



GREATREPRESENTATION.

Volume 2

Edited by Rachel Macfarlane and Michael Catchpool

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About the editors



Rachel Macfarlane is the Director of Education Services at HFL Education. From 2007 until 2018 she was a National Leader of Education, serving as headteacher of three contrasting schools over a 16-year period. In 2011 Rachel joined Ark Schools to set up a new co-educational, all-through academy for 4- to 18-year-olds in Ilford, East London. This was judged by Ofsted – in 2014 and again in 2018 – to be outstanding in all areas. In 2017 and 2018 the Year 11 students gained GCSE outcomes that placed the school in the top 1% of schools nationally for progress. The school won the Pearson “Shine a Light” secondary school of the year award in 2018 and was shortlisted for the TES Secondary school of the year award.

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, including *Obstetrics for Schools: A guide to eliminating failure and ensuring the safe delivery of all learners*. The most recent – *Unity In Diversity* – is about achieving structural race equity in schools.



Michael Catchpool is the District School Effectiveness Adviser for North Hertfordshire at HFL Education. 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 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 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: an introduction
13	The reflective journals
29	Reflective journal 1 All Saints Church of England Primary School and Nursery
39	Reflective journal 2 Barnwell School
51	Reflective journal 3 Cassiobury Infant and Nursery School
63	Reflective journal 4 Fairlands Primary School
73	Reflective journal 5 Hitchin Boys' School
86	Reflective journal 6 Katherine Warington School
100	Reflective journal 7 Kings Langley School
116	Reflective journal 8 Knebworth Primary School
129	Reflective journal 9 Longdean School
143	Reflective journal 10 Margaret Wix Primary School
156	Reflective journal 11 Nash Mills Church of England Primary School
167	Reflective journal 12 Peartree Spring Primary School
179	Reflective journal 13 Prae Wood Primary and Nursery School
192	Reflective journal 14 Presdales School
203	Reflective journal 15 Richard Hale School
211	Reflective journal 16 Robert Barclay Academy
223	Reflective journal 17 Sandringham School
234	Reflective journal 18 Simon Balle All Through School
247	Reflective journal 19 Sir John Lawes School

- 256 Reflective journal 20 St Andrew's Church of England Primary School
- 267 Reflective journal 21 St George's School
- 279 Reflective journal 22 St Helen's Church of England Primary School
- 288 Reflective journal 23 St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
- 298 Reflective journal 24 St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School
- 306 Reflective journal 25 The Broxbourne School
- 318 Reflective journal 26 The Highfield School
- 329 Reflective journal 27 Watford Grammar School for Girls
- 344 Reflective journal 28 Yorke Mead Primary School

THE GREAT REPRESENTATION PROGRAMME: AN INTRODUCTION

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, in that 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 HFL Education 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 Dr Pragya Agarwal, John Amaechi and the Rt Hon Stuart Lawrence at our HFL conferences. A race equity adviser, Toks Olusamokun, was appointed to join HFL in September 2021 (funded by HCC); and in September 2022 a second race equity adviser, Shammi Rahman, (funded by HFL Education) joined the Wellbeing Team. Schools, settings and trusts across Hertfordshire and beyond are benefitting from their race-equity consultations, training and advice.

At the same time as HFL Education 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, sadly, facing a backlash from right-wing political groups in their local community.

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 economically disadvantaged learners and their more advantaged peers, this programme would centre on initiatives implemented at 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) that 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 that could best evidence demonstrable impact in an aspect of anti-racist action.

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.

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 took away from the visits to adapt and implement in their own schools.

Over the course of the year, each school on the programme also wrote a case study 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 a 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 reached across every school in the form of this book, which was designed to inspire leaders with practical suggestions of initiatives that they might consider, albeit with adaptations, for their own institutions.

In 2022–23, 28 more Hertfordshire schools took part in a second cohort of the Great Representation programme. The format was as in year one. However, this time, instead of writing case studies of impactful race equity practice already implemented in their schools, delegates from the participating schools wrote a reflective journal of their learning and the activity undertaken related to promoting race equity in their school over the course of the year. It is these 28 reflective journals that are presented in this volume (volume 2) from the Great Representation programme.

The speakers at the six seminars in 2022-3 were:

Paul Miller, Professor of Educational Leadership and Social Justice

Cynthia Rowe, Headteacher at How Wood Primary School, St Albans

Claire Stewart-Hall, Founder of Equitable Coaching

Sufian Sadiq, Director of Teaching School, Chiltern Learning Trust

Jigna Patel, Assistant Headteacher at Herts & Essex High School

Christina Anderson, Inclusion Leader, and Ryan Bratley, KS1 educator, at Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School

Penny Laskar, Deputy Headteacher at Wheatfields Junior School

Orrel Lawrence, The Black Curriculum

Sylvia Tai, Headteacher at Watford Girls' Grammar School

Jessica Boyd, Director of Participant and Alumni Impact at Teach For All

Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson, Founder of Impact of Omission

Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga, UCL Centre for Holocaust Education

David Gillborn, Emeritus Professor of Critical Race Studies at the University of Birmingham

Melissa Lowry, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Lead, Knebworth Primary School

Lord Simon Woolley, Founder and Director of Operation Black Vote and crossbench member of the House of Lords

Toks Olusamokun, HFL Race Equity Adviser

Kings Langley School Students

We send our sincere thanks to them all for their stimulating, challenging, inspiring and impactful contributions to our learning.

As this book goes to press, we are receiving applications from schools keen to be part of Cohort 3 of the Great Representation programme. There is a sense across Hertfordshire that school leaders have a moral imperative to address the structural race inequity that exists across our society and within our education system.

The leaders of cohorts 1 and 2 will continue to meet in 2023–24 to support each other and to discuss ways in which they can continue to contribute to system leadership. In the meantime, we hope you will enjoy and be inspired by the stories in this publication.

Rachel Macfarlane

June 2023

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”, “racially minoritised” and “non-White”. The language used in this area is highly emotive, eliciting strong opinions and reactions. We have 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.

THE REFLECTIVE JOURNALS

The schools joining the Great Representation programme in September 2022 did so for a variety of reasons and were motivated by different factors. Some had noticed an increasing mismatch between the ethnic diversity of their student and staff/governor/trustee bodies and were seeking strategies to address this. Some were looking for inspiration for diversifying and decolonising their curriculum. Some were keen to facilitate discussions about race in their schools but nervous and unsure as to how to go about it. Some wanted to develop the racial literacy of their staff and students:

“We are increasingly aware of the possibilities of unconscious bias that may pervade our day-to-day routines at school and are looking to the programme to challenge these biases so that we can provide a more inclusive community for all our pupils, parents and broader stakeholders.”

Broxbourne

“The Great Representation programme gives the school a chance to assess where we are and where we are heading in terms of racial equality. We are always mindful of tokenism. We want to use these sessions and school visits to really solidify and embed the values that Great Representation stands for.”

Richard Hale

“Other schools made us aware of the Great Representation course, and we have heard of the impact the course has had with senior leadership teams across the county, who are developing anti-racist policies to support students from all backgrounds. We very much feel that working with other schools will benefit us with what we are doing to ensure inclusion. We believe that we can expand our understanding of the challenges that the diverse range of students face. We want to ensure that no student is disadvantaged because of their race and that “Everybody can be somebody”.

Sandringham

“We want to increase staff confidence to discuss and share issues of representation, race and diversity with pupils. We also want to have greater awareness of the potential for bias (conscious and unconscious). ... We want to learn from others, see some great resources and initiatives in action, and make this a key priority for our school this year.”

All Saints

“Our hopes are that the sharing of good practice from other schools will inspire us and give us the confidence we need to address matters that we know will be contentious for some of our staff and students, whether through ignorance, unconscious bias or deeply ingrained racism.”

Longdean

Some of the participating schools had been overtly addressing race equity for some time; others were nearer the beginning of their journey.

Each school's reflective journal includes a series of diary entries, sharing thoughts, questions and emotions in response to the input from speakers and facilitators at the seminars, discussions held with other delegates on the programme, reading and research explored over the year and the school-to-school visits conducted between seminars. They chart the actions taken by the schools to embed anti-racist practice. And they show the learning of the participating leaders, their colleagues in their schools and the students, parents and other members of their school communities. They give practical advice and honest reflections.

Whilst each school's experience, context and journey over the year are unique, there are some striking common threads between the reflective journals.

One is the growing determination, bravery and confidence of the participating leaders to address issues of race inequity in their schools, to develop the racial literacy of their staff and to ensure that, however sensitive or tricky, conversations around race and race inequity are taking place at all levels and involving everyone in the school:

“We understand that it is not enough to have a zero-tolerance stance on racism ... Our job is to ensure our children are educated to understand what racism is and that it exists in a multitude of forms. We need to support our staff to be confident in their teaching of this.”

Peartree Spring

“Reading and learning about race equity and White fragility has taught us a great deal. Our reading and research highlighted the importance of education around racial literacy when striving for equality.”

Kings Langley

“We have to improve staff awareness of the issue. Our staff body is 85% White, and it is likely that many will never have thought about what it feels like not to belong or to be represented, and what racism feels like.”

Robert Barclay

The reflective journals show a growing awareness that:

“Making mistakes is almost certainly an inevitable part of engaging in meaningful change.”

Broxbourne

“We are thinking differently; we are being brave in our discussions and decisions.”

Highfield

“The Great Representation programme has led us to not fear having challenging conversations, in an open and honest manner, on race.”

Sir John Lawes

“No one should be judged if they say or do the wrong thing unintentionally ... We know that we will not always get it right but would prefer to try than shy away from any challenges we may face. We do not want to be satisfied with saying that our school is not racist, but instead, know that we are anti-racist.”

Presdales

This determination and bravery has led to significant change, even over the course of just one year:

“Sleeping quietly through staff and children alike, are a newfound openness and confidence to discuss our misconceptions.”

All Saints

“We’re noticing that these conversations are becoming a lot easier to open and continue as our confidence and awareness develop.”

St Vincent de Paul

“Six weeks on from delivering our racial literacy training, staff continue to report that they are feeling more comfortable with the language they use and feeling braver to have discussions about race. They are more in tune with considering their unconscious bias and striving to be more racially diverse in their everyday teaching.”

Prae Wood

“The topic of race is now not the elephant in the room during discussions at strategic or operational level. It is openly and confidently discussed from a position of greater knowledge.”

Sir John Lawes

A second aspect of commonality is around the volume of questions posed in the reflective journals. The programme has encouraged leaders to ask curious questions – of their systems and procedures, their curriculums, their data, their recruitment and staff development practices, the biases and privileges of members of their school community, of the impact of intersectionality, about languages, about appropriate activity with children of different ages, of the extent to which children of colour see themselves represented and feel a sense of belonging. For example:

“We know that we are strong in supporting our children from all backgrounds, but do we do enough to ensure that children from minority groups feel they belong and maintain their sense of identity?”

Peartree Spring

“We want to ensure equity in learning and that outcomes are good for all pupils. But could we perhaps improve attainment for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups by a few simple changes to the curriculum we provide? Could we do more to fully embed experiences and diversity so that they become a natural part of everyday practice rather than tokenistic gestures or special occasions?”

Cassiobury

“Being part of Great Representation has led us to ask many questions.”

Prae Wood

Over the year, the participating schools started to review all their activity through the lens of race equity:

“Our job now is to ensure equity is at the heart of every decision made at Sir John Lawes, whether that be at policy level, at strategic level, or even via an in-classroom initiative.”

Sir John Lawes

“The concept of ‘race equity’ is in our mind at various points throughout the school day.”

All Saints

“There has been a shift in the culture of the leadership team to support the use of an anti-racist lens across all work we do.”

Sandringham

“This lens is becoming so embedded in our everyday life that we ensure that we challenge those organisations who perhaps haven’t discovered their identity lens yet. They are becoming ‘comfortably awkward’ conversations!”

St Vincent de Paul

“This work is vitally important and needs to be addressed with the same robustness and rigour as safeguarding. It needs to be on every meeting agenda and be fully embedded in policy, process and practice. It must not become a tokenistic, tick-box exercise, and we are committed to ensuring this does not happen.”

Knebworth

The journals show a deepening of understanding around the crucial role of the curriculum in achieving race equity:

“The school had begun to work on improving curriculum representation, but it is clear now that this is at a surface level. ... If we are to make a real change, it starts at the top. ... We need to equip staff with the knowledge and understanding of societal racial injustice, common language, etc. Just changing texts in English or studying different BAME journalists in media, for example, will not have long-term impact if people do not understand the deep reasons this is needed and the intended outcomes.”

Robert Barclay

“We want to ensure that everyone is represented; to promote inclusion; provide aspirational role models; and offer opportunities to experience other cultures, beliefs and experiences.”

St Helen's

“Thinking more about the fact that victors generally write the history books has led our staff to start to look at their schemes of learning through a different lens. This is a huge task and something that deserves the investment of considerable time.”

Barnwell

“Curriculum change takes time, so we must give staff the time to review, consider, gain knowledge and plan for changes in the future.”

Highfield

Leaders reflect on the fact that staff training is crucial in order to deliver a diverse curriculum with impact:

“If we can empower our White staff to be actively anti-racist in their development and delivery of the curriculum, this will undoubtedly have a significant impact.”

Watford Girls’

Curriculum discussions over the course of the year included consideration about what is taught and learnt beyond formal timetabled lessons:

“Another key element of the day was considering which groups are currently foregrounded in our schools and the impact of this – those who we give our focus to benefit, and we must ensure we engage in the discussion about race within the hidden curriculum as well as in the taught curriculum.”

Yorke Mead

Many of the journals describe the action taken by leaders, following input from keynote speakers at the seminars and sharing good practice strategies in discussion with colleagues from other schools on the programme, to diversify their staff bodies and governing/trust boards:

“One significant development has been a change in the way that we shortlist and interview candidates to avoid unconscious bias.”

Hitchin Boys’

As well as charting the work undertaken with staff to develop their racial literacy, and to develop their confidence and competence as anti-racist allies and teachers of a diverse and representative curriculum, the journals outline the involvement of pupils in leading anti-racist work and providing feedback to leaders on the impact of their actions:

“We are planning to work closely with the student body. This will hopefully empower students – there will be more impact to decisions if they have been involved in shaping our course of action.”

Richard Hale

“Our learning from this visit has been that we need to make sure that pupils are involved at all stages of our journey; otherwise, our efforts would become something that was being done to rather than done by the children. We have also reflected that a similar approach needs to be taken with our parent and carer body.”

Fairlands

The journals articulate the need to work with the parent body, and they describe various ways in which schools have meaningfully engaged parents in their anti-racist work:

“We need to invite our parents into the conversation, to bring their experience, thoughts and ideas to the table to strengthen the culture change.”

Katherine Warington

“Parental engagement is key to effecting change, and we are extremely mindful that this programme needs support from all stakeholders. The first step towards developing this stronger engagement is through communication channels.”

Knebworth

“Our challenge is to ensure our children understand their responsibility to call out injustice and make society more balanced. As part of this challenge, we know that parental engagement and support are key to make this successful. We have therefore taken steps to be very open with our parent community about our school-improvement priorities, including our drive for inclusion, acceptance and respect for all. We have discussed these with our parent forum (comprising representatives from all year groups) and published them in our weekly newsletter. ... We have decided to provide termly, written updates to our parents to detail what actions the school has taken against these priorities.”

St Andrew's

Without exception, the journals reflect on the power of the visits to other schools and the impact of forming strong and trusting relationships with colleagues in their hub groups:

“We have learned so much from each other and gained so much from visiting each other’s schools. Together, we have had deep and powerful conversations and have been able to challenge our thinking as to how we are leading our schools forward on race equity. Seeing first-hand how other schools have diversified displays in corridors, books and artwork, as well as their focus on staff representation and CPD on the theme of belonging, has been phenomenal. We are keen to keep in touch to find out how each other’s projects continue to progress in the future.”

Prae Wood

“It is really important to note the power of the hub group. Having a group of people who you trust and are on the same (or similar) journey to you, all with the same united aim, is a powerful tool.”

St Andrew’s

“It has been invaluable to have the opportunity to discuss things that have worked well and things that have not been so successful in our hub schools. Sharing good practice is one of the most valuable parts of the Greater Representation process.”

Barnwell

“True and lasting collaboration.”

St Joseph’s

“This programme is part of what has supported us to reflect broadly on leadership and the great importance of collaborative leadership. Collaborative leadership with other headteachers on the programme, and learning from other school systems, structures and experiences, have been invaluable.”

Simon Balle

“On a subject such as race equity, it is imperative to remember that, as educators, we are all colleagues and there is no competition. It is so important to share good practice, share advice, learn from each other’s successes and failures.”

Katherine Warington

Colleagues were inspired by practice seen at other schools and magpied ideas, resources and strategies for use in their own institutions:

“As a result of this visit, we will be looking to adopt our own diversity ambassadors in school.”

Knebworth

“These recommendations have inspired us to invest in a collection of EDI books, which we have come to realise are essential reads; these texts will form a Longdean staff library, which we aim to launch on World Book Day.”

Longdean

“We came away from our visit with a list of further things to consider – things we would have never thought of before.”

Margaret Wix

“One area in which we have succeeded is the appointment of values ambassadors. Through our relationship with the other schools in our hub, we were able to explore this role before rolling it out. We knew quite early into the programme that we wanted an EDI role for our children but were not certain how to make it meaningful. Having the opportunity to speak to colleagues in secondary school and to spend time with secondary school students who held this role helped us to develop it.”

St Helen’s

Not only were primary practitioners inspired by the maturity and articulacy of secondary EDI student leaders, but:

“The interesting part for secondary teachers was the level of sophisticated discussion and empathy that was achievable in a diverse primary school.”

Hitchin Boys’

Hosting visits from colleagues from other schools was an opportunity for leaders to take stock of what they had achieved and to feel pride in their staff and pupils:

“Our school visit was a chance to reflect on the strides that we have made in the area of representation and left us feeling proud that we are in the process of making meaningful progress.”

Yorke Mead

The writers of the journals are honest and candid about challenges they faced along the way: resistance encountered from some colleagues, depressing incidents of discrimination or racist behaviours, frustration at the slow pace of change, the pressure of time, and competing priorities. But they learnt important lessons from each of these challenges:

“December brought the recognition that we still do not yet fully have the buy in from the rest of the school staff, but it is important to note that this is through no fault of their own. A busy school life, with a large workload, means that time to share what we have been doing through these sessions and school visits are rare. ... We need to bring our staff on this journey with us, sharing the things we have heard so far from the school visits, seminars and our own research.”

Cassiobury

“We are becoming increasingly accepting of our own vulnerability. We do not know all the answers, and so exploring other views and hearing the ideas of others will be central to our ongoing process. We know that being flexible and reflective is absolutely crucial. We know that we are on a journey and that many of us are struggling with the same things. We know that sustained change takes time and will not happen overnight. ... We have therefore decided that, as we climb the mountain, we must take the time to enjoy the view and celebrate how far we have come.”

St Georges

“This isn’t a sprint – it is a marathon. Therefore, despite the want to change everything now, to make long impactful cultural change, we need to be strategic and impactful with our next steps. ... This has led to our biggest lightbulb moment to date: the need to manage our emotions and the utmost importance of avoiding emotional responses and decisions as we gather more and more information and strategically approach every step of the journey.”

Katherine Warington

“The pace at which we work may need to be slower, to ensure all are on board. ... We are coming to realise the utmost importance of creating a safe space for conversation, before we can take concrete actions to promote race equality. ... Addressing race equality in our school is not a one-time event – it is going to be an ongoing process.”

Robert Barclay

Several of the schools commented in early journal entries that they felt they were in a strong place with regard to their race equity work. A common feature seen across a number of journals is a realisation that this work is never finished and is far more complex than it first may seem:

“We had perhaps thought at the outset that this was a project that would involve completing an action or initiative. We are now clear that it is an ongoing process that will take longer to complete.”

Highfield

“We believe that we are an inclusive school, but we are quickly realising that there is so much more that we can and must do.”

Margaret Wix

“It was becoming clear that we knew less about inclusivity than we’d initially thought. ... This made us think that perhaps, in the past, we had been too focused on equity. Were we preoccupied on small solutions – helping pupils to feel equal and part of a whole; rather than seeing the larger picture – helping children to feel proud of who they are and being able to share what makes them different?”

Nash Mills

“The first seminar of the Great Representation programme had a significant impact on leaders and provoked some re-evaluation of where we are as a school on the subject of anti-racism.”

Peartree Spring

“Early on in our journal, it was all about what we had already done or what we were doing. Slowly through our journey, there has been a subtle unconscious shift to challenge our initial perceptions on race equity.”

Barnwell

“This is a project without an end date. It needs to remain a key aspect of continual school improvement.”

Prae Wood

“We need to be realistic in our ambitions for this project. It is not something we will solve in a brief period.”

Watford Girls’

“We have come to realise that we cannot change the world, or even our school, immediately. We will not be able to reach every stakeholder and alter their views. However, we can gradually build on what we do and also build on our own confidence to address these issues. In time, this will become a cultural shift, but we are aware that this is not a journey with an end.”

St Andrews

What is truly impressive is the amount achieved in each of the schools, in amongst all the other pressing educational priorities that leaders are juggling, and the resolve of the participating leaders to build on their great work of 2022–23 to make lasting change and to be life-long anti-racist allies.

“As we came to the close of our work on the Great Representation programme, we were left with a sense that there was even more to do than when we had started, and this seemed to be a common reflection amongst many of our colleagues. However, what had changed across the few months of the programme was that our resolve had strengthened collectively as a school community, and this was now reflected in systems and leadership structures within the school, which would sustain the focus on race equity in future years.”

Fairlands

“As we approach the end of the Great Representation programme, we realise that we are still at the beginning of our journey, although much work has been completed along the way. We have learned to be more thoughtful about language, had opportunities to reflect, found ways to improve inclusion, developed and diversified our curriculum, and endeavoured to ensure all children are represented at our school. Our understanding of the complex nature of racial inequality in particular has been developed through the keynote speakers and those who have shared their lived experiences with us, and we are now more confident to address inequality and are more willing to ask questions when we are unsure.”

Margaret Wix

“This project has changed our thoughts and views and has even opened up discussions within our own families that we never had dreamt of. ... we are all starting to converse, share and notice more within our families and friends. We are all recognising that this isn’t just a valuable project for our own schools, but that the impact of it is far wider. Our new questioning and understanding is starting to impact on our own families and wider life. ... At the start of this project, we wrote that this journey would take a thousand steps, and we are still not much closer to the end of it,. However, with the support of our community and our faith, we can continue this journey together, because everyone has the fundamental right to belong, and everyone needs an ally.”

St Vincent de Paul

Rachel Macfarlane

June 2023

**ALL SAINTS
CHURCH OF
ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY**

September 2022

At All Saints, prior to starting the Great Representation programme, we had already worked to ensure that the curriculum contained a range of diverse resources and teaching ideas. We use a whole-class reading resource called FREDS. This has planning linked to a diverse range of cultural books and extracts, with themes such as Black History, as well as stories and non-fiction texts from around the world. We have also revised our PSHE curriculum to include lessons on Show Racism the Red Card (www.theredcard.org), and on issues such as stereotyping, prejudice, racism and diversity.

A review of our library in 2021 identified that the vast majority of books featured White male protagonists, and that a very limited number of Black and minority ethnic writers were represented on the shelves. We used a range of book lists from HFL and publishers, alongside the expertise of Juniper Library Services, to purchase around £1,000 of new books, expanding the diversity represented in our library.

Parents of Black and minority ethnic children have reported their joy when their children have come home to share what they've been doing in school. For example, following exploring the life of Michelle Obama through a biographical text in a whole-class reading lesson, one Year 4 child shared with their parent, "I didn't know someone who looked like me could be a leader!"

We want to continue to develop our curriculum so that representative material is embedded throughout, not just in individual units (though we feel these have their place too). We want to increase staff confidence to discuss and share issues of representation, race and diversity with pupils. We also want to have greater awareness of the potential for bias (conscious and unconscious). Our commissioned school visit (CSV) focus on race equality identified that areas of the school community such as the School Parliament and house captains would benefit from greater representation, and this has led us to consider why this is currently not the case.

The governors (a relatively ethnically diverse group, compared with the school staff) have begun to consider ways we can ensure our recruitment process encourages applicants from a range of ethnicities to consider working at our school.

We have not yet begun work with staff to develop their understanding of racial literacy, though at the time of our last survey (summer 2022), all pupils and families reported feeling welcome and safe in school and able to talk to staff. We are looking forward to working with staff members this year on building their understanding. We would certainly like to increase awareness so that staff feel more confident to tackle incidents of racial bias amongst children and have greater awareness of their own bias when doing so. We want pupils and parents to feel racist issues are being dealt with quickly and effectively.

Last year, meetings and conversations with parents identified that our own understanding as a staff team was not as deep as it needs to be to enable us to fully comprehend the impact comments can have on others, even when they seem relatively innocent. This extends to well-meaning comments from staff to pupils, such as comments about hair, that can have an unintended negative impact.

We want to learn from others, see some great resources and initiatives in action, and make this a key priority for our school this year.

This time next year, we would like to be an increasingly anti-racist school in the full sense of the phrase, with:

- **staff aware of and addressing their own biases and actively working to tackle imbalance within the school and curriculum**
- **an increasingly diverse staff team**
- **pupil leadership that is representative of the diverse makeup of our school**
- **pupils confident to raise concerns and discuss issues openly, with a shared understanding of what those issues mean to them**
- **a school community that feels enabled and willing to come on this journey with us, where all stakeholders feel they can be part of the change**

October 2022

The first Great Representation seminar was impactful. We were presented with many thought-provoking ideas and statistics around the deep-rooted nature of bias within society and the way it has impacted the opportunities afforded (real and perceived) to people of colour. It led to us having a greater awareness of how our own, personal bias might impact our response to the experience of others and even, potentially, lead to denial of the problem in the first place.

Professor Paul Miller spoke of institutional racism. He argued that, if you are not outwardly saying you are an anti-racist school, then you need to be. Racism is not left at the door; it is in society so, therefore, in your establishment.

The day served to reinforce the direction of travel we have taken as a school: our identified need to address the unconscious (and possibly conscious) bias within the staff team, and the importance of continuing to develop learning opportunities for pupils. We also want to ensure there is a clearer process to support pupils and staff when dealing with incidents.

We would like to consider arranging training for staff from one of the HFL race equity advisers, to support staff in understanding themselves and their own biases. We want to develop a range of materials to use around the school; to reinforce an anti-racist stance; and to continue to develop the curriculum, including investment in resources such as the Hackney Diverse Curriculum.

We were impressed by the way representation across the curriculum was visible in the first school we visited from our hub group. This reinforced the underlying message and determined work of the leadership team to root out bias and racism, and the move from “banter” being tacitly accepted to actively challenged. The consistent messaging and varied opportunities planned through the year for the pupils at the school were key takeaways for us; they would be relatively easy for us to implement but hugely impactful for our pupils.

The seminar and school visit confirmed to us that we are on the right path. However, we are in an Ofsted inspection year. We have a large number of priorities this year, due to a relatively new teaching staff team, the challenges of very high needs amongst our pupils, and a shift in the demographic of the school. Our next largest group of pupils after White and White other is now Chinese (Hong Kong), whereas it was previously Black and mixed other. This provides us with an interesting dilemma for how to address the issues of diversity within our school, but Seminar 1 has certainly left us with a clearer path to follow.

November 2022

Whose lens is being privileged?

“Race is a social construct and has changed hugely over thousands of years. It is a socially constructed category that is normalised within a system of privilege.”

Claire Stewart-Hall

We found ourselves thinking more, after listening to Claire Stewart-Hall at Seminar 2, about our personal experiences of race and our own Whiteness. What impact does this have on our views and biases? This idea has brought us to our next predicament and the main reason we are on this journey, exploring: What impact does Whiteness have on our institution? During the seminar, much of the discussion was around extracurricular

activities and how those that are privileged have more access to these activities than those that don't. We started questioning why that was. This is an interesting concept that may be worthwhile analysing.

Another hard-hitting thought, presented in Seminar 2, was centred around race being within everything we do or say. Sufian Sadiq's talk was shocking and eye-opening. He described feeling the pain of racism in his everyday life, and the impact it has on him and his family. Sufian spoke about how he booked his holiday flights at different times from his wife and children's because he knew he would almost certainly be detained. He always carries a small bag on a train to minimise the chance of people mistaking him for a terrorist carrying a bomb. Most shocking, though, was the story he told about his daughter expressing the view that only White and blonde girls were pretty. Again, this hit home both personally and professionally, making us think about those non-White children who are hearing and seeing this every day, either at home or in school.

That brought us to our focus for this half-term. We know that, as a result of these seminars and visits, we can become the forerunners for our school in terms of race equity, particularly thinking about vocabulary and how it is used amongst staff. We are also hoping we can create a brave, open and honest community, where people can challenge and talk about race. We have a few ideas of how we might achieve this, but the biggest hurdle we face at the moment is time to organise and think about these issues. How do we get members of the community, including the school, in one place at the same time? How do we ensure every voice is represented in our plans? How do we ensure we have Great Representation across the whole of our community? We are excited about the prospect of this work as a school community and are looking forward to tackling this in the coming months.

December 2022

Creating a safe and open environment

After the initial enthusiasm of the first few seminars and school visits, it can sometimes feel like we are taking one step forward and two steps back in a few areas of education, not just in terms of race equity and diversity. We have to remind ourselves of how far along our journey we have come, both consciously and unconsciously.

The concept of race equity is in our mind at various points throughout the school day, and the speakers so far have made us realise that we must outwardly confront racism and talk openly to colleagues and friends about White privilege. This has helped us to answer one of the questions we had last half-term: How do we find the time to organise and think about these issues?

We have not yet put aside a set time to discuss and debate issues, although it is imperative that this does happen. Conversations have been much more fluid. Many colleagues are keen to hear about our experiences in the seminars and school visits, and this has meant that a healthy discussion has often been undertaken during a lunch hour in the staffroom. This method of conveying our thoughts and ideas may not be conventional; however, it may help to pave the way for future, more formal discussions with staff and, more importantly, ensure that staff feel comfortable and safe to say how they feel. By becoming advocates for an anti-racist school, we have in turn become role models for our colleagues in terms of race equity.

Furthermore, we have seen a similar result with the children in the Year 5 class, which has 26% of children from a mixed or non-White background. One child likes to remind us of his heritage almost daily and is extremely proud of it, although he seems to have a misconception about what racism is. For example, he will argue that anything where the colour black or white is mentioned is racist (such as mentioning about wearing a white shirt or black tie). However, as a result of our learning from reading and discussions, and from the key speakers we have heard so far, we feel we have much more confidence to address these misconceptions with the child and the rest of the class.

Having the freedom and confidence to speak openly and honestly with the class has been a hugely positive experience for all involved. Evidence from lessons, and the level of engagement from pupils in class, show that no one is left feeling uncomfortable for misunderstanding something, and the children can ask questions and discuss ideas in a safe environment. The opportunities already woven into our curriculum provide further opportunity to discuss concepts of race, inclusion and diversity. For example, in English the children have read about and been inspired by four Black women who were key in getting various missions to Space for NASA. The children have begun to understand the complex issues of where racism has come from, where it has travelled in the past, and where we are as a society with it in the present day.

Clearly, we are still on a journey and still need to tackle the big issues as a school; but for now, seeping quietly through staff and children alike are a newfound openness and confidence to discuss our misconceptions.

January 2023

Culture and practice

Throughout this journey, we have made small but important changes to key parts of our school's day-to-day operation. Heavily influenced by seminars, speakers, school visits,

and background reading, the small group of staff involved in the Great Representation project are more racially literate.

In turn, we have influenced our team in school in many small but significant ways, such as openly discussing issues of race as a staff team and as relevant with our school community. The impact of our previous work on the curriculum is now obvious in the way the children think and talk within their classes. Pupils report back to us that they feel more included. Work to actively promote diverse participation in school groups (such as the School Parliament) has also proved successful.

The seminars highlighted the need to be actively anti-racist, pointing out that it is not just about equality and equity but also about a culture of removing barriers that “fence” people into their respective cultural identities. The speakers at the most recent seminar, particularly Jess Boyd, highlighted that the fence is the dominant culture present in our schools and communities. Therefore, we need to be conscious of our dominant culture and the values it perpetuates, whether intended or not. In this way, we can be deliberate in shaping a culture that creates holes in the fence.

All Saints already has a strong culture of inclusion. This is demonstrated in the feedback we receive from external reviews, governor visits, parent feedback and – most importantly – pupil feedback. But in our commissioned school visit last year, it was highlighted that our School Parliament was not representative of the diversity within our community, and we wanted to explore this further.

We considered that the method of selecting our School Parliament, by democratic popular vote, may in itself not be inclusive of all eligible pupils (all those in KS2), because it is essentially a popularity contest, and not all children will wish to put themselves forward. Additionally, it relied on children receiving support from home to prepare a campaign and promote themselves – pupils wouldn’t vote for someone they didn’t know much about. We found that for many of our pupils from non-White backgrounds, this support was not available to them outside school.

This year we aimed to ensure all were encouraged to put themselves forward and provided opportunity in school for children to have support for their campaigns. We also linked the election period to texts used in our English curriculum, highlighting people of colour who are/were in positions of authority, including decision makers and leaders, with an aim of helping pupils to see themselves in these roles.

The impact is seen in our most diverse School Parliament to date, all chosen through democratic popular vote. Moving forward, we have taken inspiration from our school visits, with a view to implementing diversity champions, who can help us to shape the experience pupils have in our school, helping to ensure that increased representation is not just a one-off but becomes a permanent part of our culture in school. This is

something we are looking to implement from the summer term, but for which we are now beginning to lay the foundations.

February 2023

Policy and staff training

This month saw the opportunity to review our anti-bullying and anti-racist policies. These are separate policies, intrinsically linked and published together. The question of removing fences is key here too. We had already identified and responded to the need to do more following an incident – supporting pupils and communicating better with parents. Now we have a collection of resources (books, schemes and activities) that support both victim and perpetrator.

Some of the strategies – restorative approaches to help parties see the incident from others' perspective, implemented by one of our hub schools – create a new opportunity, and the impact we saw in this school was notably positive. We have worked to reshape our PSHE curriculum and identify aspects that would help to address prejudice, so that pupils can see for themselves the impact it can have on the lives of others.

Our constant battle throughout has been the need to balance ongoing school operational priorities with the need to develop staff understanding and their confidence to be actively anti-racist in their everyday practice. This is supported by time to explore, reflect and plan. Our next steps are to ensure time for this is prioritised further, and to arrange whole-school opportunities for CPD.

March 2023

Looking back on a productive year

As the course comes to a close, we are naturally looking back on what we have achieved so far on our journey. As teachers, we are always reflecting on our practice and looking at ways we could have done something bigger or better. In this case, our first instinct is to chastise ourselves for not having achieved “the big idea”, enabling our whole community to take part in a large-scale, culturally diverse event. However, this would be to ignore what we have actually:

- **Recently, in an inspection, we were praised for our diverse curriculum (where pupils said they could see themselves in materials we used) and inclusion of anti-racist lessons.**
- **Staff are more comfortable talking about equity and inclusion than when we first began.**
- **Pupils are more aware of diversity issues, proud of their own heritage and more willing to talk about it.**
- **As a result of some small but deliberate changes to the way we do things, we have seen our most diverse School Parliament yet – more representative of the school community.**
- **We can see many small (and some less small) tweaks that have had a positive and significant impact on the whole school.**

This month we made contact with one of our parents – a founding member of a local community group, which was set up by parents from many local schools – who felt that Black and biracial families needed more representation in East Hertfordshire. The East Herts Black Parents Assembly (EHBPA) are a group of volunteers who do public speaking and fundraising for charities, as well as looking at how they can help BAME students within the area improve their own education.

We met with one of the volunteers to talk about the work we have been doing as part of the Great Representation course and to discuss in more detail how our curriculum is meeting the current needs of our pupils. She had some stories to tell, similar to those mentioned by the keynote speaker at the seminars, which only confirmed our thoughts on the curriculum we are currently offering to children at All Saints.

The main theme running through the discussion was that very young children already see race and form views about race – for example what constitutes “beautiful” – and this shapes their words and actions. Currently, we directly teach about racism in Upper KS2. However, in the volunteer’s view, the right time to teach children about racism is as young as possible, Reception being a good place to start. If most children comment on difference innocently, and then need an educational conversation to help them understand why they have upset another person, then perhaps getting in with the educational conversation first – before offence (however innocently expressed) is caused – would be beneficial for everyone.

This has got us thinking about what this could look like for our school, and about the potential difficulties/barriers we might come across. We do currently teach about differences – different families, different bodies, different emotions – however, we do not directly teach our younger pupils what racism is. Perhaps there is a worry that the children are too young to understand the subject, but the question remains: Are we at

risk of missing racist comments from lower down the school by not outwardly addressing race? The next steps here are obvious: we need to focus on and listen to pupil and parent voice. This is one of our priorities for the summer term.

After a month involving an Ofsted visit, preparations for a busy summer term, and all the other day-to-day challenges of the education profession, we have not yet tackled the CPD opportunity for staff. We are looking forward to undertaking this in the summer as well as planning a multicultural day (based around food) and the possible implementation of an equity, diversity and inclusion group in the autumn.

At the beginning of this project we felt we had a fairly good understanding of the issues facing our school with regard to representation. Little did we know! The Great Representation course may be almost over, but we have come to realise that even this is still only the start of our journey – one we are a little more ready for than when we started.

Leah Francis and Philip Asher

BARNWELL SCHOOL

September 2022

Barnwell School has historically had a high percentage of White British students and staff. Over the last few years, our intake has become more diverse, and we became conscious that we were not providing our staff, students and parents with anywhere near enough equity and diversity (E&D) awareness. We have very much been on a journey over the last couple of years and have initiated a plethora of actions.

We have created a new role for an E&D lead teacher and assigned them a link governor. The E&D lead teacher has led a whole-school audit, evidencing where E&D key themes are celebrated. They have created an E&D staff working party, with faculty E&D leads; and mirrored this with the creation of a student E&D working party, where students decide on their priorities. This student group has already led assemblies and is going to be invited to certain staff meetings.

We have rewritten our E&D policy document and added key action points into our school improvement plan. We are very proud to be a part of this year's Great Representation programme and have also been involved with the Herts Voices programme; this provides highly inspirational and motivational talks for students in Hertfordshire schools, which will challenge stereotypes about race and ethnicity.

We have created six whole-school E&D focus areas across the year, which are mirrored in our character education planning documents. That includes the assembly rota, form-time activities and subject content in lessons across all faculties. We work with our heads of faculty to ensure diversity topics are covered in the schemes of learning within each subject where possible.

We are working with the head of English, literacy leads and librarians to change the books studied in the English curriculum, to include more accessible and enjoyable texts with cultural diversity. Texts added include: Akala's *Natives*, Zephaniah's *Refugee Boy and Face*, Blackman's *Boys Don't Cry*, Rauf's *Boy at the Back of The Class* and Thomas's *The Hate U Give*. Our librarians have been looking at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education resources for advice when choosing more diverse texts for the libraries. We are working collaboratively with our school caterers, to ensure food on offer is linked to the whole-school focus areas where possible (for example for Black History Month).

We ensure that high-quality personal social and health education-related content is taught in our Barnwell Pride lessons (our PSHE lessons). We have recently adopted an excellent scheme of learning, which addresses key E&D themes in every year group across the school. Barnwell Pride lessons contain extensive coverage of all statutory content related to PSHE, sex and relationship education and British values, via their six key focus areas of:

1. rights, responsibilities and British values
2. celebrating diversity and equality
3. relationships and sex education
4. staying safe online
5. health and wellbeing
6. life beyond school

The HFL race equity adviser, Toks Olusamokun, has already led a thought-provoking whole-staff training session related to the language stigmas around racism. Toks is also booked to work with smaller groups of heads of faculty on specific curriculum areas of development. We have started to create more student feedback opportunities to gain the viewpoints from all our students.

The impact of the very early stages of this work is beginning to be seen across the school, in terms of improving awareness of key issues experienced by some of our students and staff. We would very much like to further explore the idea of celebrating difference within our school. We need to do much more work with our students, staff and parents to really embed our E&D values so they can explain the why as well as stating the what. We will be speaking to our students and giving out questionnaires to gain a stronger evidence base of the issues that our students experience whilst in our care.

Some of our main barriers are related to having to challenge the attitudes and opinions of some of our parents. Many of our students are being heavily influenced by the thoughts and views of their parents, which unfortunately too often do not align with our own. Working with parents – providing them with E&D advice, information and guidance – is an important part of our next steps.

In a year's time, we would like to have addressed all major stakeholders and to be more confident that our students can explain the E&D issues we face at school. We want our students, our staff and our parents to be aware of the support networks in place to help educate and support them.

We are looking forward to working symbiotically with other schools, not only to share great ideas but also for them to act as critical friends, helping us to challenge our own thoughts and working methods, with the aim of improving the overall effectiveness of our E&D provision at Barnwell School.

October 2022

It was heartening from the start to see so many different types of schools involved in the Great Representation programme. The fact that every school's headteacher and another senior colleague were there spoke volumes about the gravitas of the issues we face in schools and the openness to address them in a supportive collaborative manner. Having spoken to representatives from some of the other schools, we felt that we had certainly made a good start to our E&D journey.

Listening to Rachel Macfarlane talking about the latest systemic race inequity data in the UK, especially the school-related data, resonated with us and made us even more driven to ensure that we do all we can to address the inequalities that exist in our own school. When Professor Paul Miller discussed the challenges of transforming schools, we thought that the "Open, backstage and under the stage" analogy was a great way to identify the issues that arise. We also thought that the "I see you, I hear you, I belong" statement was very powerful and something that we will definitely use with both our staff and students.

After listening to the key speakers, we realised immediately that we need to collect more information from our staff via questionnaires and targeted conversations, to gather more accurate and relevant data to help us identify the key areas for us to focus on. We thought deeply about why BAME staff would want to work in our school and how we could make our school more welcoming for all. We also explored why there are not enough BAME staff coming into teaching, and we challenged our preconceived ideas.

We will be looking into how we can develop the "hearts and minds" of our current staff, and how we can most effectively challenge the views of what is a relatively ageing staff body. We will be working with our SLT, E&D lead and link governor to explore how we can prioritise our E&D journey amongst a whole list of other priorities. We need to ensure that we can address the low-hanging fruit first of all, to build some obvious traction, and then secure a clear development plan to address the more complex actions.

We have had the privilege of visiting three of our fantastic hub schools at the time of writing this entry. It has been incredibly eye-opening to see schools that are so very different from our own in many ways, yet very similar in terms of the E&D challenges that they deal with. We have seen some outstanding data collection processes, which we are in the process of "Barnwellising", ready to use in our own school. It has been invaluable to have the opportunity to discuss things that have worked well and things that have not been so successful in our hub schools. Sharing good practice is one of the most valuable parts of the Great Representation process.

Our school has been selected to take part in an anti-bullying project, Embracing Difference – Ending Bullying, which has been funded by the Department for Education.

We are working with a charity called Diversity Role Models (DRM), who will be delivering targeted staff training and supporting us to tackle and prevent prejudice-based bullying. We have just sent out related anonymous questionnaires to all key stakeholders, including students, staff, SLT, governors and parents, to allow DRM to deliver bespoke staff training to meet the needs of our school. We look forwards to receiving the feedback.

We have recently had another meeting with our E&D link governor and E&D lead teacher, to further flesh out our plan for the year, taking into consideration the feedback and knowledge we have gathered from our school visits, and following further reflections following seminar day one.

We feel that we are well placed in terms of our current action plan but feel strongly that we need to wait and gauge the impact of our prioritised actions moving forwards. It will only be at that point, when we can start seeing what is and is not working, that we can start to fine-tune our work and start reaching for that higher-hanging fruit.

November 2022

Autumn term 2 is a fantastic opportunity for us to strengthen our initial input phase of our E&D action plan. Having initiated a plethora of actions, it is good for us to start to evaluate the early stages of impact.

We have created a staff and students E&D library section, initially from staff donations, but more recently with the creation of an Amazon wish list, which has gone out to parents with a request for donations. Upskilling our staff in terms of the appropriate anti-racist parlance has been a real focus for us, supported by the contributions from Toks and by other whole-staff training sessions we have led ourselves. This will continue as one of our main objectives as we move through the year.

We continue to work with the charity DRM, which has analysed the results of our key stakeholder questionnaires and has delivered bespoke staff training to our extended SLT and any other interested staff. We have also been sent the questionnaire results to analyse in greater depth, to help with planning our next steps.

We have secured rooms to develop into prayer rooms on both our middle- and upper-school campuses and look forward to creating welcoming environments for those staff and students who wish to use them. We are also working on amending the SIMS ethnicity categories for staff and students, as well as working with Toks on the county policy categories.

Following meetings with our catering company, we now have vegan and halal food options on offer in our canteens each day. We will monitor the sales of these food items to gauge future demand. We are starting an E&D newsletter, created by the students for the students. This will be put together by the E&D student group on a half-termly basis at first, emailed to all students and parents, and placed on our website.

Seminar 2 was particularly useful for us in terms of providing a greater awareness of the racism still faced by our key speaker, Sufian Sadiq. It was both informative and yet horrific to take a “walk in his shoes”, to quote his headline title. As a totally White SLT, it is more apparent than ever that we will never truly understand the racism that BAME members of our school community experience. We need to work hard to create an open and supportive environment as we move forwards on our E&D journey.

We felt the presentation from Claire Stewart-Hall was incredibly informative, but almost too much packed into 90 minutes. We would have liked there to be more time to go into depth on some of the concepts that Claire raised. It made us think more deeply about the idea of institutionalised racism through Whiteness, and what Whiteness actually meant to us. We also liked the concept of Ellis’s “Widening the Zone of Stress Tolerance”. We realised that we need to see the wider picture to look at why certain groups of students are underachieving, rather than just putting things in place for those underachieving groups. This will require us to think more deeply about how our Whiteness may inadvertently be creating certain conditions in school.

The main things we reflected on from Jigna Patel’s presentation on challenging and overcoming Asian stereotypes was the concept and potential damage of microaggressions. We loved the idea of the students recording how to pronounce their names on SIMS sound files so staff can learn how to correctly pronounce names, and for us not to accept students shortening their names for the ease of others pronouncing them.

We need to remind ourselves that we are on a journey, and none of this is a quick fix. We will be looking at how race impacts on key areas of our school, such as attendance, co-curricular clubs and attainment levels. We will be working with our staff to ride out the initial fear of making mistakes or saying the wrong thing. It is okay to let people know that we are on our journey and that we may not always get things right, but we are passionate about improving our equity and diversity focus across the school.

December 2022

Seminar 3 allowed us the opportunity to further explore some key E&D concepts through Orell Lawrence’s presentation from The Black Curriculum. We had a very interesting

discussion around intersectionality and explored what this meant to us, both as a school and in the context of our local community, to allow us to better acknowledge difference in our school. We particularly found the discussion around the use of the N-word compelling, comparing how different schools address this issue and relating this to our own experiences. This is such an emotive topic and one that we continue to discuss with our staff and students.

We have started to work with our heads of faculty (HOFs) to look at our curriculum content at a deeper level in response to the focus on decolonising the curriculum. We are looking at the content regarding stereotyping and possible historical inaccuracies. Thinking more about the fact that victors generally write the history books has led our staff to start to look at their schemes of learning through a different lens. This is a huge task and something that deserves the investment of considerable time.

We were particularly struck by the outstanding E&D project undertaken by Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School – to listen to such impassioned staff was truly inspiring. It was great to see such collective enthusiasm from their staff, students and parents in the video they played, and to listen to all the fantastic activities they implemented. We especially loved the idea of the students and parents working together to create a poster of their families' heritage. We discussed with our hub school colleagues the possibility of adopting this activity for the Year 6 into 7 transition piece of work that students create over the summer and present to their new secondary school on the first day of term. This conversation has been taken to the various headteacher cluster meetings for further discussion.

A very important element of the Great Representation seminars has been listening to the speakers, who have offered a glimpse into the world that they live in, and their experiences growing up and living as a person of colour in the UK. Penny Lasker's story was also thought-provoking; listening to the challenges that both she and her family faced, growing up in England, was fascinating. As White staff, we can never know what it is like to be negatively judged by the colour of our skin. Having a deeper understanding of White privilege, along with these brief glimpses from people who have experienced racism, allows us to become more educated as allies, and to more effectively lead our E&D work in school.

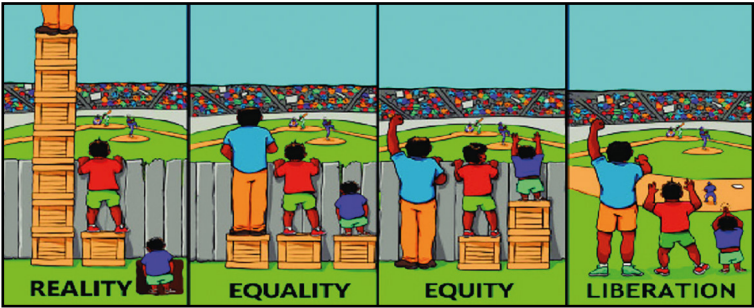
We are now, more than ever, aware of the huge challenges we face and how the E&D journey is indeed long and precariously uncertain, yet a path that is extremely important for us all to walk. As a school we have made the collective decision to step out from behind the parapet, and we are prepared to proceed on the understanding that we may well make mistakes on the way. That is a necessary part of the process.

February 2023

As we progress through this Great Representation programme, we have been both inspired and moved in equal measure by listening to the key speakers at the seminar days. We never thought that we could be challenged in so many ways to reassess our values and thought processes, both personally and professionally. To hear from inspirational people who have totally different experiences of life has been fascinating and well as humbling. Having the ongoing opportunity to discuss and challenge ideas, and bounce those ideas off our hub colleagues, has been incredibly useful.

We have far too infrequent opportunities as senior leaders for the deeper thought that comes with dedicating a good amount of time to an issue, as we have in the Great Representation programme. Getting fresh eyes on our own provision and ideas has been invaluable, but also just as valuable has been the knowledge that we are thereby helping others on their journey. We never thought that our hub group would grow to be so supportive, albeit from totally different schools.

Listening to Jess Boyd gave us a greater depth of understanding about “The Case for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy” and the need to make our classrooms engaging and relevant for all. The huge discussion around the equity/equality/realty/liberation-fence cartoon was fascinating. We really enjoyed challenging our understanding of what the “fence” may be for us and how both staff and students all have their own individual fences. We spoke about how we, as a school, could start to remove or reduce the fence.



The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated;
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The idea of Peggy McIntosh’s “invisible backpack” also resonated with us and made us think about what White privilege looks like at Barnwell School. This is a key area of further exploration for our leaders at Barnwell and lies at the heart of our E&D work. We need to continue to build our own cultural curriculum for what is right for us. We

have created a whole-school parlance, or what we call “The Barnwell Way”. This is intrinsically linked with our character education journey, as it underpins everything we do and value as a school.

Our E&D lead teacher, Nura, has again met with Toks Olusamokun to follow up on her recent whole-staff anti-racism training. As well as working with Nura, Toks met with some heads of faculty to focus in on how to more effectively decolonise the curriculum in their subject areas. Toks also met some students and toured the school to see us in action. It is so beneficial to continue to have Toks to support us on our E&D journey.

One of the most beneficial aspects of our Great Representation association has been the visits to our hub schools. Having the opportunity to go on behind-the-scenes tours around these inspirational schools has been a real privilege. At the end of January, we had the pleasure of welcoming our hub colleagues to Barnwell School. We were slightly apprehensive about having the heads and other senior staff from our hub schools come to visit, but it was so important to fully open our doors, showing ourselves warts and all, to enable our new friends to offer us honest feedback. It was a lovely morning, spent showcasing the work that we are doing, and allowed us the time to reflect and gain feedback and suggestions on how to move forwards. We hugely valued the thoughts and opinions of our colleagues throughout the visit and thank our visitors for taking time out of their own schools to be a part of our journey.

After welcoming our guests to Barnwell, we travelled the short distance for our final hub school visit to St Andrew’s C of E Primary school. It was such a positive opportunity to look around a wonderful school, full of vibrancy, love and passion. We fully enjoyed meeting some Year 6 students, who were full of praise for their school and spoke passionately about all the anti-racist work that they had done. They spoke honestly about issues that they have experienced whilst at school and loved telling us all about the various student leadership responsibilities they hold. It was really emotional to see the true passion, radiating from the headteacher and clearly flowing through the rest of her school community, with the outcome of making her school a better place for all.

We are going to be reflecting further as a whole-staff community, using the equity/equality/reality/liberation-fence concept as a stimulus for whole-staff development. Bringing all our staff on board for our journey is a key determining factor of any successes we make. Part of this process is challenging their thoughts and beliefs, and being part of the Great Representation process has given us the confidence and background understanding to be able to do this. True progress will come when staff are driving this from within, rather than leaders driving from above.

March 2023

It is with a heavy heart that we come to write our final journal entry of our Great Representation journal. Little did we know at the start the depth of support and collective power that being a part of this process would foster. We have developed strong bonds with colleagues from our hub schools and will continue to develop those links well after the programme concludes. This was a totally unexpected but truly rewarding serendipitous aspect of the programme.

Having reflected on all our original aims that we had at the start of this process, it is clear that we have come a long way. Have we addressed all the areas that we initially discussed? No. But we have taken those first developmental steps along what we have since realised is an ongoing, monumentally important journey, which will never be finished.

We have been challenged at every stage, first by the key speakers and other colleagues at the seminars, and then back at school by our staff, parents and students. As has been mentioned earlier in our journal, we have gained the confidence and base level of understanding as an SLT to put our heads above the parapet, be prepared to make mistakes, all within the main aim of becoming a more understanding and empathic community, with race equity at the forefront of all that we do.

Early on in our journal, it was all about what we had already done or what we were doing. Slowly through our journey, there has been a subtle unconscious shift to challenge our initial perceptions on race equity, and then trying to engage our key stakeholders to become a part of our journey, discovering what we might all do together to move us further forwards.

Whilst we are proud of what we have achieved so far, we are very conscious that we still have a long way to go. We realise that we need to do more collaborative work with our parents and spend quality time exploring the thoughts, opinions and experiences of our students, with a focus on our students of colour, but involving all our students. That is more than just giving them a quick questionnaire – it's about dedicating quality time in the curriculum to explore the key concepts in enough depth to really make a difference. It remains an ongoing challenge for us as a leadership team to find the time, in an already extremely crowded timetable, with many competing elements.

We will be getting the very inspirational Sufian Sadiq into school in the summer term to present to our staff body, followed by an open session to our parents. His true-life experiences, told in a very matter-of-fact manner, will be hugely effective and form a key part of developing the understanding and awareness of our staff body. If only all our staff could be part of the Great Representation programme!

Our penultimate seminar allowed us the time to reflect with our hub schools, looking at what we have achieved and what lies ahead. Having that non-judgemental, critical friend has been another key strength of the programme. Bouncing ideas off other senior colleagues has given a fresh perspective on the work we have done and continue to do. Learning lessons from other schools, not only in terms of what went well but also what hasn't worked, has been extremely valuable. The term "not reinventing the wheel" has also been used in many of our conversations, saving us valuable time.

Listening to Ruth-Anne Lenga's "Addressing Anti-semitism in Troubling Times" was very interesting, as antisemitism is something that has not historically been a part of our E&D scheme, where it absolutely should be. Our policy has already been amended. Working through real-life letters from parents was eye-opening and got us thinking about the underlying passive antisemitism and racism that exists in our community.

It is more commonly not the obvious racist language that we encounter in our school community, but more so the unconscious bias and behaviours that need to first be identified and then addressed by school leaders.

David Gillborn then provided a thought-provoking and challenging presentation on racism and education, which focused on curriculum, staff selection and training, discipline and assessment. As a school, we were particularly struck by his discussion on the "colour" of ability and the work around odds ratio graphs, looking at outcomes of students based on ethnicity and colour. David was refreshingly realistic regarding anti-racism when stating that this body of work is never "done", as racism responds to situations and is always fluid.

Following the presentation, our hub group all agreed that our views had shifted on the anti-racism work in our schools, as we started the Great Representation programme hoping to "fix" the issues but have all come to the realisation that we are all at the start of our journey, and that the work will continue for years to come.

Melissa Lowry struck a chord with everyone in the room, with her honest, stripped-back, passionate and emotive account of her life experience and career. Melissa's story and the journey she has been on, to get to the position she is in at her current school, is so inspiring and filled us all with hope. As a school, we have found these individual and personal accounts so powerful when reflecting on our own journey with equity, diversity and anti-racism.

As this final journal entry initially mentioned, being part of this Great Representation race-equity programme has been such an inspiring journey of self-reflection, education and leadership challenge. It has made us so much more aware of our starting point, which has been vital before planning where to go next. It has provided us with the tools to continue on our race-equity journey at Barnwell and has given guidance at every step.

We have learned from others, cried and laughed together, been challenged and frustrated, and been proud and elated, in equal measure. We have seen behind the curtains in some excellent schools and met some truly inspirational leaders who, when all the other layers are taken away, all want to make a real difference to the students in their care.

Education is experiencing some of its most turbulent times in recent history, but this programme has been so refreshing, giving us the time and the structure to realise that schools are wonderful places and, despite the issues, amazing things can be done when we work together.

Huge thanks go to all the staff at Barnwell and all the other schools who have covered our lessons to allow us to attend the various sessions. Thanks to our supportive hub team, who started as colleagues and ended as friends. We would finally like to thank all the speakers and volunteers who gave their stories and shared their messages with us and for the HFL team who ran the programme, led by Michael Catchpool and Rachel Macfarlane.

The journey continues ...

Martyn Patching and Matt Roberts

**CASSIOBURY
INFANT AND
NURSERY SCHOOL**

September 2022

With over 74% of our intake identifying as Black, Asian and minority ethnic, and with over 35 different languages spoken, we recognise we have a duty to provide a rich and diverse curriculum.

We want the children to see representations of themselves in the learning they engage in. Over the years, we have increased the number of events we participate in to raise awareness of other cultures, such as Black History Month and cultural days, and we have celebrated different religious events; but were we in fact simply paying lip service to these occasions? Were we just ticking off dates in a calendar, or were we ensuring practices became embedded within our school? We have become more conscious that the children don't see these events as one-off occurrences; instead, the events become part of an everyday learning experience and the school culture.

We always ensure that images used within the school present children of different ethnicities; that names used in example questions are taken from a range of languages; that resources used, such as dolls in Early Years, represent different races; and that enrichment activities and experiences draw on a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

We have successfully held annual Culture Dress Up Days since the pandemic, inviting children to wear traditional clothing from their heritage and share stories, food and experiences. Interestingly, these cultural days have caused a challenge for many of our White British families and staff members. Without a specific cultural dress, they are invited to wear clothes they would wear to a special occasion, such as a wedding or birthday, but some families haven't participated as they've felt it wasn't relevant to them. One White British family asked, "What's the point?" We shared that we wanted all cultures to feel a part of our school and to celebrate the differences. A child in Reception who came to school in her Eid dress told us, "I've come to school as a princess. I'm wearing my Lehenga. It is special. I feel special when I wear it."

We continually strive to support children in making good or outstanding progress, regardless of their ethnic background. We want to ensure equity in learning and that outcomes are good for all pupils. But could we perhaps improve attainment for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups by a few simple changes to the curriculum we provide? Could we do more to fully embed experiences and diversity so that they become a natural part of everyday practice rather than tokenistic gestures or special occasions?

October 2022

The first session of the Great Representation programme left us certain that we need to ensure a conscious movement for change to occur. We need to embed diversity and cultural awareness into everyday practice, and we certainly need a review of our curriculum. But it also generated many other questions:

1. Does our vision ensure and support diversity, equality and equity?
2. What does the ethnic representation across each class look like? What happens when mobility occurs?
3. Do we have a good ethnic representation across all stakeholders?
4. Are the events we run within school representative, and do we consider the cultural needs of all groups?
5. Do the names of certain events, for example the traditional Christmas Fair, make people of other religions feel excluded and less likely to attend?
6. With our young children, do incidents stem from curious observations or racist intentions?
7. Does our PSHE curriculum teach enough about racism and diversity?
8. How much should we teach about racism due to the age of our children?

As much as these questions may jump about and address a wide range of topics, they all need addressing to ensure equity within our school.

Our first action is to address our curriculum. Staff INSET time has been assigned to reviewing all year groups' curriculums, to ensure children can see themselves in the learning they are participating in.

Similarly, our first school visit also provoked a range of thoughts and ideas. We were looking at a school at the other end of the spectrum compared with our infant school – a large, all-boys secondary school. Would much of what they do be able to be transferred to our young children, and vice versa?

The school shared with us details of their new PSHE curriculum, and their use of form times and assemblies to support and develop understanding amongst their pupils. They recognise they are a predominately White school, contrasting highly with our own demographic, and that the number of racist incidents reported is low. They use pupil voice to find out what the children want to learn about regarding their PSHE curriculum and have acted on what the children have asked for, thus ensuring an engaging curriculum and learning opportunities.

Would we be as successful if we held a pupil-voice activity with our children? Would we be giving them ideas if we introduced some of these topics to them? Incidents of

racism are fortunately low at our school. Is this because of the age of the children and because they haven't yet been exposed to racist language, or is it because we are such a multicultural school that children accept differences to such an extent that they don't see them? We do, however, have a child, now in Year 2, who still refers to one incident in Reception when another child commented on the colour of his skin. Did we support him enough at the time? The fact he still refers to this incident would suggest we did not, as he has not been able to move on from it.

The school we visited spoke about their procedures to support the victims of racism, and we recognise that we could and should do more if an incident like this occurs again. We have already adjusted our Racist Behaviour Incident form to include a section about what we have done to support the victim.

