence life chances**
- **to ensure all Black African and Black Caribbean students have a champion and have access to a one-to-one mentor or coach to raise their aspirations**
- **to ensure there is access to cultural capital and students attend at least one extra-curricular club in and outside of school**
- **to promote the outcomes for those Black African and Black Caribbean students with the highest prior attainment by ensuring they participate in the Scholar's Programme**

Background context

The Adeyfield Academy is a medium-sized, mixed, non-selective comprehensive school in Hemel Hempstead. There are currently 630 students on roll, with 52 in the sixth form. The school roll has risen steadily since September 2018, principally due to an increase in Year 7 numbers (from 87 to 150). This is sustained evidence of the school's significantly improved reputation.

In the **latest inspection data summary report** (IDSR), the percentage of disadvantaged students was in quintile 1 (high), and the percentage of students with SEND was also in quintile 1 (high). The school serves a complex community, and the majority of the school's disadvantaged students live in areas of high deprivation (IDACI). The attainment of students on entry continues to be significantly below national average with, on average, 50% of students beginning Year 7 well below expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Of the 630 students on roll, students predominantly identify themselves as White British, and 5% (33 students) identify themselves as Black African or Black Caribbean. Of those 33 students, nine are identified as disadvantaged and seven have SEND. 21 of the 33 students are female and 12 are male. The Black African and Black Caribbean community is growing. Four out of the 71 staff members identify as Black African or Black Caribbean.

The story

Under new leadership, the school has been on a journey of rapid improvement since the latest Ofsted inspection in 2019. The academy became part of the Atlas Trust, linked with St Albans Girls' School; and during the interim transition period, there was a collaboration of headship to provide stability and security. Between July 2019 and January 2020, further senior team members were appointed, to secure a full senior leadership team to drive forward school improvement. As a result, the school's attainment and progress scores have significantly improved over the last three years.

The academy's ethos, 'Learning Without Limits', is based on the belief that all children deserve the best life chances, especially when they face additional barriers due to ethnicity and disadvantage. There is a belief that it is everyone's responsibility at the academy to champion Black African and Black Caribbean students' achievement and to create equality of opportunity for all students at the academy.

A whole-school audit was undertaken to reflect on how inclusive the school and its curriculum was for Black African and Black Caribbean staff, students and parents. As part of the audit, leaders gathered information showing that, in the community in which The Adeyfield Academy exists, 2.1% of the population are Black African. The audit provided leaders with an understanding of the gaps in provision. It also gave an insight into the views of Black African and Black Caribbean staff, parents and students, which helped to tailor the approach taken and determine a set of next steps for improvement.

The principal and assistant principals met to discuss the questions raised and identified a framework around school improvement key targets.

They identified the following key areas as foci:

- **Leadership**
- **Teaching and Learning**
- **Power and Voice**
- **Wellbeing and Belonging**
- **Community**

Leadership

The senior leadership team prioritised equality and diversity as part of the school improvement plan. They opened up a conversation about race, racism and racist stereotypes. They modelled an openness to exploring an increased focus on anti-racist practice across the academy. They dedicated spotlight briefings to staff, uncovering their biases as well as offering support in how to challenge bias and prejudice and how to seize teachable moments.

In the spring term 2021, the senior leadership team also embarked on an anti-bullying programme that ensured a clear and well-understood system for recording racist incidents, including bullying and language. This provided the opportunity to monitor and review trends in racist incidents, and to devise actions to counteract those trends.

Teaching and Learning

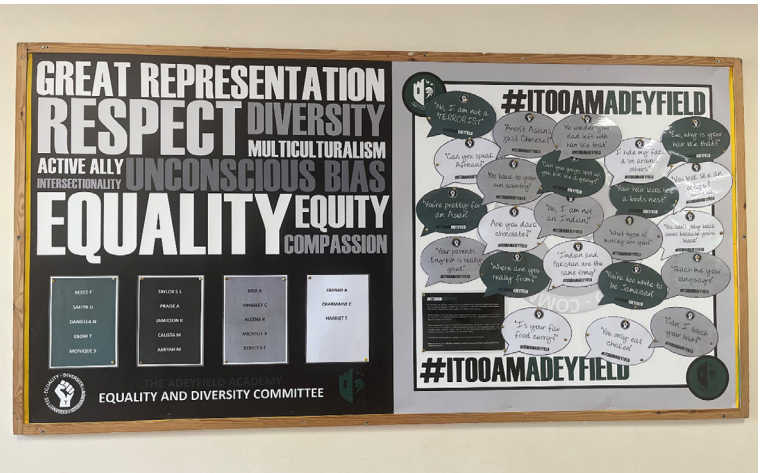
The 5 Star Student approach to teaching and learning has enabled Black African and Black Caribbean students to have high expectations. The 5 Star Student approach encompasses all aspects of academy life, including students' behaviour and attitudes to their learning.

In PSHE the assistant principal and curriculum lead reviewed and evaluated schemes of learning and lesson content during the summer term 2021. The goal was to highlight the positive contributions of individuals such as Marcus Rashford. Every Year 7 student received Marcus Rashford's book *You Are a Champion*, which now forms the basis of a scheme of learning in the department.