On this first school visit, the staff also spoke about how, within classes, the children of different ethnicities mix, but at lunchtimes and playtimes children from the same demographic would group together. Why do they do this? This is a question that the school recognise they have not yet asked, as they are not sure how to frame the question. This made us think about the students at our school. In the past, our children from Chinese families would naturally seek each other out on the playground, but we couldn't say if this still occurs. It is something we will monitor within our own school.

November 2022

The third month of the programme saw us questioning: Is what we are doing just tokenistic? Is equity embedded within the school? Do we have the buy-in from the rest of the staff to make the changes that might be needed? What changes can we make immediately to start raising the profile of equity?

Following on from our first school visit, we knew we needed to prioritise a review of our vision. Does our vision ensure and support diversity, equality and equity? Is this embedded in our school and something that our staff and children know, as it is at the school we visited? By addressing the vision and bringing it to the forefront of people's minds, can we immediately raise the profile of equity with the school staff, without requiring too much back from them straight away? In simple terms, the answer to all these questions is no.

Our vision statement – "Learning together, growing together: inspiring our children on their journey through life" – is currently too wordy. It reads as something that is being done to the children, inspiring them through their journey, rather than it being something they do – something they also hold a responsibility for. It needs to become something

simpler, and something the children would be able to learn and repeat and understand that they are doing whilst they are at school, and also something that supports a holistic development.

In discussion with the governors, we decided that the vision didn't need to be completely changed, as there was high value in some of what we already had. It has therefore been simplified to: "Learning Together, Growing Together". Every stakeholder is represented, to encompass all protected characteristics.

The second seminar enabled us to further question our practices and thoughts, through the speaker Claire Stewart-Hall discussing what is meant by White privilege – long since thought of as a White supremacy theory. Claire shared that its actual meaning refers to those that benefit from the entire system because of being White. Claire spoke about the behaviours that are maintaining White privilege: silence, apathy, colour-blindness, and avoidance.

Michael Holding, in his book *Why we Kneel, How we Rise*, recognised that in himself and his own actions, he allowed racism to continue because of his own apathy. He saw racism occurring whilst on foreign tours, but because it wasn't his home and he'd soon be away from it, he didn't challenge what he saw happening. He felt that, by being Black, he was at risk of losing his opportunity to play for his country's cricket team and travel the world if he were to stand out by taking a stance against it.

This was echoed in the presentation by our second keynote speaker at Seminar 2, Sufian Sadiq. He mentioned people who were incredibly kind to him when he was a youngster, taking him to cricket matches and paying for his food and accommodation when travelling, but how they made racist jokes about him in the locker room. They kept checking, "You don't mind, do you?", and he kept saying he didn't. He didn't want to make others feel awkward and lose the opportunity that he was so grateful for. How many of us have put someone in that position – "It's just locker-room banter, after all"? Acting in a way that may have been negative towards a protected characteristic, but because the victim didn't want to lose the position they were in, they said nothing and took it? That they felt in the minority and couldn't speak up?

Banter is harmless, isn't it? Banter means you're accepted and part of the group. But no – banter isn't always harmless. Banter isn't always fair. If comments are being made using the protected characteristics at someone else's expense, that isn't banter. This is something that is being addressed by the school we first visited, with the message "Banter is not ..." Whilst banter containing racist or other derogatory language would be rare in our infant school, it is certainly something to be mindful of, as is the role we play in helping our children understand what banter actually is.

Our second school visit provided us with an opportunity to speak directly with pupils (Years 7 to 13) about their views on diversity within their school. The demographic of

the school is almost the opposite of ours, with White children making up over 60% of the student population. The students believed there was mixing between different ethnicities, and they could speak about times when the curriculum had been altered to enable a wider range of diversity and representation, such as in history and English. The children we spoke with shared that, in their experience, racist incidents are low and, if they occur, they are dealt with very harshly. One child mentioned that he wasn't on social media, but that he knew people who were on it and therefore exposed to racist language.

This again left us wondering about how the age of our children impacts the best course of action in developing their emotional literacy and understanding around racism. Most of our children won't yet have been exposed to social media and won't yet have heard discriminatory language being used. They won't have heard the phrases or words to then be able to use them towards others. However, we fully appreciate that this doesn't mean we can be complacent, as the video clip "Children See, Children Do" (www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOrGsB4qG_w&t=60s), by the charity NAPCAN, shows us. Young children are sponges to what they are being exposed to. If they are witnessing behaviours and hearing phrases at home, they might be inclined to start using them themselves. We still, therefore, need to ensure a robust educational system that protects the characteristics of all.

December 2022

December brought the recognition that we still do not yet fully have the buy-in from the rest of the school staff, but it is important to note that this is through no fault of their own. A busy school life, with a large workload, means that time to share what we have been doing through these sessions and school visits are rare. We have two INSET days in January, and one of those days will be designated to sharing our experiences and journey so far with the Great Representation course. Compiling what we feel to be the most pertinent parts of the sessions and visits so far, we have created – personalised to our school – an INSET session.

We recognise that, sometimes for staff, repeatedly hearing messages from the same voices can cause them to be less susceptible to the message that we are trying to get across. As such, we looked for clips that could be shared to support their immediate understanding of why we need to ensure equity occurs in schools. On YouTube we found the clip "Equal opportunity? Different starting lines ..." (www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJAqPF5FNTQ). It is an American clip based on a competitive race, but starting points are decided based on the individual people's answers to certain questions.

Questions include “Are your parents still married?”, “Have you ever had to worry about where your next meal came from?” and “Did you have access to a free tutor?” As the questions continue, the gap widens between those at the front and those at the back. The majority of the people at the back of the line are people of colour. The man hosting the race asks those at the front to turn around, to look and see if this race – “this thing called life” – is fair. He states that everyone has to run the same race, but some of us get given more opportunities – a head start. It is an incredibly impactful clip, which we will be using as the starting point to our INSET, almost to shock the staff into recognising the importance of what we will be sharing with them and how they also need to be fully invested in making the required changes within our school.

After googling clips for a while, we found one based on the above one but compiled with British school children. The questions are more age-appropriate, but the same outcome starts to occur. The White children move forward and those of colour do not – a point not lost on one of the children, who remains near the starting line, when he says to his peer, “None of us are White; none of us are White; it’s not fair!”

As educators, we want to do the best for the children in our school, but sometimes that means giving certain children even more. One of the schools we visited spoke about how two sixth formers – one White and one Black – applied to study medicine at Oxbridge. The White child had parents who themselves worked in influential jobs and had arranged work experience opportunities in medical labs, had paid people to support him in writing his application, had access to people who could read through his statement and give advice and support, and had also probably had access to tutors to enable him to get the top grades. The Black child had the school. They read through his statement and supported with further advice. They helped to get work experience opportunities but not at the same level as his peer. The home life of a child can create a clear divide between opportunity and access. Therefore, it needs to fall to the school to try to close those gaps and provide what they can. This means at times going above and beyond for the children that need it, providing equity rather than just equality.

We need to bring our staff on this journey with us, sharing the things we have heard so far from the school visits, seminars and our own research.

January 2023

The start of the new year finally brought the opportunity to share with the whole school staff our Great Representation journey so far. The INSET session began with some trepidation on our part as to how it would be received and the level of buy-in we would get. We started with the clip of “Equal Opportunity? Different Starting Lines...”, which

was met by stunned silence. The “shock tactic” – to get our staff to see how differences that children/people experience, through no fault of their own, can impact their future chances – provided the buy-in that we needed from our team.

We discussed and explored:

- **Whose “lens” is being privileged in our school?**
- **Where is racism in our school?**
- **Why is race equity and anti-racism on the agenda here?**
- **Where do our children see themselves in our staff and our curriculum opportunities?**

We also discussed two of our own initial questions: “Are incidents in our school racist or observational?” and “How much should we teach about racism due to the age of our children?”

Beverly Daniel Tatum, author of *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, explains about children trying to make sense of a curious phenomenon. She writes about a friend of her son asking, “Is your skin brown because you drink too much chocolate milk?” The author states his question did not reflect prejudice in an adult sense, but it did reveal confusion. She writes about not hiding away from questions but addressing them, for example by explaining to the children in simple ways the differences between people as soon as questions arise. Her son then asked her if the reason his skin was darker was because he drank too much chocolate milk. She explained about melanin and how it is something that everybody has, but that some people have more, and that his skin is darker because he has more. A simple, accurate answer helped her son to understand his differences, and it was one that would ultimately benefit all children to hear.

We reviewed our curriculum and made conscious efforts to increase the diversity of historical figures, scientists and artists within it. We recognised that we had already made positive movements in this and increased our diversity in texts studied and books shared. We raised the profile of our “Country of the Month” and created Knowledge Organisers, displayed around school and to send home.

We discussed White privilege and explained the real meaning of it to staff. We considered how the wide range of cultures amongst our pupils and parents could create groups within our community, and that people can “stick” to what they know or already familiar friendship groups. We thought about how school has a huge part to play in educating our children on their use of language and acceptance of others, but we also recognised that we are one part of a whole in the experiences our children have.

Supported by Jess Boyd, a speaker at our fourth seminar, we recognised that we need to be careful to not respond too hastily, but to ensure that what we are doing is sustainable and achievable. Should we therefore create a three-year plan for E&D change? Could we also incorporate this into our Cultural Day, (now to be called Heritage Day) celebrations, building year on year on what we do to meet the ever-changing needs and mix of our school community?

February 2023

This month brought about our time to host the school visit. In the way we initially wondered what we would gain from a secondary school visit, this time we worried about what we would be able to offer our hub colleagues.

During the school tour, the other teachers noted how the same lessons were occurring in each class in the same year group, ensuring equal access to learning and education. They also noted the adaptations that were in place to ensure equity. These were sometimes obvious but at other times very subtle, such as the explicit sharing and explanation of new vocabulary at the start of a lesson, which particularly supports our children with English as an additional language but also helps all children who may not have yet been exposed to these words. The visiting teachers also met with children from different year groups, discussed their learning, and saw how we have introduced more diversity into our teaching through the texts we now share or historical figures studied.

This month we also visited one of the other schools in our hub group, an all-through, two-form entry primary school. We were given a school tour by the Year 6 diversity champions. They spoke incredibly eloquently about the school values, how everyone is celebrated, and the differences that the school was trying to implement. Leaders shared their enthusiasm about a programme called “Philosophy for Children” or “P4C”, and we got the chance to observe this in action in a lesson. The P4C lessons provide the children with the opportunity to discuss potentially challenging questions/scenarios, based on a provocation from the teacher.

In the lesson we observed, the teacher shared a story in which a castaway washes up on an island. The islanders have to decide whether to accept or not accept this stranger. In the end, they send the castaway to sea and build a wall to stop any other strangers coming to their island. The children were discussing whether the islanders were correct in turning away the castaway. Responses varied greatly, but there was no judgement offered as to whether the action was right or wrong. It was an opportunity to discuss, form opinions and give reasons, and then to think from other people’s viewpoints. There were obvious parallels with the current news around refugees, asylum seekers

and migration. The activity enabled the children to develop an understanding of the wider world and tackle challenging ideas and thoughts in a safe environment. It is a programme we would like to be able to introduce in our school.

At this point, we needed to take stock of what we have been doing so far this year. Following on from Jess Boyd's comments of not responding too quickly, it was important we took some time for reflection. It is all too easy to get carried away after each seminar and each school visit, to implement something else and still feel that we might not be doing enough. We needed to consider what we had achieved so far this year and whether our initial questions, after the first Great Representation seminar, had been addressed, were still relevant, or still needed to be acted on.

1. **Does our vision ensure and support diversity, equality and equity?** We addressed this in month 3.
2. **What does the ethnic representation across each class look like? What happens when mobility occurs?** When each new cohort joins our school, for the last five years we have ensured that a mixture of genders, ethnicities, term of births and needs are shared as equally as possible across the classes so that the children see representation of themselves within their class. Sometimes, mobility within the school years can impact this, but when new children join our school mid-year, we strive to maintain the mix as much as possible. When we were hosting the visit to our school, one of the visitors commented on the spread of representation he could see in each class and enquired how we ensured this happened.
3. **Do we have a good ethnic representation across all stakeholders?** Our representation across stakeholders varies. We have a predominately White teaching staff. However, we have a range of ethnicities in our support staff and through our governing body. When advertising for future teaching roles, we will change our advert to include being an inclusive school and inviting applicants to support the diversity within our school. However, we will continue to employ the best person for the job and the children in our school, regardless of ethnicity.
4. **Are the events we run within school representative, and do they consider the cultural needs of all groups?** This is something we will consider on a case-by-case basis. We have already decided to change the name of our Cultural Day to Heritage Day, which we hope will make it more accessible for all. This will support with difficulties that some families had with dressing up, as they could instead wear colours of the flag that link to their heritage rather than looking for cultural dress.
5. **Do the names of events, for example the traditional Christmas Fair, make people of other religions feel excluded and less likely to attend?** Again, this is something that we will be aware of on a case-by-case basis. An example was when discussing how we will celebrate the King's Coronation in May. A suggestion was put forward

for linking the event to the Commonwealth or having a dress-up event linked to the Commonwealth. This brought about a discussion about the historic representation of the Commonwealth and when England acquired land from other countries. With some countries now looking for independence from the Commonwealth, we decided this would not be a suitable link to make and instead decided on Modern Britain – the country Charles will now be king of and all the cultures and ethnicities this comprises. This is a discussion that might not have occurred previously.

6. **With our young children, do incidents stem from curious observations or racist intentions?**
7. **Does our PSHE curriculum teach enough about racism and diversity?**
8. **How much should we teach about racism due to the age of our children?**

These final three questions link closely together. We continue to question how much we should talk to the children directly about racism. We cover differences between us in our PSHE lessons, in assemblies, and through texts that we share. We always talk about speaking with kindness, and this is underpinned in our Golden Rules when we say we are kind and helpful. We address any incidents when unkind or offensive language is used. Our racist incident form now includes what we have done to support the victim and the reparation process with the perpetrator.

We recognise that we still need to increase the profile of “being different”, enabling children to celebrate their differences, and supporting children in recognising the differences between them. We have already addressed this by increasing the diversity within our curriculum, texts shared, famous people learned about and different countries studied. We have been heavily investing in texts to support the range of books we have in school, and we continue to add to class libraries to ensure children see images of themselves and hear texts linked to their heritage and experiences.

By increasing the children’s recognition of celebrating “us” and representing everyone, we hope to support children in the future to value the uniqueness of each other.

March 2023

As our Great Representation course comes to an end, we had our final seminar before the submission of our journal and had one more school visit to go.

Our final school visit was to a one-form entry church school. We spoke with their library monitors, who shared with us a range of texts, which they felt promoted diversity. Several of the texts were unknown to us. The children were able to share the impact

of the books and how they had developed their understanding and knowledge of celebrating differences and acknowledging their importance. The books were a brilliant way to discuss sensitive topics with children, particularly with our age of children. We promptly purchased three of the books we were shown and will use them as our “Take One Book” for each year group in our Wellbeing week.

At the penultimate seminar, author and academic David Gillborn spoke to us about really questioning ourselves and our actions. Are we being “action-oriented”? Are we really considering what we can do to help and support in raising the profile of equity within our schools? Throughout this process, we have developed a critical lens and really questioned whether we are doing the very best for our children.

Through a powerful whole-staff INSET, we have created like-minded colleagues, who are also now proactively looking at ways to increase diversity within their subjects and lessons. We have invested heavily in diverse texts. As a school that works hard to promote a love of reading and base much of what we do around texts, it was an easy way to increase diverse representation.

As Floella Benjamin writes in *Coming to England*, “To feel you belong is a most important necessity of life”. With a wide culture diversity, it was easy for us to initially think the children in our school show diversity in themselves, but we need to also represent them in the lessons that we teach and the resources that we use, so that they feel valued and seen.

As we come to the end of this project, it feels apt that the book we are currently reading is *What White People Can Do Next* by Emma Dabiri. Just because the course is finishing, it does not mean that we are finishing what we will be doing. Emma Dabiri writes that we are a product of our system. We have a duty to the children we teach to ensure that:

- **they become a product of a more inclusive curriculum**
- **they understand and celebrate the differences each person represents, and we create a culture of awareness**
- **they see themselves in what and who we teach**
- **they recognise the value of what they have to offer**
- **we provide them with content that promotes aspiration and the desire to achieve.**

We strive to enable our children to be the very best that they can, because we have given them the confidence to strive for more as we showed them other people “like them” who have done it already.

Kirsty Macnish and Charlotte Cooper

September 2022

Fairlands Primary School is a large, three-form entry primary school with capacity for 720 children, situated in an area of relatively high deprivation in Stevenage, Hertfordshire.

We serve a diverse community, with over 50 languages spoken by the children on roll and 40% of the pupils from the non-White British global majority. Historically, the largest ethnic groups outside of White British have been our Bangladeshi pupils and pupils from an Irish Traveller heritage. However, in the last two years we have seen an increase in families relocating to the area from India; at 8%, this group now represents our largest homogenous group with a strongly shared identity.

Over the years, the leadership of the school has maintained what we have believed to be a strong commitment to equalities and inclusion, ensuring that all children are “reaching high” and that barriers to children achieving their full potential are identified and mitigated. We see this as our core purpose and the vision for everything we do. We want to make a difference to every child, whatever their starting point or experience.

This has led to us developing a range of strategies and initiatives, which support a general equal opportunities agenda, working across the range of protected characteristics. For example, having undertaken a full review of our curriculum in the last few years, we have considered our curriculum in broad terms, to review where the opportunities are to celebrate difference and teach specifically about diversity. Most notably, we have established a well-embedded approach to “values education”, where a monthly focus value is agreed and forms the basis of assemblies and classroom activities. Values such as tolerance, pride and rights-respecting provide wonderful opportunities to proactively engage children in thinking and learning about equalities issues, including race equity.

Following the murder of George Floyd in summer 2020, we have been increasingly conscious of the need to ensure our commitment to race equity is more precisely developed and articulated. We have had an overriding sense that there is much more to be done and that we need to go further and deeper to expose racism within the education system and support everyone in our community in challenging their experience of racism.

Paul Miller, professor of educational leadership and social justice for the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management, describes this as the move from being race-equity “sympathisers”, who acknowledge racism is a problem and commit to help but invest only minimally; to becoming race-equity “activists”, who demonstrate a personal commitment to change and commit resources – financial, human and time – to devise planned interventions, which are monitored and accounted for, in line with agreed KPIs.

“... doing race equality is serious business, and doing race equality in schools or educational institutions is serious business that requires courage and the moral use of power that extends beyond sympathising to taking actions.”

– Miller (2020): “Anti-racist school leadership: making ‘race’ count in leadership preparation and development”, *Professional Development in Education*, p. 12, 17

Out of this commitment, we commissioned an initial piece of work with HFL Education to develop our race-equity agenda, led by Toks Olusamokun, one of HFL’s race equality advisers. The training took place in April 2022 and was a powerful introduction to the issues related to race equity. Our main observation from the session was that we had staff who were coming from many different starting points and levels of understanding. This was most apparent in a discussion about the language of racial stereotypes, where some staff demonstrated confusion about why certain words had racist connotations or could be considered offensive. The training gave us the opportunity to have an open conversation, and that went a long way to strengthen awareness of racism. It enabled us to reflect on our own cultural starting points and histories of exposure to, and sometimes acceptance of, racist tropes.

Again, this reinforced our appreciation as a leadership team that we are on a journey, and it is imperative that we ensure no one is left behind on the way. We decided to plan in further training, specifically focusing on unconscious bias to ensure that the “stone” we had turned was pushed further aside.

Around the same time, we were made aware of the opportunity to engage with the HFL Great Representation programme, which strongly resonated with our current ambitions.

October 2022

We attended the first seminar of the Great Representation programme in October 2022, and it was a privilege to meet with other schools within our hub group of five schools and to hear about their work and commitment to develop race equity within their organisations.

Notably, the seminar started by setting the scene that this is a safe place where we should all feel able to speak openly, and inevitably, mistakes will be made, wrong words may be used, and offence may be taken at times. This would be part of the “messiness”

of exploring sensitive issues around race, and we would need to show tolerance and understanding to each other for us all to move to a place of deeper understanding.

This wasn't about pandering to White fragility; it was about making sure that we all moved beyond a superficial engagement to a place where we could affect meaningful and sustainable change. We felt this was such an important message and realised that we needed to create this same safe space for staff at school to fully engage with our commitment.

During the seminar, we heard from Professor Paul Miller a warning of the danger of conflating race-equity priorities with other equalities agendas and losing the focus on the distinct challenges of working for race equity. We found this a challenging message, as we were conscious of the need to deliver on all our equalities duties, within the context of limited school resources as a primary school. Did we really believe that race was more important and should be given a higher profile than disability or transphobia, for example? This would be a discussion that we would return to frequently over the coming months.

Our conclusion at this point was that, for this specific piece of work, we needed to be mindful of the potential threat and ensure that a discrete and sharp focus was maintained on race equity within the work we were undertaking.

From the first seminar, we identified key priorities which would shape the next stage in our journey:

- **create a new EDI leader role within the school to drive the race-equity agenda**
- **establish a set of KPIs for our race-equity work**
- **make EDI a routine agenda item on leadership and governance meetings**
- **build on the starting points we have made with staff, particularly in relation to developing an understanding of unconscious bias**
- **review our website, recruitment and retention strategies through the “lens” of people of colour, engaging our governing body in this work**

November 2022

In November 2022 we visited one of the schools in our hub group and had the privilege of meeting student representatives from their LEAD (Longdean Equality and Diversity) group. It was wonderful to hear them speak so articulately and joyfully about the work they were undertaking, across the equalities agenda, but also specifically in relation to

race equity. Our learning from this visit has been that we need to make sure that pupils are involved at all stages of our journey; otherwise, our efforts would become something that was being done to rather than done by the children. We have also reflected that a similar approach needs to be taken with our parent and carer body.

We came away with some additional priorities:

- **develop pupil leadership of our race-equity commitment**
- **identify further strategies to strengthen our race-equity commitment within the curriculum, in a way that is accessible to pupils**
- **establish meaningful and sensitive parent/carers focus groups to contribute to our EDI commitment**

Later that month, we engaged with the second Great Representation seminar, and this was an opportunity to hear from Sufian Sadiq, director of the Teaching School at the Chiltern Learning Trust. He spoke powerfully about his experience as a Muslim and a person of colour within an educational context; and how racism, both conscious and unconscious, have impacted on his career opportunities. He also gave a moving account of how his daughter has been impacted by negative or absent representation of her skin colour, and this gave us a strengthened imperative to ensure that the experience of every child in our school is one of being included and positively represented.

We decided that we needed to go further in deepening our curriculum offer, ensuring there were rich opportunities to reflect on race and other protected characteristics.

January 2023

As part of our ongoing work, we began considering implementing the No Outsiders programme, designed by Andrew Moffat. In its simplest form, the programme consists of weekly assemblies, which use an image or story from current media to provoke discussion around one or more protected characteristics. Alongside this, each year group is allocated a text each half-term from a carefully curated selection of titles, which provoke questions and discussion at age-appropriate levels. The focus is around asking children what they think about the issue and supporting them to listen to what others think; considering what their family, faith, or community might say; and considering what the law says.

We were impressed with the simplicity of the approach and how accessible it would be for children, parents and staff alike. We decided to implement the programme and planned an INSET day for the schools in our multi-academy trust to introduce

the principles, making sure that all staff were involved and engaged. This was a very successful event, and staff came away inspired and feeling more confident to talk about race within the context of a wider equalities agenda.

At Fairlands we have a dynamic approach to performance appraisal whereby we identify a whole-school focus for each term and set staff a termly performance target linked to the focus. This includes all staff, regardless of their role, so that every member of the school community is directly involved in school improvement work. We decided to make the spring term focus No Outsiders and, following the INSET, each line manager met with their respective teams to agree a personal objective linked to race equity.

In late January 2023, our next school visit was to Hitchin Boys' School. We enjoyed a tour of the school as well as a presentation about their RED (race, equality, diversity) group. This is a group led by pupils, including the head boy, at which different possible scenarios involving racism can be discussed, empowering the boys to tackle racism in a safe and considered way. It was felt that boys were more likely to listen to their peers suggesting how they could maybe have handled a situation in a better way than a teacher communicating a similar message. The newly appointed leader had quickly developed a very thorough action plan and spoke enthusiastically about the progress the school was making towards its race-equity commitment.

February 2023

In February we undertook a school visit to Nash Mills C of E Primary School in Hemel Hempstead. It was again a delight to see the work this school has done on unpicking their curriculum and exposing areas where there could be strengthened representation of voices from people of colour. The school was finding that books such as David Olusoga's *Black and British* were providing invaluable opportunities to celebrate the achievements and histories of people of colour, and this focus on the celebration of heritages was evident across the school in the curriculum and the learning environment.

The school had just recently adopted the No Outsiders programme and had enhanced the suggested programme of texts with their own additions, which further explored issues around race. We had a useful reflection on how important such contextual adaptations were to ensure that the curriculum reflected the local community or specific issues faced by the school.

Another key milestone during this month was our termly governors' scrutiny meeting, for which we decided to have a deep dive into EDI. We fed back about the progress we were making within the Great Representation programme, and the EDI leads presented

their action plan, particularly focusing on the elements that related to race equity. We have worked hard over recent years to proactively diversify our governing body, and there is good representation of governors who are people of colour. Regrettably, this diversity is not yet reflected in the staffing profile of the school, and we had a useful discussion about how to improve our recruitment and retention of staff who are people of colour.

We examined the equalities statement that HFL uses in its own recruitment strategy and used this as a basis for constructing our own, giving a clear rationale for positive discrimination where there are two candidates of equal merit. One of our Black governors, who has also developed EDI recruitment policies within his own professional sphere, shared useful insight into how that process should be handled in practice; most notably, that any such positive discrimination is highly sensitive and must remain confidential within the interview panel, not even being shared with the candidate during feedback. As he said, “I don’t want to be told I got a job because I’m Black. I want to know I got the job on my own merit.”

We then attended the fourth Great Representation seminar and were particularly moved by Jess Boyd, who shared her thoughts on “The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy”. She drew the parallel between race-equity work and fish swimming in water – they would be oblivious to the fact they were actually in the water, and would probably have very little concept of what water even was, until one asks the other “How does the water feel for you today?” It was a useful reminder of how race-equity work can often be uncomfortable, as we seek to throw a spotlight on cultural norms that may have been long established within our school community, but which need to be challenged.

Jess spoke powerfully about our “identity wheels” – the way in which our identity is made up of many segments, which reflect the wide range of discrete identities or group belonging that are put on us by our family, religion, caste, national culture, etc. She argued that these segments within our identity in fact all overlap with each other and can create a complex interplay. This notion of “intersectionality” further reinforced our view that it would be wrong to isolate one protected characteristic without at least being mindful of the way race, for example, interconnects with other characteristics and may create complex, nuanced and sometimes conflicting experiences of oppression. Being Black and Queer, for example, may give an individual a completely different experience of racism from that of an individual who is Black and Pentecostal Christian.

We need to listen carefully and hear the voices from each of those experiences. This again helped us form a clear rationale for adopting our No Outsiders approach, with its focus on the equal status of all protected characteristics and a holistic approach to EDI.

During this month, we held our first parents and carers’ information workshop to explain the No Outsiders programme. This was led by our EDI leaders and was very positively

received. The most important aspects were giving parents and carers plenty of time to look at and get a feel for the resources that we would be using, and an opportunity to discuss any individual concerns or worries they had with school leaders.

March 2023

During the fifth seminar, we had the privilege of hearing from Ruth-Anne Lenga, associate professor at University College London, who spoke powerfully about the nature of antisemitism and the forms it takes in modern Britain. She used an example of a letter from a parent asking for their child to be removed from Holocaust education, which had been sent to the headteacher of a school where she was undertaking work to develop their curriculum. The letter embodied a range of antisemitic views and stereotypes, including reference to Holocaust-denial theories and elements that would give rise to concerns around extremism.

We reflected on this and how this sat with our core value that every voice within our school community should be heard and given equal opportunity for expression. Sometimes, the voices we will hear will cause us distaste or personal offence, or even expose attitudes and behaviour that may be extremist expressions of hate crime. We need to be clear about how we would respond to this.

Ruth went on to share the work that UCL are undertaking, developing some key principles, which should underpin any considered response:

- **The response should reflect a school's respect for human rights and dignity for all.**
- **The response must protect any potential victims.**
- **The response should not belittle or insult any of the people involved.**
- **The response should seek to defuse any conflict that may arise.**
- **The response should focus on understanding what has happened – contexts, actions and intentions.**
- **The response should not be delivered in anger.**

We reflected on how, as school leaders, we should remember that there is always a child who is sitting somewhere in the middle of the debate, potentially being exposed to extremist views and hate crimes that are in direct conflict with our school's core values. There may be times where we need to enact our duty to keep children safe and consider referring concerns to outside agencies or reporting matters directly to the police. Alongside safeguarding duties, we reflected that we also have a civic duty to

educate, and one of the core aims of any response should always be to bring all parties to a point of deeper mutual understanding and, hopefully, resolution.

During March, we also attended the HFL Race Equity Conference, made available to all Hertfordshire schools as part of its common good commitment. We were able to give a number of staff members access to the content, as it was made available by video for a period of time after the live event. Staff had many takeaway learning points from the conference and, most notably, reflected on the fact that we were going to need to allocate significant time for us to deconstruct our curriculum and build staff knowledge and expertise. All of our staff are products of a colonised curriculum, and their personal substantive knowledge is likely to be framed in that context.

We took the opportunity to review resources that were signposted at the conference and to commit to strengthening children's learning resources to support the taught curriculum. We also committed to support staff in building their own substantive knowledge in key areas such as the histories of people of colour, world music, art, and diverse human geography. We decided that key texts, such as David Olusoga's *Black and British*, would be made available in every classroom, in much the same way that we would expect a dictionary or a thesaurus to be available for children to access easily and independently.

In late March, our EDI leaders held our first parent and carer listening forum. Following discussion with one of our governors, who is a Black woman, the EDI leaders had sent out a specific invitation to all parents and carers who identified as Black British, Black African, or Mixed White and Black African/Caribbean. The governor was then able to approach individuals and explain to them in person what the aim of the forum was and to engage with them. As a result, the forum was very well attended.

The EDI leaders set out the aims for the discussion and then agreed the main ground rules around creating a safe space where mutual challenge and honesty were welcomed. All attendees expressed that they appreciated the opportunity for their voice to be heard. The biggest reflection from the discussion was around the absolute importance of the representation of people of colour, not just in story books and within the curriculum, but in "living" representation amongst the staff body and visitors to the school. One parent shared the experience of her Black daughter, who came home beaming one day because her class had been taught by a Black supply teacher – "It was amazing, mum! My teacher today looked like me! I mean, really like me!" The power of this testimony, and the enormous sense of belonging that child was describing, gave us a renewed appreciation that we needed to continue to drive ahead with our commitment to diversify our workforce.

As we came to the close of our work on the Great Representation programme, we were left with a sense that there was even more to do than when we had started, and

this seemed to be a common reflection amongst many of our colleagues. However, what had changed across the few months of the programme was that our resolve had strengthened collectively as a school community, and this was now reflected in systems and leadership structures within the school, which would sustain the focus on race equity in future years. Work had been undertaken to deconstruct our curriculum and create ongoing opportunities for dialogue about race. Staff were re-energised, and we felt we had the basic tools, language and confidence to continue to challenge ourselves, and each other, and to welcome external challenges. It was very clear that this was the beginning of a journey.

Robert Staples and Michelle Bridge

HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL

September 2022

At Hitchin Boys' School, 72% of students are classified in the school census as White British, but we have been increasingly mindful in recent years of diversity and inclusion. Our overall goal is to foster a sense of belonging, celebration of diversity, a culture of active anti-racism, and a celebration of everyone's contribution.

The school has had a successful programme for many years surrounding race equality, linked to Black History Month. A number of subjects have already proactively engaged in efforts to broaden representation in the curriculum. Ofsted commented on the diverse curriculum in KS3 English during the deep dive as part of our inspection in September 2021.

We appointed a race-equality leader in January 2022 to create an action plan around deepening and broadening this work, with a specific remit to extend the reach to groups that have historically felt less represented by the Black History Month work, for example Sikh and Muslim students. We also reflected on the number of respected commentators who put the spotlight on the limitations of Black History Month and are determined that racial diversity is woven more deeply into the fabric of the school.

In terms of previous work on representation, significant efforts have already made around curriculum representation in history and English, within the constraints set by exam boards, which are a barrier at GCSE in particular. Other faculty leaders are auditing their schemes of learning and identifying where there may be opportunities for embedding greater representation and diversity.

In analysis of our data, Hitchin Boys' appears to have relatively few incidences of racial bullying (single-digit numbers annually). We can see this through the monitoring of suspensions and exclusion data, which is broken down into categories such as racism, and the 2022 Kirkland Rowell survey of students where "control of bullying" and "school discipline" were both rated at 82% (outstanding). However, we are aware that there is likely to be underreporting of incidents and that the creation of safe student support spaces may lead to a rise in reporting.

The HBS values, including respect, teamwork and kindness, are used to make links to inclusion and diversity. The personal development programme and religious studies schemes of work have specific modules on increasing cultural understanding, the negative impact of hate speech, events such as the Holocaust, and Britain's involvement in the slave trade during imperial times. The governing body has appointed a trustee to lead on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). There are regular updates to the governing body, including analysis of academic and behaviour data organised by various protected characteristics. One of the trustees has a background in legal, human resources and diversity issues, and will be a contact point for our race-equality leader through link

visits, as well as someone who will hold the school to account on the implementation of the plan and the outcomes from this.

Our current race-equity work was partly prompted by teachers being more aware and having a sense of moral responsibility, as well as a demand from the student body for more inclusive subject content. A number of parents from ethnic minority communities have contacted the school with similar requests for the wider student body to learn more about their faith, culture and traditions.

We were delighted this year with the positive role modelling set by our first Black head boy since the school was founded in 1632. Given that last year's head boy was from an Asian background, both head boys and parents have commented that the school has become significantly more diverse and welcoming in the last few years. It has led to a greater feeling of inclusion amongst students, just from BAME students seeing "someone who looks like me".

Direct feedback from BAME parents at open evening said that their previous worries of sending their son to a "Hogwarts-style" old grammar school had been assuaged by the diverse student leadership body. The "Who Am I" rap song (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ujh-JZA4Kwg), which was professionally recorded last year for BHM, has also had thousands of views on our YouTube channel and led to great pride amongst those that took part.

The other key action during September was the development of a race and ethnic diversity action plan. This was put together by the lead teacher, using the Great Representation Cohort 1 materials and, specifically, the case study from Marriotts School. A second source for ideas was the National Education Union's Framework for developing an anti-racist approach, which is a well-researched and -conceived document that covers many domains of school life.

We also worked with Toks Olusamokun, one of the race equity advisers from HFL Education, in the early days of her appointment, and the second cohort of Great Representation was mentioned as part of a positive action plan. The collaborative elements of working with other schools and cross-phase work were the elements of the programme that had the most appeal and utility.

Race and ethnic diversity: Whole-school action plan summary

<p>Ethnic minority representation in the curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include significant contributors from ethnic minority groups into topics within the curriculum • provide a fair, balanced, decolonised curriculum that is representative of all people 	<p>History, English, PHSE and RS are priority for 2022/23</p>
<p>Representation and voice for ethnic minority students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a forum/student voice geared explicitly to listening, acknowledging and addressing race and diversity concerns in the school • creation of a student safe space; Race and Ethnic Diversity Forum • raising awareness through whole-school activities • encourage and support the reporting of racist and discriminatory behaviour 	<p>Autumn term 2022</p>
<p>Involvement of trustees in the area of race and diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empower trustees to be visibly and actively participating in the Race and Ethnic Diversity programme across the school 	<p>Autumn term 2022</p>
<p>Staff confidence and knowledge regarding race and diversity issues both in and outside school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equip staff and build confidence in their ability to address the problems of race and diversity with students and parents • empower staff to be able to confront racist and discriminatory behaviour and report these incidents effectively • actively promote the decolonisation of the curriculum, to present a balanced and equitable representation of the contributions of all, especially Black and ethnic minorities 	<p>Ongoing; INSET training in October 2022 and April 2023</p>

<p>Community input into support of and engagement in race and diversity within the school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the community is actively involved in contributing to the race and diversity initiative as well as have input into the school's policy and practice • involve parents in the delivery of religious and cultural diversity by encouraging talks by local religious leaders and community leaders • Parent Teacher Association involvement in delivery of events and talks to students about their experiences and strategies in understanding and dealing with race and equality 	<p>Summer term 2023</p>
<p>Training and development around race and equality in school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • train and equip staff and senior leaders, enabling them to better understand and support the policy as well as positively engage with students and staff • collaborate and share good practices with other schools in Hertfordshire and be part of the Great Representation programme • provide a "safe space" forum for staff to discuss their own experiences 	<p>Ongoing 22/23</p>
<p>Data regarding Race, Diversity and Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather useful and actionable data from parents and other stakeholders, to better understand the school landscape and community • gain evidence-based insight into the race and ethnic profile of the school and identify areas for development • ensure that recruitment processes encourage and do not discriminate against people from different ethnicities and cultures 	<p>Recruitment changes autumn 22</p> <p>Data gathering ongoing</p>

October 2023

During this month, the summarised action plan was distributed to all staff and shared with trustees. Momentum increased with the first meeting of the student forum, the RED (race and ethnic diversity) group. The head boy led an assembly on inclusion to all year groups and publicised the aims and goals of the group, linking it to the Black History Month theme of “actions not words”.

The founding members of the group are predominantly sixth form students, so the goal for future months is to broaden appeal and ensure that younger students feel they have a voice. Early actions for this group include organising culture days (including coming to school in traditional/religious dress); and working with the leader on the personal development curriculum, to review what is taught to lower school students on diversity and inclusion topics.

The second major event was whole-staff training from the National Education Union on their anti-racism framework. The facilitators were excellent and led the two-hour session for staff at no cost. This was the best-received whole-staff CPD that has been run recently, with staff appreciating a forum to talk about racial diversity issues in a safe space and to be presented with a framework that was well designed and considered. A concrete action was to launch a staff support group for race and ethnic diversity, and the first “tea and biscuits meeting” for staff was held in November.

This chimed neatly with the first Great Representation seminar. We were presented with some very useful information and data from Michael Catchpool on the national and Hertfordshire-specific challenges that BAME students and staff face. From Professor Paul Miller, it was good to see the idea of White fragility given some definition, as this is something that we have faced but lacked the language to explain.

The lightbulb moment was thinking about staff experience and bringing it more to the forefront, as we initially started thinking more about student voice leading to changes in curriculum. We left with a recognition from the NEU and the Great Representation training that an anti-racist school approach needs to include the adults and to give them outlets and support.

The testimony from Cynthia Rowe reinforced why a determination to support colleagues was at least as important as supporting the inclusion and celebration of students. It gave more determination to move us along the spectrum from passive sympathisers to deliberate activists. Taking a stance of being an explicitly anti-racist school is something that staff are now brought into after training from the NEU on their anti-racism framework.

A link governor, who is also a parent, has been appointed to lead on EDI and will ensure that this is monitored by the committee as well as visiting the school to write a short report on this theme and her findings. Having the commitment on EDI built into the school development plan is important to keep focus (since we regularly report on the state of the plan to trustees).

The most striking aspect of a visit to Longdean School was the strength of the student leadership, the LEAD group. They have not only acted as a voice for students from diverse backgrounds but have led on actions around Black History Month and prompted the subject leaders to include people, places and texts from a range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds in their curriculum. This is evidenced by everything from diverse authors in English to Scientist of the Month, and by the inclusive wall displays in many subjects.

November 2022

The student RED group is up and running, meeting weekly. One issue is that a few sixth form students are focused more on societal wrongs than what they can change in their own school. We have shared the Longdean LEAD student group presentation with them for ideas and tried to steer them to stay true to the Black History Month annual theme of “actions not words”.

The RED group has been asked to review the material in PSHE and RS lessons on hate speech, anti-racism, etc. History content related to empire and slavery has already been reviewed and appropriate adjustments made. The wider history curriculum has also been revised to address positive representation of people of diverse backgrounds, as we are aware that the presentation of different cultures and groups can sometimes be from a position of victimhood or powerlessness. For example, we have modules in KS3 on the Mughal Empire in India, and the art and science of the Islamic world, so that students understand the contribution of a wide variety of cultures to global innovation and art.

Our race-equality lead has had to step back due to family circumstances, but the deputy headteacher will continue to lead on our EDI work.

The visit to Fairlands primary school was a significant reminder of the perception and insight that younger students can have. We observed lessons in Year 2 and Year 6, where two frameworks – Jigsaw and No Outsiders – were used to deliver lessons on inclusion. The interesting part for secondary teachers was the level of sophisticated discussion and empathy that was achievable in a diverse primary school. The discussions were considerably enriched by contributions from students from Polish and Romanian backgrounds, and also from a student who had only recently arrived in the UK from India

and who talked with passion about culture, celebration and inclusion of all. We resolved to investigate the work of Andrew Moffat and the No Outsiders programme, as this might be particularly suitable as a bridge into Year 7.

Another takeaway from the school visit was the realisation that EDI needs to be an integrated approach, and that it is sometimes impossible or not desirable to separate out race as a protected characteristic from others. The lessons at Fairlands were broad in scope and covered all the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. The Year 6 lesson used the World Cup in Qatar to stimulate discussion on different laws around the world. At HBS, we also didn't want to miss the opportunity of the World Cup to make a link between sport and LGBTQ+ issues. The lead on this got us involved in the Stonewall Rainbow Laces initiative, and we held an inclusive football tournament, organised jointly with Hitchin Girls' School. The supporting form-time activity put this in context and sparked a wider discussion on inclusion.

The takeaway from the second Great Representation seminar was the urgency communicated by Claire Stewart-Hall and Sufian Sadiq around connecting with communities and creating a positive culture in school. In our hub groups, we talked about having an open dialogue with parents and students on appropriate language, and why some words are never acceptable and lead to a climate that is not inclusive. We also plan to invite parents into school to form a discussion group on diversity. We were able to benefit from some of the other hub group members, including their experiences and advice on how to manage the sometimes strong opinions and emotions that these sorts of forums can create.

December 2022

We received the results of a very wide-reaching survey of staff, students and parents, undertaken by the specialist company Kirkland Rowell. Usefully, we now have over a decade of data, and it has shown significant progress over this time period. Factors such as community spirit, control of bullying, school discipline and developing moral values were all given scores of over 80% by students, staff and parents. Kirkland Rowell benchmark this against other schools and rate this result as "outstanding". Indeed, there have been no incidents of racial bullying leading to an exclusion this term, whereas there were six incidents in the same term last year.

We have made some progress on curriculum, student voice and staff support, but the next goal on the action plan is to consider how best to involve parents and faith/community leaders. We also reflected on the ideas from Sufian Sadiq on being an ally and making sure that students are not bystanders but active in supporting and upholding the HBS values.

January 2023

Our race-equality lead stepped back from his position at the start of the year, but we have been fortunate that our deputy headteacher has experience in this area and added EDI to his list of responsibilities as pastoral deputy. He has put together a vision for this work, based on Martin Luther King Jr's famous quote "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character." The goal is to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are at the core of what a Hitchin Boy is. We have set out a vision as follows:

"We reject wholly and entirely racism in all its guises, and we reject discrimination on the basis of immutable characteristics fully and unequivocally. We are a confidently anti-racist institution boldly working to break the silence of oppression and intolerance."

For us, the key factors are around the breaking of silence – the starting and continuation of conversations that, by their very nature, are uncomfortable and complex and messy, as being human is.

In the first instance, we see our role as enabling our pupils to live wisely in a complex world. Our decision-making processes in relation to the curriculum, pastoral care and staff interactions are driven by this tenet. In its most simple form, we believe that our work demands "deeds, not words". Human complexity requires an understanding of the fact that we are all the same but different; that is a seemingly simple but complex idea. The world we live in is even more complicated today than it was five years ago, and our role is to prepare our boys to live wisely in it. We want a Hitchin Man to be kind, and kindness comes with gentleness and a particular type of humility – a gentleness and humility that translates as seeing yourself in the way you ought to see yourself, and of being able to honestly evaluate yourself. This is about striving to be compassionate. We seek to delineate between knowledge (what you know) and wisdom (applying what you know judiciously) to our students so that they can make good decisions and live responsible lives. Through wider pastoral education, we ensure that our students are able to reflect on their actions and question prejudices.

In summary:

- **We are drawn to the idea that we are much more a human story than a racial story.**
- **We are also wise to the fact that the crux of this issue is the moral and ethical bankruptcy of using race as a means to power.**

- **With this in mind, we consistently seek to reaffirm our commitment to teaching all children, regardless of colour, creed, gender or sexuality, their unique and infinite value.**
- **We reject the homogenisation of children's experience and the narrowing of their humanity to culturally generated labels, and we remain unswerving in our desire to help them discover how to live wisely, with dignity and purpose.**

As part of this vision, we also identified what we expect from the adults in our school: to be

- **kind, humble and consistent**
- **focused on the outcome not antecedents**
- **mindful of words and non-verbal actions**
- **measured and predictable**
- **certain and assured**
- **positively and relentlessly bothered**
- **seeking to mostly correct privately and praise publicly**

This visioning work stemmed from our initial whole-staff anti-racism training in autumn and will be reinforced as a charter, which will be reviewed by staff in our Easter INSET training.

Outside of this visioning exercise, we welcomed the schools from our hub group to HBS this month. As well as a learning walk and presentation from our head boy and equality lead, we discussed the personal development curriculum with the subject leader.

We highlighted a programme that we, as one of eight English schools, are running, called Loving Classroom. It is led in the UK by Sir Anthony Seldon, who introduced positive relationships education into Wellington College when he was headmaster there. This programme has had international success in countries such as Israel, Kenya and South Africa, where incidences of bullying dropped by 78%, and academic outcomes improved by 17%, after it was introduced. Again, the idea of inclusion and respect is baked into the virtues that the programme teaches, rather than having distinct lessons on "racism". It will be interesting to access the independent evaluation being conducted by Oxford and Cambridge university academics, and to also look at year-on-year behaviour statistics for Year 9, to see if there has been a similarly positive effect.

We are unsure what a second year of the programme might look like at this stage and if we will be able to participate beyond the pilot programme. More information can be found at www.lovingclassroom.net.

February 2023

This month we were fortunate enough to visit Nash Mills C of E primary school in Hemel Hempstead. This is an inspirational school that has fully embraced the diverse curriculum, and the underpinning ethos and values shone through. Nash Mills use the No Outsiders programme, and we were able to look at the recommended texts in the library that covered all primary school ages. These books explore identities, focus on diversity, and embrace difference. In addition, a must purchase for our own library was the picture book version of David Olusoga's *Black and British*, which will be a very accessible introduction for KS3 students (the adult-focused publication is a detailed text).

A reflection on the strength of the Nash Mills approach was around how EDI themes had been integrated into the wider curriculum. We observed a Year 3 geography lesson, where *Africa, Amazing Africa* by Atinuke was being explored across a series of lessons. We were stunned to see how much the children knew, and they were able to tell us in great detail about why Namibia was their favourite African country so far.

In the lesson, the teacher led the students through some of the other ancient civilisations that we may be less familiar with, such as the Nubians and Kushites based around modern Sudan. The teacher used an interactive augmented reality resource on the pyramids of Meroë in Sudan, from Google Arts and Culture, and the children gasped in wonder at the 200 pyramids and the flythrough of their architecture and construction. Children were very excited about the many positive aspects of history and modern culture in the continent of Africa. The classroom felt highly inclusive, and students from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds were able to benefit from the stories and celebrations beyond colonial stereotypes.

A further reflection came from the collective worship assembly that we were invited to. Although Christian in nature, the key message was about respect and care for others, and the parable of the Good Samaritan was woven throughout the ethos of the school. It was striking how much more dynamic assemblies in primary school can be (singing, candle-lighting, mood of celebration) than in secondary, and this made us consider how we can increase participation and a focus on core values in our own assemblies.

In terms of progress at HBS, one significant development has been a change in the way that we shortlist and interview candidates to avoid unconscious bias. We have migrated onto a recruitment platform that separates out personal details from the information needed for shortlisting and interview, and we are confident that this blind selection will be a step forward in increasing diversity in the workforce.

Other school initiatives have slowed a little, as the Year 13 student leaders were on study leave for mock exams. We are now focused on appointing the next set of senior prefects from Year 12, and appointing the prefect who will lead on diversity and inclusion and

sustain the student support group. We plan to invite parents in to offer their opinions and support on EDI in the summer term and are now considering how to structure this before sending out the invites.

March 2023

A busy month for the Great Representation project, with two seminar days, a school visit to Katherine Warington school, and the HFL National Race Equity Conference online.

We were particularly struck by Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga, from UCL's Centre for Holocaust Education, and her talk about how antisemitism is racism. Having read David Baddiel's *Jews Don't Count* recently, we were sensitive to the growing problem of antisemitism in the UK and globally. Ruth-Anne made the point that a comprehensive Holocaust education is not enough to prevent antisemitism. She referred us to publications by UNESCO to support teacher training, entitled *Addressing Anti-Semitism in Schools*.

In school we continue to work with the Holocaust Educational Trust, and one of us is a firm advocate for their work since a visit to Auschwitz as part of their Lessons from Auschwitz programme. A number of our sixth formers visited the memorial this year, since in-person trips to Poland have restarted after the pandemic. We are conscious that we need to do more and will work with the lead teacher of religious studies and personal development to ensure that the wider context of antisemitism is covered alongside the cultural and religious exploration of Judaism.

David Gillborn, from the centre for research in Race and Education at the University of Birmingham, provided a significant challenge to some preconceived ideas about racism in education. David debunked the validity of the concept of colour-blindness, arguing that an active anti-racist approach is needed. He also drew on statistics to show that the idea of the White working class being the most marginalised is false, stating that the system builds in significant White advantage and Black disadvantage. We will be using some of David's thought-provoking ideas in a future staff training day.

HFL Education ran their national Race Equity Conference on 15 March, which sadly in schools was a national teacher strike day, so we were limited to watching videos on catch-up. David Olusoga was the standout speaker, who helped to put all of our anti-racism work in context. He argued that anti-racism and a decolonised curriculum is crucially important, particularly in history (his specialist area). He argued for "A version of history that speaks to who we really are and who we have been". He talked of Britishness as a civic rather than a racial construct, with a third of British people

from diverse backgrounds and their stories not represented. He advocated an expansion of history to include the stories of everybody, a demand to reframe our relationship with history itself. He stressed the need to move on from national myths and history to “remain as it is” with omissions, half-truths and missing chapters. He argued for reframing to be inclusive, an uncomfortable challenge, a rejection of culture wars, and a drive for comfort rather than engagement.

We also made a visit to Katherine Warington School, a recently opened secondary school on the outskirts of Harpenden. The school has students from Years 7 to 10 at the moment and has already designed a very effective anti-racism programme. A particular jolt was to hear from the curriculum leaders in art and music on the work that they have undertaken to broaden access to wider cultural experiences. We had not considered before that the equal-tempered scale and common piano keyboard layout are significantly limiting in terms of access to non-Western music.

The head of music was passionate about getting access to original instruments from other cultures for the students to play, which then allowed reproduction of the micro-tonal scales from Indian or Chinese music. The school librarian is a published children's author and is a champion for diverse texts. There was a recognition that age-appropriateness is important for some of the challenging issues linked to equality and diversity. We learned about how KWS staff engaged with parents and built a teaching and publicity programme around protected characteristics, including specific sanctions when an incident of discrimination has occurred.

As we approach our final in-person session at the end of March, it feels that the anti-racism journey at HBS has started but is definitely a multi-year programme, and we have a way to go. Awareness amongst staff and students has been raised this year, and the challenge for future years will be to make this a sustainable part of the school fabric. The continuation of the curriculum reviews throughout all subjects, and increasing parental engagement in EDI work, are goals for the 2023/24 school development plan.

Fergal Moane and Dami Ajagbonna

**KATHERINE
WARINGTON
SCHOOL**

September 2022

At Katherine Warrington School (KWS), a school in its fourth year, with 750 students (Years 7 to 10), set to be a school of over 1,200 students (Years 7 to 13) in 2025, we embarked on our race-equity journey in 2021. Over the past 18 months, there have been attempts and some successes. However, each small step forward has brought with it the deeper realisation of how much there is to acknowledge, learn, unlearn and understand, to make lasting and impactful steps towards racial equity at KWS.

Before diving into what needs to be done and mapping our journey ahead, it is imperative to reflect on what is working well in terms of race equity. We have made strides to attempt to ensure our staff body is representative of our student body (although we appreciate that we need to do more in recruitment). The equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) profile has risen across the school as we:

- **have appointed an associate assistant head with this responsibility**
- **discuss EDI more at SLT meetings**
- **are beginning to address curriculum content and how it is delivered with curriculum leads (CLs)**
- **have listened to concerns from our governing and parent body regarding the underrepresentation of students from a global majority background across our messaging and imagery**

All of this has led to discussions and action points regarding how we can and need to improve communication, behaviour, the system by which racial incidents are reported, and how we work with all students involved.

To get to the position we are now in (still very much the beginning of our journey) we have undertaken several actions. In September 2022, as part of everyone's continuing professional development, our staff participated in an Unconscious and Conscious Bias training. This session successfully challenged our staff to think critically about their own role within EDI at KWS, and what they can do to develop KWS into a truly inclusive school. At the end of 2021–22, we confirmed our collaboration with Flair Impact, a racial-equity data analysis company. This is a three-year relationship, in which our staff and students complete an anonymous survey, which produces quantitative data outlining our school across four areas:

1. racist behaviours
2. racial inclusion barriers
3. racial awareness
4. racial diversity

We have completed and obtained our results from the September 2022 surveys. These results, partnered with the work we will be doing with HFL's race equity adviser, will securely map out our short-term, medium-term and long-term action plans. A whole-school improvement goal for the upcoming school year and the next is to diversify our curriculum. To do this, we have introduced an EDI section on our CLs' curriculum dashboard, empowering our teachers to confidently review how diverse and inclusive their curriculums are. Once these are completed, at the end of the autumn term, we will be able to identify which curriculums are in need of support and which are examples of good practice.

As mentioned, we are in the process of collating data to drive our short- to long-term plans. However, it is safe to say that in a year's time we would like to see that some goals have already been achieved:

- **all of our students feeling seen and heard**
- **all CLs being critically aware of how diverse their curriculums are – what has been done, what needs to be done, what the challenges are and what support they need**
- **to have made great strides in changing our school culture to one of true inclusivity, and where all members of our school community practice zero tolerance**

These objectives cannot be achieved solely through the work of a small group of people, and that is why we are delighted to be involved in the Great Representation programme. We sought out this collaboration due to our headteacher and EDI lead's need for education on the topic of racial equity, which can then be disseminated through KWS. We want to facilitate the education and empowerment of our staff body, to understand what other schools are doing and experiencing, and ultimately, share good practice with our colleagues.

October 2022

The first seminar of the Great Representation programme was a real treat and eye opener for us. Prior to this seminar, we believed that, although we were at the beginning of our journey, we had made a few positive strides towards race equity. However, following Professor Paul Miller's lecture, which eloquently enlightened us with the problems we face as a result of institutional racism – "Racism in England's education system is a reality" – we were forced to face the reality that, to bring positive change, the hard work was still very much ahead of us. The utter importance of recruitment was our first lightbulb moment during the seminar.

As Cynthia Rowe shared with us her lived experience, the power of representation was left ringing in our ears. At KWS we understand the need to bring non-negotiable change to our recruitment process. Whether that be anonymising applications or ensuring more equitable representation on panels during the interview process, we will have to trial and review.

Along with the power of representation, the need to strengthen our staff's racial literacy was our second lightbulb moment, after learning about the racism experienced on a daily basis by people from a global majority background. This raised the question: How can we efficiently and effectively raise the racial literacy of our staff?

Our final lightbulb moment came after Paul Miller outlined the importance of collaborating with all key stakeholders, and for us, our parents hold the key. We need to invite our parents into the conversation, to bring their experience, thoughts and ideas to the table to strengthen the culture change at KWS.

Our final reflection from the first Great Representation seminar was that this isn't a sprint – it is a marathon. Therefore, despite the want to change everything now, to make long impactful cultural change, we need to be strategic and impactful with our next steps.

Going into November, our next steps fortunately are self-evident:

1. organise a parent voice session hosting parents of students from a global majority background
2. collate the data and results from our work with Flair Impact
3. engage with the HfL review
4. work with our HfL race equity adviser to create our short-term, medium-term and long-term action plans
5. schedule fortnightly sessions (each ten minutes) within staff briefings to improve our staff's racial literacy (led by our EDI lead)
6. review each CL's curriculum dashboard, focusing on EDI within the curriculum

Our visit to Longdean School provided us with lots to think about, especially with regard to the work their sixth form students do in and around the topic of EDI (our sixth form opens in 2024). We were in awe of their sixth form students articulating and conveying their own journey through the school as they set up their Longdean Equality and Diversity (LEAD) group, including the outreach work they have done with local primary schools. After this visit, we put things in place for our very own EDI club; we have had our first two sessions, and the uptake, enthusiasm and energy from our students has been overwhelming.

Another example of transferable good practice was the work regarding recruitment: advertising vacant positions on Black and minority ethnic education websites. Our final takeaways were to consider using the NEU training framework for anti-racism CPD for our staff, and to explore the Equaliteach anti-racist kitemark.

Our first two months have been an intense learning period for us. We have held our parent voice session, which was ultimately a success. It was an emotionally honest evening with a small number of our families. We wanted to listen to and understand their lived experiences as parents of KWS, whilst also acknowledging our mistakes, and – most importantly – to agree what we need to do to improve.

The main takeaway from our session was that students and parents are not reporting racial incidents due to the feeling that we do not sanction strictly enough or transparently enough. Hence, over the coming weeks, we will be reviewing and altering our behaviour policy to ensure that the consequence of perpetrating a racist action starts at a C4 (hour detention) level and increases from there. This will then be reviewed by our key stakeholders, including parents, before addressing students in assemblies. Finally, we need to establish an anonymous reporting process, allowing students to report in the knowledge that they are protected.

Our challenges and next steps are therefore interwoven and circular. We aim to proceed using the model of “Do, review and redo”.

November and December 2022

Our completion of the Flair Impact survey, the parent voice activity and the HFL evaluation toolkit reinforces the fact that the autumn term has for us been a period for collecting data – both qualitative and quantitative – to aid our understanding and to inform our action planning. The data will support us with identifying what and where our areas of improvements are, what the suggested actions might be, and what our action plan will start to look like for the remainder of the academic year and subsequent years.

After such a positive start to our race-equity journey, the size of the task at hand has been somewhat overwhelming. Discussions with passionate colleagues at the conferences and the growth of our own subject knowledge galvanise us but, back in our school setting, striving for race equity is not always at the forefront of the minds of members of our school community who are not at the seminars with us and are focused on so many other things: student attainment and progress; attendance; wellbeing and behaviour; curriculum; and, of course, the daily life of working in secondary education. Therefore, the task is understanding where our race-equity journey aligns within the

whole organisation that is KWS. This has led to our biggest lightbulb moment to date: the need to manage our emotions and the utmost importance of avoiding emotional responses and decisions as we gather more and more information and strategically approach every step of the journey.

The question now is how we get Katherine Warington School to where it needs to be over the upcoming years. For us, that is playing to our strengths as educators; if this was a curriculum, we would set out the five-year map of learning to ready our students for success in their GCSEs. Therefore, we need to do the same with our EDI action plan: map out the next three years under the categories of teaching and learning, HR and policies, behaviour, pastoral, curriculum, and subject knowledge. This is what we will be strategically creating between now and January.

Before we can look at the curriculum, supporting our students with their own understanding of race and their use of language, we need to start with our staff. Since initiating them, we have held three ten-minute staff briefings in which we introduced the staff to *Anti Racist Ally: An Introduction to Action and Activism* by Sophie Williams. Through starting the conversation with “What is anti-racism?” and “Isn’t racism over?” our staff have taken the conversation to the staffroom, where the conversation of race is becoming more present.

Our EDI lead held an all-staff meeting on “What is a microaggression?” and staff explored how we have conversations with each other (and students) about microaggressions if and when they occur. The impact of this has been varied, with some staff becoming immediately more confident to have these conversations with students, but others expressing concern that “Maybe it is better to not say anything at all.” In light of this, in the following racial-literacy briefing, our EDI introduced staff to terminology, with the intention of providing staff with the knowledge of recommended language and, more importantly, how to use it. This was only a ten-minute briefing, so very much a brief introduction, which will lead to the creation of an EDI glossary to be shared with staff and posted on our staff site from January.

At the start of December, we had the pleasure of visiting Fairlands Primary School in Stevenage, where we saw an honest and direct approach to embedding inclusivity into their curriculum with the frameworks of No Outsiders and Jigsaw. As secondary school educators, it was fascinating to see the high-level questions and discussions bestowed on the Year 5 and Year 6 students. Students were given the space to openly discuss race, racism and the impact of racism.

Fairlands staff practice, around agreeing and establishing expectations with pupils for discussing issues of inclusivity, was something we would like to replicate in our classrooms (albeit adapted to meet the needs of secondary students) – the principles of respecting each other’s lived experiences, the ability to opt out from sharing, and

the importance of ensuring anonymity by removing the use of names of individuals when sharing. These ground rules immediately created a safe space for the lesson to commence.

Seeing the work being done at a primary school reiterated to us the importance of reaching out to our feeder schools, collaborating to ensure the conservation of inclusivity is carried through from primary into secondary and, most importantly, bridging the gap between learners wanting to report an incident to a trusted adult in primary, to not wanting to “snitch” when at secondary.

Similar to our reflection at the end of October, the amount of work needed in our journey to race equity and a fully realised culture of inclusion is becoming clearer and clearer. However, whilst we are creating long-term plans and laying the foundations for us to grow from, it is still vitally important we have short-term goals in place for here and now.

January 2023

As we ended 2022, we received the report following our race equity adviser’s visit to KWS, during which she gathered student and staff voice. Colleagues had fed back that they were ultimately pleased to see efforts made by the school to recognise, represent and celebrate our wider diverse community, especially when it came to religious events. Staff had requested that we provide more education to students who have used racist language or demonstrated discriminatory behaviour. For our students, there were two important pieces of feedback that required immediate action:

1. that there are frequent incidents of use of racist language and microaggressions
2. that students feel that incidents of racism are not punished severely enough

The latter was also raised by parents in the parent voice session back in October, so this fully justified our decision to increase the sanction for any racist incident. However, some students had informed our race equity adviser that there was a culture of not wanting to snitch. Students and staff also referenced that they would like to see more representation within the curriculum.

To conclude 2022, we reviewed our behaviour policy and introduced to staff (for a January launch to students and families) the Protected Characteristic Incident consequence – any incident, action or comment that is made against one of the nine protected characteristics would be addressed with the seriousness it demands (C4 sanction minimum). To empower our staff with this, we led them through a briefing, providing them with scenarios to discuss and navigate. The addition of this into our behaviour policy, in combination with the racial literacy training our staff have undertaken in the

autumn term, meant our staff left the session feeling more empowered and equipped to challenge discriminatory incidents.

On our students' return in January, we launched an "I see it, I hear it, I report it" bystander campaign to our stakeholders. To start our work of eliminating protected characteristic incidents, supporting our students to overcome the hurdles and eradicate the fear of snitching, the headteacher led an assembly to each year group in which the following message was conveyed:

"We, as a school, have put a lot of emphasis on educating and rebuilding relationships when issues arise. However, we are being told that we need to communicate this more with victims, and that perpetrators should face greater consequences for their behaviours. From now on, any incident involving the discrimination and/or intolerance of a protected characteristic will lead to a C4 consequence as a minimum. We have also been told that, when incidents have been reported, we haven't always dealt with them well; for this I truly apologise. I accept that we need to get better at this and ask that you be patient and support us as we, as staff, learn better how to respond in a more supportive, consistent and empathetic way."

The address to our students went on to outline the importance of reporting incidents, emphasising to students that, if incidents go unreported, they are enabled to continue. Only when more and more students proudly and actively participate in the "I see it, I hear, I report it" campaign will KWS be an inclusive space in which everyone counts.

In the first week since the launch, the immediate impact is clear to see, with students already feeling more confident in coming forward and staff calling racism out when heard and seen. Over the upcoming months, we will continue to encourage participation in the campaign. Our aim is to have half of our student body proudly wearing the "I see it, I hear it, I report it" badge on their blazers by the time we reach spring half-term.

As previously mentioned, stakeholders had outlined the need for a more diverse and representative curriculum. Our EDI lead participated in a Decolonising the Curriculum workshop led by Dr Rob Power, facilitated by Flair Impact, in which the concept of globalising the curriculum and pedagogies was explored. This was a very powerful workshop. The concept of globalising the curriculum was explained as the need to consider everything we study from new perspectives. This isn't about removing content from the curriculum and replacing it with new; it is about considering multiple perspectives and making space to think carefully about what we value.

It was then explained that the change to the curriculum (what “we” should learn) is just the tip of the iceberg in creating curriculum diversity. In fact, below the surface, to achieve a truly decolonised curriculum, we must explore and understand why we should learn it and how we learn it. In the session we reflected, as Dr Rob Power explained, that if our school community is one we strive to feel connected to, learn about and from; and if, within our school communities, there are links to the global community; then inevitably, our school community – the one we feel connected to – is therefore the global community. This illustrates simply why we should learn within a fully diverse, globalised curriculum.

In exploring the concept of globalised pedagogy, we considered how we learn. We were encouraged to acknowledge what frames our knowledge and pedagogy – academic background and interests, training, experience, school values, what our students need to do to succeed (i.e. pass exams) – which all in all creates the lens through which we teach. After this lens was established, Dr Rob Power metaphorically smashed it with the notion that, if globalised learning is to take place, it needs to be taught how it was intended. For example, within English and performing arts, explore the story of the hero Sundiata Keita of the Mali Empire through the Griot Culture in West Africa (a Griot is a West African storyteller, musician, singer and oral historian).

Our participation in this workshop was definitely a lightbulb moment for us, sparking the question: How do we lay the foundations to create impactful change to our curriculum to ensure it is diverse, representative and inclusive? As part of our teaching and learning focus, each department will be asked to audit their curriculum using the three questions from the workshop:

1. What do we learn?
2. Why do we learn it?
3. How do we learn it?

Using this, alongside student voice input regarding learners’ experience of the curriculum, we will create our action plan for each department and subject as we look to authentically create a diverse curriculum. We will aim for this to be initiated in the second half of the spring term, with each action plan ready by the start of the summer term.

We started this term by visiting Hitchin Boys’ School (HBS). We were invited to hear from their race and ethnic diversity (RED) group and head boy, and participate in a presentation led by their personal development subject lead. It was humbling to see the school’s honest reflection on their journey, their experiences, and what they are doing in attempting to create meaningful change. The examples of the good practice work of their RED group (and in particular the member of staff that leads the group) gave us inspiration, as our own EDI group is in its infancy.

It was particularly powerful to see how students have created a safe space and a forum, for all students to openly discuss events and incidents and to consider scenarios for navigating the world. It is also worth noting that staff are encouraged to attend forum meetings to observe and listen to their students. Students participate in similar discussions during form time. The most powerful aspect of this was the freedom given to the students and the fact that staff simply signposted the conversation for students; again, creating a safe space to explore.

Our participation in the Decolonising the Curriculum workshop provided us with our lightbulb moment, but it was the words of HBS's head boy that really solidified its importance, as he shared with us his experiences and journey at HBS. He simply explained that, had he seen more people like himself in the curriculum, he is sure that, from a much earlier stage in his academic career, he would have felt the desire to experience a wide variety of avenues and interests. As we left HBS, we couldn't think of a more powerful way to demonstrate the importance of representation within our curriculum.

February 2023

We started February with a wonderful visit to Nash Mills C of E Primary School. We were welcomed into their warm and friendly environment, which sings respect for diversity, and where everyone is included. We watched a Year 4 class work through activities devised from the text *Africa, Amazing Africa* by Nigerian storyteller Atinuke. Students selected an African country and, over the course of the topic, they researched and identified the environment of the country, the indigenous animals, the people, language, geography and main cultural features.

Some students and staff had family members from that country, and they were encouraged to talk about their heritage and experience. After observing the Year 4 class, we attended a whole-school assembly on the theme of acceptance of diversity, which was entirely embraced from Year 1 to Year 6. The school has moved considerably over the last couple of years on a journey of valuing everyone, and the students confidently engaged in celebrating differences amongst themselves in terms of heritage and culture.

Our takeaway from this experience was the confidence the pupils had in their engagement of celebrating difference and having conversations about it. This is definitely a culture we are looking to create at KWS – a culture where open conversations and celebration of difference can and do take place.

Looking inwards to the work we are currently doing at KWS, the KWS Pledge – our “I see it, I hear it, I report it” campaign – has been in place now for a term, with lots of students in Years 7 and 8 signing their pledges and proudly displaying them in their form rooms. However, participation in Years 9 and 10 has been somewhat underwhelming. We spoke with our Year 10 prefects, student leadership team and several Year 9 students. They informed us that they feel there is a lack of clarity about what constitutes discriminatory language. Some feel that some of their peers (cisgendered, White students) are disinterested because they feel that the pledge doesn’t concern them. This feedback has provided us with our lightbulb moment for this term: we need to engage our students more in the conversation and bring them along with us on the journey rather than them just being the recipients of the change we are trying to create.

Alongside the curriculum audit that is taking place in the summer term, with student voice at its heart, we have introduced a form-time session called EDI Literacy for our Year 9 and Year 10 students. Similar to what we are trying to do with our staff, in an attempt to improve their racial literacy, these sessions with students will be focused on starting the conversation about race and ethnicity. This will create an environment where students can be inquisitive – ask questions, get it wrong, get it right, have a conversation, have a debate – all in a safe space.

These sessions started after the spring half-term break, with the first two sessions focused on “What is race?” and “What is ethnicity?” before moving on to a conversation about the importance of identity and its inevitable impact on our behaviour, attitudes and beliefs. As these sessions develop, we will move on to awareness, empathy, power of language and community. Our hope is that, by the end of this term of work with our Year 9 and Year 10 students, we will see an increase in participation in the KWS Pledge and, more importantly, a more open understanding and desire to participate in our journey.

Finally, we set up our EDI staff working group, with the first meeting taking place in early February. The group is made up of staff volunteers across the school (anyone is welcome), with the purpose being for staff to reflect, discuss and propose ideas on improving EDI at KWS.

The main agenda item for the first session was reflecting on the school’s need for this EDI improvement focus, staff literacy briefings, and the KWS Pledge. The main takeaway from this session was the honest feedback on the “heaviness” of some of the staff racial literacy sessions. Staff reflected that, as much as they appreciate those of us who have EDI and race equity at the forefront of our minds and at the top of our to-do list, for staff the conversation has only just begun, and actually, a platform of scaffolded learning (like we would provide for our students) is needed to simply start the conversation without a fear of getting it wrong, saying the wrong thing or offending anyone. For this reason, exactly like the form-time sessions we have introduced for Year 9 and Year 10 students,

our staff racial literacy briefings will refocus on starting the conversation and facilitating a safe space in which staff can discuss, ask questions and share lived experiences.

March 2023

The second half of the spring term has been a very busy one indeed with:

- a **Great Representation seminar, hosting our colleagues within our hub group**
- a **second parent voice meeting**
- a **parent meeting about the KWS Pledge**

However, as we move towards our final seminar of the Great Representation programme, rather than looking at what we haven't been doing, what needs to be done and changed within our school, we have a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our journey over the last seven months.

The term started with our second parent voice meeting of the year. The agenda of this meeting was to update the parents on what we have been doing since they spoke so honestly with us back in the autumn term. The main topic of the conversation focused on the work we have done around protected characteristic incidents; the educational rehabilitation that takes place with the person who displayed the bullying behaviour; the sanction, the target, their families; and the launch of the KWS Pledge.

As always, our parents were candid in their feedback and supportive of us as we navigated through the meeting. The parents in attendance reflected that it was positive to see the school take such a clear stance on incidents, making it very clear to all stakeholders of our school that, in the unfortunate circumstance a protected characteristic incident takes place, there is a system in place to respond to it. However, and most importantly, we discussed how the very clear next step for the school is how we need to look to integrate the KWS Pledge into the culture of the school, making it a key aspect of our character development, so it becomes a natural part of our rhetoric and values for all members of the community – present and future – rather than an add-on. This second half of the meeting was definitely our first lightbulb moment of the term: yes, we have launched this campaign; yes, reporting of incidents has increased; and yes, students and staff are becoming more and more consciously aware. But, as we look to the summer term and the next academic year, it is imperative that we look to how we integrate it into all aspects of school life and make it an integral part of our school's culture.

During this term, our EDI lead was invited by Flair Impact to sit on a panel on a webinar entitled "Driving anti-racism in a largely white education system", attended by an

audience of educators (state and independent) from across the country. Our EDI lead was invited, not because they are an expert in the field or because KWS has done anything spectacular, but to be the voice of reality and to share typical experiences as an educator in a largely White state secondary school.

Participating in the seminar – being in a room (albeit virtual) with other EDI leads, discussing the importance and need for the work we are doing and how to support schools who are now in a similar position to where we were a year ago (wanting to make change but maybe not too sure of where to start) – was a joyous experience. The webinar covered different points of discussion, for example:

- **How can White educators lean into their feelings of discomfort and decentre themselves in race conversations?**
- **How can you strike a sensitive balance between being a listener to your ethnically minoritised students, staff and parents, and an active participant?**
- **What does authentic allyship look like, and how can White people and the wider education system stand in solidarity with people of colour?**

This was a humbling experience as, rather than focusing on looking inwards at the work we have been doing and becoming an exercise in self-congratulation, it was a wonderful opportunity to refocus on the work we are trying to do, what we need to do and – most importantly – why we are doing it. We can sometimes look inwards solely at what is happening in our own setting.

On a subject such as race equity, it is imperative to remember that, as educators, we are all colleagues, and there is no competition. It is so important to share good practice, share advice, learn from each other's successes and failures. In reflection, not only was participating – as a panellist – in this webinar great CPD, it allowed us to refocus, reminding us of our intent before looking ahead to the summer term, next academic year and beyond.

March saw us welcome our colleagues from our hub group to KWS. We invited our colleagues to:

- **participate in a tour of our school, led by our Year 9 members of our EDI club**
- **listen to the work our heads of history, art and music have done in their respective curriculums, to improve and increase representation and diversity and provide a wider scope of cultural experiences for our students**
- **hear from members of our EDI club (Year 8 and Year 9 students) about their reflections on what we have done and what they would like us to do and our journey as part of the Great Representation programme**

Our students expressed what they believe are the areas of strength with regard to the curriculum. Despite seeing the work of some of our CLs to diversify their curriculum, they were unaware of some of this work, due to it being brought into the Year 7 and Year 8 schemes. We felt an emotional response to the realisation that some of our students will not experience all of the diverse curriculum our younger students will, due to the changes we are bringing in happening as they are at different stages of their academic career at KWS. Therefore, it reinforced the importance of ensuring change is seen at all stages of the curriculum. Our students went on to explain to our colleagues their experiences, and it was the words of one of our Year 9 students, who made all of the hard work worth it, as she said, “I now feel seen and more confident”.

The end of the spring term also sees us approach the end of our participation in the Great Representation programme, which feels strange; in reality, our race-equity journey has only just begun. As we look to the summer term, we set out what our next targets are:

- **conducting a whole-school curriculum audit, empowering our CLs to see where and how to bring positive change**
- **cementing a guide for our pastoral team (and all staff) on how to respond to protected characteristic incidents**
- **attaching audio files to all our student and staff profiles on our internal system of the pronunciation of their name - no longer will members of our school community have to repeatedly correct others**
- **launching our first KWS Culture Day**
- **liaising with our pastoral team and CLs to ensure that classes and groupings of students are reviewed in terms of ethnic/racial balance, to improve equity and balance**

Our biggest lightbulb moment across this whole programme has been the realisation that there is no quick fix; bringing long, impactful change will take time and will be a multi-year journey. As we look into the 2023–24 academic year, it is imperative that we look to embed the change we have brought to KWS this year. This embedding process is going to be invaluable, as it will ensure that our newly anti-racist approach becomes a foundation in the making of our school and part of our culture. From there, we need to ensure – just as we do with other aspects of school life – that we are consistently in the learning cycle of reflecting, reviewing and adapting, as we continue our journey of race equity into future years.

Tony Smith and Jacob-John Church

September 2022

The coronavirus pandemic shocked the world in 2020. Amid one crisis, we were alerted to another, in the form of huge demonstrations against racism for the Black Lives Matter movement as a result of the murder of George Floyd. Returning to school was arduous, with testing, one-way systems and bubbles; but in our hearts and minds, we knew that we needed to do more for students in our community. We are acutely aware of how White British our school is, but also how this picture is rapidly changing. We are doing the Great Representation programme to empower our whole school community to make a change and give our minorities a vehicle and voice to be championed to unlock their potential for life.

In September 2021, we were fortunate to have Show Racism the Red Card ([SRtRC = www.theredcard.org](http://www.theredcard.org)), the UK's leading anti-racism educational charity, deliver a full day of staff training. The training taught the staff body about unconscious bias, microaggressions, and how we can be an anti-racist school. The impact was an increase in reporting of incidents, open discussions about race, and individual lived experiences. Following on from this, our established student group – the anti-racism champions – ran assemblies sharing stories of their lived experiences of racism and what all students can do to be anti-racist allies.

In March 2022 the school applied for the Silver Equalities Award, working with Equaliteach to review equality and equity across four key areas:

1. behaviour and welfare
2. leadership and management
3. personal development of pupils
4. teaching and learning

The scheme has highlighted areas of strengths, which included our provision in the curriculum for race and our inclusive uniform policy. Areas of development in our practices included our provision for students with English as an additional language and our equality scheme.

Following the advice from Equaliteach, we have reinvented our equality scheme to ensure all stakeholders understand their responsibility toward equality, and remastered our targets towards more specific outcomes. An equality impact assessment form has been created to assess new and reviewed policies, to ensure they are meeting the needs of all individuals.

To strengthen our understanding of prejudice in our school community, we have driven a culture of vigilance around reporting and recording incidents. Student assemblies about prejudice were delivered by the equality and diversity lead. This has subsequently led to an increase in the data available on issues of prejudice.

In our school community, our demographic is changing. In 2012 88% of Year 7 students were White British, whereas in 2022 81% of Year 7 students are White British. Our aim is to ensure all students feel safe, welcome and represented within our school community. We are extremely lucky to have had the addition of a parent governor who works directly on equality and diversity and is a voice for minorities on the school board.

As part of the equality award work, we have collected evidence of representation and diversity in our curriculum. Our English curriculum has a range of diverse books such as *My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece* by Annabel Pitcher and *The Bone Sparrow* by Zana Fraillon. This year we have developed a whole-school approach to using texts that contain problematic language. As a result, we choose our passages carefully; forewarning is given to students of problematic language, and we do not read problematic words aloud.

Middle leaders in history and geography are committed to decolonising the curriculum, and the SLT is supporting this work. Students study the changing UK population and migration in geography. In history they learn about war at home and abroad, the British Empire, the British transatlantic slave trade, civil rights in America, the Holocaust, race relations, and civil rights in Britain. Our PSHE curriculum allows individuals to explore their own identities and challenge prejudice through lessons on human rights, stereotypes and racism.

The curriculum at Kings Langley School celebrates a range of different ethnicities and cultures in the arts and technology. This includes:

- **music – reggae and the Windrush migration, and a separate unit that tackles assumptions about hip hop and race**
- **dance – rock-and-roll unit and street dance, which spotlight the origins from black communities in America**
- **technology – exploration of Japanese culture and how different cultures perceive the meanings of different colours**
- **art – influences of African culture on artists such as Picasso and Braque, exploring the changes in attitude towards black culture and the use of the word “Negro”; in the pop art project, students discuss the role of Jean-Michel Basquiat as a young Black artist in a predominantly White world of popular art and culture**

Our art department are trailblazers for curriculum diversity through the introduction of a curriculum audit to review representation of all groups. In the Kings Langley library, we celebrate equality and diversity and ensure that students have access to books where they are represented, written by a variety of diverse authors. This is further celebrated through displays during Black History Month and Refugee Week.

The work conducted above has had impact across the school. There has been an increase in reporting and recording of prejudice-related incidents. Students feel more empowered

to report incidents and are having courageous conversations around diversity and their identities. Our staff body are more vigilant around incidents of discrimination, and leaders are learning how to create restorative conversations with students who are learning to be anti-racist.

Next steps

1. Conduct an equality survey for staff, students and parents, to gain a holistic view of the improvement areas. We will break the student and parent results down into year groups to understand the work that is required in each year group.
2. Create a diversity parent working party (online and in person) to understand our school through their lens and ensure their children are happy and safe.
3. Ensure that assemblies on diversity topics are run by the experts in our school.
4. Ensure that staff receive training to be confident and use the correct language so that all students receive high-quality PSHE education around diversity topics.
5. Use the art department as a best-practice model, to assist all learning areas to complete a curriculum audit on diversity and equality.
6. Further strengthen our work to ensure the new equality scheme is implemented and followed effectively.
7. Ensure that the outcomes following prejudice-related incidents are consistent across the school, and effective education is provided to ensure that these do not reoccur.

We were aware of systemic racism in the UK, but not to the extent that was shown by Professor Paul Miller, Rachel Macfarlane and Michael Catchpool during the first Great Representation seminar. Not only in education but through law enforcement, the justice system, health, earnings and employment, the extent of failings of society for Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people is unfathomable. We discovered that Dacorum has the second-highest White population amongst Hertfordshire districts, according to the 2011 census data.

Other significant areas brought to our attention were the under-assessment and underrepresentation in top tiers of exam entries for non-White students, and higher exclusion rates for non-White (especially Gypsy and Roma, Irish Traveller, Black and Black mixed) students.

As a result of the information learned, we swiftly arranged an equality briefing and shared this information with the staff body. The head of maths shared that setting is done blind, so names and ethnicity are not attributed to students during the process. This is the only subject at Kings Langley that is sorted by attainment. Our hub group discussed the idea of positive discrimination for some BAME students who may not be achieving their potential. This was discussed with the head of maths, but there were

concerns about parental complaints if students are set in a higher attainment group than their peers who scored better in the tests.

We have continued this conversation with our hub group, where an initiative was shared whereby selected students are moved into a set above their test scores to push them and stretch their aspirations. Following teacher assessed grades during the Covid-19 pandemic years, we have continued with moderation practice in school to ensure that no bias exists in our assessment process.

The dive into the inequality for BAME staff in education gave us further cause for concern. Professor Paul Miller spoke about how British law makes it more difficult for people from majority non-White countries to gain qualified teachers status (QTS) and about the lack of representation of BAME people as headteachers and in senior leadership.

We learned about ways to actively address these shortfalls through recruitment, advertising, equality impact assessments, and normalising race conversations. We have acted on this with our equality impact assessments for all policies, advertising on the BAMEed network and driving our staff vigilance training further. We have also taken on board the information shared at the seminar around school-based recruitment processes for staff, and now the school has removed names from the application forms and any information around race as part of the short-listing process.

October 2022

In October we were warmly welcomed to Simon Balle School in Hertford. The leaders shared their progress with their race-equity work. On the tour of the school, we were impressed with the visibility and representation of different identities. In the primary phase, we admired a display showing the books read in each year group to facilitate representation. These included *Galimoto* by Karen Lynn Williams in Year 2 and *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly in Year 5. In the secondary school, a collection of posters showing role models from a variety of nationalities for each subject provided aspiration for students in a range of fields.

During the tour, we viewed a British values poster, which sparked a conversation regarding the phrase “Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs”. The Oxford dictionary defines tolerance as the willingness to accept or tolerate something, especially opinions or behaviour with which you don’t agree. It was agreed that we do not tolerate different faiths and beliefs but celebrate them within our schools. We have a British values board at Kings Langley, which includes the word, and we have employed our anti-racism champions to have it changed to reflect the values of our school.

During a conversation in the library, we highlighted our good fortune in having a librarian committed to equality and diversity. The librarian's work includes creating targeted displays, ensuring stock has a wide range of up-to-date books, and ensuring that students feel represented and welcomed in our library. We reflected on what would happen if our librarian was to move on; would her legacy continue? Reviewing the library policy and librarian job description is an important action to ensure that it does.

Our final takeaway from Simon Balle School was from their student leadership structure. A student parliament is formed in the sixth form, and each member leads on a specified area. One of the students leads on diversity and equality, creating displays, running student groups, and organising events. Since the visit, we have met with the head of sixth form to discuss setting up a similar approach at our school. The next recruitment for the student leadership team will be after Christmas, and he has agreed to work towards developing a similar structure at Kings Langley.

Reading and learning about race equity and White fragility has taught us a great deal. Our reading and research highlighted the importance of education around racial literacy when striving for equality. Facilitating the education of our school community towards being an anti-racist school is key on our agenda. As a result, an equality newsletter is in the draft phase, and it will include sources where parents can learn about equality issues, each article being dedicated to a different protected characteristic. The sources will comprise:

- **read – an article**
- **watch – a YouTube video**
- **listen – a podcast**
- **follow – a social media account**

We have engaged our anti-racism champions to lead the first issue and source this information, along with our own recommendations. Our champions are the heart of our anti-racism journey, and this month they celebrated and led on the second Wear Red Day from SRtRC, with the profits going to support the victims of the floods in Pakistan. Form groups received a tutorial providing education around anti-racism, and the day was a huge success. The students have also changed our British values display, replacing the word "tolerance" to make it an anti-racism display.



Image credit: American Friends Service Committee. www.afsc.org

We continue to be vigilant with the reporting of prejudice-related incidents. This has been successful, and we are beginning to work on the next phase of our journey. How do

we process the incidents to ensure education for the perpetrator, support for the victim, and restorative justice? Our aim is to ensure the process of dealing with equality issues is streamlined across the school and dealt with promptly and effectively.

We have scheduled the item on the SLT meeting agenda, to discuss best practice. Using an equality impact assessment, we are also reviewing how our behaviour policy impacts people of colour and ensures we are conscious of the national picture of school exclusions. We also aim to discuss this with our hub schools during the next school visit and to share best practice in this area. Following this, our equality lead will build a staff working party to develop secure systems and ingrain these into our school.

We have collected data from the survey results for students and parents in Years 7–9 and will gather the data for Years 10–12 before Christmas. The survey looks to discover how the students perceive the school (is it welcoming to students with protected characteristics?), whether they have witnessed prejudice, where and when these incidents happen, their perception on how well the school deals with these incidents, and suggestions to make our school more inclusive of all students. We hope to have a review of the results in January.

The staff survey used to collect teacher and support staff views has indicated the lack of equality reference in the morning registration programme. As a character kite mark+ school, we have integrated character into our morning registration programme every week. Our school character values are stickability, empathy and self-regulation. These link to anti-racism, and the equality lead wishes to work with the deputy headteacher to marry the two key areas of our school values and anti-racism.

During the second Great Representation seminar, we learned, reflected and came away with actions. The talk by Sufian Sadiq from Chiltern Teaching School Hub allowed us to question our unconscious bias and gave ideas for our upcoming Islamophobia assembly. We were made aware of the importance of intersectionality: looking at data across two identities, for example Black and special educational needs. Jigna Patel from Herts and Essex High School shared a tip around using our management information system, SIMS, to record audio of students' names to ensure correct pronunciation. We have highlighted the need to pronounce names correctly and encourage staff to check these with students.

During the seminar, it was brought to our attention that there can be a correlation between race and safeguarding, and it is important when looking at safeguarding that we notice any race trends. Our equality lead will discuss this with the designated safeguarding lead when they analyse safeguarding data. Another question raised at the seminar was how we foster good relationships between those with protected characteristics and those without. This is an area we are yet to work on, and we will seek advice during the seminars and hub visits to find answers.

December 2020

In December we had a pleasant reception at Sir John Lawes School in Harpenden. Meeting with the student diversity group gave an insight into their work against anti-racism and displayed the value that the school places on student voice. Each form group has their own diversity lead – an initiative that ensures diversity is permeating throughout the school. The students spoke eloquently about their current work in assemblies, displays, and the review of the BAME survey. This was particularly impressive from KS3 students.

We were especially interested in the BAME survey commissioned by the assistant headteacher and answered by only these students. This gives an insight into the lived experiences of students of colour, and we will seriously consider completing our own after our equality survey. The student leaders spoke about how students answered honestly, as answers were anonymous.

The headteacher discussed their main aims from the learning from the Great Representation seminars. These were to understand the BAME community's lived experiences and to ensure students have high career aspirations. In 2019, 4% of White Britons and 7% of BAME Britons were unemployed, demonstrating why this is the main item on Sir John Lawes' agenda. They aim to ensure that BAME students have the first choice on work experience offers, which have previously been reserved for pupil premium (PP) students. They have a new priority list, which serves students that are PP and BAME first, then BAME and finally PP, before placements are opened to the rest of the school. A dive into our own systems for careers is something we will explore.

Prior to Christmas, we explored anti-racism during a presentation at Seminar 3 from The Black Curriculum. During this, we looked in more detail at intersectionality and were taught about loaded advantage, for example a heterosexual White male has loaded advantage where a gay Black woman does not. It posed the question: How do we ensure that people of all identities are valued? How do we create an environment where each person feels comfortable and safe amongst other identities? When reviewing information we use in our curriculum, it was advised to check if it is:

- **balanced – do multiple sources agree? Is it biased?**
- **accurate – did the source see events directly?**
- **trustworthy – is it a reputable source?**

One piece of advice we took back to our school was ensuring that, when referring to the slave trade, we refer to individuals as enslaved people rather than slaves. In discussion with the head of history, we discovered this was already vocabulary the department uses, which was reassuring. It was highlighted that we must change the narrative of history by referring to the slave trade in geography as “Where does sugar come from?”

Furthermore, we learned to look out for single-story narratives when referring to Africa; for example, African music is a blanket term that is not accurate to one type of music and stereotypes a plethora of countries into one culture.

January 2023

In January we visited Peartree Spring Primary School, which led to in-depth discussions on how to make impactful changes in our own settings. We discussed career aspirations of different ethnicities that derive from family ambitions.

One area highlighted at Kings Langley School is to look at work experience and option choices by ethnicity to see if there are any trends. Do we have high aspirations for our BAME students in a range of careers, or are the ambitions narrow? How do we provide role models for our BAME students to look up to and aspire to emulate, especially if these are lacking in their lives?

In addition to evaluating data, we will be encouraging our career advisers to prioritise BAME students when allocating work experience placements. Our conversations then turned to reporting of incidents amongst the student body. From our student surveys, it was identified that individuals who did not report did not want to be known as a “snitch” and often wanted to stay out of a situation to avoid animosity.

After researching the area, we discovered literature from the Diana Award that educates students about the difference between snitching and reporting. We will be communicating to our students during Holocaust Memorial Day assemblies that “It can be helpful to think of the difference between these two terms like this: ‘snitching’ gets someone into trouble, whereas ‘reporting’ gets someone out of trouble.”

Following our equality surveys, we analysed the results from our staff survey. We were pleased to have a total of 38 staff responses. It emerged that 69% had received training on racist or religiously motivated incidents, and 90% said they felt some level of confidence tackling racist or religiously motivated incidents. We were disappointed to discover that 75% of staff were aware of student discrimination/prejudice regarding race over the last year.

Following the work completed on vigilance, we were pleased to discover that staff overall felt that the recording of incidents was effective. All staff felt more work needed to be done with families on discrimination/prejudice.

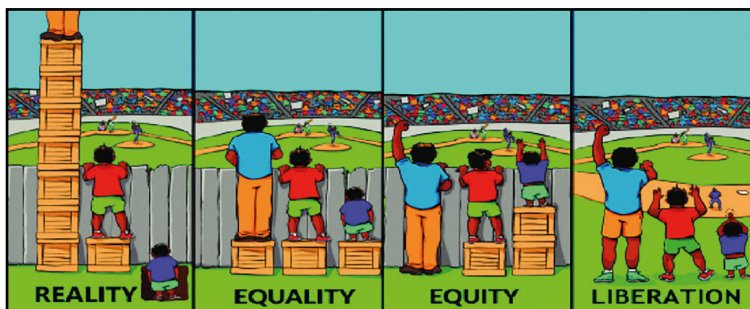
We would like to develop a half-termly newsletter on issues of identity-based discrimination/prejudice. This has opened discussion with our hub groups on how to

complete this work, highlighting that communications such as letters and newsletters are often not read by those showing prejudiced views.

Staff said they would benefit from more PSHE training and training that helps to tackle prejudice. Working with Equaliteach on the equalities award has given us a link to outstanding resources and knowledgeable staff. We are in the process of booking a seminar called Responding Effectively to Prejudice-Related Incidents, run by Equaliteach. The PSHE lead is always willing to support staff or arrange for an expert to swap sessions if required. We have asked him to communicate this to staff, to ensure full awareness of the opportunity to be supported in their teaching.

At the end of January, we were welcomed to the next Great Representation seminar, with some thought-provoking guests. The seminar started with peers sharing recommendations of what to read and watch. As a result, we watched "Fight the Power: How Hip Hop Changed the World". This documentary explicitly shows the discrimination against Black people in the USA and how artists highlighted the corruption of systems and the police, influencing the public to make change. We have shared this documentary with staff and students in older year groups and encouraged them to watch it.

Jess Boyd presented during the seminar on her work surrounding culturally relevant pedagogy. Through the presentation, we explored how different cultures learn together, how we develop our students' self-love, and the characteristics of a dominant culture. We reflected on the difference between equality (sameness), equity (fairness) and liberation.



The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated;
© Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

Jess shared the above image, and we began to discuss what our fence is. We took this question to the SLT meeting and asked them to share their views. The team felt that the main barriers to liberation were:

- **a Victorian curriculum not meeting all learners' needs**
- **government benchmarks and pressures, for example from Ofsted**
- **parent views and social prejudice**
- **social media and students' access to unfiltered information**
- **students' confidence in expressing their own culture**
- **addiction and the developing brain**
- **entitlement**
- **mental health and anxiety**

Whilst this is a lot to unpick and many of these factors are outside of our control, the team has pledged to consider what fences might be present to students of colour when promoting a new initiative, strategy or policy.

Our achievement-for-all lead has put together a comprehensive analysis of our destination data over the past three years. The findings show that no student from the school during this time from a Black ethnic background has progressed to Oxbridge or Russell Group universities. The data has been discussed with the sixth form team to ensure that these students are prioritised to raise aspirations to these top universities.

We were privileged to listen to Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson from Impact of Omission, an organisation that aims to make education on Britain's imperial past part of the national curriculum. Esmie and her cofounder began the organisation after conducting a research survey that unexpectedly blew up and was answered by over 50,000 people. She illustrated the problem of studying a curriculum through a White man's lens, which does not foster aspiration for people of colour; you cannot be what you cannot see. She highlighted the free anti-racism training offered by the NEU and the high quality of this, which is a resource we will explore.

We are extremely grateful that our history department is already paving the way to decolonising and diversifying the curriculum. They have done this through telling alternative and indigenous narratives and ensuring that students are aware that dual narratives exist. With the help of native historians, they have challenged the exam board on language that is used for Aboriginal people in Australia, for example.

This month we have finalised the analysis of the students and parents' equality survey and presented the findings and actions to the SLT and governors. Overall, students felt that the school was welcoming of students of different identities, although less so in older year groups. Some students stated that they had seen, heard or experienced prejudice in school, although the majority said they were not sure or had never heard of these incidents. Students identified that these incidents happened at break, lunch and in corridors. Most students said they know how to report incidents of prejudice and that

the main reasons for not reporting incidents were being labelled a snitch, not wanting to get involved, or perceiving the incident to be a joke.

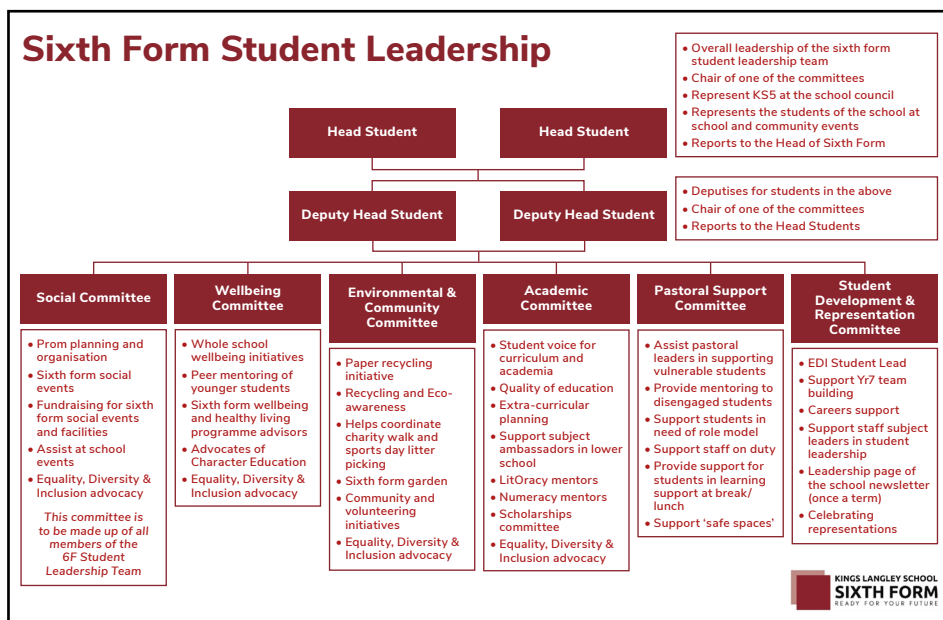
Our next step on incidents is to ensure clear systems that educate the individuals involved. This will be coupled with ensuring students, staff and parents are aware and understand the sanction and education following incidents of prejudice. In the older year groups, fewer students felt the school was dealing with incidents well and communicated that discreet reporting would help them to report. We will look to introduce a reporting system on Microsoft Teams to allow discreet reporting.

In the parent survey, many parents were unable to say how well the school deals with equality issues due to not experiencing it. Most parents said the school is welcoming of all students of different identities, or that they were not sure. Most parents thought the school teaches students to understand each other, value difference, and mix with others from different backgrounds. One parent raised concerns with the ethnic groups on the Hertfordshire admissions form, and we have since fed back on this. Staff, parents and students agreed that education for perpetrators is essential. They also agreed on more severe sanctions that are effectively communicated to all.

We have advertised for parents to join a working party to help us move towards being an anti-racist school; however, we have had no responses. We will look to directly target parents to join this working party. We also discussed with governors how to create a more diverse governing body, whilst ensuring that we avoid tokenism. The chair of governors spoke about the challenges when recruiting governors, and this is an item on the agenda for the next full governing body meeting. As part of our student leadership structure, inspired by Simon Balle, there are now four new committees:

1. Social Committee
2. Wellbeing Committee
3. Environmental and Community Committee
4. Academic Committee

Each of these committees is run by the head student team, and all have diversity and equality on their agendas.



The student leadership team recruitment will be finalised next month, and we hope to see a diverse range of applicants.

March 2023

At the beginning of March, we settled down for the penultimate Great Representation seminar, where the keynote speaker was Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga, programme director at University College London Centre for Holocaust Education. We explored antisemitism and were shocked to learn that there has recently been an increase in antisemitic incidents in the UK and the world.

Whilst there are incidents recorded that show extreme racism towards the Jewish community, we also viewed how this racism can be systemic. This includes playing down the severity of the Holocaust, othering Jewish people and holding Jewish people responsible for the conflict in Israel. Ruth-Anne gave us some key principles when dealing with incidents which have helped us with our work on a restorative programme at Kings Langley School. These included respecting human rights and dignity for all, protecting the victims, not belittling or insulting anyone, defusing conflict, and not delivering the response in anger.

Our next keynote speaker was Professor David Gillborn, emeritus professor of critical race studies and editor-in-chief of the journal *Race Ethnicity and Education*. He explained how race is a social construct and its meaning in different contexts is constantly changing. We explored statistics, including people of colour being overrepresented when applying for initial teacher training but underrepresented in teaching and school leadership.

Black students face discrimination in every society where they are a minority and are often seen as low-ability and threatening, and that their families are unsupportive. This results in them being more likely to be over-sanctioned and placed in low-rank teaching groups. We explored the narrative from the media, which constantly highlighted White working class boys to be the lowest achievers and learned that this does not account for data on private schools, and that data shows that Gypsy/Roma children achieve lower than White British students. David's advice was to begin by:

- **finding like-minded colleagues**
- **involving people of colour**
- **looking at the data in our own school**

We warmly welcomed our hub schools to Kings Langley to share good practice around diversity and race equity. The group were given a talk by the equality lead on the process of:

1. working towards the Silver Equalities Award
2. sharing the updated equality scheme, which includes a section on problematic language in texts
3. sharing the student, staff and parent surveys we commissioned

Colleagues were given presentations from our character lead on the links to diversity; and from our librarian, who shared the diverse texts in our whole-school reading programme and useful tools to aid diversifying the library. The highlight of the visit was the presentation from our anti-racism champions. The group presented their anti-racism journey and their work in assemblies, challenging systemic racism, and outlined their plans for the future.

The feedback from our hub schools was unanimous praise of our young leaders' confidence, and outstanding achievements. It was suggested that the Great Representation cohort would benefit from hearing their voices, and this was later arranged with HFL for the final seminar later in the month. We are incredibly proud that our young leaders will be closing this year's Great Representation course and are inspired by their reflection of their journey.

Over the summer and the next academic year, we wish to use our learning to work with the ambassadors collectively.

This month we were awarded the Silver Equalities Award from Equaliteach. The award shows how our school not only meets the important duties placed on us by the Equality Act 2010 but also demonstrates good practice when embedding equality and creating a safe and inclusive environment for all. We are extremely proud of this achievement and have valued the support provided throughout the process of working towards the award.

In addition, the sixth form leadership recruitment process was finalised, and we are thrilled to learn that 50% of the team is represented by students of colour, with both head students being students of colour. For a school that has a total of 21% students from BAME backgrounds, we are ecstatic to see this representation in our student leadership, demonstrating our high aspirations for all students.

This month a group of staff have launched the first post-Covid cultural celebration event, "Community Iftar". All members of the school community are invited to come together that evening to break the fast together. Students were introduced to the event with an informative video presentation recorded by the principal assistant head, who is a member of the Muslim community. We hope this paves the way for the school embracing more cultural, community and religious celebrations, and challenging cultural stereotypes.

We were extremely privileged to attend the national Race Equity Conference run by HFL Education. The calibre of expertise from the keynote speakers, including David Olusoga, Reni Eddo-Lodge and Jeffrey Boakye, blew us away. In addition, the workshops from the HFL teams on how to create an anti-racist curriculum, and creating a safe space to talk about race, gave us further actions to implement in our school. Our main takeaways from the conference were:

- **staff needing to be equipped and knowledgeable when dealing with anti-racism**
- **the value of the history association resources from a subscription**
- **the importance of discussing current news stories with students and questioning their views through this**

Having knowledgeable staff will subsequently support questioning student views and further embeds our desire to deliver more staff training on dealing with prejudice.

Coming to the end of our Great Representation journey, we understand our role in race equity and the part we play in unlocking the potential of all the young people in our school community.

Our next steps, from summer 2023 and beyond, will be to ensure we educate and empower our staff and student leaders through high-quality training, to create a safe space to talk about race and celebrate culture.

We wish to further audit our curriculum through a brave approach to diversity, to ensure students are seen in all areas of their learning. Finally, we wish to have a secure system, which educates students to be anti-racist following incidents and supports victims, linking to our key school values of empathy and self-regulation.

David Fisher and Philippa Lark

KNEBworth PRIMARY SCHOOL

September 2022

At Knebworth School our school vision is “Deep Roots and High Aspirations, Individual and Together, Learning and Creating in an ever-changing world”.

This vision was built on the views of all stakeholders and underpins all work at Knebworth. We believe that the most important thing we can give *all* our children are the *Deep Roots* of belonging, as well as *High Aspirations*, so that children know there is no limit to what they can achieve. Knebworth is a fully inclusive school, and we are passionate about building a safe, nurturing and accepting environment for our entire school community.

We recognise that we are not racially diverse – our families and staff are predominantly from the White British community. As a result, we acknowledge that we need to proactively continue to bring diversity into our school, to achieve greater representation through a carefully planned, sequenced and inclusive curriculum that recognises the contributions of all members of society.

Race equity is firmly on the school agenda and forms part of our strategic vision for the school. We are fortunate that all our staff and governors are fully committed to the programme and are eager and energised by the work the school is currently doing. One of our strategic goals is:

Knebworth School will be known and recognised as a school that promotes diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) in all its forms, and whose curriculum is constructed to teach understanding and acceptance, encouraging informed and insightful conversation, and preparing children for life in a multicultural society.

We have already made a start on this journey. Our school development plan and our equality policy clearly identify two objectives for 2022 and beyond, as we are committed to developing in this area. These are as follows:

1. to promote understanding of British values, equality and diversity
2. to develop whole-school policy, practice and strategy with regard to equality and diversity

With these two objectives in mind, we are actively working on promoting ourselves as an anti-racist school, and our diversity lead is currently working alongside different stakeholders, using a vertical-slice model working party. The aim of this working party is to develop a diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) strategy, which highlights the barriers and develops a plan to overcome them, and to ensure greater representation. For instance, one of the barriers identified is stakeholders’ reluctance to engage in deep conversations about race due to fear of causing offence.

We will be developing actions to support our stakeholders with these conversations by implementing the No Outsiders approach, which prepares children for life in modern Britain. We know that this work begins with our youngest children. We commissioned a review of our Early Years environment; HFL conducted an audit and identified areas of our provision that could be enhanced further. As one example, food/drink packaging from different communities is now incorporated in our role-play areas so that all children can see their culture in our setting.

Before starting the Great Representation work, we had engaged with the DfE's project on Embracing Difference, Ending Bullying. Feedback from the session was extremely positive. Staff reported on how the training made them think differently; they felt more confident with terminology, and they were more understanding of the challenges raised.

We were also fortunate to receive a staff training session on developing awareness around race inequality and anti-racism, led by Toks Olusamokun from HFL. Toks gave us the opportunity to reflect on our individual experiences and how these may shape the way we view the world. She highlighted the past and current landscape of race inequality and, on another level, she helped us understand how, as a school, we can make small changes to further enhance our practice. Within a few days of the training, we could see some of the small changes put into place. For instance, skin-tone crayons were ordered for use in the classroom, and children's books incorporating greater representation were more visible in and around school.

Over time, the impact of this work has been more demonstrable:

- **The school environment is beginning to reflect the change in thinking, with more diverse displays (both in classrooms and in communal areas) and literature on offer.**
- **We have reviewed the bespoke Knebworth curriculum to ensure greater representation in all curriculum areas and used resources such as Amazing People Schools to aid us with this.**
- **A complete review of all text types used across the English curriculum has been undertaken, with a focus on ensuring there is greater diversity within literature studied.**
- **Core text boxes are now used to keep these in a prominent, spotlighted place in each classroom.**
- **Assemblies are being used as a platform for exploring topics, i.e. Wonder Wednesday assembly will look at a different topic each week related to DEI.**
- **A bedtime story event showcased a range of books, read by teachers, which were written by diverse authors, and the accompanying Next Page book fair had a range of diverse and inclusive books on offer for the community to view and purchase.**

Pupil voice shows that children are more readily discussing the contributions of different individuals from diverse backgrounds rather than the established White British figureheads. Parents are showing increased engagement with the project, and many have donated monies towards our book wish list.

The next steps on our journey centre on the recruitment processes. As a staff body, we do not represent the diversity of the British community, and we want to become more proactive in ensuring that we have much greater representation amongst all sectors of our workforce so that all our children have role models they can identify with. We are reviewing our current processes in an effort to establish a clear protocol for recruitment processes, which actively encourages applications from different sectors of society. Blind applications may be utilised in future recruitment. Governor recruitment has focused on securing greater representation around the table, and recruitment sites like Inspiring Governance have been used to attract governors from more diverse backgrounds.

We are well aware that, to fully embrace this change of focus and shift in mindset, we need to take our parent body with us on our journey. Parental engagement is key to effecting change, and we are extremely mindful that this programme is being championed internally and needs support from all stakeholders.

The first step towards developing this stronger engagement is through communication channels. Our website needs to reflect the changes we are seeing in school and to be fully representative of our vision and values. There is further work needed on ensuring that, when people from different races, religions and backgrounds look at our website, they see themselves recognised and valued. They should feel like our school is a place where they would belong.

October 2022

The Great Representation programme is giving us the opportunity to hear from many different inspirational speakers. Professor Paul Miller was the first. He put into sharp focus the stark race imbalances that still exist so acutely in society and in the education sector, and the barriers that prevent some individuals in society from moving through the system and bettering their circumstances. He made us question our own processes for recruitment and taught us to be more mindful of the potential barriers that applicants may have had to overcome in order to achieve in academia.

Cynthia Rowe's account of her experiences growing up and her journey into headship was equally enlightening. She talked with openness and honesty about the challenges of being from a mixed heritage and the discrimination she suffered from people from

different racial groups. The story of her parents and the prejudice they endured in their multiracial marriage was humbling. It is quite remarkable to consider the bravery of such individuals who, despite the enormous challenges, followed the path of love against the prevailing attitudes of the day. Cynthia talked about the simplest changes having the biggest impacts; the portrayal of a Black fairy on a child's bag – in essence a small design change – to a Black child shows that they belong, they are valued, and they are important.

Both speakers, and the evidence from our research so far, have shifted our direction of travel. We need to move with greater urgency. Very often, new initiatives are transient and can lose momentum after an initial surge of enthusiasm. Change can be slow in schools; however, this work is vitally important and needs to be addressed with the same robustness and rigour as safeguarding. It needs to be on every meeting agenda and be fully embedded in policy, process and practice. It must not become a tokenistic, tick-box exercise, and we are committed to ensuring this does not happen.

We both really enjoyed the visit to The Broxbourne School. Not only did it help provide a secondary lens on the Great Representation programme, but we also had some thought-provoking discussions around new initiatives and shared ideas about inspiring some of our lowest-attaining groups. From this came the Blue Plaque project: in and around Knebworth School, we are going to have blue plaques displayed. These will reference the achievements of past children, to show our current children that children just like them came through the school and achieved great things. It feeds into our vision of high aspirations and allows children to see themselves in others who have aimed high and are successful, in whatever form that takes.

From starting on the Great Representation programme, we are moving forward with much more pace. We have a clear DEI in place, and we are having frequent working party meetings, prioritising actions and delegating tasks. We have continued to ensure that this body of work is at the forefront of school life. Every staff member has a performance management target linked to diversity, inclusion and equality, and we are determined to be an active anti-racist school and to live our vision and values on a daily basis.

November 2022

During the second seminar, we heard from three inspiring speakers, all of whom shone a different lens on Great Representation.

Claire Stewart-Hall's speech really drilled down into the theory of Whiteness. She talked about the idea of being White as a social construct to suppress the power of

other cultures and races. She raised some interesting issues around privilege and provoked some difficult questions, which felt uncomfortable but needed careful and sensitive consideration. “Whose lenses are being privileged in our own setting, and who benefits from the current policies practised and procedures in place?” Our staff body are predominately from a White middle-class background; therefore, our lens is essentially focused on this collective White experience.

The presentation by Sufian Sadiq was a powerful “walk in his shoes”. Out of all the speakers we have listened to so far in the programme, this one chimed the loudest on so many levels. It was a very personal account of what it is like to live in Britain today as someone from an ethnic minority group, and of the impact the media has in exacerbating the challenges.

One of the powerful messages that came through strongly was “If you can be one thing, be an ally”. This has given us five clear steps for empowering staff and evoking discussion:

1. Understand your privilege, acknowledge it and accept that it has created your advantage.
2. Get curious, ask questions of yourself and others, read lots from many different perspectives, challenge ideas.
3. Start with a single act; everything starts with a single act. Do not sit back or fail to act because of the enormity of the task.
4. Make mistakes, be brave, and do not be afraid to make mistakes along the journey.
5. Keep learning; keep expanding your understanding of race equity.

This led us to the book by Karen Catlin, *The Better Allies Approach to Hiring*. This has been a helpful guide and is filled with useful strategies to recruit and hire people from underrepresented ethnicities and genders, with non-traditional educational backgrounds. It advocates for an inclusive interview process, which paves the way to a more diverse workforce. We will be using some of the recommendations from this book when reviewing our recruitment process.

Sufian talked about how he constantly feels like an imposter or trespasser. People’s reactions to him, whether unconscious or intentional, constantly reinforce this idea of being an outsider – not “one of us” and not belonging. He talked about his experience as a parent on the playground and the assumptions school staff and fellow parents made in relation to his appearance and ethnicity. This made us reflect on our actions and our own assumptions, whether these behaviours have indeed penetrated our setting and whether our families from ethnic minority backgrounds feel like imposters or trespassers. We have never asked!

The challenges Sufian faces on a daily basis because of his race made for difficult listening. A simple trip to a fish-and-chip restaurant on the south coast resulted in an abhorrent verbally racist assault. Flights taken on holiday with family nearly always result in him being detained at an airport. Sitting on a packed Tube train can make others around him feel nervous and move away. These simple daily experiences, which many of us take for granted, seek to reaffirm the imposter feeling. Sufian expressed that this is normal for him; he feels numb to this discrimination as it has become a daily occurrence. However, he doesn't want his daughter to have to experience the same racism, and nor should she. Alas, he fears it has already started. He spoke of his daughter's desire to change her skin colour and to become White.

Progress update 1

- **Our diversity lead has spoken to Pupil Parliament to get their view and ideas on the DEI strategy.**
- **We have finished the first draft of our DEI strategy, which we will share with our working party before disseminating to the staff and parent community.**
- **Staff have been signposted to a range of current and prominent speakers from a range of backgrounds, to enhance their racial literacy and to begin to get them thinking in the same way as we are.**
- **Added onto our weekly staff business meeting minutes is a DEI spotlight highlighting a resource, article, blog, etc, for our staff and governing body, and we are all beginning to view DEI in the same vein as safeguarding.**
- **We have planned ahead to the spring term, where a large proportion of the upcoming INSET days and staff meetings will be focused around race equity, greater representation, and how this translates in the school environment, curriculum and in everyone's thinking.**

December 2022

In Seminar 3 we listened to Orell Lawrence from The Black Curriculum, who reinforced some of the key themes and messages we had heard from previous speakers and from the reading material in this programme. A quote from the book *Golden Gulag*, written by Ruth Gilmore, resonated with us: "Racism, specifically, is the state-sanctioned or extra-legal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death."

Ruth has spent many years studying the relationship between racism and levels of health and disease in the population, and she talks in great depth about the impact of racism on health. She advocates that this needs to be recognised by society before any progress can be made, and this then led us to read the 2017 article “Race, Public Health Issue”. We found this article to be a powerful read.

Another element of Orell’s presentation that struck a chord with us was the part on intersectionality and the idea of loaded advantage and loaded disadvantage. This allowed us to reflect that there are layers to an individual’s status, and this will be viewed differently according to one’s own individual perspective and experiences. There was some lively debate around the impact of class within intersectionality and how it can play a part in life chances. We are now using some of this knowledge in our own school and sharing it with staff to increase their racial literacy.

We also had a presentation from Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School, titled “Routed in Stevenage: Stories from our Hometown”. The presentation and the video we were shown displayed how this school had explored diversity within their own school community with some very powerful outcomes. It started us thinking about how we could incorporate this learning within our setting – we liked the idea of exploring and celebrating family trees with our school community.

Our second visit took us to Margaret Wix Primary School in St Albans. We were excited to visit this school as its demographics are markedly different from ours, and it is always beneficial to see the work that is happening in different types of schools. We learned a lot from the visit. Firstly, it was a pleasure to be taken on a tour by the school’s diversity and equalities ministers. The children spoke both passionately and eloquently about their role and the work they had been involved with. Secondly, we were particularly impressed with the school’s library and the range of diverse books on display. It is clear that children are able to see themselves reflected in the books they read, and that school leaders see this as a key priority. As a result of this visit, we are going to be looking into a redesign of our school library and ensuring each classroom has a range of books with either diverse authors or characters spotlighted, not only as books for children to read but also as their class book.

Lastly, it is always refreshing to hear first-hand from professionals’ lived experiences. Penny Laskar spoke at Seminar 2 about her account of growing up in Hatfield and her struggle to fit in with her peers and conform to cultural expectations. Her presentation was honest and reflective and helped us appreciate the challenge that cultural difference can play when navigating teenage years, with a desire to conform to peers whilst in a predominantly White British cohort.

Progress update 2

- **Our diversity lead (Melissa) led a presentation to staff on a recent INSET day around anti-racism and the curriculum. This was a powerful, thought-provoking session, where Melissa shared some of her own lived experiences. Staff were challenged to reflect and to consider their own White privilege and the advantages this has afforded them. They were also asked to reflect on the curriculum they teach and the portrayal of different ethnicities in the media. This was a revelation to some staff. Colleagues were unanimously positive about this session, and we were so proud of Melissa that we have put her forward to speak at a future Great Representation seminar. She is simply too brilliant to not be heard by others!**
- **We have hosted our hub group and shared our strategy and current practice. It was an absolute joy to show our school to our hub group colleagues. As part of our discussions, we had an interesting conversation about vocabulary and creating a shared working vocabulary list, which could be utilised from primary to secondary to support staff. Watch this space!**
- **We have reviewed classroom displays, which are beginning to reflect DEI in different forms, and our next step is to extend this to communal areas in school. We have started this in our Year 2 corridor, which is now a shining example to others in school.**

February 2023

“What are my five ethnicities?” was the question posed by our hub colleague Sylvia Tai at the start of Seminar 4. This prompted us all to reflect on the assumptions that can be made about ethnicity. It reminded us that we are all beautifully different in the heritage that makes us who we are. No one person can have just one story; we are a collection of different stories, from different beginnings, with different narratives. Sylvia spoke with such eloquence about her experiences and discussed how her ethnicity was often seen before she was. This made us ponder about how many of our children feel this way. She spoke about her English teacher being her inspiration and said that she was able to be successful in life as she never saw her ethnicity as a barrier and neither did her parents or teachers. She also spoke about how she has had to shorten her last name due to mispronunciation, and this struck a chord with Sim, who goes by a shortened version

of her first name for the same reason. This reaffirmed just how crucial this work is; a name should not be a barrier for any child, as all children deserve the same chances and opportunity in life.

Next, we heard from Jess Boyd from Teach for All, who spoke passionately about her case for culturally relevant pedagogy and the ways in which we can make changes to school systems in a sustainable way. She prompted us to consider what we are holding up to our children as examples of success. Are these the right things for all our children? She explored equality, equity and liberation with us, and we considered what liberation truly looks like in our schools.

The Audre Lorde quote “When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard nor welcomed, but when we are silent we are still afraid, so it is better to speak” reminded us once again of the importance of continuing to move forward with staff and our school community in this area. Jess ended her session by asking us to consider how we know our cultures in our school community. This is not just through a tokenistic display but through knowing our families and forging strong relationships with all members of our school community. Essentially, this challenged us to consider the aspects of our own culture and consider the impact the dominant culture has on our students.

Lastly, we listened to Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson speak strongly and assuredly about her project, Impact of Omission, and the lasting effect that the omission of races from the curriculum can have on people from all backgrounds. She spoke about how for a long time only one lens has been used to spotlight what is deemed as important and, as a result, children have been failed by the current curriculum as so many rich experiences and stories have been erased. She talked about “What we choose to teach shows what we value” and “History is always closer than you think”. These two powerful quotes have prompted us to reflect on our school curriculum, and we have invested in both Amazing People Schools and The Historical Association to begin the work of decolonising our curriculum. We know this will not be an overnight task but a work in progress, tailored to the needs of our cohorts and truly articulating to our school community what we deem of value.

Our next school visit took us to Watford Grammar School for Girls; it was a truly inspiring visit. We wholeheartedly enjoyed our tour of the school, where it was clear that school leaders had worked hard to ensure diversity in all its forms was represented across the school. We also had the pleasure of meeting some of the pupils who sit on the equality and diversity council, and we were so impressed with both the passion and eloquence that these young people spoke with.

The pupils spoke about their identity with openness and candour, and it was evident they felt school offered a safe space for them to be themselves. They reminded us that it is so important that this work starts in primary schools; it is too late to leave it to secondary

educators. Some quick takeaways from this visit were the staff book recommendations display and the book recommendation leaflets in the school library – both great ideas we are going to introduce at Knebworth.

Progress update 3

- The school has engaged in the Show Racism the Red Card (www.theredcard.org) competition, with children producing excellent drawings and poems as part of their competition entries. The work produced will be showcased at our upcoming open evening, with some children performing their poems. Then the children's work will be on permanent display around school as a means of embedding our anti-racist ethos.
- We are in the process of booking Alex Falase-Koya (the author of the popular Marv books, which our children have read in school) as well as Jobe Anderson (an illustrator) to come into school, as it is so important for our children to see success in many different forms.
- We are also considering the ways in which we can increase the number of books we have in school that are written by diverse authors or feature characters of colour. One idea is a Birthday Book Initiative where, instead of sweets, families donate a book (from a wish list) to the school.
- We have a clear diversity statement, which has been shared with the school community and is now on display in and around school.

March 2023

The fifth Great Representation seminar began with a presentation by Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga from the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. Professor Lenga spoke about the work she had been doing with educators on addressing antisemitism and ensuring that schools talk openly about the history of the Jewish people. She ended her presentation with some challenging questions related to the Jewish identity in sport, specifically football, and opened lively debate about the way Tottenham Hotspur Football Club describes its supporters. This led to further debate in the room about labels and intent, and who is able to apply them.

David Gillborn, professor of critical race studies at the University of Birmingham, was the second speaker of the day and provided further debate around the area of critical race theory. He has dedicated his career to exploring racism in all areas of society

and particularly in education. He discussed how the systems behind education are structurally racist. He spoke of well-intentioned White teachers who think they are doing the best for everyone but are complicit in the system that excludes and in some ways endangers Black students and exacerbate the gap between Black and White achievement. He referenced Richard Delgado's quote "Business-as-usual racism", which is so ingrained in the fabric of our institutions that we do not even realise we are supporting this discrimination.

Gillborn speaks of racism, which is written through the day-to-day, minute-by-minute realities; we are so immersed in this system that we are almost blind to the stark realities that are written in the foundations of all institutions. White superiority is a global phenomenon; however, White people live in the continual terror about being confronted about the realities of racism. He questioned the why behind this terror and concluded that, to maintain White privilege and its associated benefits, it is essential that White people do not open the door to fundamental changes in societal structures. They purport to want change, but not to their detriment.

The seminar ended with a heartfelt, personal lived experience from Melissa Lowry, teacher and diversity lead at our school. Melissa's presentation was raw and real. She spoke about "Growing up mixed up" and the journey she is on towards acceptance of who she is and her cultural identity. Melissa was open in telling the group that it has only been recently during a training session from HFL that she started to question a term she had accepted to describe herself which was "mixed race". The term opened up a challenge, as the word race is a social construct, adopted by White society, whereas the term "mixed heritage" allows her to connect with her cultural roots.