Power and Voice

The assistant principals gathered insights from staff, students and parents via a preliminary questionnaire. They ensured there were clear guidelines for reporting and dealing with racial discrimination, harassment and racist incidents in and outside of school. Each of the Black African and Black Caribbean students identified a trusted adult, and this information was shared with the relevant members of staff. The students were encouraged to approach those members of staff if anything worried them, including bullying, racism and discrimination. Leaders also developed a "Be Safe" culture, sharing with students the message "Hear it, see it, report it". Students were encouraged to report anything they were worried about via the "worry" or "report it" button on their RM Unify account. The assistant principal also promoted the "Be Safe" culture by arranging for a number of external organisations to come into school for a carousel exercise with students. This provided an opportunity for students to identify the support available to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy as well as safe.

The senior leadership team developed and shared with staff a "Language for Learning" policy, with a glossary of terminology focusing on an agreed language around inclusion, attainment, respect and growth mindset. They developed a script to support staff with difficult conversations around addressing stereotyping, racism and discrimination.



Wellbeing and Belonging

The senior leadership team have built a whole-school culture around students adhering to the school's five values: ambition, compassion, respect, dignity and courage. All students strive to be 5 Star Students and to be the very best versions of themselves.

The staff empowered Black African and Black Caribbean students to demonstrate a recognised pride in achievement and self-confidence. This was achieved by introducing a one-to-one mentoring scheme. Leaders recognised the importance of students having a role model; it was felt that the deficit of Black African and Black Caribbean role models could be one of the limiting factors explaining why higher GCSE attainment hasn't led to improved employment outcomes. It could also explain why Black African and Black Caribbean students were less likely to both apply to and get into Russell Group universities than their White British peers, despite having equivalent A level results.

Staff, both Black and White, put themselves forward to be champions (mentors) for these students.

Community

The principal and assistant principals recognised that obtaining accurate information about the ethnic and cultural communities that made up the school community was essential.

The assistant principals employed an all-staff approach, recognising that Black staff members, students and parents do not represent and should not be expected to be the voice of all Black people. Therefore, they approached White staff members to play an integral role in voicing and acting on the barriers that exist for Black African and Black Caribbean students.

Impact

The most notable impact has been students speaking coherently about what makes a 5 Star Student. The rewards and recognition system, including achievement points and golden stars, has encouraged a more positive atmosphere and raised students' aspirations. 80% of Black African and Black Caribbean students surveyed feel supported to achieve their best at the academy, whilst 77% of Black African and Black Caribbean students now want to go on to university.

All Year 11 students in the target group have received a one-to-one mentor as part of the Year 11 Accelerate Programme, and they have commented on how this has supported their future aspirations.

During PSHE lessons, Year 7 students have engaged positively with the Marcus Rashford 'You are a champion' scheme of learning, and all of them talk about how these sessions teach them about tolerance and respect. 87% of Black African and Black Caribbean students surveyed said that they enjoyed coming to the academy.

All students in the cohort have a trusted adult to turn to for support; this person is identified in their school planner. Of the 33 Black African and Black Caribbean students surveyed, 90% said they felt safe at the academy.

Reflections

The focus on character education has helped students strive to be the very best versions of themselves and achieve their potential without limits. Black African and Black Caribbean students are benefiting from wider school initiatives, including new enrichment opportunities like cheerleading, fencing and boxing. Students recognised that there was "something for everyone" and that they could test out different clubs. A Year 9 student commented "I don't do any out of school activities; however, I do cheerleading in school."

The school has adopted an opt-out rather than opt-in culture of student leadership. All students having the opportunity to lead and be part of the student leadership structure.

Every student now has a trusted adult, and this has raised the profile of the academy's culture of "Be Safe" and "See it, hear it, report it" across the school. Students and staff feel confident in reporting discrimination or racism, and this is reinforced with students every week in the weekly tutor presentation. This is further supported by the themes of the week, planned throughout the academic year. KS3 students commented that they "feel very included and never feel left out" as well as recognising that "teachers care about you, your grades and say good morning". Students now feel there is a real sense of community, observing "everyone looks after one another" and commenting that "no one is left out".

Leaders will continue to use the spotlight briefings on raising Black African and Black Caribbean achievement, as this provides a platform to inform staff and challenge unconscious biases.

Next steps

It is the senior leadership team's intention that the academy will continue to raise the ambitions and aspirations of the Black African and Black Caribbean students who attend the academy. They are working closely with HfL's Race Equality Adviser.

Leaders hope to continue to consult her on the work that is being undertaken and future developments around Greater Representation. They also hope to strengthen staff's knowledge and understanding by dedicating a twilight training or inset session, to support departments to implement a more diverse, inclusive and representative curriculum, which better reflects the student population in terms of its ethnic makeup and heritage. They will continue to train staff on how to address issues about race and ethnicity and, more specifically, racial discrimination, and to support them to feel confident in addressing inappropriate language and behaviour.

Dawn Mason, Imogen Walbank and Amelda Gare

DIVERSITY SQUARED – WHAT’S YOUR STORY?

Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School

Focus area

The “Diversity Squared – What’s Your Story?” project explored immigration and a sense of belonging by examining the rich variety of people who come to Stevenage town square.

The whole-school enquiry documented the children’s curiosities about and encounters with the people in the town square. Diversity Squared evolved from the school's previous enquiry, Art in Architecture, and its core questions linked to the Stevenage motto: “The heart of a town lies in its people”.

The year-long project focused on discussion points including:

- **Who lives in our town?**
- **Where in the world do they come from?**
- **Why do they come?**
- **What do people do in the town square?**
- **What happens in the town square?**

Background context

Including refugee families, 24% of the children in the school are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. The school has a number of people of colour in post, including midday supervisory assistants, teaching assistants, a nursery nurse and the headteacher.

Following the Brexit vote in June 2016, there was considerable negative media coverage concerning immigrants and migration. This was divisive and created heightened tension and fear within the school community. The national vote was 51.9% Leave, 48.1% Remain; the result in Stevenage 59.2% Leave, 40.8% Remain. Comments the children were bringing from home made it evident that staff needed to deliberately address the issue. Leaders wanted to tackle negative myths and stereotypes whilst being truthful, inclusive and empathetic.

Aims and rationale

Exploring the theme of immigration is often seen as controversial. Leaders carefully considered how to address this theme in a meaningful way both for the children and for their families, especially as the school is diverse. The children explored issues through

philosophical exploration and creative expression. Educators also used sources such as *BBC Newsround* to encourage safe, energetic discussions within their classes.

"The Rights of the Child" is central in the Reggio Emilia approach and the school's pedagogy. Children are recognised as capable and competent, and are given agency over the direction of their learning. Responding to the children's unanswered curiosities, coupled with increasing attention to immigration in the media, presented the ideal opportunity to review understanding of – and attitudes toward – immigration.

"You see me. You hear me. I belong."

The story

Diversity Squared – What's Your Story? happened in several stages over the year, comprising:

- **town centre visits**
- **a drumming procession**
- **Paddington Bear enquiry**
- **family histories**
- **interviews**
- **clay sculptures**

The enquiry culminated in an exhibition, which pulled together all the elements of the project.

The children spent extended periods of time in the town square to make observations. As they explored, they discovered new experiences and perspectives.

In June 2019 the school co-ordinated with all other Stevenage schools to take part in a community drumming procession. This marked the launch of The Stevenage Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy, which aims to make Stevenage a “destination creative town”, in recognition of the rich creativity in the community. In preparation, African music facilitator Risenga Makondo hosted a lively drumming workshop at the school for educators across the town. In schools across Stevenage, a rhythm was taught to both children and parents, which would be played during the procession.

The procession in Mondrian colours incorporated djembe drumming, singing and dancing. The whole event had a festival feel, lifting spirits and bonding the community.

This was an ideal opportunity to explore the theme with an arts-first approach. During the festival, from a stall in the town centre, staff invited members of the community to contribute to a weaving installation to represent the diversity in the town. Each person was asked to choose a thread to represent themselves, from the selection of differently textured and coloured wool, ribbons and lengths of all kinds of fabrics. The threads represented our paths, which are connected and cross in unexpected ways. This opened dialogue, an exchange of ideas and questions, and created new connections, developing new understanding of a community proud to put down its roots in Stevenage.

> **"If you treat someone differently, they will do the same. But if you treat them nicely, you could become friends."**
>
> **Jessica**

Linking with the 60th birthday of Michael Bond’s Paddington Bear, the children were introduced to Paddington and his adventures. The children naturally expressed empathy for Paddington and his predicament when he arrived, alone, in England from Peru. This presented an invaluable opportunity to consider Paddington’s feelings and thoughts, as well as how he may have been received. The children were also encouraged to think more widely about immigration and the challenges faced by displaced people around the world, in our country and in our town. The children carefully considered the values of different people, and how everyone is as important as everyone else.

Sophisticated philosophical discussions developed as the children explored equality, difference and acceptance – core strands of British values – and learned about how immigration has played a large part in the history of our country. The children learned about reasons for people emigrating, including war and famine. They considered the rights and responsibilities of all people.

Educators and children role-played scenarios, which were filmed and reviewed as talking points.

To engage parents and carers, the staff hosted an open-air film screening of *Paddington*.

Building on a planned visit of Paddington Bear to Stevenage town centre, they collaborated with Junction 7 Creatives and the Stevenage Better regeneration team to provide a provocation for children and families across the town. They invited the community to view Paddington as an immigrant, considering how he would be received, how he may be feeling and how they could help him settle in Stevenage. This was achieved through letter writing to welcome Paddington Bear to Stevenage; designing and building models of the ideal home for Paddington; and philosophical discussion about immigration, equality, difference, acceptance and belonging – all captured for a display in the public domain. The children created examples of all of these for the display in order to encourage other young people of Stevenage to add their own perspectives.