Our last hub school visit took us to St Helen's in Wheathampstead, a small Church of England village school on the outskirts of St Albans. We had the pleasure of meeting the school's values ambassadors, who spoke passionately about the work they had been doing in school linked to diversity. Some of the children within this group had moved from Hong Kong to England and gave an interesting comparison of school life in the two countries. As part of the visit, we reviewed the school's recent SIAMS report, which commented "A notable feature is the school's commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This demonstrates that pupils develop a wonderful sense of diversity and global citizenship." As a result of this visit, we will be looking to adopt our own diversity ambassadors in school.

Being part of the Great Representation Cohort 2 has been a thought-provoking, insightful and rewarding experience. From a personal and professional perspective, we have broadened our awareness and understanding of research, theory and lived experiences in this area and have used this to inform, develop and enhance our strategy towards race equity and representation in our school. We are taking the first few steps on a lifelong

journey, which will no doubt encompass challenge and resistance. However, we will be brave and push forward in our firm belief that all members of our school community will feel valued, seen and represented.

Natasha Laskey and Simmerjit Bains

LONGDEAN SCHOOL

Longdean School is a large secondary comprehensive school with 1,400+ students and 190 staff. It draws its intake from over 30 feeder primary schools and serves a diverse ethnic, economic and social community. 16.5% of the school are BAME, with Pakistani Heritage being the second largest group after White British. Every officially listed ethnicity is recognised within the school community.

Following the murder of George Floyd in May 2022, two members of staff and a group of students joined a BLM youth group and engaged in webinars and a forum with other Hertfordshire schools. We hadn't realised just how popular this group would be with our students. It is fair to say that we were blown away by the level of engagement and interest from our students, and this galvanised us even more as we realised that a large number of our community felt disenfranchised and othered. It also became apparent that it wasn't just our younger community members who felt this way. As a result, we asked staff to carry out curriculum audits of their subjects as part of our INSET training day in September 2021.

After attending an SSAT seminar, "Tackling disadvantage and discrimination", in July 2022, we were inspired by the work carried out by Erika Podmore and her team at Eltham Hill School, Greenwich, and approached her with regard to implementation of the anti-racist policy at Eltham. She was kind enough to accommodate us at her school for a morning and ensured that we had opportunities to observe, and talk about, the policy in action. This enabled us to envision what improved representation and an anti-racist policy would look like at Longdean. Moving forward, these ideas include – but are not exclusive to:

- **sharing of staff and students' cultural backgrounds in assemblies, in displays and lunchtime menus**
- **a wider range of displays throughout the school**
- **increased visibility to represent our whole school community**

Our headteacher assemblies always recognises cultural holidays such as Eid, Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Leading up to Commemoration Day in November, we also recognised the sacrifices made by Black and Indian soldiers in WWII and drew students' attention to two individuals who had received honours for their services. This is just one example of where more conscious decisions are being made to enable *all* of our students to feel valued and represented, whilst raising visibility.

The Longdean community appears to be one that embraces diversity and student voice activities. School records would suggest that there is very little overt racial bullying at Longdean School – little is reported and sanctioned. Having a keen group of students who attend the Longdean equality and diversity (LEAD) group on a weekly basis, and who also participate and engage with the BLM forum involving other Hertfordshire

schools, has certainly helped to foster this more inclusive environment. From inception to now, our LEAD ambassadors have:

- **delivered lessons to a local school**
- **helped with assemblies and school displays**
- **presented to the chair of governors and some members of the SLT**
- **helped to create resources for form-time activities**

We are beginning to consider improved representation through our displays around the school, such as the science department's initiative to display the Scientist of the Month, ensuring that they are a person of colour to raise aspirations for our minority students, whilst also ensuring visibility of ethnicity within the field of science. Other ways that we do this are through our LEAD noticeboard and the permanent murals on walls in our corridors and some classrooms.

In July 2022 we appointed an associate assistant headteacher for a one-year secondment to the SLT. Their responsibility is to ensure that equity and equality for all of our students is intrinsic to the fabric of our community, particularly with ensuring that people of colour are represented, inspired and lifted. Becoming an anti-racist school is therefore more than the things that we do – it is also a part of who we are.

September 2022

In September 2022 we revisited the review of curriculum areas, asking staff to consider the disadvantages faced by our students of colour and then explore ways they could diversify their curriculum, either by tackling a new topic or by looking at a current one in a different way. We provided suggestions, such as the possibility of beginning a topic area on the Tudors by leading with an introduction to the Black Tudors, thus ensuring visibility for our Black students. Within this review, we also asked staff to consider the resources they were using; this proved to be a useful exercise as some of our departments realised that their resources were Eurocentric. For example, our MFL department noticed that their textbooks do not feature anyone with Black or Brown skin, so they have started supplementing these with online resources.

The 2022 audit has shown an increase in the openness of staff to review EDI in their curriculum, with the majority of departments suggesting a range of topics and resources that they will introduce this year. To measure the impact of this, we intend to carry out student voice activity to gauge the reaction to these changes.

October 2022

We were unsuccessful in gaining a place on the Great Representation course in 2021, as we had not demonstrated that we had done as much in the field of anti-racism as other applicant schools. At the time, this was a real disappointment for us, but it didn't dampen the desire to continue addressing issues and concerns we had about race and the disenfranchised minority in our community. Instead, we worked harder and continued to raise the profile of our LEAD group, whilst chipping away at some of the regressive attitudes around race that we encountered.

In the summer of 2022, we reapplied to the programme and were pleased to gain a place in the next cohort. Our hopes are that the sharing of good practice from other schools will inspire us and give us the confidence we need to address matters that we know will be contentious for some of our staff and students, whether through ignorance, unconscious bias or deeply ingrained racism.

Although we have a greater number of staff from ethnically diverse backgrounds than the national average, we would still welcome more applications from the BAME community to better reflect the ethnic makeup of our school. This led us to think about the diversity of our staff and the lack of BAME representation at the senior levels in the school. It also made us question why we have fewer applicants from candidates belonging to ethnic minority groups when posts at Longdean become available. To try and combat this and change this narrative for our community, we have updated the wording of our staffing advertisements, in the hope that our school priority of equality, diversity and inclusivity will attract more BAME staff. In addition, we have decided to place additional adverts on the BAMEed website. The recognition that the cohort of staff holding leadership posts, in particular, is lacking in diversity has opened up discussions about how to forward plan and encourage BAME staff to progress into leadership roles.

Black History Month 2022 has been more high-profile than in previous years, and we have used our plasma displays, quizzes, two sets of assemblies, and videos during form time to engage staff and students. We provided a book by a Black author for each form tutor to read aloud to students during DEAR (drop everything and read) time, and this has been mostly well received. Student voice feedback has been overwhelmingly positive about all of the BHM activities, and students and form tutors were keen to offer new ideas for next time around.

To ensure that stakeholders at Longdean view our drive in becoming an anti-racist, inclusive and diverse community as more than just an initiative, we have purchased a diversity calendar from Dual Frequency and will use this as a springboard for activities during form time and assemblies. Awareness will be drawn to events such as Black History Month, Cultural Diversity Day, World Refugee Day, Tanzania Independence Day,

and religious festivals such as Eid and Diwali, which many of our students celebrate. Our intention is to weave diversity through all we do within our school community so that our minority groups no longer feel disenfranchised and separate from any aspect of school life.

To further establish this, we have decided to relaunch our Who Do We Think We Are? Week in the summer term. Students in Years 8, 9 and 10 will be off-timetable all week and able to take part in cultural activities such as a steel drums workshop, Caribbean and African cookery classes, Indian and Bollywood dance lessons, Henna painting, and much more besides. This is to celebrate and lift the many different cultures that are part of our collective heritage as members of the Longdean community. Furthermore, to ensure that all feel they have a stake in these events, and to encourage links within our community between home and school, we are planning on reaching out to staff and parents to see if there are any skills they would be willing to offer during the week. Inclusivity is our aim.

Diversity has formed a central part of our SLT planning day. This year a contact of our headteacher joined our planning day and spoke about her experiences of racism as she was growing up in the 80s and 90s. We learned about her continued feelings of imposter syndrome (despite being a graduate with a master's degree and a successful career) and how all of her family have had different experiences of racism, depending on their age and gender. Links were then made with our own student body.

Prior to the planning day, we carried out student voice activity with a small sample of Pakistani, Indian and Black students and were able to make connections between what our students tell us is happening in school now and what our guest speaker told us of her experiences 30 years ago. The SLT team were also asked to watch an interview, with Akala offering his views on poverty, school exclusions and serious youth crime, and we all began to recognise that there is much work to be done to ensure the best possible outcomes for our BAME students. All members of the SLT will be given a Christmas present of a young-adult book by a Black author, or a book from the Great Representation recommended reading list.

We recognise the value of our student voice feedback, and it has enabled us to identify key areas of concern with our teaching and pastoral staff regarding their racial literacy. Questions raised include:

- **How comfortable are they addressing issues regarding race?**
- **How willing are they to pay more than just lip service to EDI?**
- **Will they make real changes to their curriculum if they don't see the value in it?**

We are hoping that, through the sharing of good practice on the Great Representation course and by engaging outside speakers, we will bring all staff on board in our mission.

This half-term we will be introducing a total ban on any words deemed offensive to students or staff with the protected characteristics of race, sexual orientation, sex or disability, and will be running assemblies to explain the reasons behind our decisions. It is our hope that we will eventually eradicate the use of racialised language such as the N-word, “monkey” or the P-word, which are frequently used between students with the same protected characteristic and who consider it “banter”. Perhaps we will need to address some of the prevalent – and negative – attitudes that are projected on to our students of colour to help us tackle this so-called reclamation of derogatory terms.

At the first Great Representation seminar, Professor Paul Miller drew our attention to some shocking statistics. The stark reality of how our students of colour are often racially profiled, and assumptions made about them before they even have a chance to prove themselves in the wider world, should be a major concern to all of us. It really highlighted to us how change has to start somewhere, and that the best place to try and eradicate these issues must be our schools.

Cynthia Rowe’s story of her lived experience was very hard-hitting, and we found it deeply upsetting that she was the victim of such abhorrent racism as a child. Discussions with colleagues revealed a range of common themes, from the use of racist language in school between people with protected characteristics, through to the debate on whether to use texts such as *Of Mice and Men*, which have frequent use of the N-word. Our stance is that our students come first. All of them. This means that we have taken texts such as *Of Mice and Men* off our curriculum and have actively worked at designing a curriculum map that is engaging and inclusive for all of our students.

Paul’s talk allowed us to address the unpleasant fact that racism is present in our school. It was an eye-opener to have him discuss the systemic and institutional racism that is still present in society today. His analogy that we have grown up in a racist society, so – of course – we are not just leaving racism at the door when we walk into a school, was particularly effective. It has given us the courage to address issues in a more direct way, with the knowledge that other schools are successfully doing the same thing.

If anything, the day has galvanised our intentions, and we are more determined to make our school an anti-racist one. Steps have been taken to extend the one-year EDI lead on the SLT to a two-year term, and we have appointed a BAME trustee to improve representation from the top down.

The first hub group visit was to our school, and some of our LEAD students delivered a presentation about our journey so far. Hearing their gratitude at some of the changes we have already made was very humbling and confirmed that our work is important and worthwhile and will undoubtedly have an impact on future cohorts.

We hope that, in a year’s time, staff, students and parents will be fully aware of the school’s commitment to EDI and be supportive of this drive towards inclusivity. We aim to

embark on an Equalities Award with Equaliteach in January and hope in a years' time we will be well on our way to successful completion. Changes in our curriculum will be more embedded, and staff will be more racially literate and comfortable in dealing with racist incidents or the use of racial slurs. Most importantly, our students of colour will feel as if they are fully fledged members of a community that respects, values and encourages aspirational thinking by ensuring that they have representation that demonstrates that they can be whatever they wish to be. Visibility matters, and it is our duty to ensure that they feel as valued as all other members of our community.

Diversity, race and equality will be at the forefront of every decision we take in our school life, whether it be the students who feature on our website, or the choices we make in our curriculum. Staff and student voice will still be an invaluable tool used to continue with effective decision making.

November and December 2022

In the second half of the autumn term, we finalised assemblies and letters home to parents regarding “Longdean Language”. The assemblies will focus on educating students about the history around the N-word and the reasons why racial/homophobic/disability slurs should never be accepted. In SLT meetings, in preparation for this zero-tolerance policy, we began to lay the foundations of how staff manage the use of discriminatory language. All members of the SLT contributed ideas that were used to produce a script for staff who may feel uncomfortable having a conversation with the relevant stakeholder about inappropriate language. The script is intended to help prompt responses to the overt use of racist or homophobic language, which is designed to hurt a student’s feelings, as well as the “banter” we see between groups of students.

To allow us enough time to roll the initiative out to staff and incorporate training, we have decided to delay our launch until after the Christmas holidays. We have booked a speaker from HFL to come in to our first staff meeting in January, thus encouraging stakeholders to invest in our new policy.

In late November we held discussions with the not-for-profit company Equaliteach, with a view to buying into their online auditing tool, leading to their Equalities Award. We were drawn towards Equaliteach for a number of reasons, but predominantly because their award encompasses equality for staff and students with *all* of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. The audit itself seems to be user-friendly and straightforward and, because of a recommendation from Eltham Hill, who achieved their Silver Equalities Award with them, we know that it will be a good fit for Longdean.

We will be given up to 18 months to complete the audit, allowing us to work at a manageable rate. It will also keep us focused on our goals and demonstrate to all of our stakeholders that we take our commitment to EDI very seriously. After discussions with their representative and having gained a better understanding of the Bronze and Silver Awards (which are their step-on points), we are hoping to be accepted onto the January cohort, working towards the Silver Award. We know that this level will offer us sufficient challenge and allow us to build on the good foundations we have already put in place this academic year.

At the second Great Representation seminar in November, a keynote delivered by Claire Stewart-Hall proved to be as eye-opening as the first. Claire talked us through her journey to becoming anti-racist and asked us to consider how, from a very young age, we have been exposed to the social construct of race. She also gave us more shocking facts and figures, and particularly pertinent for us were her comments on how Black and Asian students feel less safe in a school environment where there are CCTV surveillance cameras. At Longdean we have a number of these around the school and they are, of course, installed with the intention of keeping students safe. We are now questioning whether our own BAME students see them as a threat rather than a safeguarding tool; once again, we are being challenged to look at things through a different lens.

Further to this, we were also made aware of the judgements that are often made about Black girls – how they may be seen to be less vulnerable than White girls and staff might therefore be inclined to discipline rather than safeguard these students. Claire's recommendation, *How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Subnormal* by Bernard Coard is now on our reading list for December; and we now follow Heidi Safia Mirza, a university professor of race, faith and culture, on Twitter.

Later in the seminar, we were also asked to “take a walk in the shoes” of Sufian Sadiq, director of Teaching School at Chiltern Learning Trust; and listened to the life experiences of Jigna Patel, a school leader. These very personal and traumatic first-hand accounts of racism experienced in childhood were deeply moving and shocking, especially as, in Sufian's case, it is still continuing today. Listening to their stories forced us to deeply consider how our BAME students may feel unwanted, marginalised, and as though they do not belong.

Our positivity was restored with a visit to Fairlands Primary School in Stevenage at the beginning of December, where we saw hope for future cohorts of secondary students. Fairlands staff are embedding a new framework, *No Outsiders*, into their curriculum and have just begun to roll this out across the school. Students were being taught about how language can have a big impact on the feelings of their peers, encouraging the development and growth of empathy through understanding and acceptance. Starting from the very youngest of school-age children, their focus on equality and inclusion will undoubtedly have a positive impact on future secondary school cohorts. We are hopeful that schools in our local area will embark on the same, or similar, schemes.

Rachel Macfarlane opened the third Great Representation seminar by facilitating a discussion about Lady Susan Hussey, and Ngozi Fulani from Sistah Space; along with the continuing media coverage of Meghan Markle and Prince Harry's new Netflix documentary. This helped us to see how events in wider society are reflective of what our students experience inside school; and how we should not passively accept casual racism, microaggressions, or any situation that is used to make any group of people feel "lesser than". Using current affairs as a springboard for classroom activities is something we will now consider.

Our first presentation in Seminar 3 was by a representative from The Black Curriculum. He led us through some activities about intersectionality and how we use language to frame discussions around race. We were asked to consider the connotations of the word "slave" as opposed to the term "enslaved person", for instance. He also offered suggestions on how to improve the racial literacy of students through embedding short tasks whilst pre-teaching modules. This could open up discussions with students through asking them to consider the stereotypes they may encounter in the resources/subject matter they are about to study. For staff, he suggested a question about race during every business meeting, to ensure diversity is always at the forefront of our planning. These are ideas we will carry forward to accentuate the importance of diversity and ensure representation is a constant in our school community.

Our next presentation was from the Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School in Stevenage, who have done a huge amount of work on anti-racism. They shared their innovative ideas with us, from their starting point of an anti-racist statement for all stakeholders through to their use of the Ubuntu philosophy "I am, because we are", they have successfully involved not only the school but also the wider community in their work. Their whole-school project, Routed in Stevenage: Stories from our Hometown, asked staff, students and parents to explore their family history, heritage and customs, tracing the routes and journeys that have led them to where they are now. This research led on to the creation of canvases and self-portraits, which were put on display for the local community to see. We are considering a similar project for our activities week – Who Do We Think We Are? – and have approached our art department for their collaboration on this.

January 2023

This month we were pleased to welcome Shammi Rahman from HFL into our first staff meeting of the year. Shammi had been asked to deliver a two-hour presentation, inviting staff to become more open to discussions around race, and to explain the importance of shifting our thinking from being a non-racist to an anti-racist school. She explored language related to race, posing questions such as:

- Why shouldn't we use the term "coloured people" and instead use "people of colour"?
- Why is "Afro-Caribbean" no longer appropriate?

Staff quickly felt comfortable enough to ask questions about the changing nature of language, and one colleague made a really thought-provoking point: "I consider myself a good person and I just want everyone to get along – why do I need to concern myself with this?" Whilst we were a little taken aback by the naivety of this comment, it did lead on to an opportunity for Shammi to explain the impact of structural racism and the effects on those who are routinely subjected to various different types of racism.

Robin DiAngelo's comment was shared with us: "The challenge for white people is that they don't tend to see themselves in racial terms, but as just human or the universal norm." This linked well to the comment above and prompted more discussion. It also linked in to a more emotive topic, which Shammi addressed – that of White privilege.

We felt quite strongly that it would be more effective to have an outside speaker address this contentious issue, as some members of staff had been quite defensive when it was brought up in a previous CPD session. Shammi has no connection with any of our teachers, and this helped to depersonalise the message. We are thrilled that the feedback about this training has been universally positive, with staff asking for book recommendations and for us to share Shammi's slides. We will definitely use HFL for future training needs.

This month we launched our Longdean language assemblies for all year groups. Letters have been sent to parents, and scripts for how to deal with racial incidents have been provided, for teachers to ensure a consistent approach. Follow-up activities with videos and discussions have been carried out in form time to reinforce the message that we will no longer tolerate racial slurs of any kind. However, we have also used this as an opportunity to educate students about why this language is so incredibly offensive and inappropriate, even if you do have one of the protected characteristics. So far, we have received only one parental query and a handful of immature comments from students. We are confident that the introduction of this new school rule will have a significant impact on wellbeing for all of our stakeholders.

Our third hub visit, in January, was to Hitchin Boys' School, where we were given a speech by the head boy, a very confident Black boy, who articulated positively about the changes he has observed in the school since he started in Year 7. Introducing the lunchtime RED (race, equality and diversity) group has opened up many discussions about what the school can do to improve experiences and raise the profile of their BAME students. We were particularly impressed with the HBS idea of using realistic scenarios to open up debates about race. All forms are asked to consider a lived experience and to discuss, hypothetically, their reaction to the incidents. For example, if they overheard

a student or member of staff using a racist slur, would they intervene? We can see the value in this type of activity and are currently working with our LEAD group to produce a series of our own scenarios to share at form-time sessions.

February 2023

The fourth Great Representation seminar commenced with more book recommendations from Rachel Macfarlane, as well as some from our fellow delegates. These recommendations have inspired us to invest in a collection of EDI books, which we have come to realise are essential reads. Our investment in these texts will form a Longdean staff library, which we aim to launch on World Book Day in March.

Our ambition is to ensure that we continue to cultivate, and develop, an interest in anti-racism to encourage our colleagues to pursue their own investigations into this important matter. Graham also shared his enthusiasm for the BBC's "Fight the Power: How Hip Hop Changed the World", which looks at how music has been used as a force for political change in America, from the 1960s until the present day. Both of us found the series to be entertaining, enlightening and engaging and so aim to use this as a means to further engage and encourage our staff body to continue the development of their own learning journey.

In addition, we have discovered a 1977 broadcast – "Ethnic Minorities Could Do Better" – a televised debate about how and why Black students are consistently underperforming in the classroom. We were both fascinated and horrified that the discussions in this programme from the 1970s were focused on the very same issues that we are encountering in our schools 45 years later: Do our teachers suffer from unconscious bias? Why aren't our curriculums more representative of the students they are aimed at? Why don't we work harder at engaging our Black and Brown students? The clip is going to be used at a future staff training event to really illustrate the point that too much time has been wasted on discussing these important issues, and that now is the time to act.

Our first speaker at the seminar was Jess Boyd, who talked us through her PhD research on culturally relevant pedagogy – a theory we hadn't encountered before. The idea that the culture of students should be not only maintained but also placed at the forefront of teaching, really got us thinking. We realised that perhaps we are guilty of many of the issues Jess raised, such as sending the message that students only have value when they act the way we want them to. For example, many of our Pakistani students have strong family values and ties, and their absence levels often reflect time taken off to care for sick relatives or to travel to Pakistan for important family occasions.

Whilst we obviously have to keep one eye on persistent absence and how these levels reflect on the school, we are questioning our attitude towards a group of people whose values may differ from ours. Are we being sympathetic towards their cultural priorities or just expecting everyone to fall into line with ours?

Our final hub visit was to Nash Mills Church of England Primary School, which is located half a mile from Longdean. Visiting one of our feeder schools has given us the opportunity to think about how we can continue with the good work they are doing around EDI when their students join us at Longdean. The whole-school addition to their English curriculum, *Africa, Amazing Africa*, allows students to gather information about many African countries over a number of lessons and culminates in them writing their own persuasive text about one country of their choice.

Students were so engaged with this work that they are unlikely to leave Nash Mills with the outdated and incomplete image of Africa as an impoverished and primitive place in need of support from the UK. It also made us think about our own connections with Africa, and Ghana in particular. Longdean has longstanding links with Bedomase School in Ghana, and we are considering ways to utilise – in a meaningful, positive and productive manner – the work done at Nash Mills. Our aim is to create a similar curricular activity at Longdean that will enable our students to have a complete understanding about Ghana and not just the usual, Eurocentric perspective. We aim to have a programme of study in place when Year 6 transition to us in September 2023.

Awareness of Women and Girls in Science, Martin Luther King Day, Chinese New Year and International Mother Language Day have been raised through our displays around school this month. Our LEAD group also organised a non-school uniform day to raise well over £1,000 for victims of the Turkish/Syrian earthquake. The non-uniform day has been one of the most successful that we have had at Longdean, despite the cost-of-living crisis. Many students paid far more than the suggested amount – a testament to the hard work and effort of our LEAD team in ensuring the high profile of this charitable event. We are proud of the work they put into raising money for this good cause by sharing videos and PowerPoints with forms and popping in to encourage them to donate as much as they could afford. We are determined that our students will begin to see themselves as global citizens and understand how they connect to the wider world.

Our first meeting with Equaliteach took place this month, and we were advised that our work on diversity needs to be promoted more explicitly on our school website. We have decided to devote a page to stating our aims and intentions with regard to anti-racism as well as links to our diversity calendar and to the Equaliteach website. In addition, we will celebrate our work and raise awareness of our aims through our social media accounts.

March 2023

This month's Great Representation seminar had three fantastic speakers. The first, Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga, from the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, gave a very moving talk on antisemitism and how this particular form of racism is sometimes not given the serious consideration it warrants. Ruth-Anne used a series of hard-hitting scenarios to help us to consider how we would respond to more subtle racist comments that are, unfortunately, still being used by children and adults.

We found her talk particularly interesting, as we had recently taken a group of eight Year 9 and Year 10 students to a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* at the Watford Palace Theatre. Tracy-Ann Oberman had played a female Shylock, and the play was set in 1936, against the backdrop of fascism and the Battle of Cable Street. A question-and-answer session at the end had the actress entering into a heated debate with members of the audience, who disagreed that antisemitism was racism and felt that the play's depiction of Shylock didn't display racist attitudes from Shakespeare.

It was really profitable for our students to hear Oberman's impassioned defence of her strong beliefs about racial prejudice. It was also extremely heartwarming and reassuring to hear our students' condemnation of these attitudes from the audience members, who could not recognise antisemitism and racism as being in the foreground of the play. Furthermore, it opened their eyes to the deep-rooted racism that exists in the UK, by educating them about Mosley's Black Shirts and demonstrating that racism isn't just a major problem in the USA; it is problematic here in the UK.

The next speaker, David Gillborn, professor of critical race studies at Birmingham University, shared an excellent analogy of race as a social construct: to group people using arbitrary markers such as skin colour is as useful as grouping racoons, tigers and okapis together because they are all stripy. We were quite shocked by his comments that areas of the media have a coordinated policy against anti-racism, and that newspaper headlines that claim that White working-class boys are falling behind every other group in schools are not only false (statistics are taken from the pupil premium group, which are typically more likely to be affected by poverty) but are deliberately designed to obstruct the work of anti-racists. The idea that there is a well-funded group working against anti-racism seemed fantastical, but at the same time made perfect sense when we considered how hostile the cultural climate is in Great Britain at the moment. As David pointed out, there is no help coming from policy makers anytime soon, and it is very much our responsibility as educators to continue to do what we know is right and to fight for those who are marginalised in our school communities.

March's Race Equity Conference was the "jewel in the crown" of HFL's offerings over the past year. The keynote speakers were all inspirational in their own individual ways,

but we felt that Jeffrey Boakye left us with the most concrete ideas to continue our anti-racism journey. His opening comment – that when people say “I am scared of getting it wrong” they really mean “I’m scared of losing power” – really resonated with us. We are hoping to use this sentiment as a springboard for staff training at our next INSET day.

The workshops were equally motivational, and of particular interest was Mohamed Abdullah’s “Adopting a Racially Literate Approach to Behaviour”, simply because it made so much sense. We can really see how using student voice to shape whole-school practice and procedure could help our marginalised students feel empowered.

Although it may sometimes seem that our race-equity journey at Longdean is long and meandering, it is gratifying to look back over our journal and realise how much we have accomplished over the space of only eight months. The school priority is being discussed by our staff and students, our SLT are fully on board, and many of our policies such as Longdean Language are already becoming second nature to all of us.

We are looking forward to celebrating the diversity of our community during our Who Do We Think We Are? week of activities, and we are excited about the positive feedback and appreciation we receive about our work from students. Moving from tokenistic light touches to being contacted by other schools to share our vision and our expertise is rewarding and deeply fulfilling, and we know that this is the beginning of our new foundations of race equity and diversity at Longdean.

We will continue on this journey, ensuring that our LEAD group continues to grow from strength to strength, and establishing LEAD ambassadors in every year group so that diversity and equity is at the heart of everything we do and is intrinsic to the fabric of our community.

Our whole-school curriculum review will guarantee not only a bespoke option programme to enrich and engage our students, but it will also offer a diverse experience so that all of our members feel valued and represented, thus lifting voices, regardless of skin colour and ethnicity. This will spill over to our whole school community, and our LEAD Ambassadors will play a large part in this. Longdean will continue to grow, and we will continue to listen to *all* of our community members.

Sarah Doyle, supported by Graham Cunningham

**MARGARET WIX
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

September 2022

At Margaret Wix Primary School, we are committed to improving our race-equality practice and representation. We are a small school, with only 143 pupils on roll.

According to Hertfordshire's community profiles, 81% of the population in St Albans is White British. This is not mirrored in our school's catchment: over half (81) of our pupils' ethnicities are identified by parents as backgrounds other than White British.

We are excited by the opportunities that our diverse community provides us. We invite parents into school to share their experiences with us and celebrate their culture. We have a range of dual-language books in our library and have recently added a carefully selected collection of books capturing positive role models from every walk of society. These books were chosen with the support of Toks Olusamokun, HFL race equity adviser, following some enlightening training, and formed the basis of Book Week 2022 at our school. Our hope was, and is, that every child in our school can find inspiration in literature and pick up a book and say, "That's me!"

Every year we host International Week, during which our diverse and inspirational community is celebrated and pupils can learn about different cultures from each other, including tasting a wide variety of food prepared by our families.

We are striving to ensure that representation of all cultures is embedded in our curriculum. For example, when learning about WWII, Year 6 are taught about *HMT Empire Windrush* and the Windrush generation. This type of inclusivity, through literature, is mirrored across all year groups, including the use of *Coming to England* by Floella Benjamin and *The Lost Homework* by Richard O'Neill (celebrating the Traveller community).

We are keen to ensure visitors to our school represent our children's backgrounds and beliefs. This academic year, we have met with a vicar, a bishop, a rabbi and a wide variety of other visitors. We recognise that our children should be aspirational for their own futures.

In our school library, we have installed an Equality and Diversity section, and each week our library is open for a before-school book club, which parents/carers and children are invited to attend. At these sessions, staff from the school read a book from this special section, encouraging each child in our school to see themselves in literature.

However, we are determined to ensure that such practice is not tokenistic. We want all pupils to feel valued, represented, included and accepted in our school community at all times.

We believe that we are on the journey towards having a strong anti-racist ethos and becoming great at inclusion, diversity and equity, but we are reflective practitioners and

keen to learn further from expert speakers, review research and literature that can aid our development, and visit other schools who can demonstrate great practice. Earlier this year, our staff took part in CPD with Toks Olusamokun (HFL Education race equity adviser), which was both inspiring and informative. The prospect of taking part in similar, further CPD, through the Great Representation programme, that will positively influence our diverse whole-school community, is both exciting and necessary.

October 2022

It was fascinating to attend the first seminar of the Great Representation programme. Professor Paul Miller confirmed that racism is deeply embedded in every layer of society, and we realised very quickly the changes we could make to our practice, to ensure this is not the case at Margaret Wix Primary School.

One of the first things we shared with our colleagues on return to our school is how unjust the recruitment process can be for those applicants from racially minoritised groups. Furthermore, the statistics for children's performance in schools provided evidence for the support that our minorities need, particularly in relation to our students from Gypsy/Roma families. Throughout Paul Miller's presentation, we became increasingly aware that our staff do not reflect our pupils' diverse backgrounds, and we have immediately set about thinking how this could be solved, through discussions with colleagues in school and across other schools. We have ensured that all our staff are reflected on our website and that every job in the school is afforded equal weighting.

Cynthia Rowe, a local headteacher, helped us to understand through her talk what it is like growing up as Black in the United Kingdom, and we learned how to see the world from a different perspective. All of these things prompted us to consider our curriculum and our everyday practice at a deeper level.

At Margaret Wix Primary School, we serve a diverse community and we are proud of this, but we have become aware that our curriculum does not always allow our children to be aspirational. This is because they cannot see themselves in it! Following the first seminar, we have researched inspirational figures, from diverse backgrounds, with links to the national curriculum.

We are in the process of embedding learning about these people, with the aim of showing our pupils that anything is possible for them. We can already see the children paying a little more attention, realising that learning has become increasingly relevant to them, and understanding that they too can be successful. For example, in PE lessons, we are drawing pupils' attention to successful sports people from a range of diverse

backgrounds and with various needs. Pupils can now see themselves reflected in images of these sporting stars, which are displayed in every classroom.

At Margaret Wix Primary School, we have a Pupil Parliament, which is engaged in a variety of areas of school life, including behaviour, curriculum and wellbeing. We quickly realised that we did not have a representative on the committee who was in charge of equality and diversity. We are in the process of interviewing for this role and are excited to see where this leads us. Following the implementation of this role, we will carry out a pupil voice activity to see where the children believe we are in terms of equity and diversity. Whilst we hope that the children will recognise and talk about a number of the positive changes we have already implemented, this process will enable us to make further changes, as identified by pupils, if required.

We run a yearly Aspirations Day, at which children are introduced to people from outside of the school, engaged in a wide variety of jobs, to inspire pupils to aim high in their own future career choices. In planning for our recent Aspirations Day, we were intent on ensuring we had representatives from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Whilst this has often happened naturally, it was not something we have previously actively sought, and it was fantastic to see children heading towards visitors who looked like them and believing that their roles were something they could aspire to do. Following visits from solicitors, doctors, football coaches, chefs, and more, the children at Margaret Wix Primary School are beginning to believe that anything is possible.

To ensure that this message is communicated every day, not just at annual events, we have again increased our provision of books with racially minoritised characters. We also have increased our selection of texts by highly successful authors from racially minoritised backgrounds. Following discussions with partner schools about such texts, we have encouraged our English lead and librarian to ensure that pupils are aware of new books in the library, but that they are organised as other texts are rather than highlighted in a special display. We are making every attempt to ensure the literature offered at our school is inclusive of all and that choosing one of these books is just as likely as choosing a text in which the characters are White.

Increasingly, we have welcomed children from Ukraine and Hong Kong to our school. Some of these children are in the very early stages of learning English as an additional language (EAL), and this impacts their ability to access many areas of the curriculum, therefore slowing their progress in learning. We have introduced an EAL programme, which ensures that children are provided with the scaffolding they require to speak English and access learning in their classrooms.

Following Cynthia Rowe's thought-provoking presentation, in which she shared her lived experience, we thought it vital that all staff had the opportunity to hear and learn from her. As the majority of our staff are White British, we believe it is essential that

we provide opportunities for them to learn about the experiences of those from other cultures, to understand the necessity for the changes we are striving to make within our school. We have now booked staff training with Cynthia for early next term and are excited to see where this takes our whole staff, in terms of inclusive practice. We believe that we are an inclusive school, but we are quickly realising that there is so much more that we can and must do.

Shammi Rahman (race equity adviser at HFL Education) has invited Hertfordshire schools to join a BAME forum, which is also open to non-BAME colleagues. We quickly signed up for this and are looking forward to learning more and developing our practice further through this group.

Another exciting event that has taken place since our first Great Representation session is our hub group visit to The Broxbourne School. We met with their equality and diversity lead and enjoyed a tour around the premises. Across the school, there were positive role models showcased at every turn. There were posters showing the success of previous students from all backgrounds and the universities they now attend. We discussed correct name pronunciation and how important this is in making a person feel valued and worthwhile. We also discussed the use of emojis on social media and immediately realised that we often use a White face on our Facebook feeds.

We came away from our visit with a list of further things to consider at Margaret Wix Primary School – things we would have never thought of before. We are now in the process of undertaking an audit to help us to prioritise our work on:

- **developing a leadership model that is committed to anti-racist values, and a whole-school approach to race equality**
- **embedding a curriculum that challenges race inequality, achieves cultural inclusion and responds to the differences in pupils' lives**
- **further ensuring that racially minoritised groups and parents/carers feel valued, safe, respected and represented in school**
- **ensuring that all pupils feel a sense of belonging and that their wellbeing is positively affected by the changes we are making within our school**
- **developing the links with our diverse school community, and embedding learning that reflects the backgrounds of families at our school**

November 2022

During the second seminar, we heard from Claire Stewart-Hall, who sparked stimulating discussion amongst our hub group through her analysis of Whiteness, institutionalised racism and policy interpretation. The notion of race being a social construct was interesting, yet its impact on the opportunities afforded to racially minoritised colleagues was stark. Our school's leadership team is reflective of most across the country – all members are White British. We are not currently in a position to address this and appoint new staff to the team, but it is something that will be considered when there is the need to fill a position.

Our teaching team is predominantly White too, and Claire highlighted the need for us to empower staff to talk about race with both humility and expertise. We know that the cultural diversity within our school is a large part of what makes our setting special, and we often celebrate this. However, as a team, we do not regularly openly question our own assumptions or discuss racial inequality, unless in relation to specific incidents of prejudice. Facing the uncomfortable truth that, despite our best efforts so far to address our racial shortcomings, there is systemic racism within our institutions, provoked feelings of anger and disappointment, to say the least.

Claire asked that we reflect on whose lens is being privileged within our own settings and question who benefits from the policies we currently have in place. We considered the socialisation of staff and concluded that most approach policy from a White, privileged perspective. This discussion has prompted us to engage further with our parent focus group, for example in analysing our current uniform policy to see if pupils may feel more comfortable with the option to wear clothing that is significant to their religion, such as hijabs.

As a senior leadership team, we have analysed incidents of behaviour and understand that it is a form of communication. On occasion, we have noticed that the expectations of a few members of staff appear to be different for some pupils, and that they react differently when faced with certain pupils' challenging behaviour. We are now beginning to question if this is the result of White bias amongst our staff and are considering how this can be unpicked through potentially challenging, but vital, conversations.

Measures we have taken already to improve diversity and equality within our school include prompting staff to talk more often about race, within contexts where they feel confident. We have utilised staff's understanding of curriculum content to build in more opportunities to address inequality and celebrate diversity. This continues to be a priority in the second half of the autumn term.

A key takeaway from Claire's presentation was the need to consider the role that race plays in every aspect of school life: we must discuss its role in attendance, attainment

and behaviour, for example. Already, we have completed analysis of end-of-key-stage results and noted trends within various ethnic groups, such as only 50% of Bangladeshi pupils achieving age-related expectations in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2, compared with 100% of Black Caribbean pupils and 69% of White British pupils. We have been prompted to evaluate this data further and consider the role race played in the achievements of groups of pupils. We are now considering whether cultural expectations, access to clubs, the opportunity for pupils to see themselves reflected in inspiring ethnic figures and the ability of parents to provide an informal curriculum outside of school, including visits to museums, etc, played a part in the attainment of pupils.

Sufian Sadiq gave an impassioned presentation about his lived experience, which was both thought-provoking and emotional. It certainly prompted us to think about the pupils and families within our school community who may feel like imposters, and what we can do to improve their school experience. Sufian discussed the role that the media plays in promoting negative racial stereotypes. We have thought carefully about ensuring that pupils see positive role models from all backgrounds and considered our use of media within our school and teaching. For example, our learning powers are represented by superheroes, and we ensured that various ethnic groups are reflected when designing these.

Sufian spoke about his daughter and how she saw herself as different from, and not as beautiful as, her White classmates. This story was shocking to us and is something we never want pupils in our school to feel. Our carefully planned PSHE curriculum is supporting teachers in delivering lessons related to self-esteem, self-worth and celebrating differences. Pupils speak passionately about diversity in our school, for example: "We love that everyone is different at Margaret Wix" and "It doesn't matter what you look like; we are all special." The newly appointed diversity minister on our Pupil Parliament is also keen to challenge any negative attitudes or stereotypes and ensure that all pupils are treated equally.

It is clear that, whilst the spotlight is on our school community, we are making progress. However, we are faced with challenges when considering what is happening beyond the school walls. Challenging perceptions beyond the school gates will be another test for us.

December 2022 and January 2023

Whilst listening to Orell Lawrence (from The Black Curriculum) when we next met, it became clear that we have since September made some much-needed adaptations to

our curriculum. Our work on decolonising and diversifying the curriculum means that all children can be inspired by the people they are learning about and see themselves reflected in what is taught at Margaret Wix. As we have moved forward with this work, we are ensuring that subject leaders are involved in the process of diversifying learning contexts. Middle leaders are continuing the work that we have begun, linking our learning powers and values to our curriculum content, and developing our provision to ensure equality and diversity throughout. We hope that, once fully embedded, the “Wix Way” will provide an accurate representation of history, help to reduce ignorance and enable pupils to appreciate differences, whilst being inspired by others that seem relevant to them.

At this Great Representation seminar, we also heard from colleagues at Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School about their exhibition “Routed in Stevenage: Stories from our Hometown”. This celebrated the school’s commitment to being actively anti-racist and was an inspiring display of strength and diversity. It prompted us to consider something of a similar nature in our own school.

We are in the early planning stages but hope to involve the whole school community in a creative project that explores our pupils’ roots. As part of this project, we will be looking at music from a wide variety of cultures, artwork that includes every child and showcases our diversity, and storyboards that capture our pupils’ history. As well as exhibiting this work later on in the year, some of it will become a permanent feature, serving as a reminder of how inclusive and diverse our school is and how, despite our differences, we can all learn from each other and be inspired by each other, enriching our own lives by relationships with others.

We feel that one of our greatest assets is our diverse catchment and the opportunities that this brings. However, we are acutely aware that some children and families from diverse backgrounds have, in the past, chosen not to spend time together socially. The effects of this can be seen in the classroom. In a bid to include our community and encourage them to socialise and work together, we are looking to secure a grant to set up a community choir. We hope that this will provide the opportunity for new relationships to form and for our community to become closer, celebrating and accepting differences.

Most recently, we have enjoyed an enlightening and inspiring visit to Knebworth Primary School. Knebworth is a school that serves a very different community from Margaret Wix, so it was fascinating to see how equality and diversity have driven changes throughout the school and throughout the community.

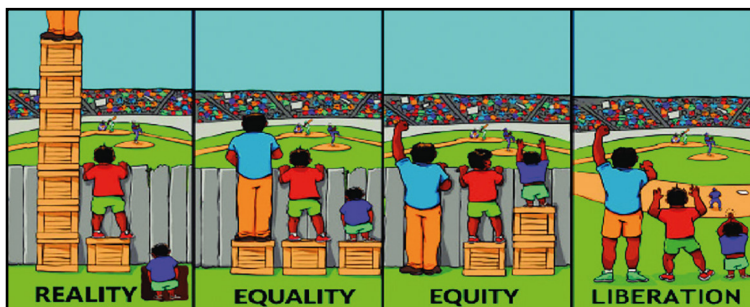
The visit began with a tour around the site, which showcased many of the brilliant displays involving DEI such as “Beyond the Bias” and “If you can see it, you can be it”. We then got an opportunity to engage in conversation with the school’s lead on equality and diversity. She talked passionately about delivery of staff training and all of the team shared the school’s DEI strategy. We discussed the use of books that

included representation, and the development of a working party to drive positive changes, amongst other things. A very interesting discussion followed regarding the use of progressive vocabulary across both the primary and secondary settings, and an agreement was made to work on this as a group so that we offer children appropriate vocabulary when discussing representation.

February 2023

Sylvia Tai, headteacher at Watford Girls' Grammar School, began her presentation at our next session by encouraging us all to guess her ethnicity. This generated a conversation around assumptions that are made about people, including what they eat, what they know and how they live. Sylvia eloquently explained that her upbringing did not fit the stereotypes that people might have assumed when looking at her. Watford, where Sylvia grew up and now works, has become known as a rainbow town, as cited in a Guardian article ("Diverse Watford one of growing number of 'rainbow' towns in England and Wales", 17 January 2023) due to its increased ethnic diversity. Sylvia was in the minority during her childhood and explained how eating pasta and rice was met with surprise! Sylvia was able to be successful as she never saw her ethnicity as a barrier, and neither did her parents or teachers. "My greatest asset was my aspiration and my parents' aspiration for me."

Following Sylvia's interesting talk, we were introduced to Jess Boyd from Teach for All. We were invited to discuss the barriers within our own context and quickly realised that at Margaret Wix Primary School many of our children are challenged because of their ethnicity, and because of people's expectations and assumptions due to the way they look and their differing cultures. During the presentation, we were shown the famous equality/equity illustration of the children at a baseball event.



The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated;
© Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

Jess pointed out that there were two more parts to the graphic that are often unseen, representing reality and – importantly – liberation, symbolising the complete removal of the barrier. We were reminded that relationships are the key to understanding others and reflected that this is the key in school too – to totally immerse ourselves in the culture of others rather than being their “saviour” means that the barriers are removed. Whilst listening to Jess’s words, we discussed the idea of all our families bringing in bread that reflected their ethnic backgrounds. We would then share this around the school community – breaking bread together – indicative of a community coming together.

Back at school, we were treated to another thought-provoking staff meeting from Cynthia Rowe, who we had first met in September. She talked to our whole staff about her own lived experiences of a Black person growing up in the United Kingdom. Our staff were mesmerised throughout, and it prompted some very interesting conversations around White privilege and how we must do better for every single one of our children. Many staff members stayed late that night, thinking about how they could do better for the children they serve.

As a school, we are beginning to witness the changes we are making in influencing the children’s behaviour. In our Early Morning Library session, our children are encouraged to share books and read them to others. Our most recent reading was a book called *Under My Hijab*, read by a Year 3 girl, who is extremely proud that she wears the most beautiful hijab. The book, and her reading of it, helped her to understand and know that anything is possible for her. Additionally, one teacher reported a conversation in the classroom between two girls. The first had drawn some pictures of Lego figures, all of them with peach-coloured skin. The second girl asked her if the next picture was going to be drawn with a different-coloured face. The first girl agreed. These challenges to the status quo are important and mean that children are feeling increasingly confident to have conversations and not shy away from considering prejudice and racism.

Similarly, Year 2 pupils have been listening to *Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet* – an exciting story about a Muslim boy with a huge imagination. The girls explained “We do that” at various points in the story that were relatable to them. After Chinese New Year celebrations, and the assembly that was run by our children from Hong Kong, parents have thanked us for allowing them to share their culture with us. Staff have reported increased confidence in discussing issues related to race. For example, through the inclusion of the Shang Dynasty, children from Chinese backgrounds have been more able to access and engage with Year 6 history lessons.

More recently, the children at our school have started to take part in a Young Citizenship Award, which the school has set up. Some of the children decided they wanted to raise money for Open Doors – a local homeless charity. They organised a Crazy Hair Day and, after a few days, it struck us that this type of day is tricky if you are wearing a hijab. We worked with a member of staff who wears a hijab to provide ideas for a girl in our school

who also wears a hijab. The day was an absolute success and both the member of staff and the pupil were made to feel included and special. We may not have considered these things in the same way prior to the programme.

It was troubling to hear in the news recently, about the treatment of asylum seekers by local residents in Merseyside. Because of this, and to meet the needs of our children, we decided to centre our Book Week on refugees and the rich literature surrounding them. It began with a reading in our Early Morning Library Club of the book *My Name is Not Refugee* by Kate Milner, and will carry on with books such as *Paddington*, for our younger learners, and *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna, for our older readers. Testament to what we have learned through the programme, and the inclusive nature of the school, one Year 6 child recently shared a presentation about life in Ukraine with her class. This piece of work will help her to be successful for her Young Citizenship Award, and it also helped all the other children to understand a little bit about her story.

Most recently, the school had a quiz night and, despite the demographics of the school, there was only one Black person at this event; all others were White British. It will be important over the coming weeks and months to work with our Parent Teacher Association to better understand why this was the case and how we can ensure that we are more inclusive through our fundraising events and the way we socialise as a community. Is it because this was held in a place where alcohol was available? Was there a concern that the questions would be centred on White British culture? Whatever it is, we must do better, and this will be an area for us to work hard on going forward.

In the last week, we have visited Watford Grammar School for Girls, and what an inspirational visit that was! We spent some time looking around the school, seeing some wonderful displays centred on inclusion and meeting with some inspiring pupils. Watford Grammar School for Girls serves a diverse community with only 15.6% identifying as White British. We were impressed by the happy, content, enthusiastic pupils, who were confident to talk to us and showed commitment to their learning and the opportunities the school gives them.

We also met with the Equality and Diversity Council, which runs as a sub-group from the school council. They talked about culture days, feeling included by other pupils, the inclusivity of the staff, and the culture where bullying for being different does not exist. Whilst looking at their school library, we noticed leaflets with book recommendations for different types of text, such as LGBTQ+ friendly books and texts that include representation of different cultures. We thought that these were a great idea, and this is definitely something that we would like to include at our school, so that children are aware of the wealth of literature that can be found in our library.

March 2023

At our penultimate seminar, we heard from Professor Ruth-Ann Lenga, who talked about antisemitism and the concerning rise in incidents of racism recently. She gave examples of parents writing letters describing Holocaust education as “indoctrination” and shared pictures of vandalised Jewish gravestones. It reminded us of the importance of ensuring that all beliefs are valued and included in our curriculum and assemblies. Currently, we do not have any families who identify as Jewish – all the more reason to educate our pupils to ensure they are global citizens.

David Gillborn talked about Critical Race Theory, which encouraged us to analyse incidents of racism and reflect on the part that intersectionality plays in them. We were prompted to consider why incidents of racism and racial inequality are sustained in the UK, such as through stereotyping of racially minoritised groups. As Claire Stewart-Hall did in our previous seminar, David shared data that showed a high proportion of Black students are excluded in comparison with other ethnic groups, whilst Chinese and Indian pupils are often seen as more able than others. Stereotypes such as these only perpetuate the systemic problem.

Melissa Lowry, from Knebworth Primary School, shared her lived experiences with us. We found ourselves moved to tears as she described the offensive nicknames she was subjected to, how she had repeatedly had to deal with her hair being touched and how the only aspect of the curriculum that she could recall feeling any sense of affinity towards or representation within was when studying the poem “Half Caste” by John Agard. Melissa described how her own experiences had prompted her to create an inclusive classroom in which every child feels seen. Her explanation of the impact her actions had on one child in particular was incredibly poignant. We all have the ability to make such a difference in the lives of the children we work with and, through what we have learned during the Great Representation programme, we are now more able to empower our staff to do so.

Our final school visit was to St Helen’s in Wheathampstead. Despite close proximity to Margaret Wix, the catchment is markedly different. As a Christian school, whose values were very clear to see, we wondered whether the school may face additional challenges in ensuring representation and inclusion. However, the school’s recent SIAMS report was shared with us and showed that their religious education curriculum was exemplary in developing pupils’ understanding of all faiths. The school had recently formed an Equality Diversity and Inclusion group of pupils who explained to us their reasons for applying for their roles, such as wanting to ensure others feel welcome. Whilst a newly formed group, it was clear that they are aspiring to make positive changes at their school.

Final reflections

As we approach the end of the Great Representation programme, we realise that we are still at the beginning of our journey, although much work has been completed along the way. We have learned to be more thoughtful about language, had opportunities to reflect, found ways to improve inclusion, developed and diversified our curriculum, and endeavoured to ensure all children are represented at our school. Our understanding of the complex nature of racial inequality in particular has been developed through the keynote speakers and those who have shared their lived experiences with us, and we are now more confident to address inequality and are more willing to ask questions when we are unsure.

Our hub group has provided us with scintillating conversation, inspirational experiences and friendship, which we hope will continue to provide support as the formal part of this journey reaches its conclusion. Looking ahead, we have a number of actions that we hope will come to fruition before the end of the academic year but we are also committed to continuing this work beyond. Actions include:

- **further development of the roles of equality and diversity ministers**
- **further professional development**
- **a celebration of cultures event**
- **CPD and updates through our new EDI handouts**
- **an audit with the support of Toks Olusamokun (HFL)**
- **enrichment to ensure celebration of all faiths**
- **ensuring the updated curriculum (the “Wix Way”) is fully embedded**
- **analysing our recruitment processes with an aim to diversifying our staff**
- **a review of policies**

We are incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in the Great Representation programme and are thankful for the impact that it has already had, and will continue to have, on our school.

Claire Gibbs and Catherine Abbott

September 2022

Nash Mills is a single-form entry, Church of England primary school, located on the edge of Hemel Hempstead. There are currently 228 pupils on roll. The school serves a diverse community and, at the beginning of this project, 13% of pupils were eligible for pupil premium, 22% were registered as using English as an additional language (with 16 different languages being spoken) and 27% considered vulnerable. The school has seen these numbers begin to rise following the Covid-19 pandemic and increases to the cost of living.

17 different ethnic backgrounds are represented, including Black African, Indian, Pakistani and White Asian. 52% of the population consider themselves to be Christian and 11% Muslim. There are also pupils who are Jewish, Sikh or Hindu. 23% have no reported religion.

Being about to embark on the Great Representation programme, we considered as a school what we hoped to get from the sessions – something that was not yet clear. There is no denying that there is racism and cultural misrepresentation in wider society, and in our first session, we were provided with some hard facts, which included:

- **the difference in attainment at all key stages between different cultural groups – White children outperforming many other groups most of the time throughout the education system**
- **that young Black people were nine times more likely to be stopped and searched than White young people**
- **that in 2019, 24% Bangladeshi young people were unemployed, compared with 10% young White people**

As the day went on, we heard from several speakers who shared their reflections and experiences – deeply personal experiences – about how, even today, they were being treated differently and even abused due to the colour of their skin.

How could we make a tangible difference to this in our small school? As a senior leadership team, we know that there are books in each classroom that represent different cultures, we know that the curriculum offers some learning around these cultures, and we know that our policy says that we do not tolerate any form of racism. But the first day made us think about some important questions:

- **What does that really mean?**
- **What is the lived experience of our pupils?**

- **If we were going to change, how could this be more than carrying out tokenistic one-off actions?**
- **How could change make a meaningful, lasting difference?**

We owe it to all of our children to do what we can, but this would not be a clear journey. As cited by Agarwal in the book *Wish We Knew What to Say*, “These are the people who are going to inherit this world, and we owe it to them to lay a strong foundation for the next phases of their lives.” From those who offered their very personal and deep-rooted experiences at the seminar, one thing became very clear: how personal and individual this is. Individual to the person, individual to each culture and individual to each specific ethnic background within our community. From this, we realised how important it was that those most affected were the ones who were empowered to have control and steerage around the work to be done; “anti-racism work is not something ‘done to’, but rather ‘done with’” (Miller, P, “Equity in Education & Society”, 2022).

As a Church of England school, we teach our pupils the skill of courageous advocacy, helping them to feel they can challenge and question social and moral norms, see disparity, and have the “fire in their bellies” to do something about it. We also have a set of values that are threaded through everything we do, linked to the parable of the Good Samaritan. Our children learn to be empathetic, to see each other for who they are and to respect this, to look out for others, and to be prepared to step in and help others who are in need. We felt that this stood us in good stead for the work to come.

We needed a concrete, supportive and clear plan, and to ensure that pupils had enough of a voice to feel they could make a difference. From the day, we came up with a plan to begin working towards this:

1. To create a focus group in school, consisting of pupils, staff and governors. A colleague on the course had already done this and offered to help. The plan: an open invitation to a cluster, where key ideas could be discussed. Does our community feel that they are all reflected within our curriculum? Do they see themselves in what we do? From this, how could we engage with the wider school community to gain their views and ideas?
2. We also recognise that this highly emotive subject can be difficult for staff to address and discuss. During the first day, the idea of White fragility was discussed. How well prepared do staff feel in addressing and confronting these issues with confidence? We needed to implement training and provide discussion time.
3. What else could be done within our curriculum? We know that different cultures are represented through some of our subjects, but is this the case across our curriculum? And is it done explicitly enough that it is recognised by the pupils? A question we had from the day, which we hoped would become clear later, was how we could find the balance between teaching the definite facts within our curriculum

whilst not over-politicising with opinion. This was something that we agreed would present some challenges moving forward.

From day one, we had a plan.

October 2022

Getting the children involved

We held our first Great Representation pupil meeting, asking for children from Years 5 and 6 to join us as an open invitation. The turnout was impressive, and it was clear that the children were interested by and intrigued about the content of the meeting. We opened the discussion by explaining that the team would be involved in helping to make an agreed terminology of how we describe ourselves and others, and would help with the development of our positive behaviour policy to ensure we promote an anti-racist ethos in our school.

The first meeting showed how clearly our children believe in the current ethos of the school. Many times, when the children were asked how they would describe someone of a different race, they would answer that it didn't matter what colour you were – we are all equal and should all be treated equally. The children kept coming back to this point and, at times, were quite adamant that they didn't need to move beyond this. We posed the question to children about how they would describe themselves in terms of race. Some said that they identify as Black. We wrote some of their words down and asked if they were all represented. Two girls said they could be Brown. It was interesting to see that two of the girls who were Indian and Asian did not know what adjective they would use to describe themselves or what their parents would identify as.

We asked the children if “coloured” was an appropriate descriptor; we are various colours -- red when hot, bluish when cold, etc. The children pondered, and one girl reflected that she might have used that adjective to describe a Black person when younger but would now probably not.

From the discussion, we collected certain terms and shared what pupils thought we might look at next. From this, we created the “tagline” of our project: We DECIDE

We **DECIDE**

At Nash Mills, we show:

Diversity, Equality, Celebration, Inclusion, Difference, Empathy

Towards the end of the month, we visited Longdean School as part of the project. One activity we engaged in during the visit was to hear from students who made up the school's LEAD (Longdean Equality and Diversity) steering group. The group was established in the school two years ago. The students spoke with incredible passion and clarity, and a real sense of ownership of the work completed by them. This was truly inspirational and gave us a real aim for an output of our work: for our pupils to have similar purpose and skill, albeit at a primary level.

November 2022

Stakeholder voice and planning for change

The initial conversations held with pupils confirmed that they felt safe in school and were keen to share their views and reflections. Hearing the range of views that the children held proved to us that we couldn't rely on preconceptions and that, to gain a deeper understanding, we needed to talk to a range of people. From listening to the range of speakers during the days on the Great Representation programme, and reading books such as *Wish We Knew What to Say* by Dr Pragya Agarwal, *Black and British* by David Olusoga, and *My Name Is Why* by Lemn Sissay, it was becoming clear that we knew less about inclusivity than we'd initially thought.

The most straightforward way to gain initial feedback was to create a set of surveys, followed up by discussion groups. The questionnaires were created and sent to parents, staff and governors, using an online tool that they were all familiar with. We also sought the views of pupils through class-based discussion and focus groups.

Generally, the responses were pleasing. Most respondents felt that pupils at Nash Mills were offered equal opportunities, regardless of need or background, with 92% agreeing. There was the same level of response to a question that asked if the school celebrated diversity, although fewer respondents strongly agreed.

Staff were asked to consider how well different groups were represented within the curriculum, most being able to identify a range of examples. However, there was less certainty in reference to people from a pan-Asian background. Staff felt that diversity was represented well in subject areas such as English, RE, PSHE, history and geography, but less well in computing, maths, science and PE. Parents were much less sure about this point, with only 56% saying that they felt well informed about the curriculum content. Parents and staff also felt that having greater ethnic diversity amongst the visitors to school and role models within the curriculum would help pupils to "see themselves" better reflected. These suggestions were also made by some classes.

There was no doubt that we needed to spend some time looking at how the curriculum represented our children, but perhaps a greater focus was needed on how we helped our pupils and parents to see this; were we being too discreet in this area, whilst trying not to make a “big deal” of it? When we visited Longdean School through the project, it was really clear how the school had gone some way to developing this area – pictures, case studies and quotes from those representing a range of backgrounds were clearly displayed throughout the school. Could this be something we could do? Although, how would we do this without overloading the curriculum?

Almost all adults who responded said that they would be confident in talking to pupils about a range of different issues. There were some comments about not wanting to use the wrong words to describe different groups, and needing to know where to go for further information; a shared space to help with this may be useful.

All respondents felt that the school protected those from different backgrounds well. The vast majority said that they knew how the school would deal with a racist incident and that this would be done fairly.

December 2022

Being a Church of England school, one area of interest that came from parent feedback was around how the school might truly celebrate a range of lifestyles and practices, when this did not always chime with the Christian faith, particularly for those with more orthodox views. No parent who spoke to us disagreed that children should be exposed to differing views and learn about people from different backgrounds, but some voiced concern at how this might be done and how the children would develop their own sense of understanding. When we listened further, it seemed that the term “celebrate” was causing concern; parents were not keen for their children to be expected to celebrate the views of those different to theirs, for example during religious festivals.

We spent a long time considering this and spoke with our local vicar and other members of the staff team. Our vicar was very clear that, regardless of background or belief, promoting togetherness, love and understanding was a key teaching of the Christian faith. We agreed that this was largely a matter of shared vocabulary and probably needed crystal-clarity in what we were trying to achieve, so that we could minimise misconception and focus on the fact that this work was focused on values. We were working to show that everyone was valued and loved in this area; in particular:

- **We want to help all pupils to understand that our community includes those with a range of different backgrounds, views and beliefs, and that this is exciting, as it means we can learn from each other.**

- **We want those coming from minority backgrounds or groups to feel proud of this and be able to identify how they fit within the community.**
- **This range of backgrounds, views and beliefs is to be celebrated to help to further engender mutual respect, awareness and discussion.**
- **We want children to express their views and opinions in a safe environment without judgement, even if they differ from opinions/views from home.**

We needed to consider how the school could steer away from teaching that particular views are right or wrong, or becoming politicised in any way, and instead focus on developing and strengthening values. This was a conundrum that would require further thought, discussion and research.

In December our SLT were able to attend a talk by Andrew Moffat, who has created the No Outsiders resource. This offers two specific strands for children to explore and discuss issues around inclusivity. Firstly, the resource comes with a core reading spine. Each book on the spine has been selected to promote conversation around a range of issues, and the texts are age-appropriate from Early Years all the way through to the end of primary. The books come with a list of key teaching points and questions, which we felt would be helpful to our teachers and would help them to feel confident in talking to their classes. The second resource is a free, weekly assembly focus, which again gives a focus for discussion. As a Church of England school, we felt that many of these themes linked well to our core values.

One thing that really resonated with us was that, with many of the conversations we had around diversity, as adults we could remain impartial, listening to the views of the children and supporting them to discuss and come to their own conclusions. Andrew Moffat made the point that we would not reach consensus on some views – some religious beliefs, for example, directly challenge some “social norms”. He suggested that, in these situations, we had to remember that people with opposing views could agree to disagree and move on; this disagreement did not have to mean that there was argument or unrest.

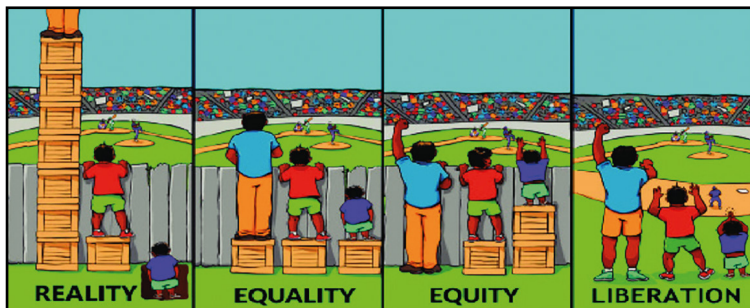
Further to this, we had another interesting conversation, during a visit to one of our hub schools, when discussing some of the news stories relating to the Qatar World Cup. One colleague noted that their school was focusing only on the sport and not the political aspects. The question was posed, “What would be acceptable in terms of the way countries operate? If Qatar shouldn’t have the World Cup due to how they treat some people, should the USA be blocked due to their laws on gun use or the UK for the way that they turn away some groups of refugees?” This was a very interesting point of thought and helped us to frame our message about this project not being about politicisation but about knowing more and accepting more.

January and February 2023

The power of identity

The Christmas break gave us time to reflect on the learning and discussions from the course so far. Having thought about the challenge from parents in December, it had become clear that, through this project, we were trying to really promote the idea of identity – for all of our children to be able to recognise themselves and their backgrounds within school and to be able to feel proud of this. Having looked again at the reading spine we had developed, what struck us was that the vast majority of books were designed to promote discussion about diverse communities and living well together.

During a session with Jess Boyd, during our fourth seminar, we considered a well-used diagram showing the difference between equality, equity and liberation (courtesy of the Interaction Institute for Social Change). The image makes the point that sometimes; ensuring that everyone receives an equal amount will not meet the needs of all. Rather, we must consider whether some need more to reach the same end point as others, considered to be equity.



The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated;
© Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

This made us think that perhaps, in the past, we had been too focused on equity. Were we preoccupied on small solutions – helping pupils to feel equal and part of a whole; rather than seeing the larger picture – helping children to feel proud of who they are and being able to share what makes them different. We don't always need to ensure equality, but to recognise and accept that inequality does exist and that these differences make us who we are.

In her book *Wish We Knew What to Say*, Dr Pragya Agarwal shares, "In telling our children that 'race does not matter' and in raising children to be colour-blind, we are actually creating more harm than good. We are not educating our children in the way

racial inequalities work, and we are telling them that what a person of colour may go through is not valid. And we are dismissing their experience". Jess Boyd also talked about this, highlighting a number of statements that were widely used in classrooms with the aim to promote equality; "we don't see race in this classroom" and "we are all the same", to name two. We considered whether these statements miss the point. Do we want our children to see themselves as all the same? Or do we want them to be able to share their unique experiences and be able to talk about what has defined them as people?

This idea of really promoting the sense of identity struck us as a focus of our work. This was supported in the work of Marian Wright-Edelman, who stated, "Children of color and children born with a rich diversity of special characteristics and needs must be able to see themselves in the books they read and be exposed to a wide range of books reflective of the nation and world we all share" (Wright-Edelman, M, "Books all children should read" (2019). From all the learning and discussion that had previously taken place, this reflection gave us a starting point for what we might do with our taught curriculum. How do our pupils see themselves and their cultures, backgrounds and experiences within what they learn in school?

March 2023

Taking the ideas gathered from the Great Representation seminars, we decided that the next focus for our school should be around the curriculum. We wanted to design opportunities for children to be able to see themselves, their families and their communities within school.

We recognise that the school curriculum, much of which was originally designed in the 1980s and 1990s, does tend to focus on White men who have shaped our world. If someone searched for photos of soldiers from WWII, they would likely see predominantly White people rather than pictures depicting the diversity that existed amongst those who fought. We talk about Britain being proud of those from across the Commonwealth coming to join the war effort, but this is not reflected in what our children see. Similarly, when teaching about the Space Race in the 1960s, little time is spent recognising the work of people like the "human computers" Katherine Johnson and Mary Jackson.

How could we begin to ensure that our curriculum allowed pupils to learn this breadth? What changes needed to be made so that each child could see themselves?

Following a number of conversations within school amongst staff, our SLT and with our school improvement partner, we decided to begin by ensuring that the opportunities pupils had to explore these themes were consistent across the school. This would come

through discussion with staff in upcoming INSET time and would include:

- **A focus on how staff felt supported and were skilled in leading and steering discussions with pupils, including through our book spine and assembly focus sessions.**
- **A focus on book diversity. As a school, we occasionally use whole-school English topic planning from HFL Education, which provides learning around key texts, some of which were focused on inclusivity. We decided to have a strategic focus on this: Which texts were used? Which protected characteristics did they focus on? When did we use them to the greatest effect in supporting our pupils to see people they could relate to or learn from? As an example, this year we have used the texts *And Tango Makes Three* by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson, and *Africa, Amazing Africa* by Atinuke.**
- **A focus on ensuring that our history curriculum accurately represented society. The book *Black and British* by David Olusoga was very helpful in beginning this work as, in each era of British history, people of colour who had made notable contributions were recognised. It gave us a starting point to consider how our curriculum reflected this. Again, had it been originally built with a bias towards White, British people? Was there any element of colonialism that needed discussion?**
- **Spending time within our STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects learning about notable people who had made a difference in each area. As a staff team, we agreed to audit this to ensure that there were people from a range of backgrounds represented. Had there been an element of unconscious bias in the construction of this? Were all the people White, middle-aged males?**

We also talked about smaller, individual actions that could be taken to help pupils to feel valued and proud of their identities. We agreed that, at the start of each school year, we would hold a day for pupils to talk about their backgrounds; wear clothes that they felt represented them; and share things that made them special, including foods and celebrations. Not only would this help them to feel that they were unique and important, but it would also act as a way to build relationships, trust and understanding with new classroom staff – an important act.

Conclusion

The work conducted through this project provided us with a real sense of the challenges that many face, silently and each day. We had not truly appreciated the extent of this or

its impact until we heard the views and experiences of the speakers and colleagues on the programme.

We also recognised that, as a school, we had some tangible starting points – things we could do to begin supporting our entire school community to feel important, enabled and – most importantly – seen.

We hope that many of these actions will really support our pupils to develop that sense of identity and belonging but also help us to really understand how, through an appreciation of the diversity of our community, we can recognise its strength. A passage from Dr Pragya Agarwal's book *Wish We Knew What to Say*, really helped us with this. The passage explains how, if we want children to be able to thrive, we need to help them make sense of the confusing and emotionally charged messages they receive about themselves and others in society. Dr Agarwal goes on to say that if we can give our children pride in their heritage and culture, and an unshakeable sense of self-worth, they will learn to support each other and to challenge injustice and inequality.

This work is by no means finished within our school, and it will take us a number of years to properly develop and embed it. However, through the programme, we have been able to take some big steps. We will need to see that this continues for the benefit of everyone within our school community.

Allan Maher and Sophie Brewer

PEARTREE SPRING PRIMARY SCHOOL

September 2022

Peartree Spring Primary is a three-form entry school with 626 children on role. Current data shows that 24% of children are economically disadvantaged, with 26% on the SEND register. Our school community is diverse, with 30% of our children having Black, Asian or minority ethnic heritage. The staff community is less diverse, having approximately 7% of adults from cultures other than White British.

Peartree Spring Primary School holds high aims and values around equality, equity and fairness. The school achieved Gold Standard in the Rights and Respecting Schools Mark in 2019. This shows that the school community has a strong understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all its members, particularly around equality and equity for everyone. We are proud of our leadership and pupil voice teams, who have created a Rights Respecting School charter, which focuses on the community having rights to:

- **be safe and healthy**
- **have an opinion and be listened to**
- **meet together and join groups**
- **receive information**
- **be the best we can**
- **use our own language and follow our own religion**

In 2019, as well as identifying our rights, pupil leaders also focused on responsibilities that they felt were important to our community. They identified that, for everyone to feel a sense of belonging, the following were needed:

- **help, respect and welcome each other**
- **ensure everyone feels safe**
- **behave and be polite**
- **listen to others' opinions and ideas**

The charter highlights our inclusive practice. It links to the school's vision to provide a stimulating and safe environment. We nurture every learner in order for them to realise their full potential. We believe all individuals have the right to learn and acquire the skills to become well-rounded, confident members of the community. Our strength is our inclusive and understanding ethos, which provides excellence and enjoyment, where every learner matters.

Our curriculum intent is to foster a life-long love of learning and to spark a never-ending fire in the minds of our children to find out more, always. Our staff are inspirational role models that motivate our children. The ethos emanates from the headteacher and

filters to all members of the staffing community to enable our children to succeed. Pupil voice is paramount in decisions made around the school, and our pupil leadership team is culturally diverse, representing all children across our community. We have created our own “Pearticles”, which have been embedded throughout our curriculum to ensure children are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Through the curriculum, culture and diversity are embraced, and respect is explicitly taught. The motivation to become involved in the Great Representation programme was a desire to gain a better understanding of how to improve our inclusive practice.

We want to ensure that our children and families from all cultures feel included and valued members of our community. We acknowledge that there have been historic incidents of racist language being used by some of our children. Leaders have a zero-tolerance stance to any form of racism within our community. Our behaviour and equity policies outline the procedures in place to deal with any incidents, and our families are supportive of our approach. We explore the reasons behind any form of prejudice that is seen, and we continue to find new ways to educate our community, to ensure incidents are not repeated and everyone feels safe with a sense of belonging.

Our first steps on the Great Representation programme are to:

- **meet with the SLT to discuss creating a cultural diversity lead**
- **use the school's equity policy to create a diversity and race and conscious equality (RACE) action plan**
- **review the inclusive education policy to support development of the action plan**
- **investigate the RACE schools mark**
- **link the programme to our SIP**

October 2022

The first seminar of the Great Representation programme had a significant impact on leaders and provoked some re-evaluation of where we are as a school on the subject of anti-racism. The keynote speaker, Professor Paul Miller, provided a thought-provoking insight into the systemic racism that still exists within the British educational system. The seminar provided time for colleagues to have open and honest discussions in a safe environment. There was an acknowledgement that some are concerned they may say something that could be construed as racist. Coming away from the seminar, we had to address the fact that, at times, we can hold back due to this fear, and this is something that needs to be overcome by many within the educational system.

During the seminar, one particular statement, made by Professor Paul Miller had a significant impact: “I see you, I hear you, I belong”.

Leaders discussed how we felt our children would respond if we asked the following questions in relation to this statement:

- **Do you see and hear role models in school who are from the same culture?**
- **Do you feel you belong to our community?**

The statement has encouraged us to review and amend our action plan. We know that we are strong in supporting our children from all backgrounds, but do we do enough to ensure that children from minority groups feel they belong and maintain their sense of identity? This is something that the leadership team has agreed to add to our action plan, and we are having discussions around how we can monitor the impact of the support we implement. We are clear that pupil voice is a sound measure but need to research alternate data to gain a true picture.

Over the past few weeks, we have explored this further. We note that our staffing is predominately White, with a small percentage of adults from other minority groups. In order for all our children to respond to the statement positively, we need to ensure that we actively seek role models from those cultures that are not represented in our staffing structure. We need to recruit from a wider circle than from within Hertfordshire, in an attempt to create a more diverse workforce.

Another area explored at the seminar was with regard to attainment data and how statistically several Black and minority ethnic groups perform less well academically than their White British peers. The evidence provided was overwhelming, and there is no doubt that this is a concern. We explored our current school data, making comparisons between our White British children and those from other ethnicities. Interestingly, for our school community, our data shows a different picture. Our non-White British children perform well, either in line with their White peers or exceeding their outcomes. For example, in our current Year 6 cohort, our children from minority ethnic cultures are high-attaining learners. All are on track to achieve/exceed end-of-key-stage expected outcomes. Our next step is to explore this set of data across the whole school, looking at starting points in particular for our minority groups, and tracking their progress to secure positive outcomes.

Following the seminar, our first hub school visit was informative and helpful. The school had already, in the previous year, commissioned Fig Tree International to conduct an audit of Race and Equity. The leadership team had embedded many ideas from this, and it was clear across the school that positive changes had been made. For us, it was interesting to focus on displays that promoted diversity. Inclusive practice was clear, and the environment promoted identity and belonging for all cultures. At Peartree Spring we take pride in our learning environments, and our displays promote our children’s love of

learning. On reflection, we recognise that we may not have enough displays that show how culturally diverse our community is, and we will therefore look further at how we can adapt some areas to promote a sense of belonging for all our children.

The visit brought forward the following areas for us to discuss as a leadership team:

Displays – How do we create displays within the primary setting that are culturally diverse? We saw many on our visit to the secondary school, but how can we replicate these and maintain an age-appropriate learning environment, especially for our younger children?

Staff recruitment – We need to investigate other ways to post vacancies, directly marketing the vacancies to diverse groups.

The school's next steps are:

- **review the action plan**
- **conduct a pupil survey, based on “I see you, I hear you, I belong”**
- **review displays – are they culturally diverse?**
- **review texts in library – are they culturally diverse? Do they meet the needs of all of groups and provide them with a sense of belonging?**

November 2022

Since the last journal entry, our focus has been on pupil voice. As discussed in an earlier journal entry, Professor Paul Miller's quote, “I see you, I hear you, I belong”, resonated with the ethos of the school. Prior to this, we felt our children were heard and did belong. However, we hadn't asked explicitly our children from our minority cultures if they did feel they belonged. This was not intentional but an oversight – we had not actively sought the views of our children as we sensed they were happy and felt safe. However, we had to address that feeling happy and safe is different from feeling they belong and feel secure with their heritage.

Sufian Sadiq's presentation, “Racial equity: A walk in my shoes”, was powerful. It supported our decision to explore pupil voice further. Sufian Sadiq addressed his sense of belonging within his career path and the barriers that he has faced on his journey. These may be the same barriers that our children could face on a daily basis. Placing ourselves in the shoes of some of our children, walking into an environment each day where they may be the only one within the room of their culture – how must this feel? Do we as educators provide enough support to ensure a sense of identity and belonging?

Leaders have to think more about the organisational culture of our school. In particular, the ideas, customs and social behaviour of our community, and how we can be inclusive to the invisible cultures that surround us. We provided a questionnaire to a selection of our Year 6 children from our diverse cultures. Questions were based on their sense of identity and belonging. The responses were interesting.

The first question asked this group “What does race equity mean to you?” Almost all responses included the term “equally”. Positively, children stated they felt respected by adults and peers, and said they were given the same opportunities within school as their peers. All children who completed the survey had been given some form of leadership opportunity.

The area of the survey that needs to be addressed is around the children wanting to talk about their heritage and culture. All the children surveyed stated they had been given the chance to talk about their race and culture within school. However, only 50% of these children then stated they wanted to talk to their peers about their culture and race. We need to delve further into this response. Referring back to Sufian Sadiq’s presentation:

- **Is this because they do not want to bring attention to their minoritised racial status?**
- **Do they feel comfortable in sharing their culture that is different to that of their peers?**
- **What can we do as educators to support these children and ensure they feel a sense of belonging, to their own cultures and to our community?**

Reflecting on our journey so far, we celebrate the successes we have had and the strength and commitment of our staff in striving to support all our children and, in particular, the needs of our children from minority cultures. Our children are creative and resilient, and have high aspirations for their futures, and we are committed to providing them with the opportunities and tools needed to become confident citizens. However, we are aware of the barriers our children face. The wealth of experience and knowledge from the keynote speakers has made us more aware of these barriers and how we cannot be complacent about the statistics that show children from minority groups can be disadvantaged in many ways.

Our journey is moving forward in the right direction. Our action plan is a working document that is highlighting that we may not be perfect, but we are determined to embed anti-racism within our community. We understand that it is not enough to have a zero-tolerance stance on racism if we do not commit to promoting cultures, providing opportunities for our children to be proud of their heritage, and provide an environment that creates a sense of belonging. We know that the journey will sometimes be difficult and that conversations might be challenging, but the outcomes for our children from minority groups must be a priority if we are to make a difference.

The school's next steps are:

- **review action plan – responses from pupil survey**
- **roll out pupil survey based on, “I see you, I hear you, I belong” to other year groups**
- **conduct staff survey based on, “I see you, I hear you, I belong”**
- **explore the responses from last pupil survey – how to encourage children to share knowledge about own cultures**

December 2022

This entry has been the most difficult to reflect on so far. The seminar provided by Orell Lawrence from The Black Curriculum led to discussions with the SLT around the inclusion of racial literacy within our curriculum.

The Peartree Curriculum has been developed over several years, and the overall positive impact on attainment and progress across all subjects is visible. We aim to foster a life-long love of learning and to inspire our children always to find out more. We want our children to learn about all the limitless possibilities out there in the world, to believe that they have the inner strength to do anything they set their hearts on, and to equip them with the skills and mindset to achieve great things.

As educators, we need to ensure that we provide all our children with the skills needed when they leave our school, to be able to question what they see and hear and not just accept it. We want our children to be independent, reflective thinkers who challenge injustice and discrimination. To achieve this, we must provide a curriculum that is open, broad and honest. We cannot provide our children with pockets of knowledge that do not open their minds to all cultures and heritages. For society to tackle racism and inequity, our children – our future – need to understand what equity and fairness looks like.

When working with the curriculum lead, it was easier to highlight and review some areas than others. For example, in literacy we could research rich texts from diverse cultures to be used as the working text. This has already been successfully implemented and, when talking to children from minority groups, they spoke excitedly of the story they were reading in class and how they could see themselves or family members within the pages. Other subject areas were more challenging, and we are continuing to work on the document. History, for example, has been more time-consuming. When looking in depth at the topics taught, there was a distinct lack of Black or minority ethnic figures

featured. We are determined that, for each topic taught, there will be figures from a variety of cultures. Our children need to have a sense of belonging. To achieve this, they need to see themselves in their learning each day and in all subjects.

Another area we looked at was the importance of educators being brave enough to have conversations around the existence of White privilege within our society and schools. It is clear from our keynote speakers that we cannot shy away from the more difficult conversations. Yet, as leaders, we often have staff come to us and ask, "How should I deal with this incident?" or "I hope I have said the right thing. I don't want to say the wrong thing." This is a problem in many schools and no different for us.

As mentioned earlier, we need to educate our children around equity and injustice. We also need to support our adults to have the confidence in dealing with any forms of racism. Our job is to ensure our children are educated to understand what racism is and that it exists in multitude forms. We need to support our staff to be confident in their teaching of this.

Teaching our children that we are all equal is not educating our children on the subject of race or equity. It is clear to us now that teaching our children that everyone is equal is the same as saying we do not need to see colour or acknowledge the differences that create the experiences children from ethnic minority groups have. Colour-blindness is something that does occur and is a form of unconscious bias that needs to be addressed through our curriculum. In addition to this, we must provide an education that is clear about British history and the injustices that minority groups have faced.

It is important to explain that some families and some cultures have not received the same privileges as others – that their start in life is not the same, and they have had barriers to overcome that may be invisible to some. Our curriculum must ensure that our children are taught to understand this so they can leave us with a solid knowledge of the wider world and injustices that have occurred. We believe that if we can achieve this, we can make change happen.

It is key that we take advantage of significant events and aspirational figures within our curriculum to embed diversity. Martin Luther King Day was a way in which we could do this throughout the whole school. Our pupil leaders delivered an assembly on his life and legacy to all of our children. It was linked to our Rights and Respecting article of the month: "You have the right to develop your talents". The children created the assembly and made links to injustice and hardship. They provided ideas for class learning, which the teachers completed throughout the week. Our house captains led house assemblies about Martin Luther King and racial equality. Even our youngest learners in Reception were able to contribute to the discussions, and many children could be heard on the playground or walking through the school discussing their thoughts and ideas about him. Children could also be found in the library reading books about his life to further their knowledge. Our key learning from this is that, if we can create this level of interest

from an assembly, what could we achieve if this was embedded in our daily curriculum?

The school's next steps are:

- **continue to develop the curriculum to ensure diversity is embedded**
- **provide staff training on the curriculum changes**
- **provide staff training on difficult conversations**

January 2023

“When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard nor welcomed, but when we are silent we are still afraid, so it is better to speak.”

Audre Lorde

This statement was shared with us by Jess Boyd at the latest Great Representation seminar. It made us think about how we should be using our positions within society to set an example to our communities. If we refuse to tackle bias and racism in any form – unconscious or conscious – because we are afraid of the difficult conversations or how others might react, then nothing will change. Children will continue to feel invisible, struggle with a sense of belonging and feel they are not heard. The cycle of inequity we see in our educational system will repeat. Courageous conversations where adults experience discomfort may be inevitable, especially where a racial incident has occurred.

Within our school, our leadership team does lead by example. We model that healthy dialogue around race and equity, however difficult, can be used to ease discord and disunity. Leaders acknowledge that this is a continuing process, which needs to be reflected on periodically so our staff feel supported and confident in all conversations.

We are confident when looking at evidence from our pupil voice surveys that our children feel comfortable to talk to adults about issues that may occur. The trust between our adults and children is visible, and it is important to remind ourselves of this when focusing on areas where we need to develop. Reflecting on the October journal entry, we are aware that high on our agenda continues to be the recruitment of staff from minority ethnic groups. Our children have strong relationships with our staff, but this can only be strengthened if we can provide opportunities for our children to feel they have adults from similar backgrounds to theirs who can fully understand their life experiences.

Following the presentation by Jess Boyd on “The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy”, our focus this month has been around the ideology of culturally sustaining pedagogy. As teachers, we understand the meaning of pedagogy – the theories and practices around teaching– but how do we embed this understanding to integrate, promote and maintain the cultural background of children within our school? We can see progress since the beginning of the programme in the way our adults manage diversity. We do not hear the terms “I don’t see race” or “We are all the same”. Through our staff development, we have begun to embed a deeper understanding that race equity is not the same as race equality.

As we know, equality is powerful – it promotes fairness by providing everyone with the same things. However, for some of our children from minority backgrounds, this is not enough. They do not always have the same starting points and, will therefore always be disadvantaged compared with our White British children. Providing both groups with the same things does not remove barriers for them, and it certainly does not close any gaps in outcomes. Throughout this programme, our staff community have developed a deeper understanding that equity is arguably about fairness but, in addition to this, it is a way of providing our ethnic minority children with rights to the same opportunities as other children in our setting, thus beginning to remove some of the barriers they face.

We have been fortunate to visit another school within our hub between seminars. The visit was inspiring, and we came away having observed several strategies that have been successfully embedded within their setting. The first was their student Diversity Team. The young adults were an incredible asset to the work that the school has already completed to eradicate discrimination. Their work sent a clear message that, within their school, discrimination of any form was not accepted.

It is clear that all adults and students held the same vision: whether deliberate or not, derogatory comments and actions still wound those they are directed at. The analogy used was “If you accidentally spill boiling water on someone, the pain is still the same as if it was deliberate” – a powerful statement with a strong and very clear meaning.

We were so impressed by these young adults that we have requested for them to come and deliver a Dreamcatcher Assembly to our children. How better to inspire our young children and provide a message that you are “seen, heard and belong” than by a powerful, young team of students, who have themselves faced some form of discrimination at a point in their educational journey? We came away feeling empowered, and this is how we want our children to feel about their culture, heritage and rights.

During the tour of the school, we saw many interesting and diverse displays. We could see that the school has worked hard to provide a sense of belonging to all their students. An interesting point made by the student representative, which was especially meaningful for us, was that their experience of secondary school and primary school

was very different. As children develop and experience wider influences and develop their own identities further, it appears discrimination also increases.

We would be foolish to ignore the statistics that show discrimination exists in primary education – as professionals, we see that discrimination occurs in so many ways. However, these students were clear that prejudice was not something they faced from their peers or adults before secondary school, and once adolescents, they needed the support of their teachers and school leaders in building effective strategies to tackle this.

This leaves us with a conundrum of sorts. With honesty and openness, we can share that racial or discriminatory incidents are rare within our setting. Where they have occurred, they have been dealt with sensitively but vigorously. We stated this in our first journal entry.

At the beginning of our journey, we sat comfortably knowing this and feeling our children from minority ethnic groups were well supported. As our journey has moved forward, we do still feel this to some degree. However, listening to professionals who have lived experiences of discrimination, many who shared their struggle to be seen and heard throughout their time in an educational system built on a platform of inequality and White privilege, we are determined to make a difference to our children's experience.

If we return to what we consider the “golden thread” of our journey – “I see you, I hear you, I belong” – we must, as educators, leaders and role models to our future generations, show through our actions that we will not cease to pursue a system of fairness and equity, where barriers are removed and a true sense of liberation for all of our ethnic minority families is achieved.

We are by no means at the end of our journey. We have our next steps, which we know will take time to embed and to demonstrate impact. We know we must be patient. We look forward to the continued journey, with the challenges and celebrations on the way. We have learned so much on one hand, yet we realise that we still have so much to learn on the other. We feel a fitting quote to end our journal entries would be:

“We walk through the world with all our identities at once and therefore our day has an endless number of possible combinations of outcomes depending on how individual events and situations we encounter interact with our individual identities.”

– Ijeoma Oluo: So You Want to Talk About Race.

Let us create these events and situations that show our children their futures are full of endless opportunities, and provide the sense of belonging that is central to them achieving positive lived experiences, which they can share with generations to come.

Jackie Massey

**PRAE WOOD
PRIMARY AND
NURSERY SCHOOL**

September 2022

Prae Wood Primary and Nursery School is a two-form entry school, with 452 pupils on roll, situated to the south-west of St Albans. Diversity amongst pupils is reflective of the community the school serves: parents and carers record 28% of the pupil population as belonging to an ethnic background other than White British, with 27% speaking English as an additional language (EAL). With 36 different languages spoken, our pupils have varied ethnic backgrounds. Our second largest ethnic group is Chinese, with Cantonese being the second most popular language spoken after English (3% of total pupil numbers / 11% of pupils with EAL).

18% of the whole school staff identify as being from Black, Asian and ethnically minoritised groups, which increases to 28% amongst our support staff group only (the same as our pupil population). The majority of our support staff live in the local area, and often their own children attend or have attended Prae Wood. However, the ethnicity of our other staff groups is not reflective of the pupil population, with 93% of teachers, 100% of the wider SLT, 100% of the administration team, and 90% of the governing body identifying as White British.

What led us to this programme?

When the pandemic resulted in all schools moving their learning online, primary pupils had free access to the internet via phones, tablets, computers and gaming at a much earlier age than they usually would. As a result, children developed their online identity much earlier too, and some didn't have the necessary safeguards and checks in place at home. Therefore, we saw a rise in online issues regarding poor behaviour choices and cyberbullying, which included racist and homophobic comments being used by pupils.

When children returned to school, many lacked the emotional and social skills usually expected for their age and stage of development. Our school ethos is "Everyone Valued, Everyone Learning". Our staff team focused on pupil wellbeing. This work was vital to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) were once again at the forefront and key to rebuilding our school values and culture amongst our whole school community.

Initially, we spent six months reviewing and writing our EDI policy with governors. During this period, subject leaders reviewed their curriculum offer and considered how to ensure our Prae Wood Curriculum is fully reflective of the community it serves. The English and history subject leaders made some early adaptations, to include a more diverse range of texts and authors as well as reviewing the significant historical figures pupils would study. As a result of training on the Revised EYFS curriculum, our Early Years leader purchased a set of recommended BAME picture books, and we felt this was a positive first step in ensuring our youngest pupils could see themselves represented positively in stories.

In September 2021, we appointed a middle leader as equality and diversity lead and began to research literature available. Following a presentation at our local Headteacher Consortium, we asked Cynthia Rowe (a local primary head) to speak to our teachers about her lived experience of being from mixed-race heritage, growing up in St Albans, raising a family, becoming a headteacher and the challenges she has faced.

Cynthia's talk was truly inspirational, and in the spring term we invited her back to talk to our support staff, as they had heard from class teachers how powerful her message was. Following this, our Year 5 teachers asked to adapt the annual speech-writing project, and every child in Year 5 selected an inspirational person of colour to research, write and present their speech on. The results were outstanding. Parents and governors attending the presentations were very impressed with the children's understanding of the challenges their inspirational person faced and the ways they overcame these.

In June 2022 we were involved in a commissioned school visit (CSV) on race equality. Initially, we were concerned that we weren't doing enough as a school; however, the visit with Toks Olusamokun (HFL race equity adviser) proved to be extremely positive in guiding us more strategically in our next steps. As a result, we were thrilled to be accepted as part of the second cohort of the Great Representation programme.

EDI is now a key area of focus for further improvement on our school development plan. We are working our way through the key recommendations from Toks, to strengthen and further improve our practice. Firstly, our deputy head has taken on the role of equality and diversity lead, she has attended the twilight session "Building an anti-racist school" and is booked onto HFL's two day "Strategic approach to becoming an anti-racist school" training. Following this, we intend to complete the HFL Race Equity and Anti-Racism Self-Evaluation Tool. Secondly, developing staff understanding of and positively promoting EDI has become a key target through the appraisal process. Training needs have been identified and continued professional development (CPD) opportunities offered to all staff at all levels.

Our pastoral provision is already very strong and a key outstanding feature in our most recent Ofsted report (July 2019). However, we acknowledge that this needs to be constantly revisited and finely tuned at every stage to ensure all pupils are explicitly taught about racism, discrimination and prejudice. Our comprehensive RSHE curriculum provides this through a spiral approach using the Jigsaw units, alongside our carefully planned assemblies, delivered by senior leaders and external visitors and during weekly class reflection times.

Reviewing and improving our curriculum offer is an ongoing process, with a focus on ensuring resources and high-quality texts are racially diverse, inclusive and representative throughout all key stages. As part of the appraisal process, all subject leaders have this as a main area of focus on their action plans, and this will remain a key area of future development and improvement.

Finally, recruitment strategies are being more consciously considered; we have undertaken unconscious bias training and now use the anonymised facility on the Teach in Herts website. However, recruitment remains an issue generally, and even more so when striving to increase the number of teaching staff from Black, Asian and ethnically minoritised groups.

Having EDI as a key area for improvement in our school development plan, and also a key target at every staff appraisal meeting, has definitely elevated the importance of understanding EDI from different people's perspectives. As senior leaders, we are becoming more confident in having those uncomfortable conversations and challenging ourselves to be better informed and more racially literate.

In one year's time we are hoping to:

- **have a fully inclusive, racially rich and diverse curriculum, which is reflective of our school community**
- **have racially literate staff and pupils, who have the emotional intelligence to ensure discrimination and prejudice are not tolerated – everyone will challenge and champion Prae Wood in being an actively anti-racist school**
- **increase diversity amongst our teaching team (as well as our SLT and governors) when positions become available**

October 2022

The first seminar we attended was extremely thought-provoking. It was useful to gain an insight into the starting points of other colleagues and to find out about their school priorities. The slide about being "Comfortable to get it wrong – What's in a name?" has been a point of discussion a number of times. What terminology is appropriate; does everyone agree? We have found parents have recorded their children's ethnicity or home language as different amongst siblings – why is this? This has made us question how accurate our data is.

There were a number of lightbulb moments during the day, which certainly made us, as senior leaders, reflect, question and reconsider our practice at school. For example:

- **Using the anonymised application process for our librarian role proved successful. What more could we do?**
- **We believe our emotional wellbeing and positive behaviour policy is crucial to ensuring fairness and a consistent approach. Have we considered this from a race perspective?**

- **We must ensure we truly understand how a parent's own lived experiences impacts their concern for their child's lived experiences. What has been the advancement between the generations? How quickly is change happening? Is it enough?**

At the Hertfordshire Headteacher Conference in October 2022, Tanisha Hicks-Beresford discussed her view on moving from Black Oppression to Black Joy. She spoke about the importance of how people identify themselves – the terms BAME, Black and Brown are used interchangeably by some, and we're hearing the phrase "global majority" being used more frequently.

Tanisha suggested asking Black and White pupils their view of the school curriculum – how does the curriculum reflect them and their family? This would be a good initial step and should be an incredibly powerful opportunity for us, as senior leaders, to really listen to and understand the views of our pupils from marginalised groups.

We were left with more thought-provoking questions to ponder:

- **Do we believe our staff are adequately equipped to support and understand Black, Brown and racially minoritised children in our school?**
- **Do we ensure CPD of the whole staff body is fully inclusive?**
- **What further steps do we need to take to ensure this happens?**
- **Where are we fitting the Black narrative into our curriculum?**
- **Is it really interwoven – frequent and often – not just through one or two topics?**

The most important takeaway from Tanisha is, "Black Joy is anything that inspires, supports and uplifts Black culture and people in unique ways."

It was really interesting to see the inner workings of a secondary school in a different part of the county during our first hub school visit, to Robert Barclay Academy. We were impressed with the work the school is doing to rebrand the corridors with permanent wall art, which is diverse and inclusive of all groups and protected characteristics. This is something we are considering for our school. How can we do this at a primary level, so every child sees themselves being reflected through positive role models?

The first month led us to consider how to prioritise and avoid distractions. It feels like there's so much to do and we want to do it all at once; but we also want to do it well, and we recognise the importance of having time to reflect. Therefore, this month we started to contemplate the following:

- **Parental engagement.** We realised at our October parent-teacher consultations there was a much higher number of missed appointments amongst our BAME group. 4% of White British families missed appointments (14/329) versus 7% of BAME

families (9/123). Previously, we would not have considered interrogating the data in this way – we would only have looked in general at the percent of no-shows. As a school, we make sure that all parents make appointments, and we have a good system for prompting and encouraging our “hard-to-reach families”, but it has made us consider whether some parents may feel pushed into making an appointment and then choose not to turn up. Moving forwards, we will consider how to approach this for our future consultations.

- **The percentage of pupils achieving expected levels in reading, writing and maths (RWM combined) at KS2.** We are now comparing outcomes for BAME and White British pupils; we are focusing on this in every year group. The 2022 data was very favourable towards BAME pupils. However, we are aware that there are attainment differences between different ethnic groups, and this cohort had a higher than usual percentage of Chinese pupils who nationally achieve very highly.
- **Parent voice.** We want to increase racially minoritised voices within the school.
- **Staff training.** This is planned for January.
- **The language we are using.** If using the BAME acronym, we should use the full term when speaking, saying “Black, Asian and minority ethnic”, not “BAME”.
- **Inviting racially diverse visitors into school.** This is not to discuss their lived experiences but for everyday things (for example an author to launch a new novel, parents to discuss their jobs or to help in school, visitors to assemblies).
- **Including culturally diverse names** and not just traditional White British names in maths questions and science explanations.
- **Considering the names given to characters** when engaging in shared or guided writing, having discussions with older children about the names of characters they select, and being more aware, especially of the role of each character and the name given.
- **An extensive book audit.** Providing book boxes and displays featuring Black, Asian and minority ethnic characters/non-fiction information; ensuring every child can see themselves reflected on the bookshelves in their classroom as well as in school libraries and on displays.
- **Ensuring all classes have a wide variety of skin-tone colouring pencils available to pupils all of the time.**

Moving forwards, we want to bring all our stakeholders with us on this journey:

Governors – bringing governors onboard and developing their understanding of the school's work in this programme. The SLT will be presenting to governors at the annual Governor Development Meeting on 23rd November 2022.

Staff – delivering staff CPD on our journey to becoming an anti-racist school. Having those uncomfortable conversations so that everyone develops their understanding of what it means to be actively anti-racist through understanding White supremacy and White privilege as well as intersectionality. Developing racial literacy amongst our staff is imperative.

Pupils / pupil voice – do pupils see themselves and their family reflected in the curriculum? How? Is this the same for all groups of pupils? What more could we be doing to ensure everyone feels welcome and can articulate their sense of belonging at Prae Wood?

Parents – how can we confidently communicate this important work we are doing in school? Will all parents be on board?

November 2022

“Are you racist?” was a question posed by Sufian Sadiq, director of the Teaching School at the Chiltern Learning Trust, during the second seminar. Prae Wood is a kind and nurturing school, and our school ethos, “Everyone Valued, Everyone Learning”, nicely captures this ... doesn’t it? In reality, how confident are our staff in talking about race? Do all our children feel like they belong? Do they see themselves represented? Do they truly feel valued?

We presented our Great Representation project to our school governors who, together with staff, helped us form ideas to start a pupil forum group so as to ascertain our children’s views and perceptions.

We have further reviewed our curriculum to ensure it is more representative and diverse. Following an extensive book audit, we are in the process of revamping the school libraries and class book corners. We are considering representation in our school displays and reading extensively to increase our own knowledge to improve our racial literacy.

After reading Toks’ enlightening blog, we intentionally didn’t hold a Black History Month this autumn term. It was a good place to start a few years ago, but we are now much further on our journey towards building a more racially literate school, and we firmly understand Black history should permeate throughout the annual cycle of the curriculum. We have been proud of some elements we have already weaved into our curriculum, but we need to continue to be aware of any unconscious bias to ensure we do not emphasise White power in our teaching. We must eliminate inequality based on race, ethnicity and colour. We are becoming more consciously aware, questioning everything we do and, ultimately, being more intentional about the decisions we take.

This has left us pondering if we need to review the Enslaved Trade Court Case taught as part of the Prejudice and Discrimination topic in Year 6.

Our reading and research, as well as our attendance at the Great Representation seminars (where we've been fortunate to listen to inspirational speakers), have reinforced the need to empower our staff to feel comfortable in the language they are using and to be proactive in addressing and eliminating inequality. This needs to start now, and we have decided the most effective way to do this will be to give the subject the time needed to explore it with our staff. INSET training is being planned for January with the whole school staff.

Do we understand what we mean by unconscious bias and what might this look and feel like for our BAME pupils? A school governor asked us what our pupil voice groups look like in terms of racial diversity. It was unnerving to discover the one area of school life where we promote pupil democracy, we appear not to have adequate representation from our pupils of colour in our school council group. Why is this? Is there unconscious bias from pupils? Did our BAME pupils put themselves forward for these roles? This is an area to consider, as our other pupil voice groups are more representative.

Our SLT are all White British. We have never had to consider whether we would feel welcome somewhere, to live, work or send our children to school. Yet this is the reality for 28% of our pupils and their families. We don't know what it feels like to "feel like a trespasser", as Sufian Sadiq described his lived experience. Our No Outsiders programme has got off to a good start this term, and our children are embracing how we have no outsiders at our school and how we can just be ourselves, but do our pupils really understand what diversity, racism and prejudice are? This is something we shall focus on in our assemblies and class reflections at regular points throughout the school year, as well as through our RSHE curriculum.

To lead on this, it is clear we need to increase our own and other staff members' knowledge and confidence. We need to have open conversations and listen to others' experiences. The 2020 Runnymede report "Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools" highlights that racism is "deeply embedded" in schools, with more punitive measures for pupils of colour, BAME pupils (for example Child Q) receiving much harsher treatments, glaring disparities with exclusion rates amongst different ethnic groups, and adultification of BAME pupils. This is not equal, and it is our job as school leaders to make a change.

Our school ethos is "Everyone Valued, Everyone Learning", but we are aware that we are not all the same. Everyone has different experiences, and we must ensure that everyone feels valued. Since joining the Great Representation programme, along with the introduction of our No Outsiders programme, we feel that we are on the journey to reshaping our pupils' lived experiences to being more positive and more successful. We

are at the very beginning of this journey, but we are excited to see where it will take us and what impact it will have for everyone in our school.

January 2023

For our January INSET on racial literacy, we posed the same question Sufian Sadiq had asked us during Seminar 2: “Are you racist?” At the beginning of the session, we emphasised to staff they may feel uncomfortable feelings during the session, and that this was okay. We were clear that everyone needs to understand racism so that together we can proactively strive to be an anti-racist school.

Sophie Williams, author of *Anti-Racist Ally*, describes racism as being more overt in today’s society and says that “marginalised groups have been fighting the same fights, having the same conversations, battling the same struggles as their grandparents. Change is at a glacial speed.” Racism today is dangerous, systemic and structural. People die. Rights White people take for granted are denied to others. This was an incredibly powerful INSET, and the response from our staff was what we wanted – it was uncomfortable, but it made staff really reflect and challenge their own subconscious biases.

During the training, we discussed intersectionality and how marginalised groups can face double, triple and even multiple layers of societal disadvantage. For example, the issues that impact an able-bodied Black woman are not identical to those facing a disabled Black woman. We used statistics to highlight the differences with marginalised groups. In Britain, Black children are more likely to experience poverty, have poorer educational outcomes, be excluded from school, 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 family members.

We discussed language and the different terminology, and we noted how everyone who isn’t White British is lumped together, further emphasising White power. We presented powerful clips of others’ lived experiences and the prejudices they have faced, as well as significant cases that led to the death of individuals (for example Awaab Ishak).

We tackled White supremacy – being born with a skin colour not affected by society’s prejudice, how society disadvantages people who aren’t White, and how this can be a difficult concept for White people to come to terms with. We listened to Robin DiAngelo explain White fragility and how, when people of colour try to articulate feelings, they can often be met with silence, defensiveness and argumentativeness.

To finish the session, we returned to the question, “Are you racist?” and discussed how being colour-blind and treating everyone the same only serves to be passive in the fight against stamping out racism. Sophie Williams explains that treating everyone the same fails to recognise intersectionality. Treating everyone the same only leads to more inequality. Instead, she advocates a more inclusive approach in recognising people’s differences and understanding them as a whole, and we discussed this in collaboration with our project and what we are doing at school.

Staff feedback was both moving and impressive. Individuals pushed past comfort and questioned structures and norms. They recognised sympathy as being not helpful. Together, we need to be proactive. Hearing the lived experiences from members of staff was incredibly discerning and added to the adversities we are now more aware of. One member of staff later voiced privately with us that the session resurfaced childhood memories they had fought hard to forget, but they articulated they were pleased to be working in our school, with our cultural ethos of valuing everyone.

We feel that this is the most important project we have undertaken in education to date. Ultimately, and without doubt, we must be key drivers in bringing about change, and we can all do this by being a good ally. Our staff focus with our pupils will now be on mirrors (children seeing themselves reflected) and windows (having a view into someone else’s experience). “I see you, I hear you, I belong” needs to be our mantra, so that children respond with “You see me, you hear me, I belong”.

February 2023

Six weeks on from delivering our racial literacy training, staff continue to report that they are feeling more comfortable with the language they use and feeling braver to have discussions about race. They are more in tune with considering their unconscious bias and striving to be more racially diverse in their everyday teaching.

Our No Outsiders books this half-term tackled race and discrimination. Picture books were carefully selected, according to the age of the children. Our SLT again led these sessions so as to promote its importance and empower staff for delivering future sessions. The discussions held were powerful. The story *Rose Blanche* by Ian McEwan and Roberto Innocenti led to an interesting discussion in Year 6 around how Jewish people today still face racism. This was particularly compelling as we listened to the lived experience of a member of staff. Initially, pupils found it hard to grapple with the concept of racism as not only being experienced by people of colour. From this work, pupils extended their understanding of prejudice and discrimination a little further.

We have now completed the HFL Race Equity and Anti-Racism Self-Evaluation Tool and returned to the recommendations Toks gave us last summer term (following our CSV on race equality). It was pleasing to see how much progress we have made since joining the Great Representation programme. We now need to continue to be brave and continue to seek the views of our racially and ethnically diverse pupils. We looked at this with governors back in November and have continued to have discussions around the best way to do this. Consequently, we feel we are more confident to do this and have planned to hold pupil voice sessions.

March 2023

We have attended six seminars since September and, in that time, we have built a strong rapport with the three schools in our hub group. We have learned so much from each other and gained so much from visiting each other's schools. Together, we have had deep and powerful conversations and have been able to challenge our thinking as to how we are leading our schools forward on race equity. Seeing first-hand how other schools have diversified displays in corridors, books and artwork, as well as their focus on staff representation and CPD on the theme of belonging, has been phenomenal. We are keen to keep in touch to find out how each other's projects continue to progress in the future.

This month our pupil voice group highlighted some actions and thoughts for future staff development. In the primary curriculum, Christianity is presented as the most important religion in the world, as it is covered in each group every year. One pupil bravely told us how they were once asked to draw a picture of Jesus, even though their faith does not permit this and articulated how, at the time, they felt uncomfortable challenging their teacher. Another pupil commented on how the assembly on Ramadan, delivered by a parent, was well received as the discipline of Ramadan was explained rather than it being overly focused on fasting.

Establishing our pupil voice group will be vital for us moving forwards – we are now much more aware of the responsibility we have as senior leaders in actively listening to and understanding the viewpoints of pupils from marginalised groups.

Additionally, we have analysed the results of a staff survey reflecting on our racial literacy INSET in January, our racial equality target on our school development plan, and teachers' appraisal targets this year. We are thrilled we can already see steps of progress in the right direction. Staff are developing their racial literacy and have started to make some positive changes to diversifying the curriculum further. We are hearing staff openly discussing the windows-and-mirrors analogy when planning their lessons,

and colleagues report they are more confident in the language they are using when teaching about race, equality and equity.

When we, as senior leaders, deliver our No Outsiders sessions, pupils are more confidently articulating the respect and understanding they have for others, which is an important aspect we will continue to foster moving forwards. Recently, pupils in Year 6 were tasked with writing a story for their Reception buddies on the theme of “Celebrating difference”. We were astounded with the results, and our Year 6 pupils have since presented their stories as picture books for their buddies to enjoy reading in the classroom. Many of these focused on race and delivered important messages about inclusion, belonging and “It’s ok to be different!”

Being part of HFL’s two-day training on Building an Anti-Racist School, we were fortunate to have a consultation with Shammi Rahman (HFL race equity adviser) and used this opportunity to discuss progress this year and raise the queries we still have. Together with Shammi, we discussed the development of our history curriculum in particular. We are conscious we now do not emphasise White power or miss out the “uncomfortable parts” of history. For example, this year in Year 4, John Blanke and the role of Black Tudors was for the first time taught within the topic on Kings and Queens. As part of a unit on prejudice and discrimination, the Enslaved Trade Court Case held in Year 6 usually focuses on nine key individuals involved in the enslaved trade, but this year we will be even more careful to ensure a focus on both Black and White slave traders and abolitionists. Being part of Great Representation has led us to ask many questions and, most importantly, accept that this is a project without an end date. It needs to remain a key aspect of continual school improvement.

During mid-year appraisals, teachers were keen to discuss the positive progress they can see they are making in diversifying aspects of their curriculum content, and our next step is to arrange for Shammi Rahman to work directly with our subject leaders to audit our curriculum.

When future pupils say “You see me, you hear me, I belong”, we will know we will have achieved our desired aim. We will finally be making a positive change, but we recognise this as a long-term aim because, collectively, we are still far from eradicating discrimination within schools in the UK. One parent recently asked us if we were doing this project because our school has a problem with racism (which they were concerned they didn’t know about), but this project is so much more than responding to a racist comment. It is about the aim we set for ourselves at the beginning: to become an actively anti-racist school, with a racially rich and diverse curriculum, with racially literate staff and pupils, eradicating discrimination of any kind.

Ultimately, we aim to ensure pupils show tolerance and respect towards each other, because this will enable them to live and work harmoniously alongside each other and

be responsible citizens ready for life in modern Britain. Our children are the future, and together, we have an important opportunity to make a change.

This project will never be concluded – at least not until we achieve equality for the global majority of people living in Britain. This, without doubt, has been the most challenging but necessary project we have led on in our teaching careers and we would urge all schools to join the Great Representation programme. Together, we can make a positive change.

Jenny Sheppard and Tracey Lockwood

September 2022

Presdales is an 11–18 girls' school, with boys admitted into the sixth form. There are 1,163 students in the school. The school has students from 20 different ethnic groups. 80% of all students are White British, White Irish or White other. No other defined group has more than 2.8% (Black African, White Asian, any other mixed background)

We carried out an EDI student survey at the end of the last academic year. This was led by a member of staff, who also runs the Pride group at Presdales. The survey was a starting point, and overall the results were positive. However, there were only 254 responses from 1,163 students, and it is not clear who completed the survey. The way in which the questions were asked made it difficult for meaningful analysis to take place, although the comments have been useful. Follow-up work included the member of staff starting to interview individual students about their experiences at Presdales. There was a positive reaction from the students who were interviewed individually but, due to staff absence, not enough students have been seen yet.

It is clear that in order for us to gain an accurate picture of student experience at Presdales, a follow-up survey is required. We will need to ensure that more students complete the survey so we can compare outcomes year on year, with an agreed set of questions. The survey also needs more closed questions, with an option for further comment, to make it easier to analyse the data. We will seek the views of students as to the questions they think we should be asking.

As part of the overall curriculum review over the past few years, departments have mapped and adapted their curriculums to include greater diversity. Examples include:

- **history: enquiry questions (migration, medieval Islamic world, transatlantic slave trade, consequences of the British Empire)**
- **Spanish: effects of immigration**
- **English: more poetry from BAME poets; texts including female and black protagonists.**

Heads of department have mapped all of the protected characteristics across their curriculum

When the school has advertised for roles and we have received a large number of applications, we have removed all references to names/gender/ethnicity. However, for the majority of roles, we only have a small number of applicants, so we are minded to interview all candidates who have relevant experience.

Part of our school improvement plan for this year is to address racial literacy for both staff and students. Whilst overt issues have not arisen, we expect there is work to do

on this when we start to investigate further with the students about their experiences in lessons and around the school. We currently hold a European Week of Languages and, from September 2023, this will be expanded to be a Week of Culture. In preparation for this, the school council will be running a Day of Culture in February 2023.

Very few incidents related to race have come to our attention in the school. However, it would be naive to presume that this is the true picture. We have started on the path of investigating this further but need to hasten what we are doing. Asking the views of students in greater depth is essential and needs to be completed within a short time frame. This will give us a better indication of the positive culture we have in school but also focus on areas where there are issues. We want to support staff and students in racial literacy. We would like to set up a diversity council as a matter of urgency.

Looking forward to this time next year, our aim is to have a clearer picture of our strengths and next steps, with many of these steps already taken. We want students from different ethnic backgrounds to feel their voice is being heard and to know it is being heard through our actions.

October 2022

The first conference session was both engaging and thought-provoking. Hearing about the wider context of historical and persistent racism in our country from Professor Paul Miller certainly focused our minds on the vital role we have as school leaders. Our influence is wide, as was demonstrated during the pandemic. Whilst the accountability structures within our education system are so high on the agenda, we agreed with Professor Miller when he talked about the influence leaders have on the moral compass of our students and, in turn, our future society.

Listening to Cynthia Rowe's lived experience was particularly moving, and hearing first-hand the impact racism has had on her life was very thought-provoking.

Recruitment of staff from different ethnic backgrounds appears to be key for students at our school in seeing themselves represented. However, this is a challenging area, as recruitment of any staff member is very difficult at the present time and fields are small. Nevertheless, it is for us to investigate how we can encourage greater diversity in applications. Ensuring our website is representative of our school community is a good place to start.

We consider ourselves to be at the beginning of this journey, and it was reassuring to hear from the other schools in our group that were in a similar position, but also from those who are further along the road. For us, learning from others about their own experiences and challenges is a significant part of the process.

So far, we have visited two other schools and have hosted a visit. As part of the visit to Presdales, we asked students to be part of a question-and-answer group with the visiting leaders. We were open with the students about the purpose of the visit and the session they would be taking part in, and it was pleasing to hear friends of those involved also wanted to take part. The feedback from the session has given us a sound base to build on. Students are proud of Presdales and initially said the school did not have an issue with racism. When probed further, it was clear that they accept some “minor” incidents as normal behaviour.

More work needs to take place with all students about what constitutes racist behaviour. All of the students in the session were from an ethnic minority, and we considered how students who were White would answer the questions – would their perceptions be the same?

The school has focused a great deal on LGBTQ+, and we believe this has been successful. We need to set up a diversity council as a matter of urgency. Seeing this in one of our partner schools was useful, and hearing about the impact of the council from the students was powerful. We know this from our own Pride group, so need to replicate this with a new diversity council. Asking the views of students in greater depth is essential and needs to be completed within a short time frame.

November 2022

Following Seminar 2, we had several conversations with our senior team about Whiteness and what it may look like in our school. Are we colour blind? Do we truly have equity and equality for all? Our senior team is 100% White, and we reflected that our views may differ from those of students and staff who are not White.

One of the questions posed by Claire Stewart-Hall was “How do we teach race?” We would agree that this is primarily through the hidden curriculum, as opposed to the formal curriculum. We do not think it features explicitly – rather as an add-on. How can we change this? We liked the idea of starting with staff and asking them to think about their own journey and experiences, and how these experiences have shaped their ability to manage conversations about race.

Claire used the term BIPOC: Black Indigenous People of Colour, which is terminology we have not heard before. This affirms our view that further work on racial literacy is needed in our school. We had not considered that being White is being in a racial group, which brings privileges, including that being White is seen as normal. Claire asked why we do not have conversations about race as freely as we do about contraception or FGM.

We reflected on how the media reacts when someone uses a term or phrase that is not appropriate in relation to race, and whether the reaction was the same when comments about other protected characteristics were made. We need to ensure that, as we move through our journey in school, we are very clear that we will not always get it right and that no one should be judged if they unintentionally say or do the wrong thing.

We found it interesting to see how education policy in relation to race has changed over time. We considered how this period of time in race education will be viewed in 10–15 years' time, and how those leading on race education from 1945 onwards believed that they were doing the right thing at that time, in that context.

Listening to Sufian Sadiq brought home how much work is still to be done in our schools and society. We were particularly moved when hearing him refer to himself as a trespasser and feeling that he doesn't belong or ever will. We wondered how many of our students feel the same, and if directly questioned on this, would they be as honest as Sufian? What could we do to ensure our students of colour feel like they belong in our school community?

Since Seminar 2, we have had feedback from a parent of a student who took part in the panel that we organised for our hub's visit to Presdales. The student had told her mother how apprehensive she was about the session but was very positive after the session. A member of staff, who herself is a person of colour, raised concerns about us putting together students from different ethnic groupings and thought this was singling them out. We asked the students about this after the session. They all answered that this wasn't an issue for them and agreed that being together allowed them to be more open and honest than they would have been if their White friends had been present. They commented that it was very refreshing to have a space to discuss their thoughts and feelings about diversity.

We have completed or are working towards the following:

- **In response to the presentation by Jigna Patel, we are planning on adding audio files of students pronouncing their names. We will also add the phonetic spelling of their names.**
- **We have met with Toks Olusamokun (HFL Education race equity adviser), who will return in February to work with a group of students and provide trial software for staff e-learning.**
- **We are investigating using Flair Impact – a race and diversity data partner – to provide questionnaire and data analysis.**
- **We are finalising preparations with our heads and deputy heads of house for the Week of Culture, which will be taking place in the spring term.**

December 2022 and January 2023

Following the recommendation from another participant on the course, Matt – co-author of this case study – read *Gold Rush* by Michael Johnson. Whilst Michael's achievements were inspiring, Matt didn't enjoy the book as much as he was hoping to. The interviews and reflections from prominent Olympians were insightful, but he found the structure of the book to be jumbled and repetitive and didn't get a sense of equality being a barrier for Michael. He considered whether this was due to the racial profile of many USA men and women in their athletics teams. This then led Matt to purchase the audiobook version of *Sway* by Dr Pragya Agarwal, and he was immediately challenged by his assumption and unconscious bias that Michael Johnson may not have experienced as much racial discrimination in athletics due to the racial profile of many athletes (which, of course, is an absurd assumption to make).

Orell Lawrence, in his presentation at Seminar 3, reminded us to “appreciate that reforming our understanding may involve discomfort”, which we believe to be true. Challenging our own thoughts and unconscious biases since the beginning of this course has been refreshing, as until they are pointed out or become apparent, they may not change.

We found Seminar 3 as thought-provoking and as interesting as the first two. Having the opportunity to listen to the lived experiences of the guest speakers is incredibly insightful. We were particularly interested in listening to Penny Laskar speak of her childhood in terms of “A question of identity”. It made us reflect on the number of our students that might lead a dual existence in order for them to feel accepted.

The idea of making up experiences or holidays that are somehow more socially acceptable to talk about with friends when back in school, rather than sharing their actual experiences, is something that we hadn't fully considered. Why might racially minoritised students feel that their experiences are any less valid than those of their peers? It did draw parallels with experiences a current student has shared with us: she says she very often speaks in a different accent in school with her friends from how she speaks at home with her family. She wasn't talking about a different language – just the tilt of her accent.

When we describe vulnerable students in schools and the disadvantages they may experience, it is essential we consider multiple protected characteristics and the disadvantages they may bring; the intersectionality should be at the forefront of our minds. Orell said, “Disadvantage comes from how people see you, not your actions – how do you see yourself and how do people see you?”

Whilst protected characteristics are identified, they should not become labels that themselves are the disadvantages. We discussed whether it was possible, or desirable,

based on your context, to put the protected characteristics in order of importance. We determined that it was not about an order of importance, but maybe a priority at any given time and place. Over the past few years, our school has brought gender identity to the fore, and we have successfully worked with students to launch groups and initiatives that have been successfully received and implemented. Our priority is now race equity

We found the topic of personal qualifiers and how these are used particularly thought-provoking. We reflected on the number of times in our careers when a group of students has been described to us by students or staff, and the ethnicity of a student has been used if the student is non-White, but infrequently when the student is White.

We really enjoyed the presentation from Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School – seeing and hearing first-hand how their EDI project had captured the imagination of their whole school community. “This is me” is something we discussed with our secondary school hub colleagues. We thought it would make a fantastic activity for the Year 6 induction day.

We would like to explore our new students’ heritage with them during the transition day and then ask the students to complete the project over the summer holidays. We would then ask students to share this work via a display during our Year 7 parent information evening, which takes place in September. We would also like to incorporate the map of Britain and the world to show the importance of ancestral roots in our school community and produce wordle posters that show the wide range of countries that are representative of the cultures of our students.

Following the rise in prominence of the Black Lives Matter movement, subject leaders identified how they included diversity, in particular race equality, in our curriculum. We think that we need to do further in-depth work to decolonise the curriculum, as opposed to auditing the curriculum for diversity. In our Year 8 music curriculum, we have a project entitled African Music, which is a term that must cover many different styles and genres, as all African music is not the same. Terminology is also key, referring to enslaved people instead of slaves.

February 2023

On Monday 21 February we had a joint INSET day with Richard Hale School, who are also in this year’s Great Representation cohort. The morning was delivered by Shammi Rahman (one of HFL Education’s race equity advisers). It was an inspirational morning, where the thoughts and views of all staff present were challenged.

The first task involved staff discussing appropriate language to use, especially when describing ethnicities and cultures. This highlighted the importance of open dialogue between teachers, as the language we use has changed and will continue to change. Shammi challenged staff to become anti-racist. I am sure that phrases such as “I don’t see colour” or “I treat everyone the same” resonated with staff, and several would have accepted that they had also said and thought this in the past. The shift to being an anti-racist school means that we need to do more to ensure that we are challenging stereotypes, White privilege, our curriculum, and the culture in school.

Since the last conference, we have visited both St Andrew’s C of E Primary School and Barnwell School. The strength and confidence that an effective hub group gives you should not be underestimated. We believe that we have all accepted and embraced the challenges of this programme, knowing that we are on the same journey. We have been open and honest throughout, and this has given us a high level of trust. Our advice to new participants on this course for 2023/24 would be to invest the appropriate amount of time into your hub group, and not to see the visits as add-ons that need to take place.

At Barnwell we shared time with students, staff and a member of the governing board, and we were able to hear about their journey so far and look at their plans for the future. Their willingness to share their Equity and Diversity Scheme and action plan is testament to the trust we have built up, and the willingness to share resources that will benefit us all.

When we visited St Andrews C of E Primary school, we were struck by the calmness and nurturing environment of the school. Students were keen to talk to us about how they were becoming an anti-racist school. They were articulate, honest and insightful, especially when challenged about the importance of this work when the vast majority of students in their school are White. The students could see the long-term value of the work the school has been doing.

At Presdales we recently celebrated our Week of Culture. This was organised by the students and included form-time activities and different world cuisines at lunchtime. We look forward to developing this week over the coming years.

Toks Olusamokun visited our school and carried out a question-and-answer session with students in all key stages. Her report has given us a lot to consider about how the students perceive systems in school, including our rewards and consequences. For example, some students believe that little or no action is taken following a racist incident, when our school policy is not to share with students the consequences other students receive. It is very easy to read such reports and be defensive, but this is the reality of the students’ perception, so we need to work with them to address the valid concerns they have raised.

Following this work, we will be going through the HFL toolkit, and we have also signed up with Flair Impact to survey the students in greater detail, so we have a benchmark of our starting point. We are recruiting, internally, an EDI lead and have set up a T&L library, with a particular focus on EDI in the staffroom.

March 2023

We were interested to hear Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga talk in our early March seminar. When discussing this programme with our trustees, one had asked whether antisemitism would be addressed. Professor Lenga shared an antisemitic letter that had been received by a headteacher and asked the group to evaluate the content and the terminology that had been used. We reflected on the tone of emails we had received from parents, and how one can get a sense of their opinions by how and what they write. It reminded us that, whilst we are working hard with our students in school, they are heavily influenced by what they hear outside of school.

We had not considered derogatory language that was specific to a culture, and when Professor Lenga shared examples, we were unaware of their meanings. It reinforced the importance of training for staff on what language can be used to discriminate against others.

We have both commented on how privileged we feel to have been part of this course over the last year. On starting the course, we were concerned about the time implications of the headteacher and deputy headteacher being out of school for several days for conferences and school visits. However, the impact of the course on us, and on our school, has made the time commitments worthwhile.

In September we were in the position as a school where we completed relevant policies relating to EDI, we did have meaningful objectives, and we had successfully launched and embedded our Pride club. We now feel that we are in the position to dig deeper into our practice and are looking forward to what is to come.