Interested in the human stories behind the migration of people, the children interviewed family members to uncover their own histories and lived experiences of how they came to be part of the Stevenage community, embedding a sense of belonging. Together, these histories represent the diversity of the school community. They instil values, respect, and acceptance; and foster community cohesion by helping children to understand people's different backgrounds, allowing young children to fully participate in a democratic society. These stories were then collated and made into a book.

My name is Maraki. I was born in Ethiopia. My mum grew up near Milan in Italy. She moved to Stevenage to work as a research scientist. She met my dad through work in 1999. Nowadays, my mum commutes to work in London. My mum has lived in different houses in Stevenage and we are planning to move again soon within the town. My grandparents still live in the house my mum grew up in. They married in 1970 when they were both 23. They visit us here in Stevenage and we visit them in Italy every few months.

My name is Aboody. My family lived in Gaza. We moved to England because it is safer. My grandparents still live there, and we visit them sometimes.

Over several visits to the town, the children closely observed the people in the town square, making sketches. The children took photographs and videos of the people in the town square. They imitated their movements in role play and dance. Children interviewed the people they met, finding out about their experiences in Stevenage and how they came to be here.

Darren

My name is Darren. I was born in Hitchin before Lister Hospital was even built in Stevenage. I've lived here for 53 years but my family come from Ireland. I've got the day off today, so I've come out to get some money from the bank and take Radar, my dog, for a walk. Radar is 7 years old.

Lady from Ghana

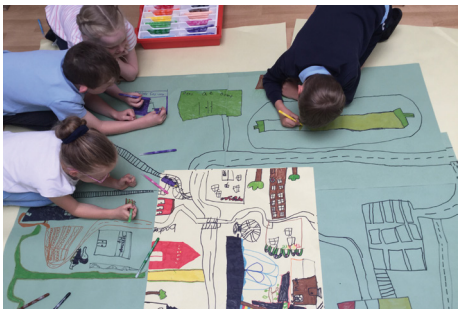
I come from Ghana but now I live in Stevenage. I'm a hairdresser. Today, I've been shopping and meeting my friend.

"You should treat people the same. We are all the same."

Thor

The children considered the question: "What does Stevenage mean to me?" They devised a simple picture map with recognisable landmarks, incorporating both human and physical features of Stevenage. The children shared their endearing perceptions of their town, revealing that they hold Stevenage close to their hearts. They enthusiastically described a town that is welcoming, positive and a creative place to live and grow. Overwhelmingly, the children shared a resolute sense of optimism, claiming the right to be part of the dialogue, thereby shaping and giving identity to their hometown.

"In Stevenage, we welcome people."



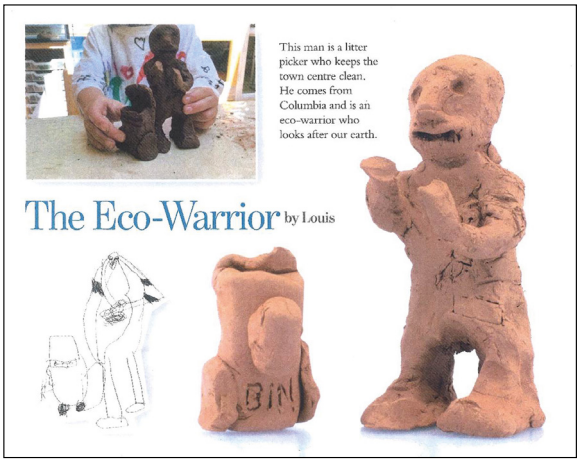
A Community in Clay

This installation encapsulated and celebrated the diverse community of Stevenage. Through making objects, we write our history and capture a moment in time. Over 200 clay figures portray unique narratives of Stevenage residents, as seen through the eyes of children. Together, they are dramatically charged with movement and energy. They vividly express the children's love for and pride in their hometown. Through making objects, we make and write our history, capturing a moment in time.

In collaboration with a local graphic designer, educators captured and documented the journey that formed the summer exhibition and, in turn, part of Herts Open Studios. Alongside educators, children took on a leadership role to tour their peers, families, members of the community and special guests around the exhibition. Children were empowered to educate their parents and carers. Visitors were invited to add to the weaving installation, plot their own family journey to Stevenage on the digital map, consider the provocation posed by Paddington Bear, browse the catalogue, and view the 2D and 3D artwork by the children.

A professionally bound book showcased each member of the community captured in clay. Each child was given a whole page of the catalogue. This showed their final sketch of their chosen member of the community, their sculpture in progress, and their final piece, together with the child's description from observations and conversations with the person.

The children were delighted to find an eco-warrior in the town square! The street cleaner was invisible to most of the people that day, but he was a hero to the children. Here are some examples:



The children were captivated by Roberto's music. Unable to communicate in words with the Romanian street performer, they communicated through music. The children enjoyed dancing to the music Roberto Played on his accordion.

Children's thoughts about "A Community in Clay":

"Just because people come from different countries, they still have feelings like us."

Ethan

"If you have a different colour skin, it doesn't mean you are different inside."