It has been a pleasure to work closely with our hub group and, in particular, to visit their schools to observe their own journey. The bond that our group has formed has been a real strength of the programme. Early on, presenters all said that we need to be prepared to get it wrong, to not know the answers and not be fearful of this, and we are grateful that the culture our group created allowed us all to speak freely and openly.

Over the course of this programme, we have identified next steps that we needed to take, including a more in-depth survey of our students and staff, a culture day, setting up a diversity council in school and planning for Year 6 induction. At a recent trust board

meeting, we shared our progress so far:

- **curriculum audit for all nine characteristics**
- **visit from Toks Olusamokun, including student panel conversations**
- **joint staff training with Richard Hale School, delivered by Shammi Rahman**
- **website representation check**
- **Week of Culture, organised by our student leadership team**
- **new library installed in the staff room, with a focus on EDI literature**
- **engagement with Flair Impact, who will be conducting student and staff surveys this academic year**
- **attendance at the HFL Race Equity Conference**
- **appointment of a new EDI Lead in our school**
- **identification of an EDI trustee**

The joint INSET with Richard Hale School, which acted as the launch to staff of an enhanced focus on EDI at Presdales, was a particular highlight. The session created a buzz with staff, with many saying that they had never had training on race equity in their careers. We interviewed four internal candidates for our EDI lead role, and all of them could have been appointed. We have rarely seen in interviews the level of passion and desire to do a role that we did for this post. Staff are grateful and proud that Presdales School's focus on EDI is so high-profile.

Our new EDI lead will start immediately, and their first role will be to write an action plan. On our visit to Barnwell School, we were grateful to receive a copy of their comprehensive improvement plan, which will work a template for our new lead. Areas to work on before the end of this academic year include:

- **analysing student and staff survey results and using the outcomes to form the bedrock of our action plan**
- **setting up a student and staff diversity group**
- **creating a calendar of religious festivals and celebrations across cultures**
- **trust Board training**
- **further staff training**

For those who are reading this and are about to embark on the Great Representation course, we offer some practical advice:

- **Ensure you are committed in advance. Make sure the dates of the sessions take priority in your calendar.**

- **Either make notes during presentations, or immediately afterwards, so that your journal is easier to write, and write your journal soon after each session.**
- **Plan your school hub visits in advance. We had two visits per day, which meant reduced impact in our own schools but also gave us time as a hub group over lunchtimes to get to know each other better and to discuss in greater detail how we were implementing strategies in school.**

As we finish this programme, we look to the future and are excited as a school about the journey we are on. We know that we will not always get it right but would prefer to try than shy away from any challenges we may face. We do not want to be satisfied with saying that our school is not racist, but instead know that we are anti-racist and that our work is never done, but will be ongoing for evermore.

Matthew Warren and Sara Miller

September 2022

The Great Representation programme gives the school a chance to assess where we are and where we are heading, in terms of racial equality. Actions obviously speak louder than words and, in this case, louder than signing up for the course in the first place. We feel that our school champions equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), but we ask ourselves “Can we do more?” in embedding these important values in an affluent, mostly White, mostly male environment.

Looking back at historical work the school has carried out, we are always mindful of tokenism. We want to use these sessions and school visits to really solidify and embed the values that Great Representation stands for. We have tried to move away from the yearly messages of learning about Windrush, NHS nurses, Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela. Instead, we have tackled more specific issues such as:

- **the BLM movement**
- **use of racist language**
- **inequality in society**
- **racial and unconscious bias**

This is alongside the need to be aware of cultural differences and historical events, and knowing and celebrating people’s heritage.

We have had a big push on tackling all forms of discrimination, and this has resulted in an anti-banter campaign. This campaign has asked all students to look at the use of language and to respect each other. In the last year this campaign, alongside the plethora of resources that have been presented, has resulted in very few examples of negative behaviour exhibited. We have recently asked departments about how they celebrate and teach diversity within their curriculum. This gave a real insight into the different work that departments produce and the opportunities available to students. It also shows some potential for development and discussions within departments.

The school student body is predominantly male, White and British. The school staff body replicates this. One thing that stuck with us after the first session is the potential for our students from various ethnic backgrounds to feel isolated due to the lack of inspirational role models that they can associate with. We hope this is not the case and are confident that all students feel supported and comfortable in and around the school. Hopefully, the proactive nature in which we tackle diversity and racial equality solidifies this.

October 2022

Seminar 1 was a real eye opener from the start. The initial presentations from each school clearly showed the different demographics and subsequent demands and issues schools deal with on a daily basis. We found the whole atmosphere of the room really positive, and the open dialogue within our group allowed for some interesting and informative points to be made.

The data that Professor Paul Miller presented was exceptionally powerful. What really hit home was the daily struggle people face and the racial inequality that exists. It also made us think about the struggles our parents and students may face within and outside of school regarding racial inequality.

As a result of the first session, we are planning to work closely with the student body. This will hopefully empower students – there will be more impact to decisions if they have been involved in shaping our course of action. We already have an equality and inclusion student ambassador and now have plans for a further two EDI ambassadors next year. These will be sixth formers and will lead in student suggestions and feedback.

The student council are due to meet within the next few weeks and will be tasked with a student-friendly anti-discrimination policy. We already have an anti-bullying policy that is visible in all teaching rooms but not an anti-discrimination version. Hopefully, this will reiterate our message of racial equality and clear repercussions if our expectations are not met. The student body will also be tasked with producing educational resources for use with students who are found to have made any racist comments. We plan to carry on with our approach of sanction alongside education.

Another thing that stuck with us was around the work we are currently undertaking with the victims of racist incidents. The incidents that are reported are minimal. Is this testament to a proactive approach, or is it just that incidents are not being reported? Or is it something in between? We aim to improve support to victims by using restorative work and welfare checks. This was prompted by hearing the powerful and inspiring presentation from Cynthia Rowe; her recollections of racism she has experienced had obviously had a profound affect. The hurt and damage caused by such actions must be at the forefront of any investigation we lead at the school.

Future plans include a staff working group. It will be interesting to see how this unfolds and what positives it will bring.

November 2022

Seminar 2 gave the chance to look through other schools' journal entries, and it raised some relevant points for us to think about. Firstly, it raised the fact that the data may mask underlying issues or show a different picture from the reality. For example, our school data suggests a lack of racist incidents. However, what is actually going on within the school for our students? Are all racist incidents being reported? Do students feel comfortable in reporting? Do students see the value in reporting? All of these questions cast doubt over what is actually taking place within the school.

The seminar also covered the topic of White privilege. It really brought home to us that, although we may feel we are inclusive within school, what does equality and equity look like for our students from different ethnic backgrounds? One of the speakers who made a big impression was Sufian Sadiq. His passionate and emotional presentation fully opened our eyes and gave the room a glimpse of what it was like to be him and walk a day in his shoes. His personal story was shocking at times and brought a spotlight on the media, language and banter. We can never fully appreciate what it must feel like to walk a day in his shoes, but his presentation made us question our own experiences when involved in sport and "locker-room banter".

Jigna Patel raised an important issue of the correct pronunciation of names and made us question how we can better this within our school. As a result, we will be looking into the idea of voice-recording names and putting these on file.

The month ended with a really positive visit to Sandringham school. The visit allowed for talks with the EDI student group. This has given us plenty of ideas of how to launch the same at Richard Hale. Our student council will start to tackle issues surrounding EDI, with race top of the agenda. Feedback will be on the work currently undertaken, how students perceive racial equality within school, current issues, and future ideas/projects. The trip to Sandringham also highlighted the need to look at race as a potential barrier to different factors, including attainment, progression and attendance. We have highlighted this to the teacher in charge of data, and we will be looking at this in the New Year.

There were other touches that we really liked at Sandringham. These included lots of public displays of celebration of effort and attainment. The fact that these were in photo form gave a real sense of diversity and a spectrum of colour and race throughout the corridors. We liked the idea of naming the rooms of the school after inspiring people; the headteacher reflected that it took a few attempts to get a balance of both race and gender. This raised the question: What would our first draft look like if we attempted the same exercise?

Overall, another really positive month, and we look forward to the next seminar.

December 2022

The third seminar gave the chance to speak with leaders and staff from other schools. This was another opportunity to share good practice and talk through issues, and it has been a highlight of the course so far. It has allowed reflection on positive things we are doing at Richard Hale, alongside things we can continue to improve on. Discussions included unconscious bias, perception, intersectionality, racial literacy and educating staff.

The presentation on curriculum scratched the surface on how to embed a diverse curriculum within different subjects and has given recommendations of certain resources that will help. We hope this will be returned to in other seminars, as this is something that we feel we need to continue to build on at RHS.

The task "Who is the most disadvantaged?", which looked at intersectionality, was a positive and interesting way to open discussion amongst students. We have taken this idea away and will present this to certain year groups in due course. Again, another eye opener! The use of the N-word was also discussed, and this led us to think back to examples of how we have dealt with it within school. This is another thing we plan to raise within our new EDI staff group.

Within school we have continued to work with our student body. The use of language is the first item on their agenda when they next meet. This will include many different forms of slang words and potentially offensive words. As a result, different year groups will receive assemblies on what is acceptable and what is not (and why!). The new EDI staff working group has also met, and we have started to devise a stronger, more robust way to deal with any forms of discrimination. This will include sanction and restorative work. The staff group is mixed in its ethnic background. We are excited to see it evolve.

We are looking forward to the next seminar and visits to some of the infants and junior schools in our hub.

January 2023

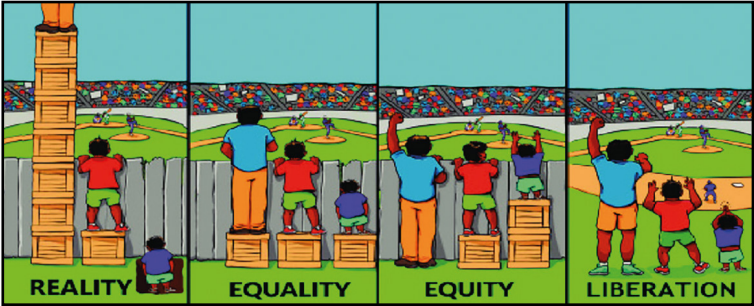
The new year brought an unfortunate start, with a case of racism that had been reported to a head of year. This not only led to tough sanctions but also gave a chance to educate and trial our new restorative work. The student who was the perpetrator completed his sanction and then spent some time with the behaviour manager looking at issues concerning acceptable language and anti-racism work. These resources have been improved since our involvement with the Great Representation programme. Following

this, both the perpetrator and the victim sat down with two teachers from our new EDI staff team. The victim talked about how the comment had affected him, and his concerns were listened to. The other student was able to listen and talked openly about how he had completely misread the situation and used the word “banter” as an excuse. Both students maturely discussed this, and the victim left the conversation feeling supported and listened to.

Feedback from staff and both sets of parents was positive, and the main objectives were achieved: the victim empowered and supported, the racist behaviour quickly recognised and addressed, the perpetrator given a sanction alongside clear education and left in no uncertain terms that his behaviour was racist. Both students were then offered the chance to speak to any member of the EDI team following the restorative work if they needed any further clarification on anything.

We also had the chance to present to governors, which was an interesting experience. We talked through all the work that we were currently doing, the Great Representation programme itself, and our plans for the future. The idea of not being afraid to get things wrong was challenged. This promoted a discussion, and we found common ground in the fact that the school is working hard to prepare all students regarding equality and equity for all. The discussion also focused on unconscious bias and White privilege. It was really interesting to bring these two discussion points to governors, and we all agreed that the students should have some form of education around these terms (and more).

The month finished off with the fourth seminar. It was interesting to explore the concepts of equality, equity, reality and liberation. The image shared by Jess Boyd was a powerful one and left us with a few questions to take back: What barriers are in place in the first place for our students? Can they be taken away? What exactly is the fence/barrier in each case – it will be different for all?



The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated;
© Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

February 2023

The EDI staff team has now met a few times, and we have put in place a programme of discussion and education for the summer term. We plan to look at the use of language within our school and the different types of racism. This will be ongoing, alongside our new EDI student body. This work has been aided by Shammi Rahman, one of the race equity advisers from HFL Education. She came into Richard Hale to run a joint INSET with Presdales School. Staff were treated to the programme below:

- **how to talk about race**
- **legislation and Ofsted**
- **exploring different terms and use of language in relation to race**
- **the importance of the curriculum and diversity**
- **facts and statistics in relation to Hertfordshire**
- **White privilege**

The presentation was interactive and informative, and promoted a lot of dialogue amongst staff. We obviously need to build on this, starting with developing the curriculum, representation within texts, classroom display, and challenging use of language, if required.

Feedback from staff was really positive, and the session prompted some really interesting discussion after the initial INSET. The overwhelming view was that it was positive that we were taking a proactive approach on the issue of race within Richard Hale and the wider community. Staff were also positive about the plans for a more transparent system of dealing with any racist incidents. Likewise, the messages around the need for more diversity throughout the school and the curriculum has sparked interest amongst the staff body.

March 2023

Early March saw the last of the school visits. This was to All Saints Primary in Bishop's Stortford. This visit had been preceded by visits to both Cassiobury and Yorke Mead a few weeks earlier. These visits gave a chance to see how the younger key stages in different areas around the county were introducing the idea of EDI into their schools. It was really enlightening to see the amount of literature available in all three schools, which was inclusive and gave younger children plenty to read and think about. This gave students from all backgrounds, races and religions the chance to be represented and celebrated.

We were extremely impressed by the work that Yorke Mead primary school was doing. The visit to this school highlighted the power of high-quality, teacher-led discussion work, which really engaged the students. Their maturity at such a young age was impressive, and the topics of “How to tackle racist comments” and “Do people belong to places, or vice versa?” were explored in detail.

As we draw to the end of the programme, we feel really positive about our involvement and the foreseeable future. When we started, we felt we were a non-racist school. We had good intentions and based our model on positive principles. However, our approach was reactive in places. The course has shone a light on many things. We have made progress and want to be recognised as an anti-racist school. This includes being more proactive with our approach regarding all issues surround racial equality, diversity and inclusion.

The new EDI staff team, alongside our student EDI champions, are really focused and enthused for the challenges ahead. This highlights the fact that we, as a school, have a duty to prepare our students for the picture in society, not just our school.

Kevin Patterson and Ian Hawkins

ROBERT BARCLAY ACADEMY

September 2022

At Robert Barclay Academy our student population is 90% White, and the community we serve is predominantly White. In response to the death of George Floyd and the growing prominence of the Black Lives Matter movement, our school took several steps to address the issue of racial inequality.

We conducted a student survey to gain a better understanding of levels of racial understanding. The results were illuminating: 73% of students felt that the school could do more to talk about inequality. Specifically, 65% of students highlighted racial inequality as a subject area that they would like to discuss more. These results underscored the importance of our efforts to address racial inequality and further reinforced our commitment to promoting diversity and inclusivity.

We have started to make progress towards improving the diversity of our staff body and have seen an increase, since 2016, in the number of BAME staff, from 12.2% to 16.4%. We have introduced branded displays that showcase our identity and values. These displays help us to communicate our commitment to excellence and inclusivity. We have also invested in publicity initiatives such as our promotional video and prospectus, which convey our vision and mission. Through these efforts, we hope to reach a wider audience and encourage a more diverse range of people to join our community.

In addition to this, we reviewed the curriculum by asking the heads of departments to identify opportunities where they could strengthen diversity. The goal was to ensure that our students are exposed to a wide range of perspectives and cultures, which we believe is crucial for promoting understanding and inclusivity.

As we embark on the Great Representation programme, we recognise the importance of gaining a clear understanding of our key challenges in promoting greater diversity and inclusivity throughout our school community. To this end, we plan to engage in conversations with our colleagues to help us identify and formulate these key challenges. We hope to gain a better understanding of the specific barriers and obstacles that exist within our school community, which will enable us to develop a clear action plan with specific steps and strategies.

Ultimately, our goal is to create a comprehensive plan that we can present back to all stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and the wider community. By working together and engaging in open and honest conversations, we believe that we can create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our school community.

One of our goals is to ensure that our staff body has a greater understanding of how to support equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) from a curriculum perspective. To achieve this, we have to review and strengthen our curriculum plans to ensure that they are more inclusive, and representative of all students' needs and experiences.

Additionally, we recognise that it is crucial for our BAME students to feel seen and heard, and that they belong to our school community. We want all of our students to feel valued and supported, regardless of their background or ethnicity. To achieve this, we are committed to continuing our efforts to promote EDI throughout all aspects of our school community. This includes creating a safe and welcoming environment for all staff and students, providing opportunities for students to engage in open and honest conversations about EDI, and working to address any incidents of racist behaviour that may occur.

Overall, our goal is to create a school culture that is characterised by respect, understanding, and inclusivity. By working together and committing to ongoing efforts to promote EDI, we believe that we can have a positive and transformative impact on our school community, both now and in the years to come.

October 2022

During the first Great Representation seminar, we were presented with some eye-opening statistics about the representation of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) staff within the education sector and the civil service. For example, we learned that only around 3% of headteachers are of BAME heritage, with Black males accounting for 0.9% of those. These statistics highlight a clear lack of diversity at the leadership level within the education sector and suggest that there are systematic race inequalities within UK schools.

It is crucial to confront these statistics head-on and work together to create a more diverse and inclusive education sector that better reflects the society we live in. Through ongoing efforts to promote EDI and greater representation, we can create a more inclusive and welcoming school community that is reflective of wider society.

We were also presented with some alarming statistics about the impact of Covid-19 on the BAME community. One of the most concerning statistics was that 95% of doctors who died from Covid-19 were BAME. This suggests that race inequity is deeply entrenched in society, even within well-educated sectors.

As a school, we must consider how we can better support the BAME community both within and outside of our school walls. We have a responsibility to address systemic inequalities and work to create a more equitable and just society. This may involve reviewing our policies and practices to ensure that we are promoting EDI for all members of our community, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

During our Great Representation seminar, we were challenged to think about how we could tackle issues of representation and equity within our own school. We were reminded to anticipate some resistance or defensiveness, particularly from those who may feel uncomfortable about confronting issues of race and representation. This notion of White fragility was an important reminder that change can be difficult and uncomfortable, but that we must be willing to challenge our own thinking and biases in order to make progress.

We were also presented with statistics about attainment levels in Hertfordshire, which showed that attainment levels are below average for many BAME groups. This was a stark reminder that race and ethnicity continue to be important factors in educational attainment and success, and that we must work to address these disparities.

We have a responsibility to address these disparities and work towards creating a more equitable and just educational system. This may involve reviewing our curriculum and teaching practices to ensure that all students feel represented and included, and providing targeted support and resources for students from underrepresented backgrounds. By addressing these issues head-on and committing to greater representation and equity, we can work towards a brighter and more inclusive future for all students.

During our discussions, we explored various ways in which we could incorporate student voice and input into our efforts to address issues of representation and equity within the school. This is an important aspect of creating a more inclusive and just school environment, as it ensures that the perspectives and experiences of all students are considered.

Another key consideration was how we could build race equality into the very fabric of our school community. This could involve a range of actions, such as reviewing our curriculum to ensure it represents and values the experiences of all students, providing targeted support and resources for underrepresented groups, and creating a more diverse and inclusive staff body.

Through our discussions and work on the Great Representation course, we have come to recognise that addressing issues of representation and equity requires a top-down approach. This means that we need to prioritise changes at all levels of the school, from leadership and governance to curriculum and student experiences. By making race equality a central thread within our school, we can work towards creating a more equitable and just learning environment for all students. This will require ongoing commitment and effort from all members of our school community, but it is a vital step towards creating a brighter and more inclusive future for all students.

Moving forward, we will liaise with a race equity adviser from HFL Education, who will be supporting us with an audit of our curriculum and provision. This will help us to identify areas where we can prioritise our efforts and make meaningful changes.

In addition, we have reached out to other schools within our trust to share our work from the Great Representation course and discuss how we can collaborate on this important issue. We will be presenting our findings and progress at the trust INSET day, along with Sir John Lawes School, who are also participating in the Great Representation course and are part of our trust.

At the beginning of the programme, the school identified the need to improve racial equality and anti-racism through better representation in the curriculum. This was motivated by several factors:

- **the school being predominantly White**
- **the concern about the Black Lives Matter protests**
- **the desire to provide students with cultural capital**
- **feedback from BAME students that they did not feel a sense of belonging at RBA**

The school had begun to work on improving curriculum representation, but it is clear now that this is at a surface level. Below are some key reflections:

Reflection 1: If we are to make a real change, it starts at the top. We must do some work with the SLT and staff. We need to equip staff with the knowledge and understanding of societal racial injustice, common language, etc. Just changing texts in English or studying different BAME journalists in media, for example, will not have long-term impact if people do not understand the deep reasons this is needed and the intended outcomes. 85% of our staff are White, and many will not necessarily appreciate or fully understand how prevalent racism is in the UK, although many will have seen local protests in Hoddesdon.

Reflection 2: We need to audit exactly what is in place – how much of the curriculum is White experience?

Reflection 3: We have had discussions about decolonising the curriculum. We need to discuss what this actually means and what this will look like.

Reflection 4: We need to ensure that our race-equity plan for the year is manageable. What can we feasibly achieve by July? We know this will just be the start, and it is likely we will have a two- to three-year plan.

Reflection 5: We need to review our EDI plan beyond the scope of a year, looking to improve staff understanding and representation in the curriculum.

November and December 2022

Our focus for improvement will be in two interlinked areas. The first area will be to raise awareness amongst all stakeholders about the need to enhance our work, and to create a truly comprehensive and inclusive school community where everyone feels they belong. This will require us to consult with the SLT, our wider staff body, and students and parents, with the hope that all stakeholders will fully understand our intent.

The second area will be to improve representation in our curriculum. We plan to base our actions on the audit that will be undertaken with the support of one of HFL's race equity advisers. During a visit to one of our hub schools, we were inspired by the work they had done on improving representation, not only through books and resources but also through culture and ethos. For instance, we were impressed by a very large display in their canteen, titled "One World – the beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people".

Our approach will be informed by the audit and focused on achieving our goal of making all students feel seen, heard and valued in our school community. We understand that improving representation in the curriculum is not only about diversifying the content but also about fostering a deeper understanding of societal racial injustice, common language, and the intended impact of the changes we implement. Therefore, we need to equip our staff with the knowledge and understanding they need to support our efforts to create a culture of belonging and celebrate differences. Finally, we recognise that this project will be ongoing and that we will need to review and update our EDI plan to ensure we are achieving our goals.

The success we are seeing at the moment is that we are becoming better aware of what we can do that will make a difference, the clearest thing being that we have to improve staff awareness of the issue. Our staff body is 85% White, and it is likely that many will never have thought about what it feels like not to belong or to be represented, and what racism feels like.

It was interesting that, when we briefly raised what we were doing with our SLT in December, it led to a far bigger discussion and debate than we had expected or anticipated. A range of questions were asked, such as:

- **Racism is a huge, complex problem, a societal problem – can we make further changes?**
- **Do we have the capacity to address this alongside other school improvement priorities and the impending Ofsted inspection?**
- **What about other areas of inequality?**
- **What is decolonising the curriculum, and is this needed?**

- **What common language should we use, and shouldn't we ask the BAME community what language they prefer?**

If there was a lack of sensitivity or awareness around the language used to discuss issues of race and racism, we knew this could create a sense of exclusion or invalidation. It's important for schools to approach discussions around race and racism with sensitivity, awareness, and a commitment to inclusion and equity. This involves actively seeking out and valuing the perspectives and experiences of ethnic minority staff and students, as well as fostering an environment where all members of the school community feel safe and supported in engaging in these important conversations.

The opportunity at Great Representation Seminar 2 to reflect on whose lens is being privileged at RBA and who benefits from that was a powerful one. The question "Are we racist?" was also powerful and thought-provoking. It made us more aware of the need to delve into our data a lot more, to see if any groups are being disadvantaged. The ongoing theme of belonging only helped to reinforce what we want to achieve: to create an environment, ethos and culture where everyone feels part of the RBA family.

We will review the CPD required at SLT-level to better understand the issues of race equity before taking this to other stakeholders. Once the SLT have been upskilled, we will look to see how this can be disseminated to the wider staff body.

We have noticed that we are now using a range of terms to describe race, for example "BAME" and "people of colour". This is because we have heard these terms being used by visiting speakers. It is also motivated by a desire not to offend.

January 2023

The third Great Representation seminar prompted us to reflect on how the school's profile and the ethnic diversity of its student body can impact the pace and momentum of change. We recognised that racism has been deeply ingrained in the education system, and that the national curriculum doesn't incorporate any core knowledge on the topic, particularly regarding colonialism. This led us to acknowledge the need to address issues of equity and race within the school community, and to consider how we can better support their staff in understanding these issues.

The recent hub school visit was to a school where the SLT has a clear direction for addressing staff representation, from anonymising their applications through to putting their adverts on different platforms, to support their efforts in broadening their reach for applicants from diverse backgrounds. They have planned a whole-staff conference, focusing on belonging, and the entire day will be aimed at getting every member of staff

to have a better understanding of the challenges of racism. They are in the process of organising a cultures day in the summer term, to celebrate different cultures.

We have fed back our learning from the Great Representation seminars to the CEO and trust executive team. This led to a discussion about the Hertfordshire Secondary Heads Conference last year, where the heads listened to Bennie Kara talk about reviewing and decolonising the curriculum. The outcome of this discussion was to plan how we can integrate decolonising the curriculum into our trust INSET day in June 2023, and thus have impact on a wider group of schools within the trust.

At the RBA January INSET, the headteacher fed back to staff on the Great Representation project and its intended aims. He explained that this is a long-term project and that our next step will be for the SLT to complete the HFL race audit. In the coming half-term, we will ask the SLT to complete the HFL race audit anonymously, and then the results will be collated to help us determine what our priorities should be. We will build these into our academy development plan. Following this, we will review how we can use aspects of the HFL audit with our middle leaders and then all staff. This will inform our planned summer work, which is to support staff with reviewing their curriculum, in decolonising it and improving representation. This work will then be further supported by the trust INSET day at the end of June.

February 2023

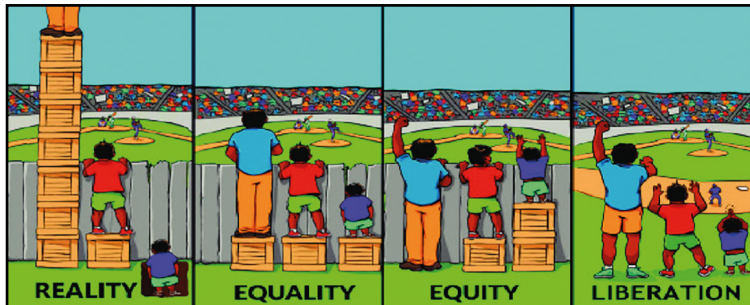
The presentation from Jess Boyd on “The Case for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy” was very powerful in furthering our understanding of how we can address race equality in our school. The opening image of two fishes swimming in the water, with one saying “Mind the water”, and the other responding with “What water?” gave a simple but effective message: we need to talk about the water, i.e. race inequality. It has been noticeable that, within our hub group, it has taken time and several meetings for us to feel fully comfortable in talking about the content of the seminars. We now do so safely, with respect and with agreed language. We now recognise how the seminars and the hub conversations have allowed us to listen, examine, recognise and understand experiences, backgrounds, prejudices and biases. The seminars and hub discussions have allowed us the privilege of increasing our knowledge and understandings of race equity and anti-racism.

This led to us reflect on whether we have yet established the same environment, within our SLT and amongst our staff, to discuss racism, race equity and anti-racism in a safe and respectful manner, where everyone can be free to express themselves and ask awkward or clarifying questions (where necessary), in a way that is mindful of others.

This will be something we will need to put in place if we are genuinely going to take our stakeholders with us and get them to commit them to learn more and make meaningful and tangible changes. To do this, the pace at which we work may need to be slower, to ensure all are on board. We also have discussed sending other members of our SLT and our link governor to the HFL Race Equity Conference on 15 March, to deepen their awareness and understanding of what we are trying to do.

Within Jess's presentation, the image of the three children looking over the fence to establish understanding of equity was equally enlightening. It enabled us to discuss the meaning of the fence:

- **Is the fence our unconscious bias? If it is, how do we all recognise that bias?**
- **Who put the fence there in the first place?**
- **Is this fence present in our policies, and do we need to review these to remove any barriers?**
- **Is this fence representative of our dominant culture, and if it is, how can we dismantle this fence?**
- **How do we lessen the impact of this dominant culture and remove the invisible backpack?**



The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated;
© Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

We felt it would be very useful to share these images and discussion points with our staff, as part of taking them with us on this journey to being an ant-racist school.

Just before the half-term, we shared and discussed with our SLT the HFL race audit. We then asked them all to complete it anonymously. One of our next steps is to share the results and to use this to discuss what our priorities should be and how we can build these into our academy development plan.

The other next step is to work with Sir John Lawes School to establish how we can both share our work from the Great Representation programme with all staff across the trust at our trust INSET day, with the intention that departments from across the trust will come together to discuss how they are incorporating diverse perspectives and voices into their curriculums. We are coming to realise the utmost importance of creating a safe space for conversation, before we can take concrete actions to promote race equality.

Addressing race equality in our school is not a one-time event – it is going to be an ongoing process. This requires commitment from school leaders, teachers, students and the broader community, to promote understanding, empathy and respect for all individuals, regardless of their race or ethnicity. We recognise that this is going to require dedication and perseverance.

A personal reflection for Rav – co-author of this case study (who is from a minority ethnic background) – is that learning about race and equity has been a challenging experience, with a lived experience of racism both in and out of one's career. Doing so can bring up past experiences of racism, discrimination and marginalisation that the individual has faced, which can be very painful and difficult to revisit. These experiences are deeply ingrained, and discussing race can bring up questions around a sense of identity and feelings of belonging.

Rav related to Sufian Sadiq's presentation, in particular when he spoke about having to work harder to ensure your abilities and qualities are noticed. She has found herself, at times, hesitant to engage with discussions around race and equity because of a fear that her experiences might not be validated or taken seriously. This is something she has never raised before because she never thought she could.

Rav was one of the few minority females in the entire room, which was so apparent on the first day of this programme. At times, this has led to her feeling a sense of disconnection from the wider group, and being the only ethnic minority delegate within the hub group compounded the feeling of isolation and a sense of not belonging. At one point, a comment was made about how well she had done to be in the position she is in! This was difficult for her to hear, but she recognised the truth in the comment. The personal challenge she faces is that some people may think that she "should" be the biggest champion of this programme when, in reality, the power to make the change does not sit only with her.

March 2023

David Gillborn's research and presentation was very thought-provoking. He argued that racism in education manifests itself in several ways, including the curriculum taught in schools, the assessment methods used, the way teachers interact with students, and the disciplinary practices employed by schools. He suggested that these issues are often influenced by broader societal attitudes towards race, which shape the way schools operate. Gillborn's view on racism in education is that it is a systemic and institutionalised problem that needs to be addressed through a concerted effort to change policies, practices and attitudes within the education system. This requires a commitment to anti-racist principles and a willingness to challenge existing structures and beliefs that perpetuate racial inequality.

Our reflection from this was that colour-blindness is something that can easily sit and spread within the education sector. As Gillborn said, a belief that one should treat all persons equally, without regard to their race, in practice results in:

- **ideology that promotes ignorance of existing inequalities**
- **refusal to engage with race inequity**
- **defence of the status quo**

It was concerning to hear that the government's own "Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities" report (March 2021) lacked credibility to such an extent that the United Nations Human Rights Council's Special Procedures issued a joint statement expressing concern about the findings. The experts noted that the report's conclusions appeared to downplay the role of institutional racism and structural inequalities in creating racial disparities in the UK. They also criticised the report for presenting a misleading picture of the experiences of ethnic minority communities in the country, and for failing to acknowledge the impact of historical injustices and ongoing discrimination on these communities.

The experts raised specific concerns about the report's recommendations, including its proposal to abandon the use of the term "institutional racism" in favour of "inequalities that result from our history, our geography, and our economy". They argued that this approach ignored the systemic nature of racial discrimination and would make it more difficult to address these issues effectively. They expressed concern about the lack of diversity amongst the members of the commission and the limited scope of its inquiry, which they argued did not adequately engage with the experiences of ethnic minority communities or take into account the views of experts in the field. This only reinforces that inequity is institutionalised!

We end our engagement with the Great Representation programme knowing that more must be done and achieved around race equity, and that this must not be dovetailed with “equality” in general, as this diverts and can mask the issue. The journey has been slower than anticipated and, in recent months, the challenge around this has been evident within our own SLT. Discussing race and issues of diversity in a professional context requires courage and vulnerability, as it can often lead to uncomfortable conversations and the potential for conflict.

For a member of the SLT, who is an ethnic minority, it has been evident that discussing race has at times left them feeling vulnerable, isolated and worried about having to experience backlash – the fear of people thinking “Oh, what now? Do we really need to do more? You’ve done alright; if racism existed here, would you be where you are?” The pressure of this has reinforced the stark reality of not feeling like they “quite” belong and therefore having to revert back to “navigating” how to fit in.

Overall, whilst it is important to have open and honest discussions about race and diversity in education, we have recognised the potential vulnerability and pressure that someone in a marginalised position may experience.

Our next step is to create a safe and supportive environment for our team to have these conversations, so that we can move forward with supporting our school community.

In some ways, the end of this process is almost the beginning of our journey in addressing and dealing with race equity, but it is one that we are committed to.

Ced de la Croix and Rav Phagura

September 2022

Other schools made us aware of the Great Representation course, and we have heard of the impact the course has had with SLTs across the county, who are developing anti-racist policies to support students from all backgrounds. We very much feel that working with other schools will benefit us with what we are doing at Sandringham to ensure inclusion. We believe that we can expand our understanding of the challenges that the diverse range of students at Sandringham face. We want to ensure that no student is disadvantaged because of their race and that “Everybody can be somebody”.

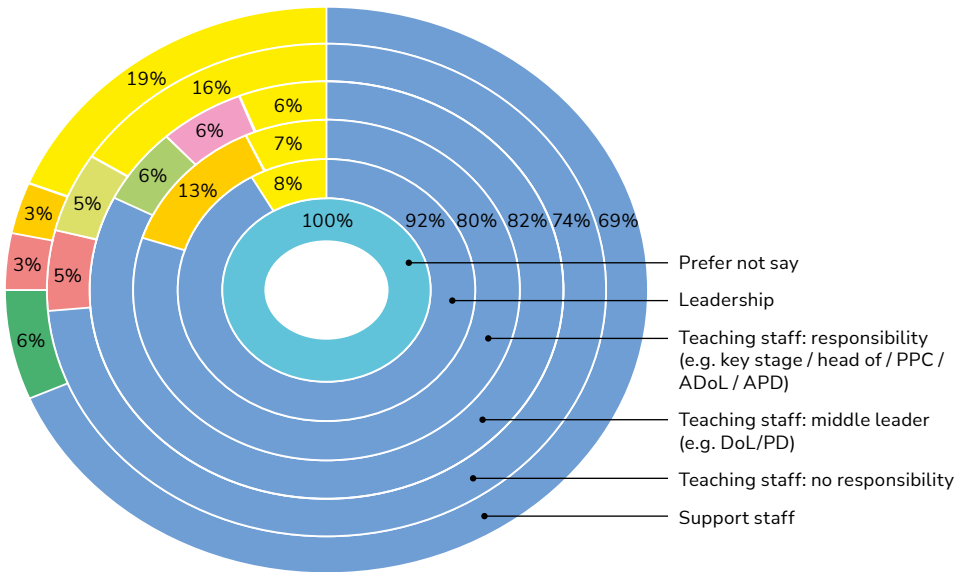
We aim to ensure that all students, regardless of ethnic background, can access an equal curriculum, and that the curriculum studied does not make any student feel uncomfortable or perpetuate stereotypes of race or ethnicity. We want to address our curriculum and unpick any evidence of racist language, texts or concepts that may be embedded. We want every student to feel safe in their learning and to ensure that nobody is disadvantaged by their race at Sandringham.

We have looked at the curriculum in a number of subjects already, including English and history, and addressed the texts that are studied to ensure that they offer diversity and do not discriminate or fuel racial stereotypes. The biggest challenge is the time it will take to audit such a wide and varied curriculum, with many subjects and courses requiring analysis, but we are committed to achieving this.

We have also looked at representation of staff and governors and developed an anonymous equality and diversity data-monitoring form. This serves as a tool for capturing the protected characteristics of our staff and governors, to allow us the opportunity to analyse diversity across the staff who work with our students. The findings show that, as a staff body, we predominantly identify as White English, with a greater diversity in support staff and teaching staff with no additional responsibility. The more responsibility staff have at Sandringham, the less diversity there is, with a leadership team and middle managers who predominantly identify as White.

We are concerned by this and by the image this must present to the students of colour in our school. Where are the role models for our students who identify as Asian, African, Black or of a mixed ethnicity?

Ethnicity by role



- White/English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish
- Any other ethnic group
- Asian/Asian British - Indian
- White Irish
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups - Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups - White and Asian
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups - White and Black Caribbean
- White - Any other white background

In a year's time, we want to have decolonised our curriculum to ensure learners of all ethnicities feel comfortable in every classroom. We want to ensure that every student at Sandringham feels seen and heard, regardless of their ethnicity, and we want to highlight the importance of anti-racism to students. We also want to ensure that our staff and governing body are representative of a range of ethnicities, and that everyone has an opportunity to progress to a position of leadership. We are determined to increase visibility and promote non-White role models.

October 2022

The biggest learning from Seminar 1 was definitely the sense that racism is prevalent across society and, as a result of it existing in our city and county, it does not stop at the door of our school. Hearing Cynthia Rowe's account of her childhood in a neighbouring school was difficult to stomach. Has that much changed? We hope so, and that the work we are doing as a school is not putting our students in similar situations. We also hope that the work being promoted ensures White students are understanding the importance of anti-racism.

The second takeaway for us was a realisation about the amount of privilege we possess and have experienced in our life to date. As White males from relatively comfortable socio-economic backgrounds, we find it hard to relate to that privilege and the experiences of people who lack it.

As a result of Seminar 1 and the first school visit, Andrew (assistant headteacher; inclusion and student leadership) definitely feels he has challenged himself to work with colleagues and other students to be "upstanders" in the presence of any hate language towards race. In his classes and around the school campus, he does this personally, but his responsibility as the school's anti-racism lead is to change staff perception of language and ensure that they take a zero-tolerance approach.

We have worked on the education of language for the past year with staff, but now we need to ensure that the message is spreading to students. Through assemblies and equality and diversity student meetings, we are ensuring the students realise the power of what we say, or what we don't say.

As a result of school visits and discussions at leadership level, we have decided to include our students in the discussion and hold a number of student voice meetings to set our agenda for anti-racism and gauge their feelings on what discrimination is currently happening in school. By speaking to students, we hope to understand any problems that are harboured at Sandringham before tackling them. Once we can understand the barriers, we will continue to look at our strategy and share this with students, staff and governors, to promote equality and inclusion.

In the interim, our current focus is to establish an anti-racism group that will sit alongside our GSA (Gender and Sexual Identity Alliance) to work on issues of inclusion for students of colour. This will be led by Andrew and supported by our student-led equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) team and their Year 12 leads. The main focus for the year is our curriculum, and we have already been in contact with HFL Education to look at how they can best support the school in this. We hope for our middle leaders to further this process in January.

When visiting Richard Hale School, Andrew saw the power of their visible branding of message. Through all PSHE lessons, assemblies and posters, staff at the school are ensuring that students know what is and isn't acceptable and the serious approach the school has towards racism and hate language. We are now looking at how we currently share our message and the uniformity of this through our Thought for the Week (TFTW) and personal development curriculum.

In terms of priorities, we have developed an EDI implementation plan that has been shared with our senior leaders and governors. The goals are as follows:

1. The **curriculum** at Sandringham is **diverse** and **decolonised**, with EDI visible across all subjects and key stages.
2. **Recruitment** at Sandringham positively encourages those of different backgrounds to apply for roles at all levels, including governance. **Mentoring** for promotion is offered to those from a minority group.
3. **CPD** is **tailored** to the school, ensuring that all colleagues are confident and effective in engaging with EDI issues.

Andrew is working through this to look at steps that are specific to us as a school. We plan for this to change the way we look at whole-school strategy, to give us an anti-racist lens on all work.

This half-term we have been focusing on developing our understanding of the barriers to learning for our ethnic minority groups, to strategise and remove them, thus creating equality in attendance, behaviour, rewards, destinations and progress at Sandringham School.

Through our analysis, we have uncovered a number of key barriers that we weren't aware of. In terms of attendance, we have unearthed new findings, in that we do have four ethnic groups who are struggling to access school and have an attendance rate way below that of the school average (96.03%). Our White Eastern European students' attendance sits at 88.09%, Bangladeshi students at 88.73%, White and Black Caribbean students at 86.43%, and our Pakistani students' attendance rate is 82.45%. For a school that prides itself on leaving nothing to chance, these findings surprised us. We must change our approach and analyse the reasons for this.

In terms of our behaviour analysis by ethnicity, we have identified that the percentage of behavioural incidents in the school generally falls in line with the proportion of students from each ethnic group. There is a slight over-representation of Bangladeshi and Pakistani students, suggesting that there is a lack of access to education for these students, and there is work to be done to support them. It may also be that there is an unconscious bias from staff, and we must ensure that we are confident this isn't the case by looking at incidents affecting children from these groups more closely and monitoring the data.

There has been a shift in the culture of the leadership team to support the use of an anti-racist lens across all work we do. We are moving closer towards an analytical approach, where ethnicity sits alongside gender, SEND and economic disadvantage. We need to ensure that all staff see this as our work as opposed to Andrew's work. Our next steps will be to apply this lens to our destination data and progress data, to help us identify any groups who are not accessing higher education opportunities in the same way that their peers are.

At Seminar 2, Jigna Patel of Herts and Essex School spoke about her journey in education as a teacher and school leader and shared her reflections of discrimination. Her story resonated with us in that we have few staff of colour in positions of leadership, and we now recognise the lack of role models our students have at Sandringham. We need to consider how we can support staff of colour into leadership roles at Sandringham. Jigna also shared some key strategies and quick wins that she has been able to put in place. The most pertinent was where students are offered the chance to voice-record themselves saying their name; the recordings can then be added to registers, for support staff to use correct pronunciation. This is a strategy we are now looking at.

One of the highlights from Seminar 2 for us was hearing Sufian Sadiq of the Chiltern Learning Trust. His session, titled "Racial equity: A walk in my shoes" gave us so many reflections. It was an insight into one man's life and career. Sufian has encountered a vast amount of discrimination, yet he doesn't let this affect his positivity and unwavering pursuit of success for his trust and his community in Luton. He talked about the media's creation of a racial ideal, and how this has shaped our culture and prevented many from accessing opportunities in society.

How guilty are we of contributing to this? Is this part of the cause for a lack of engagement for some of our ethnic minorities in school? We must look at our barriers and how we can best overcome these. Sufian's message culminated with him highlighting the importance of becoming an ally. This is part of our reason for joining the Great Representation programme and also central to the work we are implementing in school with our staff and students.

Recently, we hosted a hub visit and welcomed our colleagues to Sandringham. It was a very positive experience and made us think about what we do, why we do it, and how we can be better at supporting all students at Sandringham to genuinely adhere to our motto of "Everybody can be somebody".

One highlight from the day was giving our SLT's EDI arm the opportunity to speak to our guests. We feel this was a positive experience for both parties and gave an honest perspective of student experience on inclusion at Sandringham. It was encouraging to see the confidence and passion students demonstrated around this work and the support they feel we offer all. They have decided they want to run a Culture Day at

Sandringham as the main focus for their work this year and were excited to share this with the hub. They recognise the diversity at school and believe we must do more to highlight and celebrate this. We also feel that our guests were able to dig deep into the school through these conversations, and there were threads that emerged for us to focus on. One area was the support we offer both victims of racism and the perpetrators. Do we act reactively or proactively to hate speech and racist language? We believe it is the latter, but is this true? We then discussed our work at Sandringham around looking at key trends in the school. The feedback we received was very encouraging but also challenged us to act faster in our work.

December 2022

Seminar 3 started with a look at recent societal examples of racist language and microaggressions in the media. One discussion centred around the questioning and treatment of the Sistah Space charity worker, Ngozi Fulani, by Lady Sarah Hussey. Our reflections on this were timely, in preparation for our World Traditions and World Religions Day, which aims to ensure that our students, staff and whole school community are better prepared for the society we live in. An assembly led by our director of learning for philosophy and religious education allowed us to share this example directly with students, highlighting the importance of tolerance and respect for each other, specifically within different religions and ethnicities around the world. This gave a clear message to students and got them talking.

The next big piece of work we plan to undertake in January is an overhaul of our curriculum, as we look to decolonise and diversify each and every subject. This task has already begun in history and English literature; however, the bulk of the work is still to do. Our subject leads will cast an eye over every aspect of our school curriculum to ensure our students see a representative and inclusive curriculum. This work will start with a curriculum audit, which we are completing in conjunction with HFL. This is a key part of meeting our EDI aims and ties in nicely with thinking prompted at Seminar 3, where Orell Lawrence from The Black Curriculum shared ideas around curriculum review and revision.

At Seminar 3, we were also treated to an insight into the work of Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School, from the first Great Representation cohort. Leaders shared their community-based project and got us thinking again about what we want to achieve for ourselves and our students this year, and how we, as allies, can ensure our anti-racist stamp is a part of Hertfordshire's work for an inclusive society.

One development we are now undertaking with our EDI Student Leadership Team, alongside Leeds Beckett University is to become accredited as an anti-racist centre. The audit that we have started has allowed us to look at every aspect of our work as a school, and to consider what and how much we are doing for students, as leaders and for the community. We believe that, through this accreditation and the accompanying coaching sessions for staff and students, we can further our stance for equality and inclusiveness in our school and local community.

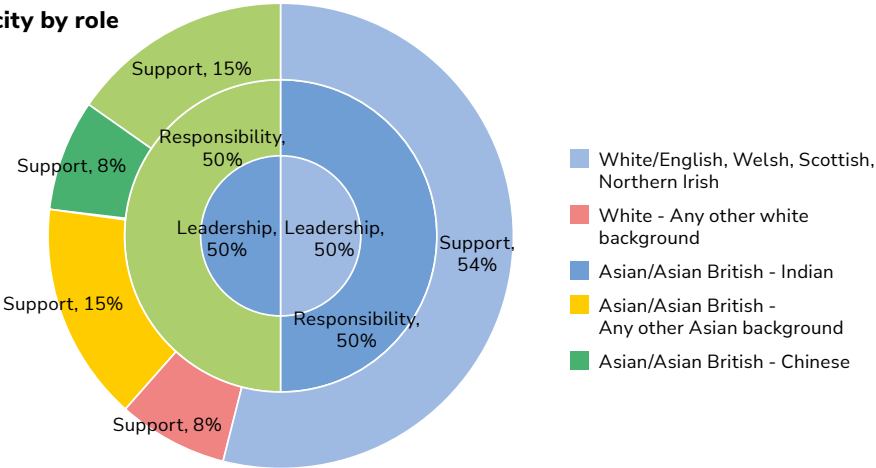
Another opportunity for self-reflection between Seminars 3 and 4 has been a recent governors' meeting, at which EDI and our compliance with the public sector equality duty was due to be reported on. This has given us a chance to review our EDI aims for the year and review progress. Our focus has been on the first two of our aims:

1. The **curriculum** at Sandringham is **diverse** and **decolonised**, with EDI visible across all subjects and key stages.
2. **Recruitment** at Sandringham positively encourages those of different backgrounds to apply for roles at all levels, including governance. **Mentoring** for promotion is offered to those from a minority group.

Aim 1 is ongoing, and imminent change will create a huge impact.

In relation to Aim 2, we have recently completed a review of our new recruits and have seen an increase in diversity of applicants. Support staff applicant diversity continues to be higher than for teaching staff. Leadership applications are now only 50% White. This highlights the impact of the change of our recruitment advert, to highlight inclusivity and opportunities for staff of all ethnicities and backgrounds. The diagram below does, however, highlight the lack of representation in the current staff body and again illustrates the need for these applications to be converted to appointed staff, to further diversify staff to represent our students.

Ethnicity by role



Moving forward, we very much look forward to Seminar 4 and the visits to our primary and infant colleagues in our hub group.

January 2023

Seminar 4 gave us the opportunity to hear from one of our colleagues, Sylvia Tai, headteacher at Watford Grammar School. This was a very honest and open account of Sylvia's journey through education and early life, before becoming a school leader in the area. It gave us an insight into the changes in the local demographics and the impact this can have on students in our schools. Sylvia highlighted incidents that she has reflected on and the opportunities open to her as a result of her race. This made us think whether or not we are supporting our ethnic minorities in engaging with daily life at school.

After our analysis of attendance, we have improved our attendance monitoring and, in conjunction with our trust attendance officer, we now have a much wider lens over day-to-day patterns. Our outreach to families of certain ethnicities has become more proactive. We have worked to highlight religious holidays across the year where attendance may drop, to support families in helping students to be in school, for example by offering a prayer room facility during Ramadan.

As a result of learnings from Great Representation, from the input in Seminar 3 from The Black Curriculum, and from a visit from Shammi Rahman of HFL, we have been able to move forward with aim 1;

1. The **curriculum** at Sandringham is **diverse** and **decolonised**, with EDI visible across all subjects and key stages.

Shammi visited us for a director of learning (heads of subject) meeting, with a focus on carrying out a curriculum audit to look at what we are delivering, how we are delivering this, and who Sandringham's curriculum is representing. Our motto of "Everybody can be somebody" is inclusive, and we want our curriculum to demonstrate this, and for every student to feel seen and heard through it. The training gave directors of learning a stark understanding of what it is like for a student of colour to feel excluded. This introduction has allowed us to equip our middle leaders with the attitude and motivation to join us as activists and seek a wider representation in the curriculum they own and teach.

Our hub visit this month saw us in Watford, with a look at Cassiobury Infants and Yorke Mead Primary. Both schools demonstrated the work and journeys they've been on to support race diversity. Yorke Mead's inclusion centred around Philosophy for Children (P4C), which facilitates the study of key issues of race equity and gives students a safe voice and space to share their ideas. It was a mature approach for a Year 6 class, which

gave us the confidence in our opportunities for oracy on similar subjects through the Sandringham curriculum. Our takeaway from Cassiobury was around the importance of consistency. They demonstrated this in abundance, with all three classes in each year group receiving a very similar diet through their curriculum and expectations. It was evident that the race and ethnicity of pupils are considered, to ensure equal representation in each class. This results in a homogenous learning environment.

Another new initiative we have introduced is a school podcast: Sandcast. This is an opportunity to share stories and interview students, staff, governors and parents in the school community, to shed light on a number of key issues and all corners of school life. It has served as an excellent platform to share some of the work going on in school as a result of the Great Representation programme. Guests have included:

- **Deputy Headteacher Dr Caroline Creaby, talking about female representation in leadership and STEM subjects**
- **our Year 12 student leadership equality and diversity team lead, Alice Taylor-Paul, on the importance of developing cultural awareness within the student body and the plans she has to introduce a Cultural Diversity Day to the school**
- **one of our head students, Shiam Ardeshta, on his move to the area from North London as an Indian student**

Students and staff have given much positive feedback on the podcast, and we feel this gives students of colour another opportunity to be represented. We look forward to the weekly episodes that will celebrate the diversity at Sandringham.

March 2023

Our final hub visit was to All Saints Primary in Bishop's Stortford. This was an enjoyable and mind-broadening trip that saw the culmination of our shared visits. The opportunity to meet students and hear about their anti-racism learning gave us takeaways that we have put into our own context. As a direct result, we have invested in our library and bought new literature highlighting key issues and figures of colour, as well as by authors with whom all students at Sandringham can directly relate.

The visit also allowed us to meet students who have studied key issues of race in their PSHE lessons. Seeing students of a primary age helped us to reflect on the education of our own students, and on the carefully considered personal development curriculum that we know is impacting race equity in our own school.

Another excellent learning opportunity was the keynote from David Gillborn on racism in education. His message again reminded us that racism exists in all schools and that stereotypes are both formed and strengthened. We must do more to break these and, as highlighted by David, the curriculum gives us this opportunity.

Our ongoing work on the curriculum has seen our initial audit completed and our middle leaders make key findings. They were able to go back to their faculty meetings to discuss what they can strategically abandon and what they would like to do to their curriculums as a result. A key aspect in this process was agreeing to the activism and representation in our curriculum as a shared approach.

Our next steps are to amend curriculum maps and implement changes for a September start, with a drive to broadening all students' recognition of race equity. David also highlighted the danger that inequalities in the education system are normalised, with reference to evidence that exclusion numbers are frequently higher and performance levels frequently lower for Black students. Again, this reminded us of the shifting lens we as a leadership team are adopting, and the need to consider: Does this data prevent anyone in our school accessing and thus achieving? We believe that, by posing this question more frequently, we can challenge ourselves to adopt a more inclusive and anti-racist approach to all our work.

As we near the end of the programme, it is only right to consider our aims for the year.

Aim 1 was around our curriculum. As outlined, this work continues, but progress has been good. The staff have a passion for changing our curriculum to increase representation.

Aim 2 is our drive for more diverse recruitment. We believe our logistical changes will result in a shift, as prospective staff see our school as diverse and representative, but we also recognise that much recruitment in education is challenging in our current climate.

Aim 3 is the development of anti-racism CPD. This is something we have continued to act on, with opportunities for individuals, team training, and a whole-school culture shift to highlight and rid any systemic racism.

To conclude, this is a journey that we relish and which will, over time, have a profound impact on the culture of inclusiveness at Sandringham, ensuring Everybody can be somebody.

Alan Gray and Andrew Cracknell

September 2022

Professor Paul Miller inspired us greatly on the first day of our Great Representation training. We always knew that schools are at the centre of our communities. Covid-19 showed us that we are responsible for driving changes, not just within our schools and communities, but to make a positive impact on society overall. It is our moral responsibility to do so. At Simon Balle All-through School, we passionately believe that we are creating tomorrow's citizens today. What does that mean for race equity and equality? What is our motivation? What are our levers? What are our challenges?

During 2021–22, as a response primarily to the murder of George Floyd, our SLT and governors decided to conduct a race-equity audit of our current provision in order to set up an action plan for future improvement. To make it comprehensive across the fabric of the all-through school and provide the necessary training, we decided to apply for the Race and Conscious Equality Charter Mark. Developed by SSAT (the Schools, Students and Teachers network) and Fig Tree International, the Race and Conscious Equality (RACE) Charter Mark is for UK schools, academies and colleges, both in the state and private sectors, wishing to demonstrate their commitment to action and improvement in relation to race equality in all aspects of their work as educators, employers and community leaders.

The RACE Charter Mark framework comprises six elements for the school to self-assess. Some of these naturally fit into national frameworks, including reference to the Race at Work Charter:

- **race at work**
- **assessing equality**
- **leadership and management**
- **conscious curriculum**
- **professional development**
- **stakeholder engagement**

We initially assessed our provision, set targets and committed to actions through the year, and revisited them to evaluate impact. Overall, the school achieved the Silver Charter Mark, but this is an ongoing journey, and many elements need to be embedded or developed further.

There were many positive aspects in the RACE report, including:

- **The student body has been fully involved with the development and implementation of the plan through a student parliament that allows the strong use of student voice in terms of equality**

- RACE has a regular slot at governing body meetings to ensure that it remains an integral part of the school's strategy.
- Clear links have been established between the RACE agenda and Simon Balle All-through School's values and the school's wider work around equalities and inclusion.

The report outlined further considerations:

- **What support, internal and external, will enable race leads to continue to develop the RACE agenda at Simon Balle?**
- **How will the school make sure that any data-capture activity is meaningful without being onerous?**
- **How will the school ensure that support and external partnerships/inputs are coordinated appropriately?**
- **What opportunities are there to share good practice, learn from what others are doing, and discuss and explore solutions to challenges associated with this work?**
- **How will the school ensure it can maintain the momentum that has been generated to date, to sustain and improve practice moving forward?**

Using these questions, we are now building an action plan to ensure a continued commitment to this crucial work.

October 2022

Returning to Professor Paul Miller's inspiration, one specific area has struck us and compelled us to seek further student voice feedback: where do Black and minority ethnic (BAME) students see themselves represented? Professor Miller spoke of the importance of connection and of belonging – even just seeing a member of staff that looks like you can achieve this (“I see you, I hear you, I belong”). But clearly that sense of belonging can be created in multiple ways – through displays, books, staff, governors, the parent community, our school website, external visitors, and more. How well are we creating that sense of belonging at Simon Balle All-through School? Would everyone say they feel they belong?

Our assemblies at Simon Balle All-through are themed for Years 3–13 to ensure that we:

- **promote global events and awareness**
- **continuously instil our values**

- **communicate knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures and religions**
- **provide thought-provoking materials, during the assembly itself and with pre- and post-assembly tasks**

As part of One World Week this year (the week beginning 18 October 2022), we focused on what sharing One World really means and how we all seek to belong within this. Using a variety of materials, including a pertinent video made in the Netherlands, students were inspired by discussion around how important it is to every single one of us to belong; therefore, it is incumbent on us all to warmly welcome everyone and to celebrate diversity. Perhaps it is just semantics but, for us, this deep sense of belonging goes far beyond the notion of “tolerance” as one of the British values.

One of the strengths of our work, as recognised by our Silver Charter Mark, has been in our all-through student parliament and year group council discussions. We believe it is important to be humble enough to learn from student views. For example, staff had worked to create a display in a shared corridor, celebrating diversity at Simon Balle; it was well intended but the students hated it because they felt it lacked a real message and was too bland! Their subsequent work to recreate this display – created by the students, for the students – had a much better impact.

As part of our drive to include the community in creating our inclusive school, we decided to run a student voice activity to hear opinions, perceptions and views. We focused on the middle school, Years 6–8, because we recognise that a feeling of belonging is crucial at this stage in a young person’s development; what is established in these years is the foundation – pastorally and academically – for what follows.

We asked heads of year to select students for us so that they were reflective of a wide range of protected characteristics. We asked those students:

- **What do you belong to at Simon Balle? (Prompts included activities, clubs, etc.)**
- **Where do you feel that you belong most / where are you happiest? Why?**
- **Is there anywhere or any time where you feel like you belong less or not at all? Why?**
- **Do you think that everyone feels that they belong? If yes, how is this achieved? If no, why might this be, and what more can we do as staff and students to support this?**
- **Our focus is on ensuring that our students from different backgrounds and cultures belong at Simon Balle. Do you think we are achieving this? How? What more can we do?**

The responses were both encouraging and gave us a real sense of purpose and future direction. The range of clubs where the learners felt safe and happy were wide-ranging

and diverse, including the chess club, the library, enrichment activities, sporting activities and music; and students were keen to belong. Quotes included: “Drama helps me to express my feelings”, “In music I feel part of the community”, and “In music the older students help me progress”. Specifically on welcoming those from different backgrounds and cultures, students eloquently explained how students designing diversity displays helped educate their peers and developed a sense of belonging.

The curriculum was also mentioned, with a specific example, in English lessons, of looking at speeches, activists and inclusivity. This was seen as a powerful, engaging topic. Areas where students did not feel a sense of belonging were in corridors and changing rooms, and a specific case was given of a student being laughed at due to not being allowed a phone because of their religion. These areas are now being addressed through staff awareness and continual reflection on our pastoral practices, including with more strategic mapping of student/parent/staff voice through 2022-23.

From the first session, we have mapped our new actions, whilst still keeping the key headings from the RACE Charter Mark framework.

November 2022

Something that struck us from the presentation shared by Claire Stewart-Hall was the statistics on behaviour incidents. She shared the notion that Black students are often perceived to be more mature, and their names more easily remembered for infringements of policy, which may mean that they are often more harshly or regularly sanctioned than their non-BAME peers. Unconscious bias could be highly prevalent here.

When we came back to school, we relooked at the higher behaviour level sanctions. The statistics pointed out that we had too many re-offenders (of all ethnicities) and that this needed to be redressed. As a result, we are scrutinising isolations and suspensions, and tracking trends and patterns, including those specifically related to ethnicity. We have put in place a flow diagram, as a check and balance, to really analyse our interventions and impact. For those students who are reoffending, we are forming a group around the student to ensure a coherent strategy is in place, to foster and support the individual to continue to belong to our community.

Sufian Sadiq’s story – “Walking in my shoes” – highlighted the negative depictions in the media of certain cultures and religions and ultimately the question: “What does ‘good’ look like?” As educators, we have a vital role in ensuring we equip the next generation to understand “good” in its broadest sense and to understand media spin, fake news and the power of research.

As we reflected on Sufian's words, we were reminded of the power of our own Simon Balle All-through school values: always needing to teach and model how to live well together in our community and beyond, and what respect, hope, wisdom, responsibility, trust, kindness, and more (we have 12 values in all) mean to be citizens who understand the goodness in all. Again, staff could unconsciously be promoting a notion of "good", which is unintended: this needs to be a lens we continue to apply in all that we do.

Thirdly, we were privileged to listen to a presentation shared by Professor Louise Archer at our recent INSET day. She spoke powerfully about identity (how BAME students may see themselves) and capital (how easily or otherwise resources are accessed). Disadvantage, in its widest sense, needs to be well understood by all staff, to effectively and proactively support all students.