Aurora

"It is wrong to treat people differently because of how they look."

Reuben

"When someone is being mean to someone because they are different, I will stick up for them. I will tell them to stop being a bully."

Katie

Impact

The exhibition included the screening of a film featuring the children interviewing members of the public to learn the stories of how they came to be part of the Stevenage community, and to find out their views of the town. This film was shown by Councillor John Gardner at a meeting of councillors, who were discussing diversity in the town, ahead of formal policy making.

The project challenged some of the stereotypical views held by some parents and carers about diversity, inclusion and immigration. This was achieved by giving the children agency over the learning.

"We are all humans. We are equal."

Emily

The feedback from the exhibition:

"Everything looks better through your eyes, children. The exhibition and its diversity theme were both beautiful in the physical form and inspiring from a learning journey concept."

John Prebble, poet

"Amazing and quite moving. It captured the essence of our town."

Stephen McPartland MP

"An inspirational exhibition that shows how children's learning has enabled them to not only build new knowledge and skills but a strong sense of community pride."

Mireille MacRaild, Education Services Director (Early Years), Herts for Learning

"What a fabulous exhibition. Our Terracotta Town is so moving in representing our Stevenage motto 'The heart of a town lies in its people'."

Cllr Sharon Taylor, Leader of the Council, Stevenage Borough Council

"This work is so important that all schools need to know about it."

Theresa Clements, Herts for Learning

"The town is revealing its treasures! Looking forward to hearing more about A Community in Clay as it becomes mobile and imprints new spaces."

Deborah Mills PhD

"The exhibition is great. It shows all the different ways the children have benefitted from such a great learning opportunity exploring diversity."

Mr and Mrs Todd, parents

Diversity Squared, including a smaller version of the children's installation in clay, formed part of the public exhibition held in the Junction 7 Creatives space in the town centre, entitled with the Stevenage motto, "The heart of a town lies in its people". The exhibition launched in July 2021.

Reflections

The project empowered young children with the agency to express their voice and to think critically about the world around them. Many also realised that they could stand up for social justice in their school and the local community.

The project also facilitated open discussions for adults, who could reflect on their own perceptions and think more widely about immigration and the challenges faced by displaced people around the world.

Leaders now appreciate that Diversity Squared – What's Your Story? was the beginning of a much longer journey with more work and developing of understanding to do with all stakeholders if the pledge to be an anti-racist school is to be sustainable and impactful within the community.

Next steps

Leaders plan to refocus and address anti-racism through parent-partnership workshops and activities.

They feel a duty to challenge the systemic racism that continues to be highlighted in the media and in the community. They believe that all staff must take responsibility and engage in meaningful discussion. They want to enable the school community to be part of the conversation: developing understanding, raising awareness, driving change and making a difference.

Diversity Squared – What's Your Story? captured the community of Stevenage in clay. Parent and carer partnership work will include bringing the focus in closer to the school community. Leaders will invite children (with their parents) to create mixed media collages to represent family histories. This will open an authentic dialogue about their personal family histories and an understanding of how they came to be part of the Stevenage community. In order for parents and carers to understand how to maximise the impact of this experience for the children, staff will film educators demonstrating how to have meaningful interactions with a child whilst completing a collage. Taking time to reflect, each collage will thoughtfully represent the collective story of the Woolenwick family.

The senior leadership team will lead termly CPD for all adults, including governors, educators and MSAs. The sessions will be planned to deliberately challenge thinking on subjects such as identity, privilege, microaggressions and bias. All adults will journal their reflections. Rather than creating a separate sub-committee for equality and diversity, leaders have deliberately made equality and diversity a standing item at all governing body meetings in order to ensure that all members are involved in this ongoing discussion.

When the new "Hub" building is completed, as part of the Stevenage regeneration programme, the aim is to display Diversity Squared in the public exhibition space, visible to the wider community.

As an IQM flagship school, Woolenwick's leaders will focus on anti-racism for their action plan and case study. The inclusion leader has joined a subgroup of the Stevenage Equalities Commission and intends to be an active member – a voice for education. Through a lead role in the Stevenage Creative Network, leaders will seek ways to work collaboratively with other settings and cultural providers to address the issue of race equity. They will use their influence to be visible allies on social media.

Staff will continue to empower the children, giving value to what they have to say by providing learning opportunities that respond to their interests and enquires. As young citizens, the children are not only capable of influencing change in the town in which they live, but they also have the potential to have their voices heard around the world.

Usha Dhorajiwala and Christina Anderson

STAGS TALKS

St Albans Girls' School (STAGS)

Focus area

This case study describes the establishment and embedding of STAGS Talks and STAGS Talks About through the pastoral curriculum and student voice with the aims to:

1. create a safe and positive space for students to explore, talk about and discuss challenging issues, including race equality, within and beyond the classroom
2. support staff in facilitating such conversations in a productive and inclusive manner

Rationale

The current generation has access to much information and many voices from across the world in a majority social media setting. Misconceptions, misinformation and fake news cause rifts in society. It is the role and responsibility of educators to give students the cultural capital needed to ensure that they are prepared for the wider world and are able to be active participating citizens in society.

Students at STAGS are continuously active and vocal in their needs and expectations of the school. As such, leaders recognised that there was a need to provide a safe space and platform for student voice and a forum for discussions on equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI).

As schools are powerhouses of responsibility for young people, staff need to have the cultural competence, provocation and courage to extend beyond empathy and be proud allies and deliberate activists of the anti-racist agenda. Leaders recognised the importance of school's role in facilitating conversations between staff and students on the topic of race.

The initiative that allowed for a safe space for staff and students alike to discuss EDI is known as *STAGS Talks*. The aim was to create a weekly discussion space and a bi-weekly form time with a focus on EDI – fora, for discussions on EDI.

Background context

As a multicultural school with a rich heritage, discussion about racism has always been on the agenda at STAGS but is now under the spotlight. St Albans Girls' School is an 11–18 single-sex girls' comprehensive with a co-educational sixth form. There are currently 1,392 students on roll, with 7.3% eligible for FSM, 8.3% PPG, 11.7% SEND and 17% multilingual learners. 29% of the students are of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) heritage.

Outcomes at both GCSE and A level are consistently nationally in the top 5%. There are 150 permanent staff, comprising 93 teachers and 57 educational support staff (ESS), of which 13.3% are of BAME heritage (10.75% teachers and 17.54% ESS). The school context, with the majority of staff being of White heritage, means that the focus was on supporting and facilitating conversations about race, whilst also trying to target and empower the minority of students and staff who identify as non-White.

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict in May 2021 was a trigger for the school's intent to enhance diversity and equity dialogue and actions. Many of the school population were personally and culturally affected by this international crisis. This manifested in some negative activities, which took place across the school: propaganda leaflets, Israeli flags being crossed out on world flag maps in geography rooms, and an aggressive outburst between two students. It was clear that many of the students felt passionate, upset and frustrated at the situation and, as a result of lockdown, had not had the chance to air and consider their views in a healthy way.

Students wanted to discuss the crisis with members of the school community and wanted to speak with staff members about their frustrations. In some cases, students felt shut down and not heard as, due to the sensitive nature of the situation, some staff were nervous about opening up discussion and perhaps "saying the wrong thing" or igniting the situation further. This nervousness felt by staff and students alike highlighted the need for such issues to be brought to the foreground in the school community, to ensure that conversations were facilitated rather than dismissed, and to ensure that there was a safe space for students to be heard and listened to.

The story

A meeting was held between the executive headteacher, assistant headteacher, assistant director of learning at post-16 and deputy headteacher. It was agreed that leaders needed to act quickly to address and challenge misconceptions. The most prominent finding was that many students were not aware of the history between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, and there had been some misunderstandings across the school community about why the conflict was taking place, which in turn was heightening the situation.

Leaders agreed a plan to outline both sides of the debate by presenting the facts of the conflict in terms of the history and context of the situation. It was decided to engage social action leaders in the sixth form to lead an assembly, providing the whole school community of students and staff with an educational understanding of the crisis. (Social action leaders are part of the school's student leadership team and promote social and world action within the school.)

The aim was to address any potential further issues of conflict and to find an appropriate and safe place to talk. It was decided that, to support staff and students, a follow-on discussion club would be set up and promoted by the social action leaders on the day of the live assembly, for all students who felt passionate and wanted their voice to be heard to come together with key staff to discuss the conflict.

To initiate this, the two assistant heads met with KS5 students who were largely involved in the propaganda activities that were taking place around school, and the social action captains. Along with the creation of the assembly, they highlighted the importance of developing these conversations and allowing a regular time and space for such discussions. The KS5 students agreed that this would be an excellent opportunity and wanted to take a lead role in the club. Following the success of the whole-school assembly that was led by the KS5 students, the inaugural club took place, with over 100 students coming together to talk about the Israeli–Palestinian crisis. It was an emotional and powerful session, and the KS5 leaders led the discussion with support from senior staff. The popularity of the club and the richness of the discussion showed that having an opportunity for everyone's voices to be heard was pivotal in ensuring the cultural capital and inclusivity of our students.

In the latter part of the summer term, the Sarah Everard case made headlines, leading to the formation of the "Everyone's Invited" website. This further highlighted the need for the school to act and empower all voices to be heard, which in turn promoted the importance of continuing the weekly discussion club. Initially, the club was called "Everyone's invited" as leaders wanted to emphasise that everyone's voice is to be heard at STAGS. However, due to the eventual context of "Everyone's invited" being specifically linked to sexual abuse in schools, it was decided to change the name of the club to *STAGS Talks About*, as it was more appropriate to reflect the range of discussions and important topics that arise through the media and in society. The now weekly STAGS Talks About club is supported by members of the senior leadership team (SLT). It is promoted to all students across the school and has gained huge momentum from staff and students alike, with the ebb and flow of content in the media.