At times, BAME students may not feel that school is part of their natural habitat – they may struggle to identify and belong if they do not see themselves reflected. This may lead to them choosing pathways that unnecessarily lack ambition and aspiration – they may not identify with what they are capable of. For example, Professor Archer spoke of women in physics; the same could be said of BAME diplomats. Of course, there are many examples of achievement and success where challenges and circumstances (including socioeconomic) are overcome. But this is often as a result of exceptionally hard work, staff who are advocates, excellent resources (including human) and, at times, luck. The implication, therefore, is that our culture and values must underpin every aspect of our educational establishment – for all students.

We have worked hard on over a number of years to analyse our curriculum through the lens of the extent to which it promotes diversity. We are conscious of in-the-moment opportunities – perhaps most relevant to class teachers and form tutors – to celebrate all cultures, different ways of life and individuals such as Marcus Rashford and Raheem Sterling (with the World Cup happening as we write!). Forming the foundation, though, is the need to ensure our curriculum is robust in its knowledge base for promoting diversity and developing the skills for individuals to think for themselves. We are proud of our all-through literary canon, because each of the texts that children read, study, are inspired by and use for their own writing has been so carefully selected (with multiple criteria applied). There is too much to share here, but, for example:

- **Study of *Galimoto* by Karen Lynn Williams led to both excellent writing outcomes and sophisticated reflection from our Year 2 students on the many moral messages the book conveys.**
- ***Journey to Jo'burg* by Beverley Naidoo has inspired the best kind of cross-curricular learning in Year 4, with a genuine depth of understanding from a literary, historical and values-led perspective.**

Students, parents and staff are fully committed to the curriculum rationale. All-through discussions amongst staff have been valued by all, and no doubt tweaks will continue to be made.

Our work in history is also significant and, as leaders, we have encouraged a healthy debate – changes have been controversial at times. We are in a relatively distinctive position to plan for and review our curriculums from Reception to Year 13, so the progressive and sequential curriculum is both an opportunity and a challenge for our diversity lens (and indeed each lens we use for evaluation).

We are still grappling to ensure that changes made in subjects like science, maths and computing are not tokenistic. The challenge in geography is avoiding victim narrative, but we still need to teach about inequalities and the fact that the global economic system produces winners and losers.

We know we have lots to reflect on this month. As we move forward, we are forming key areas to review in our subsequent reflective journal entries:

- **student voice**, in relation to diversity within the curriculum and in our displays and resources
- **data analysis from leaders and student voice**, in relation to behaviour
- **how well our values are embedded**, in terms of the notion of who our students aspire to be and why – this will allow us to continue to shape our PSHCE curriculum in a well-informed way in respect of the positive and negative impact of societal norms and the influence of the media

December 2022

The focus of this fourth journal entry is on the last of the bullet points above, from our third reflective journal entry: the continual work to daily embed our values through our teaching and curriculum, and through all points and opportunities across the school day.

Firstly, learning from training, the curriculum was yet again a topic of debate. We were challenged in the last session on developing our curriculum, amongst other things, ensuring that we avoid victim narrative. In this session we reflected on how we ensure BAT (balanced, accurate, trustworthy) in all facets of our curriculum. Equally is important is ensuring that when our students leave, they are equipped with the skills to question, look at many sources and not simply trust a headline.

Several years ago, one of us heard a talk by Sir Trevor McDonald, who said the best thing teachers can do is to equip students to question and balance views. How do we get

students to constantly apply critical thinking? It is possibly easier in some subjects, for example history; but using form time to constantly analyse and discuss current affairs and breaking stories, for example on immigration, will develop the skills to apply across the curriculum. It is a great opportunity to use newspapers with different focuses – liberal and conservative.

As an educational institution, we are in a valuable position to challenge students to really explore diversity and racism. This includes brave conversations about whether White privilege exists and whether racism is ever understandable. We discussed the importance of training to ensure that staff always deliver with consistency and confidence. This is vitally important as we were reminded, “A misinformed child is a vulnerable child”.

We focused on the curriculum in terms of generalisations and language. How broad and/or deep is our focus in different subject units? Are leaders questioning this sufficiently well? As a Hertfordshire improvement partner (HIP), one of us has often explored with schools their depth of study. If, for example, they plan to cover Africa (for example, geography or music) in just one short half-term, what are the dangers of what children could take away? What smaller focus could lead to children knowing and remembering more, with an accuracy and depth of knowledge?

We were also challenged about terminology and the offence it can induce. It seems there is a growing use of the N-word in mainstream music. Personally, we believe it should not be used in any part of our school community. As a result, we have since gone back and thought about terminology and any use of controversial or discriminatory vocabulary in our curriculum, for example the slave trade in history. This has confirmed our opinion that we need to revamp one of our societies to involve our student group more in promoting and being at the forefront of diversity and inclusion across the whole school. In addition, when we reflect back on our teacher training, we recognise that diversity was not high on the agenda, but we do need to ensure the new generation of teachers are fully equipped. We have since spoken to our teacher trainer coordinator about this issue, to ensure that we develop an awareness in all teachers.

Martin Luther King Jr Day (16 January 2023) provided another assembly opportunity for reflection by all year groups, from Years 3 to 13. With pre- and post-assembly tasks too, it was a great point in time to focus on equality and legacy. We asked students, “What are you doing for others?”, taking inspiration from Martin Luther King’s words.

We focused on the Simon Balle value of hope, and the understanding that for us all to have hope for the future, the notion of belonging and representation is so important for each individual. This is true for our responsibility as citizens – creating tomorrow’s citizens today – and in ensuring aspiration in career choices. We supported each student to reflect on their own identity and again returned to literature, thinking of our youngest children in terms of the belonging or representation they will find.

We are always looking for great books that are available in the libraries in both the primary and secondary phase. Following an inspiring personal story shared on video, *Princess Katrina and the Hair Charmer* by Christina Shingler has found an important place amongst quality picture books for our youngest children.

Finally, we were inspired and in awe of the hard work undertaken by a school in the previous cohort of Great Representation – Woolenwick Infant and Nursery – a school based in Stevenage, who have really embedded diversity into the fabric of their school. From defining anti-racism to studying and painting their own faces and their peers', to making African masks from clay, it was great and refreshing to see how they incorporated all year groups in their project about identity. The African philosophy of Ubuntu – “I am because we are” – was an inspiration, and this resonates with the phrase used by Professor Paul Miller in the first session: “You see me, you hear me, I belong”. It shows how culture and awareness needs to be planted, grown and watered on a regular basis and in different ways. We go back to building a values-based culture and it is not a project but a constant holding of the lens.

January 2023

This year we have worked hard to ensure that our parental and student voice activity is strategic - planned, involving all, - and that our analysis is reflective and representative of all. Sometimes qualitative feedback is as important as quantitative, particularly in relation to impact. The email below has just been received from a parent of a child in Year 4, where *Journey to Jo'burg* by Beverley Naidoo is a key text. It is heartening to read our values and ethos expressed so well by our stakeholders:

“I felt it important to share with you the impact of your recent work.”

“This week X has spoken regularly about the book you are reading as a class ‘Journey to Jo’burg’. It has clearly made a huge impact and he has started speaking at home about his feelings on racism and injustices in the world.”

“Today he came home and told us that the class had been segregated and it made him cry as he didn’t understand what was happening and it felt so awful and unfair. He said that Mrs Y had asked Mrs Z to talk with him (support him) during the activity/experience which she did incredibly well (as she always does!)”

“I just wanted to let you all know what a huge impact your teaching and support has made. Not only have you taught about racism through relevant literature but X has been enabled and encouraged to feel the hurt and injustice it brings whilst being fully supported in doing so.”

“Simon Balle promises to create tomorrow’s citizens today. With a child in Year 8 and a child in Year 4 I see this happen daily/weekly. However, I wanted to bring X’s experience today to your attention and thank you for the “what and how” you are teaching and supporting. A priority of our parenting is for our children to fully understand and feel fundamental British values – thank you for doing such an amazing job at embedding this at school.”

One of us has recently taken over the careers strategy at our school. After attending the LMI Conference for Careers Leaders and CEIAG Professionals, Mike was keen to incorporate the work from Great Representation into the careers curriculum and his presentation. In his assembly to the primary students, he wanted to tackle stereotypes.

The phrase “You see me, you hear me, I belong” echoes in our thoughts when planning and preparing presentations. Focusing on different professions and the skills people doing them need to be successful, Mike used pictures representing diversity, for example Black female construction workers, policewomen, etc. Allowing our students to grow up with high aspirations and role models in all work sectors is a moral imperative and a key role of ours as educators.

As we move towards the end of the Great Representation programme (an inspiring and motivating programme that we have personally both benefited from hugely), we wanted to reflect on the overarching impact of this professional development for Simon Balle All-through School. Our entries in this publication, and thus our work with staff in school, have ranged:

- **from curriculum to student and parent voice**
- **from our work around personal development (PSHCE, assemblies and more) to data (in its widest sense) analysis**
- **from culture and ethos to recruitment**
- **from literature to teaching and learning practices to support students (all students) to overcome barriers**

And so, at this point, we turn our attention to leadership. What do we need to do to lead our school in a way that is attuned with all that we have learned and discussed and been inspired by? We would like to propose three main areas of focus:

1. We know that in schools there are times that the urgent takes over from the important. There is a risk that all we believe in related to Great Representation could become lost in the need to get jobs done quickly. Our practice is only strong if it is consistent in its implementation, and we therefore need to be robust and rigorous with agreed systems – ensuring that staff understand the *why* as well as effectively implementing the *how*. Three important examples of this include:
 - **recruitment**
 - **student voice**
 - **the need to talk about race – in assemblies, curriculum discussions (all subjects), libraries, class, form time and unstructured time**
2. We have been inspired and moved by reading David Harewood's *Maybe I Don't Belong Here*. To continually examine the biases that shape our society is a profound exploration of the impact of everyday racism on Black mental health and an inspiring call to action. And, of course, if those biases shape our society, then it follows naturally that it will be very difficult indeed – though essential – to avoid those biases shaping our school. Therefore, we as leaders need to ensure that we always apply the lens of race to each decision taken, particularly in relation to principles and rationale. We must ensure that every member of staff is called to action to be certain that no child or parent or member of staff or governor could ever say, or even think, "Maybe I don't belong here". This is our vision, our responsibility and our hope. It will require daily work to embed and sustain our ethos and values. Who we are as leaders and what we believe in can powerfully impact on every stakeholder in our school. As the author Reni Eddo-Lodge finishes her book *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* by saying, "It's happening right now".
3. We still believe that the Fig Tree structure, which we began with in our first reflective journal entry, is very helpful for distributing leadership responsibilities

and ensuring that specific actions are taken to promote this important work. These are:

- **race at work**
- **assessing equality**
- **leadership and management**
- **conscious curriculum**
- **professional development**
- **stakeholder engagement**

By having this structure and allocated responsibilities, we as an organisation are ensuring that all parts of our school are impacted. We do, however, need to be mindful that the key elements and action plans are regularly on the agendas of the SLT and the full governing body. To ensure this is embedded, it is a case of weaving it into the fabric of the school and providing structures, so that thinking in this way becomes habitual.

March 2023

As we come to the end of our journal, we reflect on Michael Johnson talking about how the Black Lives Matter momentum has stalled in America. This makes us keen to see longevity and sustainability in the drive to embed diversity in all aspects of our school. This has brought us back to the structures, systems and culture that enable change to happen, as described in the February entry above.

The presentation at the fifth Great Representation seminar on antisemitism in society showed us the need for a continual drive in schools to ensure students are globally aware and have a strong moral compass. It was apparent in the presentation that we cannot always rely on parents or carers to instil these fundamental values.

We are in a good position to reflect on our initial aims. At the outset, we thought we would be able to shine the lens of diversity on all aspects of the school, from the curriculum to recruitment and student voice. We wanted to feel challenged and uncomfortable as leaders, to reflect on our practice and to secure change. We wanted to ensure our staff were trained to be acutely aware of teaching within an anti-racist school, and confident to deliver complex and relevant content. Our actions have been specific too, for example, ensuring that our academic targets are aspirational for BAME students in Year 7 and, benefitting from our experiences of the TAG/CAG processes, taking steps to avoid unconscious bias when moderating student work.

We now have structures and proformas to ensure academic and behaviour data is routinely analysed from the perspective of ethnicity. Governors scrutinise our work and challenge us to ensure we set the culture of achievement and openness for all. We constantly look at the impact of our work and continue to read widely. Broadly, we understand that professional development underpins the ethos and culture of our school. We have in place a robust coaching programme (for teachers at all stages of their careers) to ensure the staff we recruit can reflect on their practice and deliver quality first teaching to all. For us, reflecting on our journals across this programme, it is all about belonging – a sense that all must feel part of our community and all staff must feel responsible for creating an environment that promotes and nurtures the culture we feel so passionate about. Indeed, we are creating tomorrow’s citizens today.

Our driving force for change rests with our students. Our mantra “by the students for the students” embodies our robust School Parliament. Agendas are drawn up by our student leaders, ensuring all have a voice and a say in our community. They perform a check-and-balance function and are passionate about inclusion and sustainability. As an all-through school, the power of student voice is significant in creating role models for our younger students, and role models who are diverse in every way.

Finally, this programme is part of what has supported us to reflect broadly on leadership and the great importance of collaborative leadership. Collaborative leadership with other headteachers on the programme, and learning from other school systems, structures and experiences, have been invaluable. Sharing resources and ideas from all phases of schooling has inspired change at our own school. Just this week, we have been appointed as co-headteachers at Simon Balle All-through School from September 2023. Able to inspire and support 200 staff and 1,600 students from ages four to 18, we will ensure that “Great Representation” is woven into all that we do.

Rachel Kirk and Michael Moss

SIR JOHN LAWES SCHOOL

“There is systemic racism in society, there is systemic racism in Hertfordshire, and thus there is systemic racism in your school.”

The words of Professor Paul Miller resonated with us. They confirmed the reason that Sir John Lawes (SJL) applied for the Great Representation programme. It is our duty to promote race equity in everything we do.

SJL's strapline is “Education for a changing world”. The world has changed a lot in the last few years, but we are still not able to say we have been successful in achieving race equity. We need to promote that change, we need to live and breathe that change, and we need to be that change. We want to be proud of the improvements we have made in race equity in 12 months' time. For change to occur, we need to know what part we must play. This will require us to complete a full and comprehensive statistical analysis to highlight the areas that need addressing.

Our school has 24.9% Black and minority ethnic (BAME) students, out of a student population of 1,348. For three years now, we have been working on diversifying our curriculum in all areas. A great deal of work has been put into rewriting schemes of learning and ensuring the representation in them reflects Britain in the 21st century. We have run a school improvement group, attended by a wide variety of staff. This involves regular meetings, with action points for staff to implement in their own practice and across the school.

We have also held regular diversity forums with students, collecting the views and experiences of our student body and making changes to policy, where appropriate. For example, we changed our hair policy two years ago and adopted the Halo Code, which explicitly protects students and staff who come to school with natural hair and protective hairstyles associated with their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities. By adopting the Halo Code, we proactively took a stand to ensure that no member of our community faced barriers or judgements because of their afro-textured hair.

We were taken aback by the statistics shared in the first Great Representation meeting. In particular, the following:

- **Young Black people (10- to 17-year-olds) are nine times more likely to be arrested than their White counterparts.**
- **42% of exclusions in Hertfordshire were students with a BAME background, yet this group makes up just 12.4% of the student population. (This made us reflect**

about how our sanctions are administered and about our internal statistics on detentions, suspensions and exclusions.)

- **BAME youth unemployment (16- to 24-year-olds) in 2019 stood at 19%, and Black youth unemployment at 40%, compared with White youth unemployment at 10%. (This made us reflect on the employability of BAME students that leave SJL at either 16 or 18.)**
- **Pupils from Gypsy/Roma, Traveller of Irish Heritage, Black Caribbean, White and Black Caribbean, Other Black and Pakistani backgrounds score lower on average in exams than their White British peers. (At SJL, we see results as passports to the students' futures, and thus these statistics are concerning.)**

The data inspired us to look internally at our statistics and also to explore studies in race inequality in schools. What are the issues at SJL, and what are the probable causes? When we have the answers to these questions, we can find the solutions. All schools face their own contextualised challenges, and you therefore need to truly know your school, otherwise the changes you make could have little to no impact, or – even worse – could exacerbate race inequality.

Sociologists have conducted many studies on race inequality in education. In a study conducted in 2000, Gillbourn and Youdell found that teachers were quicker to discipline Black pupils than others for the same behaviour. They argue that this is a result of teachers' "racialised expectations". Are those racialised expectations evident at SJL?

In 2010 Wood et al. conducted a study into direct and deliberate discrimination in employment. They found that, out of 1,000 identical job applications, using fictitious names associated with different ethnic backgrounds, 1 in 16 BAME applications were offered an interview, against 1 in 9 White applicants.

Do we do enough at SJL to ensure that all BAME students are employable in their first-choice career path and thus support them to become leaders in society?

The work of Louise Archer in 2008 focuses on teachers' dominant discourse. It defines the BAME pupil's identity as lacking the favoured identity of the ideal pupil – a White, middle-class student, who achieves the "right way". The contrasting negative views are of the pathologised pupil or demonised pupil. Archer stated that BAME students are more likely to be seen as demonised or pathologised pupils, thus leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy of institutionalised underachievement in exams.

Are these views on identity present at SJL? If so, what impact do they have on educational outcomes at GCSE and A level? In addition, is unconscious bias, evident in teacher effort and behaviour ratings on school reports, negatively impacting on BAME students?

Our first action will be to complete a full statistical analysis of race inequality at SJL. We will analyse the following statistics:

Behaviour

- **detention analysis by ethnic groups**
- **exclusion analysis by ethnic group**

Outcomes

- **outcomes analysis at GCSE – BAME students versus White British**
- **outcomes analysis at A level – BAME students versus White British**

Bias

- **teacher-reporting analysis on behaviour/effort/homework – BAME students versus White British**

Experiences

- **BAME student stakeholder survey –survey identical to that from 2020, for direct comparison**

The outcomes of this statistical analysis will allow us to identify the contextualised issues we face at SJL in relation to race inequality and allow us to formulate an action plan for the Great Representation programme and beyond.

November 2022

The statistics were an interesting read. We took the data analysis to an SLT meeting, where we could drill down into each area and then discuss possible actions. Firstly, and pleasingly, there were no gaps in outcomes between BAME students and students from other backgrounds. As diversity has been a thread in our school development plan for three years now, this was encouraging to see.

- **the average ALPS grading for GCSE BAME students in 2022 was 2**
- **the average ALPS grading at GCSE for non-BAME students in 2022 was also 2**

The next statistics we analysed were on behaviour. When we analysed detentions, the data showed that BAME students were getting proportionally fewer detentions than non-BAME students, with 18% of lunchtime detentions, 17% of after-school detentions and 17% of after-school detentions awarded to BAME students (BAME students make up 24.9% of SJL student population). No BAME student has been permanently excluded

within the last five years, in comparison with three non-BAME students. This proved that the racialised expectations explained in Gillbourn and Youdell's 2000 study are not evident at present at SJL. This also bucked the national statistics that were shared with us in one of our seminars.

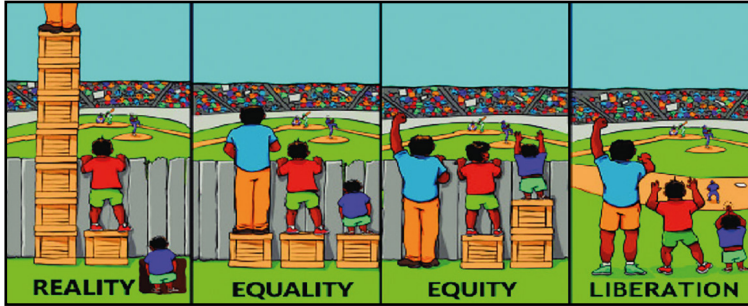
Unconscious bias is a recurring theme within the programme. Remembering the Miller quote, "There is systemic racism in society, there is systemic racism in Hertfordshire, and thus there is systemic racism in your school", it was important that we found statistics to either prove or disprove this at SJL. For this we had to find a statistic that was subjective and based solely on the teachers' opinions of students.

We decided to use teacher-report analysis on behaviour, effort and homework. Students of a BAME background are often labelled in society through the media with negative stereotypes relating to behaviour, effort and support at home. At SJL we have a four-point score for effort, behaviour and homework on each data drop and school report. 4 is high and 1 is low. A score of 2 and below requires immediate intervention. The SJL average of these grades is 3.55 for non-BAME students and 3.53 for BAME students. Out of 1,350 students, there is no statistical relevance to this difference.

We have decided to focus on employability, in response to the data presented about inequitable employment rates for young adults from a BAME versus a White background. During the second Great Representation seminar, we had an inspiring session led by Sufian Sadiq. He raised several thought-provoking points about his employability as a Muslim male in Hertfordshire. He was one of the most qualified speakers we have had the pleasure to listen to; however, he felt that he would be unlikely to be employed as a headteacher in a Hertfordshire School. This saddened us, but the statistics do, unfortunately, back up his claim.

This seminar helped narrow down the focus of our study to increasing the employability opportunities of students from a BAME background. We need to make sure that our students are as employable as possible, and that they experience a full and diverse programme of enrichment opportunities that will make them stand out on paper, when their name may disadvantage them.

We had some inspirational guest speakers at the fourth Great Representation seminar in January. Jess Boyd highlighted the difference between equity, equality and liberation, using the diagram shown on the next page. We looked at what the fence was in relation to our schools. We used this image as the starter for our SLT meeting that week and had a really rich discussion from it. We felt that the fence represented dominant culture and that equity represented fairness.



The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated;
 © Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

The Great Representation programme has led us to not fear having challenging conversations, in an open and honest manner, on race. Our job now is to ensure equity is at the heart of every decision made at Sir John Lawes, whether that be at policy level, at strategic level, or even via an in-classroom initiative. In light of this, we are looking to appoint an EDI lead from September 2023. Without this programme, we would not have made that decision.

Within the same seminar, we had the pleasure to listen to Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson, one of the founders of Impact of Omission, an organisation that focuses on ensuring that education about Britain’s imperial past is part of the compulsory national curriculum. The organisation also campaigns for a more accurate curriculum that celebrates the contribution of Black Britons. We were blown away with the work that someone so young has already accomplished. Esmie captivated the audience and truly inspired us to continue our work on race equity.

On our return to school, we reviewed the history curriculum. The curriculum intent statement includes the following:

Our history curriculum targets to nurture our students’ curiosity to know more about the complexities of the past. At Sir John Lawes School, we aim to develop a love of history through a structured chronological framework, which equips students with in-depth knowledge and the understanding of change in Britain and the wider world, which will help them make sense of the present day. Through this chronological approach, students will develop historical concepts that will enable them to challenge the constructs of the past and create meaningful arguments that will help them become analytical individuals.

Students study the following:

Year 7

- **an exploration into life and culture beyond Europe, through the significance of the ancient city of Baghdad**
- a focus on medieval life after the Battle of Hastings, and the changes made during Norman England
- **a comparative study of medieval monarchs from around the world, from King John to Mansa Musa**
- an investigation into the religious changes of the Reformation under Henry VIII

Year 8

- **an investigation into those who gained and lost from the British Empire**
- a study into the complex nature of WWI
- **an exploration into some inspiring women in history – from Joan of Arc to Malala Yousufzai**

Year 9

- **an investigation into the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust, with a focus on the experience of the victims and a debate around those who were responsible**
- **a comparative study of controversial figures of 20th century from around the world, from Idi Amin to Enoch Powell**
- the causes and events of WWII, with an enquiry into the experiences of those who were involved and how their experiences differed
- **an exploration into the changing face of Britain, from 1950 to current day, focusing on diversity, cultural change and what it means to be British**

The topics highlighted in bold have been recently introduced to provide a more diverse, less Eurocentric curriculum. Any curriculum has to be reviewed regularly and, motivated by Esmie, we are looking to review the curriculum further for September 2023.

A key learning that we took away from our school hub visits was the power of student leaders. In particular, the visit to Kings Langley School, where the anti-racism student leaders delivered a powerful presentation of their journey, from inception to being an embedded part of the school's leadership, inspired us to introduce diversity leaders in each form group, Years 7–10. This is a recent initiative, and we still have work to do to refine the role they play in the life of the school.

We are going to look at how we can empower them to organise events such as the “wear red” day that we observed at Kings Langley. We are planning on training these leaders in the autumn term, to ensure they are given the tools to confidently deliver their role.

After time to reflect on the different seminars and school hub visits, we decided to challenge the societal construct that disadvantages young BAME students from achieving parity in the employment market. We plan to look at every aspect of the SJL school experience and not only how it prepares BAME students for employment but also the challenges of the recruitment process. In summary, we want to help students create the strongest CVs possible, through gaining diverse and aspirational experiences, and thus provide the support they require within our uneven society.

We plan to create every possible advantage within the areas we can control. These include the following aspects of school life:

- **parents evenings**
- **options evenings**
- **advice and guidance meetings for transitions between KS4, KS5 and post-18**
- **careers meetings**
- **careers day sessions and experiences**
- **work experience at Years 7, 10 and 12**
- **leadership opportunities and training**
- **initiatives such as Watford FC outreach projects, “Have you Met”, and The Brilliant Club**
- **trust conferences for leadership, sustainability, mental health and anti-bullying**
- **interview/presentation skills training**

The basic principle is to redress the imbalance seen beyond school by giving preferential treatment to BAME students when it comes to the different opportunities that help make their CVs stand out from others. This way, we hope to increase the chance of first-choice Russell Group university courses, higher apprenticeships, and employment in prominent sectors of society.

Currently, students are encouraged to find their own work experience placements privately, but pupil premium (PP) students are supported to find life-changing placements through being offered first choice of the placements the school has access to. We will in future look at intersectionality, and meet firstly with those who are BAME and PP, secondly with non-PP BAME students, and thirdly with non-BAME PP students, before making the centrally held options available to the rest of the year group.

We feel that, with the context of the school being in an affluent area, the other students won't be disadvantaged by this reordering.

We are looking to engage our alumni in aspirational employment positions to provide work-experience opportunities to students from a BAME background and thus open the door to a future of possibilities. We are proactively approaching our alumni and people of power in the local area. Our first success was acquiring a week-long work-experience placement for one of our Year 10 students in parliament with Bim Afolami, MP for Hitchin and Harpenden. This process involved us supporting the student to write to Bim on more than one occasion, until he was successful in gaining the placement. We will financially support any travel expenses that these experiences incur and thus ensure that no glass ceiling prevents the opportunity being realised.

The Great Representation programme has taught Sir John Lawes a huge amount, not only about the issues faced by our young people of colour, but about how we, within the educational system, can at times be part of the problem. We have learned a lot from the seminars and school hub visits.

The topic of race is now not the elephant in the room during discussions at strategic or operational level. It is openly and confidently discussed, from a position of greater knowledge. We still have lots to learn and to embed, but we are ready to embrace the challenges ahead.

Philip Newbery and Emma Montgomery-Ward

**ST ANDREW'S
CHURCH OF
ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

September 2022

St Andrew's is a one-form, Church of England school in Much Hadham, catering for children from Nursery to Year 6. We have a strong Christian ethos but consider ourselves, first and foremost, a village school to serve our community. Currently, there are 217 children on roll. Our pupil premium numbers are below the national average, and around 12% of children are on the special education needs (SEN) register. We have very low levels of ethnic diversity within our pupils and staff.

Our school has a reputation locally as a village school set in the predominantly White and middle-class Hertfordshire countryside. Racist incidents at our school are few and far between (according to our records) and, as such, racial equity has never featured on our school improvement plan ... until now.

The national response to the death of George Floyd; and government, county and diocese agendas; have encouraged us reflect on our current practice and on the curriculum we teach our children. As a relatively new SLT, created in the middle of the Covid pandemic, we have taken a fresh look at the current and future needs of our children.

As a starting point, we took time to begin reviewing the literature available to our children. Books that obviously rely on stereotypes were removed. However, we are still conscious there must still be many books in our library where the references are more subtle ... or not (for example by David Walliams!).

Recognising our children's need to look beyond themselves and their own experiences, we purchased "Picture News". This is an online assembly and collective worship resource, which looks at a "big question" each week, based on what has been happening in the news. Through this, we have been able to approach uncomfortable subjects in an age-appropriate way. The issues raised encourage debate, discussion and courageous advocacy. The children explore issues including race, climate change, war and social inequality.

After attending the HfL Education "That's me!" English conference in January 2022, we made the decision to use World Book Day as an opportunity to explore diversity. We chose age-appropriate texts that challenged children's and staff perceptions of race, gender and prejudice, through a unit of work we called "Our Colourful World". On the back of the conference, we attended Andrew Moffat's No Outsiders training, to explore how we could use texts to further instil respect amongst our community and beyond. We came back so inspired that we have booked Andrew to join us for our INSET day in January 2023, in the hope of becoming a No Outsiders school in the future.

October 2022

What an inspiring and, at times, emotional day we had at the Fielder Centre for the first face-to-face seminar of Great Representation. The examples of race inequity given by Professor Paul Miller, and his case studies and statistics, were shocking to us both. It was the first time we had really considered the depth of our own White privilege. His plea was that we use it to challenge racism, create a shift in our own mindsets and truly understand the responsibility we hold as school leaders.

We then heard Cynthia Rowe's honest and open account of her personal experiences. We were taken aback by her stories, and how the racism she was subjected to as a child, and still experiences, is so frequent and severe.

We both found the day challenging, as it made us look inwardly and consider our own unconscious bias. However, in the words of Professor Paul Miller, it inspired us to become "agents for change". We further felt our duty to educate and readdress the imbalance in our society. We want our children to grow up in a world where opportunity, representation and respect are equal for all. We came back from the day full of ideas and enthusiasm to further tackle the issue of racial inequality within our setting and the wider community. We would respond to this call to action.

Soon after completing our first day's Great Representation training, we were fortunate to visit St George's School in Harpenden. We gained an insight into their work on anti-racism to date and stole a few ideas to bring back to St Andrew's and adapt to our setting. It struck us at St George's how important it is for our pupils to be upstanding and to challenge unacceptable behaviour. As a result of this, we decided to focus the following half-term on the Christian value of justice.

November 2022

This started with several whole-school worship sessions focusing on the idea of fairness, and the children recognising that there is injustice all around them, in many different forms. Over the next few weeks, we built on this understanding to discuss equity versus equality with the children, and the idea that those who are lucky should be supporting and standing up for those who might be less so.

Our Year 6s have been drafted as "Agents for Change" to work with the younger children, to show them how to call out injustice and discrimination that they might see in school. They have decided that at St Andrew's we should be Kindness Keepers, to challenge actions or words that might threaten our St Andrew's golden rules to "Be kind

and work hard". The Year 6 children will plan presentations about what it looks like to be a Kindness Keeper and then visit all the classes in the school over the next month or two, to spread the word about this new initiative.

Our next step was to visit Presdales School and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Again, there was so much great practice to see, and we very much enjoyed speaking with the pupils. It was becoming evident that a one-size-fits-all approach to anti-racism in schools would not work. Each school we visited had a strong sense of identity and the distinctive needs of their current cohorts.

Coming back to St Andrew's, we discussed what makes our school unique, and how we must further tailor our curriculum and other school improvement priorities. We came to understand that whilst our predominantly White British pupils thankfully do not directly experience much racism, this in turn can mean that they do not have the inclination to be anti-racist. Their experiences to date have been very passive.

Our challenge is to ensure our children understand their responsibility to call out injustice and make society more balanced. As part of this challenge, we know that parental engagement and support are key to make this successful. We have therefore taken steps to be very open with our parent community about our school improvement priorities, including our drive for inclusion, acceptance and respect for all. We have discussed these with our parent forum (comprising representatives from all year groups) and published the priorities in our weekly newsletter. So far, our parents have been very supportive but requested to be kept up to date with what work has taken place. We have therefore decided to provide termly written updates to our parents to detail what actions the school has taken against these priorities.

Day two of the Great Representation programme was another fantastic, informative and hugely thought-provoking session at the Fielder Centre. Even just the initial welcome talk gave us ideas about how we could upskill ourselves on the language used around racism. Getting things wrong is a huge worry for all our staff (including us). We realised we need to empower everyone with the knowledge and confidence to challenge racism in the right way. We are hopeful that the book recommendations, such as *Wish We Knew What to Say* by Dr Pragya Agarwal, will be invaluable reads to help build our racial literacy.

Claire Stewart-Hall presented us with some hard-hitting facts and figures about the opportunities available to people of colour (or lack of them) as they move through life, when compared with those who are White. It was so troubling and at times very upsetting to see the clear difference. It further steeled our determination to be conscious of how we can ensure the children in our school do not add to these statistics.

Even small opportunities, such as access to extracurricular clubs, could make the difference. Whilst we normally allocate club spaces on a first-come, first-served basis

(trying to be fair as possible), we now questioned whether we need to make extra effort to ensure certain children are able to take part. We have also reflected on the concept of being “racist by outcome”. Uniform or hair policies, which may have been written to try and ensure equality, in actual fact might do the opposite. The session has driven us to be mindful and to review our policies under this lens.

One of the most memorable presentations we have watched so far is “Racial equity: A walk in my shoes” by Sufian Sadiq. His passionate, funny and yet heart-breaking story left us open-mouthed and speechless. It made us realise (with shock) just how idealistic and clueless we were in our understanding of what some may experience in their daily life.

Whilst we understand that prejudice and racism exist in our society, the daily challenges faced by so many, and so close to home, stunned us both. In addition, the experiences of his young daughter in school made us consider the few children of colour in our own school. Whilst we try to promote equality, we also need to ensure equity. Some children need more support to understand how much they are valued. Consideration and time must be spent to ensure they see themselves represented and are proud of who they are.

We were incredibly moved by Sufian’s talk but realised that we could never deliver his message, back at school, in the same powerful way. Therefore, we were very grateful to Rachel Macfarlane, who introduced us to him at lunch. As a result, we are absolutely delighted that he has agreed to visit our school at the end of February. We are determined that as many people in our school community (including parents and governors) hear what he has to say. We are hoping that this will help everyone to fully understand why this drive for inclusion and diversity is such an important priority for our school. The more people we can inspire to join us on this journey, the stronger the impact will be.

Back in school, we began to think again about our curriculum and our subject portfolios. Consideration must be given to how each subject ensures diversity, not just within knowledge content but also through role models and resources. Conscious of workload, we have decided that additional time will be given in staff meetings to action this. Our teachers are such an amazing team that we know doing it together will also promote that deep discussion that is so valuable.

December 2022

At the start of the academic year, we had agreed to have Inclusion and Diversity as our focus for our HCC commissioned school visit (CSV). In the week prior to the visit,

we were able to reflect on what we had already achieved. Looking around our school, we saw displays featuring diverse authors, and science boards celebrating female scientists of colour. Children were independently choosing reading books featuring characters from minority backgrounds, and our youngest children were playing joyfully with dolls representing racial diversity. Whilst we are still on a huge journey, we did feel proud of what we could already see.

We were very grateful to have Toks Olusamokun from HfL Education visit us for the CSV and give her viewpoint on our work to date. Whilst we are looking forward to reading her full written report with recommendations for future actions, there were some very useful points made on the day. Toks helped us to understand that we need to celebrate the wins where they happen. It is unlikely that we will be able to reach every single child and member of our community with our message, but that should not diminish our efforts or make us feel like they are not worthwhile. Any difference we make is a positive one.

Her visit also made us aware that we cannot do this work without buy-in from as many people as possible. As leaders, we are attending the Great Representation training and returning, after each visit, filled with energy and determination. However, we realise not everyone has been hearing the message in the same powerful way. We have therefore decided that it is vital that as many as possible of our staff attend the HfL National Race Equity Conference in March 2023. We are also holding as many open conversations as possible with our staff about race, so they can ask questions and put forward ideas.

We are delighted that, on the back of this, one of our teachers has put us in touch with Dr Leema Jabbar, a local children's author and GP. Leema is an advocate for positive body image and diversity. Her aim is for everyone to understand the importance of embracing all cultures. She has written several engaging books, aimed at young children, to address the issues surrounding understanding the culture of others. We are so pleased that she will be visiting our school in January to read these texts to our children. We hope this visit will give many of our children a broader perspective, and also offer representation and a positive role model for the children of colour in our school.

As always, we found day three of the programme thoroughly interesting and enlightening. We were very grateful for the recommendation, in the welcome talk, for Tàta Storytime (<https://tatastorytime.com>). We feel that this will be a powerful and very easy-to-use tool, enabling all our children to hear, see and enjoy authors from a range of diverse backgrounds. We cannot wait to get started with this!

Orell Lawrence spoke to us about The Black Curriculum. He impressed on us the influence we have as educators and how important it is that all our staff feel comfortable to challenge racism. As primary leaders, there is always a question over how explicit we can be with the younger children about racism and associated terminology. However, it

was interesting to hear that the concept of race inequality can be identified by children as young as five or six. We must be brave and tackle injustices as early as possible.

The discussion regarding curriculum was the most useful part of the presentation, with clear examples of how we could decolonise so many areas of our subjects. However, what struck us most was how critical it is to ensure the language used within lessons is correct. For example, the use of “enslaved person” is far preferable to “slave”. It is essential that we shift this mindset with our teachers and, consequently, our children.

During the reflection time, Rachel asked us to consider the definition of racism. It is important that we define what racism is within our school policies so that we have more confidence to tackle it when it arises. This is something we certainly need to reflect on as leaders, and reviewing our policies is now on our to-do list. She also asked us to reflect on the journey taken by a parent or carer, prior to making a complaint about racism. It is likely that racist incidents would have built up over time, before a parent would even consider approaching a school.

Hearing the true account of a mother practising several times in front of a mirror, so she had enough courage to speak out to the school about the racism experienced by her child, was heart-breaking. Whilst we always pride ourselves on listening to parents, it made us even more conscious of our own personal response to complaints of this nature.

We loved hearing Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School’s story and about the projects they have undertaken to look at the background of all the children and families in their school, whether they are local, from other parts of UK or from further afield. Using Paddington to represent an immigrant was genius! It inspired us to think about how we could apply some of their approaches in our own school. Whilst we have low levels of ethnic diversity, there are certainly ways that we can look at everyone’s heritage, make links, and celebrate all our differences. The involvement of parents was key to the Woolenwick project’s success, and yet their project, Routed in Stevenage: Stories from our Hometown, was an easy way to engage everyone in a non-threatening way. We are hopeful that it is something we can recreate, in our own style.

Penny Laskar’s honest and open account of her life was very thought-provoking. We had never considered that children might deliberately lie about their holiday destination out of worry or shame. What else might they lie about? It was also clear that her presence as a Muslim teacher in a predominantly Muslim school was a huge comfort to many of the children in her care. Whilst we cannot “magic up” role models for all our children, we must take every opportunity available to us to ensure representation for the children of colour within our St Andrew’s family. We are hoping that the visit in January from Dr Leema Jabbar will be a good starting point.

January 2023

The day we had been so looking forward to had finally come – our INSET day, and a visit from Andrew Moffat to talk about his No Outsiders approach to acceptance for all (<https://no-outsiders.com>). His whole-day training focused on how we can use children's texts to help promote a discussion about diversity and acceptance; in his words: "preparing children for a life in modern Britain". We were fortunate to have our entire teaching staff, along with some teaching assistants and governors, present to hear him speak. For the first time, we were all together to hear the same message, and Andrew's simple, age-appropriate approach inspired all those who attended. We can do this!

In response to this training, we have decided that we need to embed the language of No Outsiders in our school. This simple phrase covers all areas of difference and gives the children the vocabulary to explain how everyone is welcome. Our new Christian value this half-term is "Respect – No Outsiders". We conducted our first whole-school worship based on this theme, and even the youngest children are already starting to explain, "We need to be kind and welcoming so no one feels like an outsider in our school". We are committed to this process and are feeling more empowered than ever. We cannot wait to start teaching our No Outsider lessons and we know that we have the support of all of our team, including our governing body.

And so to day four of the Great Representation programme. What we have come to realise is that the speakers at these seminars are so incredibly inspirational and motivating. They are the reason why we have come as far as we have. We both feel that this course has changed our lives ... for the better. Our outlook has changed irreversibly. However, it is really important to note the power of the hub group. Having a group of people who you trust and are on the same (or similar) journey to you, all with the same united aim, is a powerful tool.

We would urge anyone reading this who is about to embark on this journey to invest time in getting to know their hub group. Make sure you do some school visits early in the course, sit with your hub colleagues in lunch and get to know them as people. It will pay off. We were initially sceptical about the mix of primary and secondary schools in our hub group. However, reflecting on our experiences over the past few months, we know now that this mix has broken down many of the preconceptions we may have had. We can always learn from each other and transfer practice across phases.

February 2023

Last week we welcomed the author and GP, Dr Leema Jabbar, to our school. She read her new book, *Curry Worry Ninja Noo*, to Years 1, 2 and 3. It is a story about a young Indian boy worrying about his hair smelling of curry after visiting his Grandma. Leema talked about how her own lived experiences were the inspiration for the book, and she wowed the children with her collection of spices and saris, along with a talk about her work as a doctor. She talked with pride about her heritage.

One of the children in our school with a similar background to Leema was simply star-struck. Her teacher commented that she had never seen her quite so animated. This confirmed for us the reason it is so important to have a variety of role models and visitors in the school. All the children gained something from Leema's visit, but to provide that aspiration for a child who might not see herself represented very often in school was such a powerful moment.

This week we visited Barnwell School in Stevenage. It was fantastic to have the opportunity to talk to a variety of stakeholders, including staff, children and governors. Their E&D (equality and diversity) lead had clear passion for the topic, and it made us realise, yet again, how we cannot do this alone. As leaders, the journey we take our children on will be different from the one we take our staff and governors on. The passion and understanding of why this work is so important must permeate throughout and be embedded into the very fabric of the school. Whilst we have had our No Outsiders training, we are hoping that the HFL National Race Equity Conference and our visit from Sufian Sadiq will be powerful tools for a move towards this.

We were delighted to welcome our hub group to St Andrew's and show them what we have done so far on our journey. As part of the visit, they spoke to our Year 6 children, and we were delighted that so many of them seemed to understand the concept of racism and how we might tackle it in school. Their work as Kindness Keepers and the introduction of No Outsiders have given these relatively young children the language to talk about discrimination in an eloquent and easy to understand way. We were so proud.

Having the opportunity to reflect again on our journey made us realise how much we have achieved in just a few months but also what work there is still to do. Relooking at our curriculum under a diversity lens is going to be a huge job, but we have the motivation to do it. Not just because of county and diocese agendas that were mentioned at the start of this journal, but because we passionately want to. More than ever, we want to be, in the words of Professor Paul Miller, "agents for change".

Straight after half-term, we launched our whole-school writing project, using the book *You Are Special* by Max Lucado. The message behind this text is that people are different. We all look different and all have different strengths and difficulties. However,

we are all special and we should be proud of who we are. Every class used the book within their English lessons, but the text was also used as inspiration for our art, DT and dance lessons. Our Year 3 and Year 4 play is also based on this story. The idea behind this is to empower our children to stand up for themselves (and others) when faced with prejudice.

March 2023

It has become very apparent that the engagement of our whole school community is key to our success in creating a culture of inclusivity and standing up against injustice. Our No Outsiders training has already had a huge impact on our whole staff and governors. Now the next step ... parents. Our visit from Sufian Sadiq was imminent, and we knew that his talk "Racial equity: A walk in my shoes" could really help demonstrate to the parents why this ongoing work is so important. We therefore decided to combine his talk with a No Outsiders morning in school so that as many parents as possible could hear his message.

On the day, we did a short introduction to the parents and explained the rationale for our approach, using statistics we had been given by Great Representation and Andrew Moffat. Parents and carers were then invited into their children's classes to watch a No Outsiders lesson and to see the texts that were used to teach about diversity in our school. This was immediately followed up by a talk from Sufian in the hall. We were delighted to have a huge turnout for the class sessions, with over 70 of our parents staying for his talk. By the end, we saw many a tear wiped away, and we knew that we had gained their understanding. The fact that we have received no negative feedback to date hopefully shows that, on the whole, parents are supportive of our work on diversity and representation.

On the back of the success of our No Outsiders morning, we attended day five of the course buoyant and full of enthusiasm for our work and how much we had achieved ... and then came back to earth with a bit of bump. Hearing Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga's talk about addressing antisemitism in schools made both of us realise how little we knew about this topic. We found it astonishing and quite frankly disturbing that antisemitism is so extensive and widespread. The fear that must be felt by the Jewish community when acts of antisemitism occur, from Nazi graffiti to comments such as "Can you smell the gas?" horrified us. We immediately checked the texts that are covered in the No Outsiders programme and were gratified to see that *Rose Blanche* by Ian McEwan is included within the Year 5 scheme of work. Whilst this is a mere drop in the ocean in terms of opening up the discussion about antisemitism, it is a start.

We have come to realise that we cannot change the world, or even our school, immediately. We will not be able to reach every stakeholder and alter their views. However, we can gradually build on what we do and also build on our own confidence to address these issues.

In time, this will become a cultural shift, but we are aware that this is not a journey with an end. We still need to review our curriculum, continue to embed our work on No Outsiders and, as we welcome new families to our school, we may need to start from scratch in some areas. It will be a challenge, but it is one we are definitely committed to, now more than ever.

Caroline Dimond and Helen Cole

September 2022

St George's is a state day and boarding school located in Harpenden. We are a non-denomination school with a Christian foundation, which underpins all of what we do. We currently have 1,371 students on roll, with 112 boarders from 16 different countries. Harpenden is a predominantly White area, although this is changing, particularly with the increased numbers of families from Hong Kong moving into the area. Boarding and our Christian foundation do allow a somewhat broader area for catchment, which means that our cohort is more diverse than the area we are within. Currently, 19.3% of our students are non-White, with a proportionally higher number of students of colour in our sixth form.

We want our students – all of them – to go out into the world understanding their own values and to make the world a better place. This is the foundation for all of our anti-racism work. We not only want to create a community and a classroom where our students of colour feel safe, supported and able to achieve; we also want all of our students to become allies and be ready to create a more just, fair and purposeful society.

The death of George Floyd was a watershed moment for millions around the world, and it certainly threw a light on the issues we had and continue to have at St George's. In May 2020 the school received a petition from two former students, who wanted to explain the impact of their own experiences as students of colour in the school. This was a hard read for us. It was clear that there were issues that we did not recognise or, at the time, understand. For example, some referenced texts used and the difficulties of being the only Black student in a class when racial slurs are discussed. Others talked of not seeing themselves in positions of responsibility and the impact that had on them. Whilst former students didn't suggest they had been victims of overt racism, they did write about their experiences of insensitivity and microaggressions.

The two students who initiated the petition have been important sounding boards for us to discuss our work and next steps. They have been agents of change, and we hope that their contributions to improving our community for future generations will encourage others to take up the mantle too.

Following the events of 2020, we decided to create a new role to support the work on anti-racism. In January 2021 the appointment of an anti-racism lead – a non-curriculum role – centralised our focus on this work. It was important that this role was a classroom teacher role rather than a senior leader, so that it didn't feel like just another initiative with little or no legacy. It was also hoped that students would feel more involved than if it was a senior leader in post.

Over the last two years, we have worked hard to address numerous elements of the petition. Our actions included:

- **Reviewing our curriculum, within the scope of exam requirements, with a view to diversifying it.** This was led by departments who were allowed time and space to ask for support if needed. Considerable work has been done, specifically in English, RE, history and art.
- **Creating our anti-racism committee (ARC).** This is a student-led weekly group, which discusses key events, drives campaigns, leads assemblies/chapels, and directly feeds back on what the school is doing.
- **Establishing a student focus group to gather data and grow understanding.** This is with a particular focus on our boarding community.
- **Reviewing the reporting of incidents.** These are now recorded in a different way – not automatically as a disciplinary issue. This has helped to encourage students to report as well as provide us with important data – like trends on racialised language – which we can respond to from a whole cohort or school perspective.
- **Creating an allyship week.** This is a week that combines many protected characteristics and explores different ways we can support those in our community.
- **Setting up student sessions.** This is in year groups, houses and in tutor bases. They have ranged from a student voice exercise to how to challenge injustice.
- **Reviewing and adapting key school policies, for example on hair styles and uniform**
- **Diversifying our governing body**
- **Leading teacher training sessions on:**
 - unconscious bias
 - microaggressions
 - names
 - how to recognise, report and respond to a racist incident
 - new staff induction on anti-racism (twice a year)
 - regular updates on / response to media events

We are constantly reflecting and reviewing what we are doing; we are aware that this is a changing landscape and that the things we do today may not be the things we need to do tomorrow. Toks Olusamokun, one of the HFL race equity advisers, visited recently and completed some focus groups across the school. Her report will form the basis of our next steps, which we hope will be augmented by our work on the Great Representation programme. We are aware that there are challenges ahead, but we are committed to working with staff, students (current and former) and families to build towards an anti-racist culture in the school.

Our involvement in the Great Representation programme is essentially about diversifying our viewpoints and expanding the dialogue. We know that our school has a strong moral foundation, but we want to build on this, creating students with a firm understanding and commitment to social justice.

One of the challenges we face, as a middle-class, predominantly White school in a predominantly White area, exacerbated by the current recruitment and retention crisis in education as a whole, is that our staff body does not reflect the relative cultural diversity of our students. We know this is something the students feel, but it is not an easy problem to solve. Therefore, we need to look at different ways we can hear different voices. We are listening to our students, but we also want to learn from the schools around us, both in similar and in different contexts. Our involvement will, we hope, allow us to build on the work we have already undertaken and allow us to celebrate our successes and navigate our onward steps.

We feel incredibly lucky that the apathy that is described as a frequent challenge to equity work is not widespread within our organisation. Whilst there will, of course, be pockets of resistance, the buy-in from the majority of our staff has been consistent and clear.

We are becoming increasingly accepting of our own vulnerability. We do not know all the answers, and so exploring other views and hearing the ideas of others will be central to our ongoing process. We know that being flexible and reflective is absolutely crucial. We know that we are on a journey and that many of us are struggling with the same things. We know that sustained change takes time and will not happen overnight.

October 2022

At the first seminar, Professor Paul Miller indicated that our race work should be at the centre of all we do – it should not be an add-on. But to get it to that place, we will need to invest time, energy and action. Finding the headspace to do that with a range of competing agendas and needs, all vying for attention, will take clarity of action. However, we have an infrastructure already in place; our whole ethos is built around our Christian foundation and our desire to send our students out into the world to make a positive impact. Our work with anti-racism fits perfectly with this.

We know that the very real impact of racism is not always felt and understood by the majority of our students. However, as Professor Miller argues, “Racism is deeply sedimented in the psyche and fibre of all layers of society ... it is a zombie stalking us.” It is important that our students of colour feel supported and empowered as they head

into “the real world”, and our White students are committed to challenging injustices and confront the zombie.

Professor Miller challenged us that action needs to be rooted at the top. In some ways we agree, but in others we do not. Our action (overseen by a deputy head) has been rooted in what our pupils are telling us needs to change and is delivered and sustained by a passionate team of teachers and staff within the school. We believe that the *doing with* rather than *being done to* approach means our work is both valued by members of our community and has a longer-term stability and sustainability.

On 30 September, St George’s welcomed our hub group to the school to explore how we approach anti-racism. This was a really exciting opportunity for us. Our deputy head gave an initial talk about data, and it was interesting to reflect on how effective our data collection already is. However, we do not currently conduct a survey specifically on race, and we discussed the possible benefits of doing so. Giving anti-racism this level of visible commitment, whilst also understanding the school through the eyes of our students, would certainly offer us the opportunity to consolidate or change our direction of travel.

Following a tour of the school, our hub colleagues had the opportunity to meet with members of ARC and other students of colour. As always, our students impressed! In our subsequent discussions, it became clear that these students are the greatest advertisement for our work, and we even discussed how they could be used to provide role models in other school settings. We are aware that local primary schools offer different levels of anti-racism education, and we began to discuss how we could use our students’ racial literacy and confidence in articulation to help inform younger students.

Being honest, we were initially unconvinced about working in a hub group with primary school colleagues – what could we take or learn from each other? However, our discussions have already proved informative and fruitful, and we look forward to seeing how these can continue to help shape our work.

On 18 October 2022 our hub groups visited Presdales School. We were inspired by the number of pupils who were willing to engage and by their openness with us. By sitting with a group of students, talking about their experiences on a one-to-one level, we realised how important and vital it is to keep communication with our students going. As do our own students, the Presdales students reflected that they experience less racism in school than they do outside. How do we help them develop the resilience to deal with the outside world, whilst keeping them safe and protected from it within our community? We were inspired by the determination of the school to focus their efforts on making this an agenda item for whole-school development and change.

Later that day, we visited St Joseph’s Primary School. We were inspired by the high-quality display work that makes this an inviting and inspiring place to learn. We were struck by

the willingness of staff to challenge their own thinking and to involve their students in this process. A good example of this was a display on how Mary (the mother of Jesus) is represented in different cultures. The creation of a parent voice group, and the way that this has grown, even after only two meetings, was also impressive. The confidence of their young people who not only presented but also answered questions from a group of headteachers was awesome.

The visit left us with the question: How do we manage engagement with the parental body in a secondary school to ensure that a positive and progressive conversation is maintained? We acknowledge that the area we want to work on most – or, at least, initially – is with parents, and it is wonderful to see how this can be successfully done in a school. How can we replicate that within our own, albeit secondary, setting?

November 2022

The presentation from Claire Stewart-Hall and the personal insights of Sufian Sadiq have reinforced the level of challenge we face and the size of the mountain that we, as a nation, have to climb if we are to bring equity to all within our nation. The mountain seems to loom out of the mist in front of us, bigger than our own experience would have allowed us to imagine, and more complex than we had at first considered possible. At times, this has seemed daunting, overwhelming and impossible to overcome. But we know that if we never put our walking shoes on, begin to read and understand the map, and set out from our front door, then the journey will never start.

We know that we are in the foothills, and that as we gaze upwards, the mountain can seem to be insurmountable; but, as a school, we are committed to keep putting one foot in front of the other. At times we may need to pause for breath, to gaze back down the mountain to assess where we have come from, as well as gaze upwards to assess and map out the best route forward. As we climb, we gain a better understanding of the environment within which our mountain stands and the challenges that in itself may bring. The mist may seem dense at times, and the journey may be long, but we know that we do not walk alone. We are committed to bring change to our pupils, our staff and our wider community. In essence, we are committed to playing our part in conquering the mountain, however tough the climb may become.

That journey has begun, and in our November seminar, we were both overwhelmed and inspired. The sheer size of the problem and the fact that, as a predominately White institution, we are unable to understand on a personal level the trauma that comes with being a victim of racism – either on an individual or systemic level – made Sufian's talk so challenging and shocking. We do not know what we do now know – how can we ensure

we support and protect our students from a monster that appears ever changing and often, to our eyes or ears, invisible?

We have therefore decided that, as we climb the mountain, we must take the time to enjoy the view and celebrate how far we have come. Our perspectives may change, the ground may be uneven, and we most certainly will make mistakes en route, but we need to blaze a trail for us, our students and the next generation of Georgians to come.

December 2022

As we have continued on our journey through the Great Representation programme, we have continued to consider how we can meet the challenge of the intersectionality of the many inequalities we see within our community. How can we try to understand how the experience of a female person of colour may be different from that of someone who is male or transgender? How does the experience of an Asian Muslim man differ from that of someone with Black Caribbean heritage? There is no simple answer.

Decolonising the curriculum has for some time been a focus in school. We have even debated what we should call it; is “decolonising” too political? Does the term “diversifying” go far enough? We have moved beyond the obvious areas of English and history and have seen some inspiring work in departments such as art, RE and PSHE. Banks of resources have been created to diversify the range of examples that staff can use, creating “pick-off-the-shelf” resources that allow easy access for all staff, and removing the barriers to change that others may perceive are in the way. This has reassured us that the mission to review what and how we teach certain subjects and topic areas has extended to a broad range of teaching staff and is becoming “normalised” in the manner in which we think and create our schemes of work.

One thing has become particularly clear: this is another moving target. We need to constantly review and be willing to change what we teach, and how we teach it, to ensure different voices and stories are told and all are represented. We need to be able to justify what we teach and not be afraid of change when reviewing and adapting our curriculum.

Christina Anderson’s work on the project, Routed in Stevenage: Stories from our Hometown, at Woolenwick Infant and Nursery school was inspiring to hear about. We came away thinking creatively about how we could utilise the idea of a family heritage composition to help us better understand our pupils and their families who are transitioning into Year 7. We are considering how this information could help us partner our sixth form mentors and Year 7 more constructively, perhaps allowing us to consider

heritage links and understanding of life experiences, to help create stronger initial bonds and be able to offer a shared understanding.

We are excited about how this could manifest itself in our transition planning and are already reflecting on the most appropriate timeframe. How much guidance we would need to give, and how we can encourage parents to take part?

We considered creating a map of past boarding students, sharing their cultural heritage and their journey through St George's, linking finally to a "Where are we now?" scenario. This could inspire our current boarders to consider where people with a similar cultural background have ended up in the world and what realms of employment they have found themselves in. We feel that this project, inspired by the "Routed in Stevenage: Stories from our Hometown" presentation, could help show all of our community that we value their stories and backgrounds and look to form connections. In the words of the late Jo Cox, "We have far more in common with each other than that which divides us."

February 2023

In January we attended our fourth seminar. These seminars have proven to be a fantastic space to discuss, share and support, raising questions as well as providing us with routes to explore answers. We arrived at the seminar following a spike in racist language being used and reported by our students. In one year group there had been four incidents reported, and we decided to bring the year group together to reaffirm our position and how seriously we take these incidents.

To be honest, we had begun to feel, as we occasionally do, that this was not a war we could win! When you are talking to and supporting students who are impacted by racist language or behaviours, it can be incredibly upsetting, and we can only imagine the exhaustion and upset experienced by the students themselves. At points, it has felt like the problem has been getting greater rather than smaller, making it difficult to keep believing that change can come. Indeed, it feels that we are fighting against an ever-shifting enemy so, whilst you may feel like you have addressed one form of racism, another attacks unexpectedly.

With this background, we arrived at the seminar with a feeling of frustration and hopelessness. However, our ever-supportive and inspiring hub group were welcome reminders that, whilst the road is bumpy and often feels never-ending, it doesn't mean progress isn't happening. The fact that we have students who feel empowered to challenge and report racism is something not to be overlooked, as is the willingness of our staff to commit to make a difference.

We learned so much from the contributors to the seminar and came away feeling reinvigorated and hopeful ... no small feat! Sylvia Thai's lived experience was fascinating and was a welcome reminder of the multifaceted nature of ethnicity and experience. She spoke about the greatest asset being aspiration. As our school motto is "Aim Higher", this resonated strongly and was a reminder of the need to ensure all students feel that they can achieve and are believed in by the staff around them.

Moving into the session on culturally relevant pedagogy, we were encouraged to see how our own work at school is already partly reflective of this idea. As a body of staff, we are becoming increasingly confident about talking about culture, and we regularly discuss equality, equity and liberty with our students. This session provided much-needed validation of our approach.

We were moved by the quote by Zora Neale Hurston: "I feel most coloured when I am thrown against a sharp white background." We are aware that our school, particularly in KS3 and KS4, is a very White environment. Ensuring that our students of colour feel heard, appreciated and valued is something that continues to be a priority. Not only do we want these students to feel appreciated, but we also want them to feel appreciated as they are – for their identities to be lifted up rather than be subsumed by the dominant culture.

There is little doubt that one of the most enjoyable and important elements of the Great Representation programme has been to carve out time to visit other schools, build relationships and share good practice. The school visits, whether primary or secondary, have given us the opportunity to reflect on what we do and build a much-needed support network. In our visit to Barnwell School, we were impressed by the visibility of their work; it was clear that anti-racism could be seen around site and they had a clear course of action. Their Equality Scheme is embedded, and it was great to hear from students themselves how they were trying to enact change.

Following this visit, we were lucky enough to visit St Andrews, a Church of England primary school. Here, the passion and drive to create an anti-racist culture was clear from the moment we walked in. The library was full of diverse literature celebrating the voices of different people and cultures, whilst the students talked eloquently about the value they placed on equality and diversity. By creating Kindness Keepers, the school had begun to support students in finding their own voice and developing a confidence to challenge others. At both schools, and all the schools we have visited, the students themselves were the most effective tools to create the desired culture, and it is clear from our visits that these students both bought into the work being done and also benefited directly from it. If our work is to develop students into the best possible versions of themselves, both schools are clearly well on the way to success.

As we near the end of our work on the Great Representation programme, and we have completed the school visits within our hub group, we can't help but remember this is just the first step on our journey. A sobering thought that we return to is that this is not a battle we can "win" – it is a battle we will need to fight every day. Just when you think you have the upper hand, the battleground shifts. As much as we came into this work with the idealism of creating a completely anti-racist community, we now understand that this is the work of a lifetime, not just a couple of years. Our school visits have highlighted to us the need for collaboration. If our journey is not to finish at the end of this programme, we need to find a way to continue to support each other's work, and to offer the support and advice that only those on this journey can really give.

Another challenge we continue to face is the need to bridge the experiences of primary school into secondary school. How can we ensure that students feel celebrated, accepted and engaged with our work, when they are likely to have different starting points? Working with our local primary schools, and indeed other secondary schools, as a collaborative effort is absolutely a priority.

March 2023

When we embarked on the Great Representation project, we were not sure what "success" would look or feel like. We had no idea as to where the journey would take us and how much value we would find in the work we were doing with our hub group. Looking back on the last nine months, it is clear that being involved in Great Representation was not going to be about success but about progress – small, incremental steps that help us improve the culture of the school and push towards a more equitable approach to education.

In fact, our journey has definitely faced its obstacles – those moments where it feels like the problems are getting bigger or are becoming insurmountable. Indeed, at points, we have had to check that we are going in the right direction at all! But this journey has taught us that progress – however small – is being made, and we can achieve so much more by collaborating, listening and reflecting.