Leaders also undertook a review of the pastoral curriculum (form-time activities) to support these discussions and to support staff. STAGS Talks (a weekly dedicated time to consider the importance of EDI in all areas of the school by ensuring a centralised place for world and current affairs to be discussed) was then set up in the new academic year, to complement the STAGS Talks About club.

STAGS Talks would ensure that the pastoral curriculum provided the time and space to be inclusive of all. Leaders created an annual plan of events that was published to all staff. Staff were offered the opportunity to contribute to this. Themed sessions were then centralised and delivered to all students across the school. The calendar of sessions was

created to represent world events such as Black History Month, Diwali, Hanukkah, Human Rights Week and Pride Month.

In addition to world events, there would be bi-weekly sessions on current affairs. Topics included, "If it wasn't for mobile phones being able to record video, would race be the discussion point it is today?" Discussion points were differentiated by key stage to ensure age-appropriate content. In addition to this fixed calendar, it was important that the programme provided flexibility to make sure that any important new issues that arose could be added and discussed with all students. Leaders supported staff by providing materials and facilitating initial educational prompts on discussions. STAGS Talks discussions fed into the next STAGS Talks About club session – students could come and continue the discussion further with members of staff who were comfortable with facilitating in-depth debates on topics. STAGS Talks About club is promoted at the end of every STAGS Talks form-time session.

To enhance the leadership of students who regularly attended STAGS Talks About, the role of global ambassadors was introduced to the student leadership group. Global ambassadors are committed members of STAGS Talks About who assist with the creation of form-time activities and lead discussions, whilst also suggesting ways that staff can increase EDI awareness at STAGS.

The STAGS Calendar of Diversity was set up to ensure that there was a consistent message being delivered to the whole community throughout the year. This involved the STAGS Talks form-time schedule, termly year group assemblies, staff EDI group meetings, Personal Development Day: Diversity March 2022, staff training on being an anti-racist school in February 2022, and annual anti-racist assemblies.

As part of the school's diversity plan, anti-racist assemblies now run on a termly basis with every year group. Each term has a theme. Autumn term 2021 was focused on microaggressions, the concept of racism and how the school can be anti-racist. The aim of the assembly was to empower students and staff to be anti-racist in their language, have the power to challenge any racist behaviour, and promote the use of anti-racist language.

Impact

Students that attend STAGS Talks About on a weekly basis are enthused and engaged about the club and the programme at STAGS. It has given them the confidence to also take inclusivity and diversity further into the school community; they want to get involved in further school events. For example, 30 students who come to STAGS Talks About have become global ambassador leaders; they are helping staff lead a Personal Development day on Diversity for the whole community. As outlined in our aims, staff wanted not only

to create a safe space but also to provide a platform for students to explore challenging issues beyond the classroom, and this has clearly happened.

One of the most enriching learning outcomes for staff has been the impact of listening to students express how they feel, and the impact it has shown to students seeing staff collaborate to ensure that STAGS is a beacon of inclusivity. Students have developed greater confidence to express themselves. Staff could not have foreseen the impact this would have on students at STAGS.

What the students say about STAGS Talk and STAGS Talks About:

"It has given a safe space for discussion as well as the impact it has on the whole school, and feeling involved in the wider community feels very impactful. Also, hearing other people's opinions has shown so many different perspectives."

"The club has made me feel included and encouraged me to speak up. I feel more educated every time I go as it gives us the opportunity to learn about other experiences. I feel like it is actually creating change within the school."

"It's reassuring knowing that there is a portion of progressive teachers at the school and has created a sense of community I didn't believe STAGS previously had."

"It has opened my eyes to more issues of the world and made me more comfortable speaking out on issues."

"We have a safe space to discuss and understand things I didn't understand before."

"It has made me more confident in talking in school, less introverted."

"It is a great way in which everybody is verbally being involved and interacting with one another in a safe space."

“I think I’ve learnt a lot about articulating points and it’s a really useful club to educate and widen your knowledge on global issues.”

“Talking and initiating debates in a healthy and controlled environment by letting the students lead conversations with each other.”

“[Students can] freely discourse and share their views and hear both sides.”

We can all share our opinions and learn from each other rather than having meaningless talks once a year where we are reading off the board.”

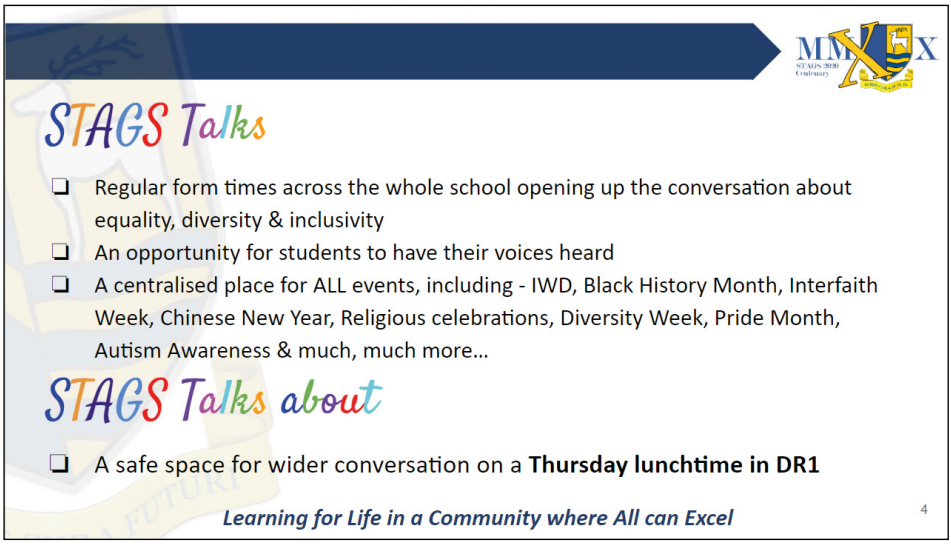
What staff say about STAGS Talks and STAGS Talks About:

“As a form tutor, I really appreciate the resources and having something meaningful to do with them so thank you to all for putting them together. I said the other week how animated students were about the club and how they've enjoyed going and they promoted it to the rest of the form which is fab.”

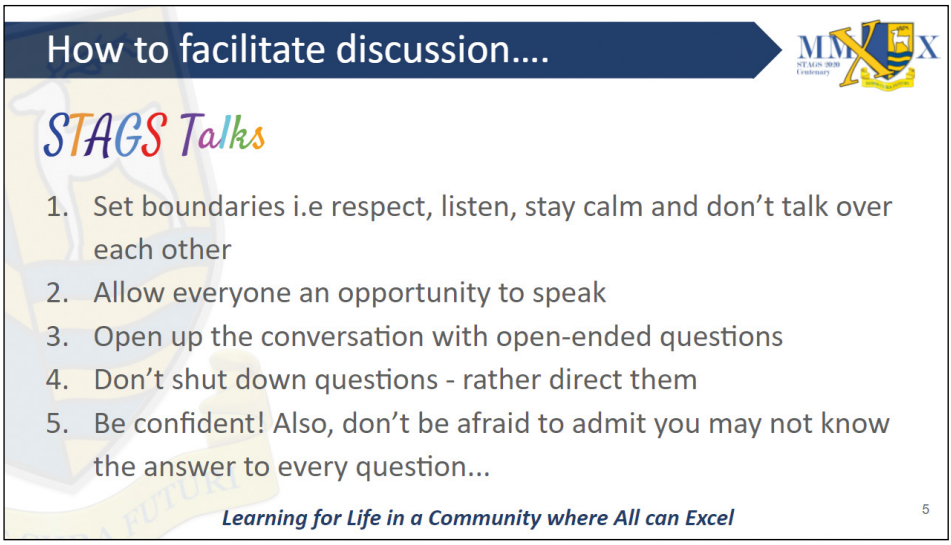
“The club has been a wonderful opportunity to see the attitudes of students and the depth of their thinking and discussion. It also exposes me to some different perspectives I, as a White cis man, don't hear often.”

“STAGS Talks is the form-time activity I most enjoy, as my form and I discuss current topics relating to society and citizenship. STAGS Talks encourages very mature, insightful and empathetic conversations among the students.”

The branding and contents of our club, as promoted around our school



Slide taken from initial staff training on how to facilitate STAGS Talks



Sample slide taken from autumn term anti-racist assembly

Reflections

The school has faced challenges in ensuring all staff feel confident and are following professional responsibilities in delivering the STAGS Talks form-time sessions. Leaders have had to be consistent in their approach to ensuring all stakeholders are on board with the concept and delivery. This has necessitated a continuous promotion of the EDI focus at STAGS by working with form tutors, directors of learning, heads of key stages and SLT, to ensure that there is a whole-school drive on inclusivity.

Weekly emails were set up, directing staff to resources and support for the STAGS Talks form-time session for that week. Including staff from across the school has helped with its promotion. A key element of the form-time sessions that leaders have reflected on is ensuring that there is a centralised place for all school events covering equality and inclusivity, to ensure there is a consistency of approach.

STAGS Talks has allowed for a greater presence of the student voice, and this has highlighted the need for a whole-school language policy, not only for students but for staff alike. Furthermore, the need for a more holistic approach to inclusivity is evident, thus regular whole-staff training regarding protected characteristics and the importance of EDI have become a feature of CPD annual planning for all staff.

Next steps

To continue to develop the language needed to be an anti-racist school, leaders are in the process of creating a Language Policy for staff, students and parents. This policy will outline the school's agreed policy on language related to race, equality and diversity.

Following student feedback from STAGS Talks – "One way STAGS can continue to help improve this [inclusivity] is by ensuring diversity in all subjects" – there will be a focus on decolonising the curriculum, to take place in the second half of the spring term, 2022.

Identity activity is to be launched as part of the Personal Development day on Diversity in April 2022.

STAGS Talks themes are to be promoted and noted on *STAGSlink*, the school's weekly newsletter. The further embedding of STAGS Talks throughout the pastoral curriculum is to continue into the 2022–23 academic year.

Margaret Chapman, Tess Lambert, Sally Ann Taylor and Paul Kershaw

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