It has certainly helped having outstanding copilots. Our hub group has been a constant source of support and a place where we can interrogate each other's thinking and learn from each other's successes and mistakes. It has really spotlighted the need for a collaborative approach to dealing with these issues – something we know will shape our work in the future. No school is an island, and if we are going to make the level of progress we want in our fight against racism and its detrimental impact on the experience of our students, working together and with clear communication is vital.

HFL's Great Representation seminars have become a highlight of our term, not least because they have given us an opportunity to catch up with the hub group. Seminar 5 offered us some really insightful moments. Firstly, the "Addressing anti-semitism in troubling times" session led by Professor Lenga forced us to reflect on how we challenge antisemitism and perceptions of it within our school. We know antisemitism is growing – indeed, we have seen so within our own local environment in the form of graffiti – so it felt important and necessary to discuss how we deal with antisemitism, particularly when it is cloaked under the guise of political expression. Professor Lenga's line of ensuring our policy moves from being "laminated to lived" was particularly important, as we realise the significance of "walking the walk" as well as promoting ideas of anti-racism.

We feel like we are in a crucial moment in critical race theory history and this was augmented by the presentation by David Gillborn. We were struck by his no-holds-barred approach to the enormity of this work; his final line about this literally being a matter of life or death was both powerful and utterly terrifying!

Finally, Melissa Lowry's talk on "Growing up mixed up" was a welcome reminder that we are just looking for the individuals; our students are looking for signs that they belong, and we cannot forget the importance of the individual experience in the face of the problem as a whole.

Following the seminar, we were keen to ensure that anti-racism was on the agenda for the SLT, and we spoke about the lessons we have learned, along with our priorities for moving forward. We are reminded of the need to reflect; we have come a long way over the last two years, including:

- **the creation of an anti-racism lead**
- **the review of the curriculum leading to significant changes, particularly in art, English, history, PSHE and RE**
- **the development of an anti-racism group, who meet regularly**
- **a carousel of personal development sessions for all year groups, to educate on issues including microaggressions, unconscious bias, and racialised language**
- **reflection on school policy, including uniform, bullying, and equal opportunities**
- **the creation of a system for reporting, with a focus on education and restorative justice as well as a clearer route of communication**

We are also incredibly excited about our next steps. Whilst it is easy to get caught up in the excitement of new ideas, keeping a strategic approach to priorities is so important. For us, our priorities include:

- **Year 6 to Year 7 transition – offering students an opportunity to celebrate their cultural identity.** This is something inspired directly by the Great Representation work.

- **Collaboration both inside and outside of school.** We would like departments to work together in a cross-curricular way to ensure that everyone is represented and our messaging is the same. We would like to continue to develop the connections made with local schools and support their work. It became clear that many of our local primary schools have not engaged with this work to the same extent as those on this project. We are keen to look for ways for our students to lead anti-racism work in local primary schools, to support the development of their racial literacy.
- **Upskilling staff and students.** We are acutely aware that many students do not feel represented by our staff body; therefore, houses will be “upskilling” students to mentor and support our younger students of colour. Training will be developed, and it will enable us to provide ongoing support for students who have faced racist incidents. We will also be training representative staff from each house to have these conversations so there is a regular point of contact.
- **Continuing to explore how we can hear different voices in a predominantly White school.** We will be looking at creating focus groups with former students and parents so that we have active engagement from those representative of our student body.

Ultimately, our work on Great Representation, and the relationships developed with the hub schools, have been invigorating, inspiring and challenging. Whilst anti-racism work can feel insurmountable and sometimes incredibly lonely, this project has reminded us of why we have embarked on it and why it is such a crucial time for this work to be done.

Margaret Mead argues: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” This is what we must hold on to.

Helen Barton and Laura Holton-Gaus

**ST HELEN'S
CHURCH OF
ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

September 2022

At St Helen's we are already a couple of years into our race-equity journey. Being selected to take part in Great Representation programme has meant that we will now have the tools to develop it further. We are in the process of updating our curriculum, with some subjects – such as art, DT and English – being further along than others. Whilst developing a more diverse curriculum, we recognised that content included had to be more relevant to the children. This meant adding more British icons and history (rather than defaulting to the American civil rights movement). The curriculum will be a big focus over the course of the year.

We are planning to set up a parent/carer group to support us in our efforts to become an anti-racist school. Our intention is to involve as many different stakeholders as possible. Having listened to the concerns of a parent, we have made changes to the school uniform policy. In particular, this related to how children could wear their hair. The policy previously asked for hair to be tied back if it was longer than shoulder length, and it was pointed out to us that this discriminated against some children who could not tie their hair back due to its texture. We are also trying to address issues of diversity on our governing body. The current makeup of the governing body is a consideration when we are looking for new/replacement governors. Although it is becoming more diverse, the overall makeup of the staff and governing body is still primarily White.

Our primary next step is to finish reviewing the curriculum. We want to ensure that everyone is represented; promote inclusion; provide aspirational role models; and offer opportunities to experience other cultures, beliefs and experiences. To review the curriculum, we will look to use resources from the Bristol and Haringey curriculums, as well as Diverse Educators. Our target is to have it fully reviewed by the end of the year, and for it to be monitored and reviewed each year.

Like many schools, devoting time and money to this is the biggest issue. Budgets are tight, and a mostly White governing body and staff may not see it as the most important issue for the school. It is therefore important, as delegates from St Helen's, that we are feeding back learning from this course to help educate and motivate key stakeholders of the school. Staff will also need to be given time to assess and reflect on this learning, applying it in reviews of the subject or year group curriculums.

St Helen's is in Wheathampstead, a tranquil village on the River Lea. The vast majority of the village are White British, and this is reflected in the population of the school. It is important for us that all pupils feel included in the school setting and that our White pupils have a clear understanding of the diversity in the UK and in the world. Indeed, this was particularly evident during aftermath of George Floyd's death in 2020 and the resulting movements. Many of the children were particularly motivated and supportive of those movements, whilst others had questions and demonstrated limited understanding.

October 2022

Seminar 1 was an excellent and thought-provoking introduction to the programme. The statistics provided by Michael Catchpool and Professor Paul Miller really put the issue into context. Michael's statistics with regard to law enforcement and the justice system, health, earnings and employment illustrated how race inequality is still a systemic problem in the UK. Michael and Professor Miller both alluded to schools being "changemakers" in the community. This is certainly true for St Helen's, with the school being at the heart of the village. We think that the schools and the associated church are key to improving race equity in the Wheathampstead community.

Cynthia Rowe's story was challenging and, at times, uncomfortable. Her experiences growing up in the heart of Hertfordshire really proved to be eye-opening. The racist names that other children called her, and the way that her mother was shamed for having a Black baby, outlined the attitudes common when she was growing up. Her most recent story, of a car boot sale in Suffolk, was the perfect example of how many of these systemic issues are still prevalent in the UK to this day. Her speaking has prompted us to reach out and look to bring her into our school to help us on our journey.

The first seminar provided some excellent conversation amongst the delegates in our hub group. Discussions were held around what each school was already doing in terms of race equity, with many useful tips picked up, including suggested readings. A point discussed at great length was job applications. Most schools in the hub face challenges with hiring, particularly with a view to ensuring a diverse and well-represented staff. This was particularly relevant for us, as St Helen's does not have a very diverse staff, and where we do have staff of colour, they are in the lowest-paid jobs (TA and cleaner).

With the help of the seminar presentation, we were able to identify different paths from the traditional Teach in Herts advertisements, such as BAMEed, Voice Online and LGBTed (amongst others). The recruitment process itself was discussed, in terms of unpicking applications even more through using completely blind applications (redacting names and details of ethnicity). Also, given that our SLT and governing body mostly comprises White people, ensuring we have diverse panels by bringing in outsiders if necessary.

The first school visit was to The Broxbourne School. It was a very interesting visit, as the school had a newly built campus. Whilst being shown around the new school, it was easy to notice the efforts made to promote diversity, through distinct diversity-related displays as well as integration in subject-specific displays. Also powerful were their alumni displays, with many accessible role models for children of all backgrounds.

As well as the guided tour around the school, there was time to provide updates on progress. All schools had taken a look at the curriculum, with approaches varying by school. Delegates from secondary schools lamented the closed nature of large portions

of their curriculum, proving barriers to promote diversity in their curriculum. In our school – a primary school – we naturally have more scope to create our own curriculum and still meet the demands of the national curriculum. Diversity Educators was discussed, with the Diversity in the Curriculum Toolkit (collated by Bennie Kara) mentioned as a good starting point.

December 2022

Sufian Sadiq opened his session with the question “Are you a racist?” Unsurprisingly, everybody looked down at their hands and tried not to make eye contact. This strong start set us up for a presentation that was emotionally and mentally challenging. We cannot know what it is like to live as a person of colour, but the stories Sufian told us made us reconsider the truths we thought we knew. It made us realise that White privilege is a thing that we never think about and, hearing Sufian’s story alongside those of Cynthia Rowe and Jigna Patel, made us realise that we were ignorant to many of the issues people of colour face on a daily basis.

Since the third seminar, Kaye has listened to the audio book *Why I’m No Longer Talking To White People About Race* by Reni Eddo-Lodge. She found this a challenging listen, and at times was ready to give up on it, but made herself listen to the end and questioned herself as to what she was finding disturbing. When she dug into it, she realised she did not like how Reni sounded so angry when she was speaking. That left Kaye conscious of the fact that she was being stereotypical, buying into the concept of “an angry Black woman”. Having now listened to many stories from people of colour, she acknowledged that Reni has every right to be angry. She would too in her situation. She also found her chapter on feminism enlightening. She had never given any thought to the fact that feminism could look different depending on your situation, but this is of course the case. This has left Kaye thinking about other areas such as disability, homophobia and ageism; and how it is important to not think one size fits all. Kaye thinks this is where we could fall into the trap of being tokenistic.

Our second hub visit, to Margaret Wix Primary School, gave us the opportunity to see some excellent practice. The distance between our two schools is 5.7 miles, and yet the cohorts are very different. One of the first things to strike us when we went into Margaret Wix is how multicultural the school is in comparison with ours, which is quite unusual for the part of Hertfordshire we are in. This made us consider why minority ethnic families are choosing Margaret Wix over the other schools. Is it because they feel safer and more represented? We spent some time with their equality and diversity ministers, who form part of their School Parliament. The girls were excellent representatives for the school

and spoke eloquently about their roles and how they made them feel. This is something we have taken away with us and would like to introduce at St Helen's in the spring term.

We also felt that the library at Margaret Wix was a warm and inviting environment, and we were impressed with the range of books and how books relating to equality and diversity were displayed in an enticing way for the children. The equality and diversity ministers spoke with excitement about the culture day the school took part in and how they enjoyed exploring the food from different cultures. Again, this is something that we plan on doing at St Helen's.

January 2023

This month we are going to reflect on the impact the Great Representation group is having on our school. Having now attended four seminars, visited three schools and made a number of contacts, we are in a position to start putting things into action. We have started to work on four main areas.

We have invited Cynthia Rowe, head of How Wood Primary School, to come and present to the staff and governors. Having found Cynthia's presentation so moving at a previous seminar, we felt it was important for the staff to experience this first-hand.

We have opened this presentation up to all staff and governors, not just the teachers who would normally attend staff meetings. One of the most impactful, and often shocking, parts of this journey has been people sharing their own stories.

Penny Lasker-Brown was another speaker we had the pleasure of listening to at a seminar. Penny is the assistant head of Wheatfields School, and we matched with her through the HFL Herts Voices initiative, which organises racially minoritised speakers for schools. We explained to Penny that we want to launch our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) group, and she is going to speak to the children about protected characteristics. Penny was also good enough to send us the documents she had used to set up her own group.

After visiting Margaret Wix School, we were very keen to set up our own EDI group. As a Church of England School, we currently have a group called "Worship Ambassadors", and we have been looking into the UNICEF Rights Respecting Ambassadors programme. We have decided to combine these groups to make them more meaningful. Our school vision statement states:

“We work together to understand, show and share God’s love. Adults and children act with honesty and kindness, appreciate each other’s differences and love their neighbours. We strive to approach all learning with a positive attitude, a sense of collaboration and a desire to achieve.”

We have decided to bring our EDI group back to the vision statement, and the members will be called values ambassadors. The children will be from Years 5 and 6. We have decided to use upper KS2, as we believe these children can have a greater impact.

When we visited Knebworth Primary School, we had an excellent discussion around language regarding racism and how to speak to adults and children about such issues. We felt this might be something we could work on as a hub group. When we got back to school, we contacted Toks Olusamokun, one of the Race Equality Advisers at HFL, and asked if she knew of any useful documents. Toks has recommended reading the book *Wish We Knew What to Say* by Dr Pragya Agarwal, alongside some other documents, and we will be looking at these over the next half-term. In addition to this, Toks sent through some excellent Sesame Street resources, which we plan to use with the children in collective worship.

Being part of this programme has given us lots of ideas and the resources to be able to take them forward.

February 2023

Over the past few months, there has been an interesting shift in our thinking about which parts of the programme we value the most. In the beginning, it was the seminars and the information that were provided. We have found that, as our confidence and understanding have grown, we value our hub group more. We are very fortunate to be part of a strong and proactive hub, who have been able to support each other and share ideas.

We have recently visited Watford Grammar School for Girls. As well as the opportunity to have a look around their amazing, historic site, we were able to speak to a group of the school’s equality ambassadors. We found it a privilege to speak to young people about the things that make life difficult. These young people were a credit to the school and spoke eloquently about how the school makes a difference to their lives. They spoke about all forms of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and were very proud to represent their school.

We found it particularly moving when one member, who was mixed race, was able to speak about the first time they encountered a mixed-race teacher in secondary school and the difference it made to them. Being able to hear this story from somebody who had a recent experience of primary school made a real difference to how we are thinking. All the young adults spoke about how it wasn't until they came to secondary school that they realised the lack of diversity in their primary schools. This is something we need to think about and address. Primary schools tend to be small and nurturing, but this creates a problem if you feel you do not fit in.

The focus this month has definitely been on the young adults, and we had the privilege of hearing Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson speak about her project "Impact of Omission". The data that Esmie shared from her research was shocking, and we were particularly interested in the statistics that showed 86% of the people surveyed had learned about the Tudors, and 72.5% the Great Fire of London; but only 9.9% the place of slavery in the British industrial revolution, and 7.9% the colonisation of Africa (<https://impactofomission.squarespace.com/survey>). This survey had a large sample, of 56,467, which serves to show how many people want to have a say about this matter.

We have been working on our curriculum for some time now and, although it is not perfect, we feel that it is improving. We have recently undergone our SIAMs inspection, which is a Church of England inspection not dissimilar to Ofsted. We are very proud that the inspectors have recognised the work we are doing for EDI and commented on it in their report:

"A notable feature is the school's commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This demonstrates that pupils develop a wonderful sense of diversity and global citizenship. For example, studying Mary Seacole along with Florence Nightingale. As a result of the vision and EDI commitment pupils are good citizens to each other."

In our previous entry we spoke about launching our values ambassadors, and this process is now underway. More than 30 children applied for a position, and the applications came from a large cross-section of our Year 5 and Year 6 children, many not being children who would usually come forward. Some of the comments in their applications included, "I want people to finally feel comfortable and talk to people instead of doing nothing", "Sometimes people make offensive comments ... I would really hate if this happened to someone else", and "I want to show everyone what equality means". Our next step is to invite our parent/carers in to meet with the group, so that we can all plan a way forward. Initially, we tried to start with the adults, but we soon realised that engaging with the children first would increase our chance of engaging with the adults.

March 2023

As we approach the end of this programme, we are able to reflect on what we have achieved and where we would like to go next.

Our initial intention, which formed part of this year's school development plan, was to achieve the anti-racist school award. We are still planning to apply for this award, but a variety of staffing issues have led to leadership time being cut, and it is unlikely to happen this school year. Despite this, we have made a lot of progress towards our target.

The difficulties around staffing have also led to us not being able to do as much with the curriculum as we would have liked. Although we have managed to review the curriculum and ensure that there is diversity within it, we have not been able to look at some of the more diverse curriculum models that exist. This is something we hope to pick up again in the next school year.

One area in which we have succeeded is the appointment of values ambassadors. Through our relationship with the other schools in our hub, we were able to explore this role before rolling it out. We knew quite early into the programme that we wanted an EDI role for our children but were not certain how to make it meaningful. Having the opportunity to speak to colleagues in secondary school and to spend time with secondary school students who held this role helped us to develop it. We were also very grateful for the support of Penny Lasker-Brown for sharing her own good practice in this area.

Once our values ambassadors were in place, they represented us at two events. The first was a visit from our hub colleagues. The children were able to speak about their hopes and aspirations, and the opportunity to do this with a group of adults who fully understood what we are aiming for was invaluable for them. We then invited parents/carers to join us for a coffee morning, where we talked about what we want to do.

Getting parents/carers on board with our journey is something that continues to be a challenge. Although we have parents who are interested in what we are doing, they are not equally representative of the children we have in school. This is something we continue to look at, and we hope that we will be able to grow the group by showing that we want to make a difference.

The coffee morning was an excellent opportunity for us to share ideas between staff, children, parent/carers, governors and representatives from our church. It was surprising how far we were able to develop ideas once different groups became involved. The values ambassadors had initially said they would like to have a Culture Day, and we were already aware of the difficulties this could lead to, having spoken to the young adults at Watford Girl's Grammar School.

With the support of all at the coffee morning, we were able to develop the idea further, and we will be having a “Good To Be Me Day”, where the children/adults can decide what it is about themselves they would like to celebrate and how they would like to celebrate it. The children were very keen to experience foods from different cultures, and we are going to speak to the school kitchen about this and see if there is some way we can integrate it with school dinners.

Alongside Great Representation, the headteacher has been taking part in A Strategic Approach to Becoming an Anti-Racist School. As part of this, she met with Toks Olusamokun, to discuss progress so far and what we are going to do next. The main next step is going to be to complete the School Race Equity and Anti-Racism Self-Evaluation, as provided by HFL. This will present us with information on what needs to be done next.

Looking at our journey from start until now, it is clear to see that we have not achieved everything we set out to do this year, but we have achieved some things that had not been planned. As our networks and understanding have developed, so has our vision for the school. It is hard to believe that we have reached the end of this programme, but the resources and people we have met along the way have put us in a strong position to continue our journey. It is also our hope to share what we have learned with other schools and to help them develop their own anti-racist approach.

Kaye Healy and Andrew Sewell

**ST JOSEPH'S
CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

September 2022

St Joseph's is a one-form entry primary school with 203 pupils, from Nursery to Year 6. Our demographic is changing quickly. We currently have 33% Black British children, this being our largest group of children. Over 12 different languages are spoken by the children on roll.

Our journey of curriculum review began three years ago. We began looking at introducing a variety of different texts and started to expose our Year 6 pupils to current and diverse topics. This process was slower than anticipated due to staff response – some embraced the change, whilst others felt more secure with their traditional topics.

For many years we held celebrations, event days and assemblies on various themes – Black History Month, International Week; other faith weeks; and World Book Week, with two black authors sharing their books and stories.

Then, after the Covid pandemic, when many of the parents of our younger year groups hadn't even entered our school, we started to receive questions about our ethos and celebration of diversity. We agreed that we needed to review these areas fully and give greater context to all we do.

The main change was looking at everything from our children's point of view and allowing them to hold us to account. We asked the question "Can I see myself represented in my school?"

The actions we undertook were:

- **a full curriculum review**
- **curriculum mapping, with explicit diversity sections embedded**
- **reviewing all aspects of our SMSC events**
- **ensuring we delivered Diwali assemblies**
- **ensuring that Windrush Day involved all**
- **visiting a range of places of worship**
- **reviewing Black history activities**
- **making International Week specific**
- **ensuring that class saints were diverse in colour/age/sex**
- **focusing on the image of Mary our children see**
- **considering why we do everything**
- **undertaking pupil voice activity on curriculum**

- **carrying out a parent survey with diversity questions**
- **setting up a parent working party**
- **reviewing school displays**

Our vision is that “Children see themselves represented in everything” within our school. This begins in Nursery and lasts until their final days in Year 6.

It is that journey that brought us to the Great Representation programme.

Getting to know the other schools in our hub group in Seminar 1, through a “speed-dating” session, we gained so much knowledge, depth and understanding of each school’s starting points and where they are on in their journey. We established each other’s contexts and why they are on this journey too – each school completely different, and each school opening up to the challenges, achievements and goals that we are striving towards.

When listening to Professor Paul Miller at the first seminar, we felt that we were actually thinking about and acting on the right areas. He shared the mantra “I see you, I hear you, I belong.”

How do our children see themselves every single day they walk into our school? Do they see themselves in our staff, our curriculum and our environment? Professor Miller delivered such an engaging, honest and inspiring talk, which really demonstrates the levers that we need to take on regarding our anti-racism work.

The levers to consider are:

- **culture**
- **people**
- **curriculum**
- **leadership**
- **policies**
- **funding**

We currently don’t have any Black staff within our teaching or support team, so who do our Black children look up to? Where do they see themselves in our school? We have tried to compensate through reviewing our events, including parents more, making more links with the community, looking at projects or events, and allowing pupils the choice to identify with whom they wished.

The true inspiration from the session came from Cynthia Rowe, a Black headteacher from St Albans. To hear such personal honesty in her telling of her lived experience made us question everything, and to again think about why we are doing what we are doing

and who we are doing it for. It is this we will continue to return to as the answer can only be and will only be *for our children*.

October 2022

This was the start of true and lasting collaboration. We visited two schools: St George's and Presdales. We also hosted the group at our school. Each school is so different but these were such powerful experiences.

The "speed-dating" session with St George's Anti-Racist Committee (ARC) was inspiring. We got to sense the daily life of the school and the roles that staff and pupils play. We learned about their unique survey system, which allows staff to track year groups and trends. We then met a group of children from the ARC and they were honest, inspirational, and a true representation of the current world and society we live in today. They are great role models, who we want our children to meet, to give the realisation that our children can aspire to do anything.

At Presdales, an all-girls secondary school, the girls' passion for change and their honesty was a credit to the values instilled. They want to use their voice to make the right changes for their school. School comes first for them, and they want to make a difference now and for the future. As guests, we posed very frank, direct and open questions to the students. Their answers were articulate, clear and frank. They are driven and inspirational young women who want to see more done for themselves and for future generations to come. They appreciate the work their teachers are doing and are very eager to support new committees and groups being set up to establish and embed anti-racist practice.

November 2022

Claire Stewart-Hall began the morning by sharing the idea that we are not alone; we are not just one; our support is each other. The project so far is emphasising that as we are as one as a hub group, supporting and encouraging each other as we are challenged but also empowered to embrace the changes we are encountering or leading. The socialisation map is something we will share with staff to help drive change. We have had the privilege of time to think – time to understand our own context personally and professionally and what brings us to today. Staff need the same experience, to give context and allow them to understand their journey to today.

David Gillborn shared the idea: “I cannot be a teacher without exposing who I am.” It is this contextualisation of who we are, why we are who we are, and the challenges of life that have made us who we are today that is vital. We have to know who we are in order to embrace the conversation and not shy away. Avoidance enables White supremacy to continue, and this is not what we stand for. We have a voice for change.

Our steps for success are around curiosity, talking to wider communities, and reaching out to one another and sharing experiences, as well as having the courage and the honesty to know that this is okay. We want to try to ensure we are constantly shifting habits.

Our next steps are to:

- **review “whose lens is being privileged?” in our school and who therefore benefits from that privilege lens**
- **share with staff the socialisation map and explore their own context, experiences and journey**
- **invite Sufian Sadiq to our school**
- **continue to open up the conversation**
- **consider our parents: do they have the same drivers as we do?**
- **explore much deeper the “hidden curriculum”**

December 2022

As the autumn term began to close, it was time to sit back, think and reflect on how far we had really come as a school community. We had a clear vision and aim at the beginning of the academic year. We wanted to ensure our children were represented, seen and heard in our school.

During the final weeks of the autumn term, we were gathering thoughts on how to prepare for our upcoming INSET day. There would be seven primary schools and one secondary school attending. We decided that we would deliver several workshops, and one of these would be on diversity and inclusion within our school. It would provide an opportunity for other schools to see, hear and feel what we have begun to develop and embed within our school. As a team, we were able to reflect on what we had achieved already.

Our first reflective step was to just look, see and get a sense of what our children were experiencing every day. We saw displays featuring diverse authors, school hall

boards representing our children and their heritage, and our libraries celebrating many different communities and offering rich opportunities for children to explore race, diversity and heritage. But what we really wanted to know was what representation looks like in each and every classroom. We journeyed into our classrooms, and we could see our children were independently choosing reading books featuring characters from minority backgrounds. Our youngest children were playing and interacting with dolls, books, images of themselves, maps and small-world figurines, representing race and diversity in a number of ways, all building on their communication, language and their understanding the world and the community they live in. This made us feel grateful for the diverse children we have within our school and the achievements we have made so far.

As leaders, we are attending the Great Representation training sessions and returning, after each visit, wanting to do more, see more, hear more and feel more. However, like some other schools have mentioned in our hub group, we have begun to realise not everyone was hearing the message in the same powerful way. Our next step for our journey is to approach one of the guest speakers from the second Great Representation session, Sufian Sadiq, to come and deliver a staff training session. We want our staff to see the shoes he walks in every day, to hear about his life and experiences, and to reflect on how we can use his knowledge and skill set to continue to develop our staff approach.

We have recently planned a trip for the spring term, for our children to attend a Hindu temple located in our community. This opportunity will allow our children to experience a place of worship that serves many in our community. We are a Catholic primary school, and we want to ensure that our children understand that the Catholic church is not the only place of worship. We look forward to seeing the value that this trip will bring our children and us as leaders, staff and parents.

January 2023

After the hustle and the bustle of the Christmas holidays had been and gone, it was time to reflect and think about what our next steps should be.

One of our tasks during the January period was to send out our parental and pupil surveys – an annual event. With careful reflection over the last three to four months, we carefully tailored our questions to delve into the realms of race, equity and diversity to see whether parents have yet seen an impact from our efforts and overhaul of the curriculum.

Firstly, only 13 parents chose to comment on the race, diversity and equity question, out of a possible 126 responses. This leaves us with a series of questions: Do parents understand these questions? Are parents satisfied we are doing enough at school and do not feel the need to comment? Do parents not wish to comment because their feedback may be negative? It is difficult to know, however the 13 results did give us an insight into what parents, see, hear and feel when they enter our school:

“The cultural diversity working group is doing an amazing job in ensuring people from different cultures come together with ideas of how to improve and promote cultural diversity within the curriculum.”

“I think the school does a lot to promote cultural diversity within the curriculum.”

“Children learn about different cultures already. Perhaps more about Asia.”

“As a family, we feel the school has fully immersed itself into ensuring that the walls of St Joseph’s are seen through the lens of diversity. My child is represented throughout the curriculum and has many opportunities to explore diversity and inclusion through everyday life at school. He relates to the wider world through specific subject teaching as well as cultural capital opportunities that develops his understanding of race, diversity and equality. This is down to the teachers and leaders at the school and the hard work they have put in to ensure that every child is represented, felt, heard and seen within the school.”

The next comment has sparked conversation between teachers, staff, and senior leaders with our school:

“Work with external educators who are specialists in black history education. Diversify the workforce. There’s not enough teachers that pupils can relate to culturally. This is such an important thing. Invest in more culturally diverse reading books with varying characters across the board.”

We questioned whether this parent might be unaware of our CPD training, our workforce and our actions to diversify the books we have in classroom reading corners and communal areas such as libraries and shared reading areas.

To address this, we are inviting all parents who answered the diversity questions within our survey to attend our next diversity working partner session on 22 February 2023. Hopefully, this will spark conversation and discussion around what we already do in our school and our next steps.

Following on from the survey, we went to visit two of our hub schools, one primary and one secondary. These were both very powerful visits and showed us the impact of their journey so far. As a primary school, it was encouraging to see another primary setting and how a non-diversified school in terms of pupil representation has fully committed itself to embrace their children's learning through the lens of diversity and equity. We picked up many examples of good practice in each of the schools. As a result, we will be looking to see if we can get more authors, speakers and interactive workshops from the Asian and mixed-heritage communities into the school.

Finally, the talk given by Jess Boyd at the January conference was inspiring in so many ways. The exploration of the dominant culture characteristic sparked many discussions within our hub group, and we learned that many of our identities and our characteristics overlap, and it is so important we relate this to our children and acknowledge this within our class, assemblies and wider opportunities within our school.

We went away from the conference clinging on to Jess's words and having that sense that we must take the time to take down "fences", and a realisation that we cannot know all of the values, traditions and routines of our families and children if we do not know our families. We need to be able to take on their cultural fences and build on those relationships to have deeper knowledge and empathy. Relationships are the key that enables us to knock down fences. This is something deeper to explore, and something we can hopefully raise awareness of during our February parent workshop meeting.

March 2023

After our final school visits in January, we were re-inspired and reinvigorated. St Andrew's staff spoke about their Kindness Keepers in Year 6. This gave us ideas for our own group. Following some work for Racial Justice Sunday; and a Bible reading that summed up what we want for our children, "Not to hide their light but to shine"; we focused in assembly on "Walking together, working together and praying together". This allowed us to join up our thinking for a pupil group. We decided on the name Lighthouse Keepers,

as we want our children to lead the way for change, support each other and walk the journey together. The children were invited to find out more. 35 children from Years 4, 5 and 6 applied to be Lighthouse Keepers. We have been humbled by the strength of their views:

“I am the light of my school.”

“I want to guide people on their path to become a better person.”

“I can show people lightness and not darkness. I will guide them through the way and make sure they take the right path.”

“Giving them light when they think they have no hope.”

This group of 35 are currently designing their badge and motto, and preparing for a launch on our school feast day and to share with the rest of the school what the group is all about. The motto chosen is: “One light, one path, one human can change the reality.”

Our fifth Great Representation session was a challenging one. As we all shared, the speakers are testing our thinking more and more. The day ended with tears once again as we heard Melissa Lowry’s open and honest account of her life: “Growing up mixed up”. She is from a mixed heritage family (White mother, Black father) and calls herself mixed race, but has only in recent months come to terms with that terminology. She said that, as a child, she never felt she belonged. She wasn’t White; she wasn’t Black; who did she identify with? She said she didn’t see herself anywhere. Through all her education there were only two books that represented her. As she said, this has to change. In those two texts, she felt noticed and understood, but not at any time apart from then through all of her years of formal education.

Even though we have reviewed our books three times now, it is now the next step to review them again with these words in our mind. Our children cannot feel that way. Our task will be to speak to the children and be direct, to hear what they say, however difficult that could be. We want to know if they feel they belong, are seen and feel represented.

This has been an awe-inspiring journey which has allowed thinking time and collaboration, and has inspired us to continue to review and challenge what we do. Our work within our hub group and our visits to schools have proved so beneficial. We thank the group for their support and continued inspiration. This is not the end, but the beginning.

Our next steps will be to:

- **continue developing our Lighthouse Keepers**
- **continue to develop and listen to our parents**
- **ask our pupils if they feel they belong and can be seen in what we do**
- **provide staff training**
- **invite Sufian in to speak to staff and governors as well as a pupil group**
- **invite St George's students to visit for workshops and an assembly**
- **re-audit all the books we have to share, as class books, in our library and reading areas**
- **continue to develop and evaluate our curriculum**
- **continue reviewing our action plan**
- **invite Melissa Lowry to speak to staff**

Barbara O'Connor and Kate Moseley

September 2022

The St Vincent de Paul School is a beautifully diverse community. 31 languages are spoken across our families, with 31% of children fitting into an EAL category. 13 out of the 17 recorded ethnic groups are represented within our school, with 61% of our pupils identifying as coming from an ethnic group other than White British. We have a White British head and deputy headteacher. Our school is a happy, Catholic school, which believes it upholds the values of inclusion, equality and equity both for pupils and staff. We strive to offer the best opportunities for all. We believe we do this well ... Don't we?

We attended the first Great Representation seminar and began to reflect on our current practices. Our book stock has also been recently reviewed, and replenished with a selection of multicultural, diverse books for all. We celebrate our differences and cultures in assemblies and general school life. We are aware our curriculum needs to include more diversity, and we are looking at where we can implement this. However, following the seminar, we realise that we need to do much more.

We all know statistics can be used to promote a viewpoint and can be arguably manipulated to reflect what you want them to. However, the message became clear as we sat and reflected on our groups of children. Why are children from certain ethnic groups appearing to achieve less well than those from other groups?

The guest speakers, Professor Paul Miller and Cynthia Rowe, spoke from the heart, opening our eyes and leading to a far deeper understanding. We became quite embarrassed about some of our preconceptions. We never want to offend, and we truly believe everyone should be equal, whatever their faith, ethnicity, gender or sexual preference. It was a simple but powerful statement that Paul Miller made that drew us in and fired us up: "You see me, you hear me, I belong".

We reflected on how some of our children might feel. How naïve we had been! We also began to understand the importance and effect that the feeling of belonging can have on education. This is true across all aspects of school life, whether it involves curriculum, pupils, families or staff.

We knew that we needed to delve deeper into three main areas:

- **How do our pupils and families really feel? Do they feel represented, listened to, understood and equal?**
- **How do we enable our pupils to see themselves in all elements of school life and the curriculum?**
- **How can we create a more diverse staff team? Recently, we have appointed several staff of colour. However, despite changing the wording of our adverts when we have teaching vacancies, to encourage people from all ethnic groups to**

apply, diversity continues to be inadequately represented in our teaching staff. Are we advertising in the right place, or is the pool of staff just not there? And if not, why not? How does our outward-facing front of the school appear to those from different groups?

A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. To build an understanding of the feelings and experiences of our school's community, we will firstly have to ask some difficult and open questions.

October 2022

Where to start? Letter after letter, chat after chat, the big question was, "How do we approach the children and parents to ask how they feel; do they feel included?" A daunting concept and one that we could get very wrong, perhaps with unintentional consequences. Should we be selective, or should we invite all the parents to respond? Do we ask the children, ever mindful that we may be making them question whether they are happy or not? This is a minefield, and we have spent a lot of time going round and round, with no decision being made.

The staff meeting was apparently a success. We were sharing the project and what we have been thinking about with an easy audience – one we know. We reflected on what the children must see in our school. Do they have the sense of "You see me, you hear me, I belong"? A great discussion was had, and changes were seen the very next day. Assembly images were rethought and displays tweaked – perhaps little things, but nevertheless a start; an awareness in formation. As a Catholic school, we began to notice certain images around, but what were these saying to our children? With a few changes and an increasing awareness, progress is being made.

A visit to one of the secondary schools in our hub group was a great experience and opened more professional dialogue. Again, that tricky conversation reared its head: How should we approach the subject of race without upsetting or insulting people? Following a discussion in our group, we learned how another school had managed the conversation about appropriate language to use around race with their students. The students themselves didn't agree with the adults' recommended terminology and preferred different terms when describing their ethnicity. There certainly isn't one simple answer! We just need to be brave, make the mistakes and own them.

November 2022

What can we say? Another thought-provoking day and seminar. It felt like someone had wired our office. The seminar had a useful focus on racial literacy and language – exactly what we needed!

We were back to that difficult question again: How do we navigate the conversations about race? Our hearts sank when Claire Stewart-Hall pointed out that there isn't just one way or answer to how you approach it. What makes it so difficult is that, because we find it traumatic and uncomfortable to talk about, it's so much easier to just shut the conversation down – to bury our heads in the sand. We need to manage our own emotions and venture out of our comfort zones. To quote Dr Pragya Agarwal, "There is a fear of getting it wrong, not having the right vocabulary."

But why is it so hard? Claire Stewart-Hall spoke about institutional racism and schools. She argued that the remnants of inherited thoughts that were left behind from the 80s and 90s have manifested in a "colour-blind" approach, right through to the current focus on equal opportunities. We have learned to conform due to our experiences as we grow up.

We think we're not racist, but are we without realising it? It is our experiences and our memories that impact our growth. They have continually changed, resulting in conflicting messages and uncertainty. The whole "trying not to be racist" is making us more so! Therefore, we have decided to identify members of our community whom we feel we can approach to explain what we are doing and why we are doing it. What we need is an open and frank conversation. This will be a start, and from there we can begin our transformational journey.

Now for the next task. What is it that we want from this project?

1. a school with a fully inclusive curriculum that reflects our families
2. the whole school community to feel that they belong
3. our children to have aspirations that they can
4. a community that celebrates, shares and talks about race, gender and cultures without being worried
5. to attract a more diverse teaching staff

This project must be aiming towards one big thing, but we still can't work out what it will be!

December 2022

Could this be the key?

Sometimes you come across something that resonates with you; it makes you stop and think – a yes moment. We've read through multiple amazing books on this journey, but strangely, a two-minute 50-second YouTube clip from the Royal Society called "Unconscious Bias" (www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYaK1WphTuk&t=2s) could have been the answer that we were looking for. However, we hadn't realised it yet.

It was now our turn to host the hub schools. Mince pies and coffee at the ready! What are they going to see? Anything? We hadn't made any massive changes yet.

We sat and put the agenda together and thought about what we wanted from the visit. We needed fresh eyes. What picture do we paint? It was decided that we would take our visitors on a tour of the school and have a look through the website. What we wanted was first impressions.

In leading others through our school, we saw things in a different light. We could see small changes happening already. Religious icons and pictures are now more diverse; even a display in Year 3 that showed children's drawings of Mary had changed to show a Mary with Black skin and one with Brown skin. Images on emotional wellbeing displays reflecting our children, books, posters and curriculum content were certainly becoming more diverse.

Our visitors commented on the diversity in our school. Changes for the better were clearly becoming apparent. We shared the website, and that again reflected our children. We are about to put an advert out and discussed the different websites and advertising in a range of places to attract the right candidates. In subsequent months, when pitching at a recruitment fair, we ensured that our focus on diversity was prominent – curriculum materials, resources, images, and discussions about involvement in the Great Representation project. We seem to have attracted a diverse pool of candidates, and we will see what happens next!

It was during this conversation that we realised exactly what we wanted at the end of this project – it wasn't one big thing; it was simply a new lens. A lens that we needed to stop and ensure we frequently look through. As Dr Pragya Agarwal states in her book, *Wish We Knew What to Say*: "By saying everyone is the same, we deny our children their own racial and cultural experience." We need to acknowledge colour and race. In Dr Pragya Agarwal's words: "Not seeing colour in itself is racist." It's an unconscious bias. This returns us to the Royal Society Video on unconscious bias.

Our unconscious mind processes more information than our conscious mind by developing shortcuts based on our background, cultural environment, and personal

experiences. We can't help it – it's just how we're all wired. We all make snap judgements without thinking – we'll favour particular people, groups and genders, all unconsciously. The video talked about interview panels doing four things:

1. slowing down when making decisions
2. reconsidering reasons for decisions
3. questioning cultural stereotypes
4. monitoring each other for unconscious bias

This is something that can't be “cured” per se but can be addressed. It's about stopping and reflecting, and using a different lens to look through. Now comes the big challenge: raising awareness and getting everyone on board to do the same. Could this make a difference?

January 2023

Well, we never thought this project would have had such an impact on us. This project has changed our thoughts and views and has even opened up discussions within our own families that we never had dreamt of. *Why I'm no Longer Talking to White People About Race* by Reni Eddo-Lodge was the stimulus for a deep conversation with Jon's 15-year-old daughter. It was interesting to hear her views and refreshing to hear her talk about unconscious bias, with a different focus, on feminism. Jon shared his thoughts and the idea of the lenses to look through. His daughter threw up questions and made him reflect on issues within her school and with her friends. Although this was not our school, it was interesting to hear the type of things the children had seen, shared and heard. Sometimes this is about vocalising their own perspective on an event but, at other times, about conveying the upset or anger that friends had shared with them.

These open conversations continued when we visited one of our hub secondary schools. We sat and talked about how we are all starting to converse, share and notice more within our families and friends. We are all recognising that this isn't just a valuable project for our own schools, but that the impact of it is far wider. Our new questioning and understanding is starting to impact on our own families and wider life. We are so lucky to have members of our hub team with whom we can share personal experiences and with whom we can consider views we wouldn't have otherwise encountered. You don't know what you don't know – a recurring theme that requires a new lens!

We've opened up conversation with the SLT and have discussed the need to burst the comfortable bubble and challenge ourselves and others to think differently. We've discussed at length the “I don't see colour” argument with our wider staff team, and

there were tangible moments of realisation in the eyes of some. As we began to unpick the impact of colour-blindness, they began to realise its true impact.

Not content with KCSiE and Catholic Social Teaching updates in our weekly whole-staff briefing, we now also have a Great Representation update, which aims to challenge each member of staff (and the governors) with a question and something for us all to think about. The conversation and the reach of the lens is widening!

This week's update focused on allyship and active participation. We're noticing that these conversations are becoming a lot easier to open and continue, as our confidence and awareness develop. In fact, this lens is becoming so embedded in our everyday life that we ensure that we challenge those organisations who perhaps haven't discovered their identity lens yet. They are becoming "comfortably awkward" conversations!

With this new co-found confidence, we now feel ready to write "The Letter"...

February 2023

We want our families and children to feel they belong. It was so much easier in the end than we thought, with a letter outlining a simple explanation of the Great Representation project and posing the question: "Do you feel you belong at St Vincent de Paul?" Who should we send it to? Well, that was easy – everyone! The letter has been sent and the coffee morning arranged. The idea is to give a little more information about the project and see who would be interested in forming a focus group. This will be an important group – one that is open, honest and supportive. We need to know what we don't know. We have learned so much already, and we are excited and nervous at the same time to hear what the parent body has to say.

11 parents and a visiting relative from Kenya showed up – not the best turn-out! However, we can still gather some information. We shared a short presentation about the project and our journey so far. It felt good, and we felt confident enough to be open and honest and to discuss colour, diversity and belonging with our community. We highlighted the changes we had made and the idea that we were now taking a diversity lens to everything we do and every decision we are making, ensuring that our children will be able to see, hear and feel that they belong. One parent said "My eyes filled with tears and I wanted to stand and shout with joy when you acknowledged we needed to include Black British people and history within the curriculum."

Everyone was keen to share their feeling of belonging through our simple activities. Within the hour spent together, friendships were made and open discussions were had. We learned that one of the parents attending had written her master's thesis on

“Belonging”. The little changes we had already put in place had impacted on our families, and these were being commented on. The parents loved the display of books, resources, pictures and photos that was shared. This coffee meeting became a chance to collate positive feedback about what had already happened as well as to explore what we needed to do next. We ended the meeting with a commitment to do more of this and agreed that next time they should all bring someone else along.

March 2023

A lot of reading, researching, conversations and soul-searching has been had. When we started this project, we set out thinking that this would result in a single outcome. However, we quickly realised this wasn't to be the case. Through the lens of this project, so many small changes have occurred. Our staffing and governance are more diverse. Resources, images, and our curriculum are far more representative of our children and families. We acknowledge and celebrate our community and challenge those organisations and individuals who can't yet see through our diversity lens. We have included our staff on our journey too, with a reflection and focus on diversity in weekly briefings. It is incredible to see the little changes that we have made having such a huge impact on our school and wider community.

This is not a project that should end. In fact, we would go as far to say it's life-changing, or rather life-*challenging*. This project has changed perceptions, altered thinking and highlighted unconscious bias. This project has been invaluable for everyone, but most importantly for our pupils and their families.

At the start of this project, we wrote that this journey would take a thousand steps, and we are still not much closer to the end of it. However, with the support of our community and our faith, we can continue this journey together, because everyone has the fundamental right to belong, and everyone needs an ally.

Alexandra Whitty and Jon White

September 2022

Currently, the school has a strong track record in terms of ensuring strong academic outcomes for the growing number of pupils at the school from Black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, as measured by metrics such as attainment measures (Attainment 8, good passes in both English and maths, EBacc, etc) and progress measures (Progress 8 and value-added, in both maths and English).

We have also, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, performed a department-by-department curriculum analysis to assess the extent to which the curriculum is representative of our increasingly diverse student body. This has led to some noteworthy changes to our KS3 curriculum.

At this key stage, we have taken advantage of the greater freedoms available in terms of curriculum design, to ensure more meaningful representation, compared with the greater prescription determined by GCSE and A-level specifications higher up the school. For example, our history department instituted our “Meanwhile Elsewhere” project, aimed at highlighting to pupils what was happening in other parts of the world during particular phases of European history, therefore ensuring a broader awareness of the histories of other peoples from around the world. Departments are encouraged to reflect on the degree to which their programmes of study can be more inclusive in the departmental evaluation processes, and they are encouraged to amend their programmes in the light of those reflections. We believe our curriculum has been enhanced by this activity, but we are keen to gain further external challenge of our work in this area.

We came to the Great Representation programme after performing an analysis of our staff and governing body representation and noting a growing mismatch between our increasingly diverse pupil body and the relatively homogeneous staff and governing body. We wanted to see if, through the programme, we might be able to make changes to our recruitment processes in order to be able to recruit a more diverse staff and governing body.

Another driver for change is our local context. The reaction to the Black Lives Matter protest in neighbouring Hoddesdon, where a number of our pupils live, was disturbing. Young people, including our own pupils, were subject to abusive chanting when engaged in peaceful protest in the town centre. Moreover, within the last 20 years, there have been British National Party representatives at local council-level in the Broxbourne borough. We felt, therefore, that we wanted to engage in work that might in some way provide a counter-narrative in school, to combat some of the racist narratives that some of our pupils might hear at home or in the local community.

We have also become increasingly conscious of the fact that we simply are not fully aware of the day-to-day lived experiences of our pupils from BAME backgrounds, and

we desire, through reflective work, to gain a greater understanding of these experiences. One example of a question to gain a greater understanding of would be, “What is it like to be a Black pupil in a predominantly White school and area?”

When the Black Lives Matter movement was gaining momentum, we had one ex-pupil write to us sharing some of her experiences whilst at the school, including reflections on the curriculum she experienced during her time with us. Whilst this curriculum may have changed, this intervention, amongst others, has led to us wanting to have a greater, and more meaningful, pupil voice element in our work on representation, which will be one of the focuses for us in the year ahead.

We would like to celebrate more meaningfully the diversity of our community but also uncover any negative experiences and expose them robustly to challenge. We are increasingly aware of the possibilities of unconscious bias that may pervade our day-to-day routines at school. We are looking to the programme to challenge these biases so that we can provide a more inclusive community for all our pupils, parents and broader stakeholders.

October 2022

The first seminar session was very thought-provoking. We were perhaps familiar to a degree with the statistics regarding pupil performance of pupils from BAME backgrounds, but this still was useful in establishing a context for the work we will be doing. What we were less familiar with was the data on the underrepresentation of BAME staff in schools, particularly at the senior level (and particularly in Hertfordshire). Michael Catchpool’s direct experiences of this underrepresentation were powerful.

The discussions around our hub table regarding this were interesting, and some schools were certainly further ahead than us in terms of their efforts to put in place recruitment processes that, although not guaranteeing more diverse staffing, were creating the conditions in which this might be more likely to happen. We have recently restructured our HR function at the school, and we will use this juncture to consider some of the issues discussed around the table, including:

- **the message our website images display about our school community**
- **where and how we advertise, for example BAMEEd**
- **more clearly and explicitly sharing on our website and in our recruitment literature our aspiration to be a diverse and inclusive community**

We have also begun to think about how we can inspire young BAME pupils from our own school community to become teachers and return to us in due course, for example through BAME teacher presentations at our careers fair and by working through the potential obstacles to this aim with our local School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) provider.

We found the seminar to be of a consistently high quality, with all the various speakers consistently communicating their insights with intelligence and sensitivity, whilst not shying away from challenging conventional thinking and practice.

The discussions about White fragility were both interesting and challenging. One of us, as a White male, has inevitable privileges arising from those two characteristics. The challenge presented to us is to be aware of these privileges, whilst not allowing any defensive reaction to deflect from the work at hand. On our return to school, a colleague shared with us an article, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" by Peggy McIntosh. This article reinforced some of the learning from the first seminar day and laid out in very stark terms the "unearned privilege" that White males enjoy. A question in bold towards the end of the article reflects very succinctly the key challenge facing many of us on the course: **Having described White privilege, what will I do to end it?**

Following the seminar, we have put in motion a plan for some staff INSET regarding unconscious bias, which we hope will have an impact on our day-to-day practice. We have also charted a plan for greater involvement of pupil voice in our diversity and anti-racist work. We have decided to move away from a traditional school council and instead set up a number of pupil working groups to look at issues of diversity. We have had some interesting discussions with colleagues about some of the fears we may have about issues to do with diversity such as:

- **Will we handle pupil discussions with sufficient skill and sensitivity?**
- **Will we raise expectations of what we are able to do about some societal issues?**
- **How will we react in the face of negative reactions to anti-racist work?**

It was interesting that colleagues at school who did not attend the seminar came to the same conclusions as the delegate body there, that such fears should not stand in the way of action. Making mistakes is almost certainly an inevitable part of engaging in meaningful change.

Since the last seminar, we have hosted the other schools in our hub in the first of the school visits. During the tour, it was interesting and gratifying that some of our colleagues from other schools pointed out some positive aspects of our display work, which we had perhaps begun to take for granted, for example the representation in our aspiration posters: "This is where maths can take you". This reminded us of the truism that "you can't be what you can't see".

At our school visit, our diversity lead spoke to the group about the work she was planning for our upcoming staff INSET, based around her attendance at an anti-racist school training session. This led to some interesting discussion about topics such as:

- **White privilege**
- **non-White vs BAME as preferred terminology (the course had suggested the latter could create an “othering” effect)**
- **adultification (particularly in the recent case of Child Q, who was strip-searched at a Hackney school without an adult present)**
- **the power of representation – some research work that highlighted that even young children viewed a Black doll as “bad”**

Both the first seminar day and the hosting of our school visit have reinforced our desire to ensure that our work over the course of the year has impact, and that it does not become lost amongst the other challenges we face as senior leaders.

December 2022

In the second half of the autumn term, there will be a focus on including, to a greater degree, our broader staff body in our Great Representation work. Our November staff INSET day began with a presentation by our diversity coordinator. This presentation looked in part at the impact at the pupil level of effectively ignoring diversity issues in schools, with extremely negative outcomes for the pupil groups concerned.

The response to this talk was perhaps even more positive than we might have anticipated; there is a greater appetite than we might have supposed for engaging in work surrounding diversity and representation. This led to our diversity coordinator sharing a simple survey, with the following questions:

1. Would you like to share anything from your practice that supports EDI?
2. Is there anything in particular relating to EDI you lack confidence addressing?
3. What areas (if any) would you like support or training on when approaching?
4. Would you be interested in supporting an equality, identity and inclusion working group?

The findings of this survey will doubtless prove interesting and help provide an insight into the thinking of our staff about diversity issues. The survey findings will be presented to our SLT in the first instance so we can provide a strategic and resourced response to what arises. The training we will subsequently put in place, and the working

group we will set up in the New Year, will help increase the momentum of our Great Representation work.

Another area we hope to focus on is pupil voice. We have felt for some time that pupil voice in our school could be more effective. We have operated traditional year and whole-school councils, which, for various reasons, have not proved to be as representative as they might be. More broadly, they have not shown themselves to be the most effective vehicles for establishing the day-to-day experiences of our pupils that might then help inform effective anti-racist work. We have therefore taken a decision to effectively dissolve or suspend these groups and focus instead on focus groups, which will explore issues related to diversity.

We have appointed an experienced middle leader to lead on this work. Previously, she has carried out a very strong piece of work surrounding pupils' experiences with sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual language. She led this work with great sensitivity, which was appreciated by the pupils she worked alongside. We believe that she will be able to lead on the pupil voice aspects of our anti-racist agenda.

One of the concerns, which we have outlined in earlier reflections, is of a fear of "getting it wrong" in any pupil voice work connected with anti-racism. We have therefore reached out to provide her with further support in ensuring this work is effective and have set up a meeting between her and HFL's race equity adviser, Toks Olusamokun, to elicit guidance on how best to facilitate such work.

We also sought further advice from Toks around how to approach another sensitive pastoral issue. The school has a zero-tolerance approach to racist language, but a recent incident found some pupils "taking the law into their own hands" rather than allowing the school to address a particular incident. We were disappointed by this but are keen to explore why pupils did not feel they could report the incident to us. Although not wishing to take too much from one incident, we would like to explore whether there are ways of building greater trust with some of our BAME pupils.

At our second seminar we were perhaps most struck by the powerful testimony of Sufian Sadiq. He conveyed with great eloquence the damaging and scarring impacts of racism on the day-to-day life of himself and his family. One could not help but be reminded of the great moral purpose supporting anti-racist work. Such reminders help focus our work on what is important when other items on the school's agenda threaten to take over our time.

We have also found time to visit another of our hub partner schools, Margaret Wix School in St Albans. Here we were impressed by the number of different opportunities to hear the views of pupils, including about the appointment of pupils as equality and diversity ministers, and a cross-section of pupils from different years appointed to the roles in a Pupil Parliament. In each classroom we visited, diversity was celebrated, with

pupils able to articulate differences clearly, recognising these made them unique and very much valued.

January 2023

The third seminar day was once again highly thought-provoking, particularly the discussions surrounding intersectionality. As part of our table discussion, we had a fascinating debate about how class was an important aspect of identity, which could play a role in determining life chances, and how it was important not to neglect this characteristic when considering life experiences of the pupils in our care. A number of us found that, within the broad BAME category, class could be a very powerful factor in contributing to students' success at school.

At our school, our diversity co-ordinator carried out some highly effective INSET with respect to microaggressions and adultification. The choice of these two topics was based on feedback from a staff survey she had conducted, which highlighted issues that staff felt less confident in exploring. As part of her presentation, she shared a highly effective and engaging YouTube clip, "How microaggressions are like mosquito bites" (www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450), by a group called Fusion Comedy, illustrating the cumulative impact of microaggressions on victims.

The survey highlighted a lack of confidence in some staff about how to discuss certain issues with pupils – a desire to not get things wrong but also a willingness to overcome such awkwardness so that they could effectively support our young people.

As mentioned in previous journal entries, we are completing a fairly radical overhaul of how we carry out pupil voice activities at the school, moving away from traditional year and school councils, and instead having regular focus groups with a broader range of pupils. We have appointed an experienced head of department – a former seconded senior leader – to facilitate this work. She has been supported in this via conversation with one of HFL's race equity advisers. They have discussed how, as a White female adult, she can sensitively and effectively discuss the pupil experience and gain pupils' trust. The first meetings she has had of these pupil voice groups have already provided considerable insight into pupils' experiences, particularly when compared with the pupil voice approaches we have used in the past.

One of us has recently been listening to the audio book of Michael Holding's *Why We Kneel, How We Rise*, which has proved inspiring. He interviews a range of Black sporting figures to understand how racism has affected their life experiences. One example, which might cause one to despair, was the almost identical experience of Holding and

Usain Bolt, each being questioned in jewellers' shops as to whether they could afford an item and also being trailed by security guards. With two decades plus separating these two incidents, one could begin to question the degree to which progress has been made in some areas of modern British society. Despite that, it is not a depressing book but more a call to action by a deeply respected, articulate and impressive sporting hero.

An interesting article that we have come across was in the Guardian newspaper, "UK scheme supporting Black students to reach Oxbridge expands to nursery schools" (2020, www.theguardian.com/education/2022/dec/25/uk-scheme-supporting-black-students-to-reach-oxbridge-expands-to-nursery-schools). This article explored a project, Hemisphere Education, which aims to tackle unconscious bias in schools, even in the Early Years. It is an off-shoot of another project, Target Oxbridge, aimed at increasing BAME entries to those elite universities. The experience of alumni of this project helped shape a desire to go back even earlier to challenge attitudes and school structures. Seemingly, it has been positively received, with one deputy headteacher quoted as saying: "I was amazed by the way this programme empowered staff members to engage in really honest self-analysis about unconscious bias."

Another small action the school has recently taken is to amend the wording of a range of our recruitment documentation, with a view to encouraging applications from professionals from a more diverse range of backgrounds.

We also recently visited Knebworth Primary School and received a warm welcome there. Their intake is becoming increasingly diverse in their younger age groups. Whilst there, we looked at their diversity, equality and inclusion strategy and had an interesting discussion about how they are working on the progression in language, from the Early Years through to Year 6, to ensure that diversity issues are discussed in an age-appropriate, sensitive and inclusive manner. This links to the developments we are undertaking in our own approach to pupil voice, highlighted above.

February 2023

As we begin to near the end of the Great Representation programme, one recurring theme in our thinking has been to consider the relationship between social class and representation. As a sub-cohort grouping, our disadvantaged group has fallen in recent years (it peaked at about 23% four years ago and has now fallen to about 10% of the current Year 11 cohort). However, 41% of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 are from non-White backgrounds, compared with 20% of the year group as a whole. This highlights a key intersectionality, which we believe has a particularly profound impact on the life chances of our BAME pupils, the intersection of social class and race.

For a number of years now, senior leaders in the school have mentored disadvantaged pupils in Year 11. The remit for this mentoring is to act as the “pushy parent” for these pupils, to attempt to problem-solve with them any barriers to success they may encounter in their GCSE year. This year we (the Great Representation delegates) consciously selected from this cohort pupils from BAME backgrounds. We hoped from these relationships to gain a greater insight into the obstacles that might be particular to BAME disadvantaged pupils, which might help inform our work as part of the Great Representation programme.

A key part of our work as mentors is to try to raise aspirations and to inspire the levels of motivation towards schoolwork that will increase effort and, ultimately, exam success. Aspirational role models can play a part in this process and here, occasionally, we have bumped up against the lack of BAME figures in some professions and industries. One boy had an aspiration to work as a design engineer in the world of motor sports – the world of Formula 1 or, more generally, the automobile industry. Although Lewis Hamilton is very much an inspirational figure and role model in terms of competitors in this sport, there are very few non-White figures in the senior ranks of the design and engineering teams.

We eventually came across a news article from the US about Edward Hightower, who only last year became the first Black CEO of an US automaker. This emphasised, once again, at the pupil level the maxim that has been repeated at different junctures in the programme that “You can’t be what you can’t see”.

We have also recently established an EDI newsletter for staff, produced by our diversity coordinator. This is intended to give greater confidence to staff in addressing EDI issues that they have highlighted they need support in discussing with pupils. This is a further response to the survey that was referred to in the December entry. A thread running through our work in this programme is a mismatch between the desire of staff to support EDI work and their professed lack of confidence in approaching some areas of potential sensitivity, for example around appropriate language in describing race and terminology; and concepts that they may be unfamiliar with, such as microaggressions. These newsletters, we hope, will help build staff confidence over time. They will supplement INSET, our revised induction programme for staff, and other measures we have already undertaken.

Since the last seminar, we have also visited another of our hub schools, Watford Grammar School for Girls. As at all of our colleagues’ schools, we received a very warm welcome and came away from our visit with further inspiration and practical strategies, which will increase the impact of our Great Representation work. We had the opportunity to meet the school’s Equalities and Diversity Committee, who spoke with impressive eloquence about their work.

We were also impressed with the way the librarian at the school had developed leaflets directing pupils to where they could find examples of literature relating to diversity, for example literature that might highlight the BAME experience, amongst other areas of interest. This could easily, if not handled sensitively, tip over into pigeon-holing but, placed in a broader context (there were pamphlets to guide readers to all manner of different topic areas), would allow the pupil who might want to read about “people like them” a clear signpost to where such texts might be found. We were also very impressed with the school’s display work, which consistently highlighted prominent women (including those of colour) who they could see as role models. We discussed on our tour how these are easier to find in some fields than others. There are, for example, very few prominent female economists, let alone Black female economists.

In a related development, there have been some interesting discussions in the press recently about how older literature, for example Roald Dahl’s still very popular works, should be curated, given some of the dated language and racist stereotypes they can be seen to perpetuate. There has been a lively debate amongst authors about how, if at all, such work should be amended to reflect modern sensitivities.

March 2023

Since our last journal entry, we have had our final visit to one of our hub partner schools and our penultimate seminar day. We very much enjoyed meeting the diversity champions from St Helen’s Primary School in Wheathampstead; and it was interesting, coming from a non-denominational secondary school, to see how diversity work can sit within the broader ethos of a faith school.

The speakers at the fifth Great Representation day maintained the high standard of the previous seminars and once again challenged us to reflect on our own practice. Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga’s presentation highlighted the worrying rise of antisemitic incidents in the UK. The images she presented of graffiti on Jewish graves were met with considerable disgust in the room and were a reminder of the human impact of such appalling behaviour on its victims. However, it is one thing to see such distressing scenes in the news and then move on, as we commonly might; and another to consider how we might respond to other instances of antisemitism in our own contexts. Ruth-Anne went on to present us with various real-life scenarios we might face as school leaders and challenged us to think how we might respond to often challenging and complex instances of antisemitic behaviour.

As this is our final journal entry, we will try to draw together the various threads that have run through the previous entries as we have moved through the programme. This

entry will look back to our initial aims on joining the programme, and also forward to where our work in this area will continue as the formal stage of the programme comes to a close.

Initially, our aims might have been summarised as:

1. a desire to see if changes to our recruitment process could help bring about a more diverse staff and governing body
2. a desire to provide a counter-narrative in school, to combat some of the racist narratives that some of our pupils might hear at home or in the local community, given some of the historic tensions in the local area our school draws from
3. an aspiration to gain a greater understanding of the day-to-day lived experiences of our pupils from BAME backgrounds through, amongst other strategies, the more effective use of pupil voice

Over the course of the programme, we have also added another aim. In retrospect, this seems an obvious one in ensuring the success of the other aims outlined above:

4. to establish the level of understanding of our broader staff in addressing diversity issues, particularly with respect to race, and put in place strategies to build this confidence

Looking at the first of these aims, it is fair to say that we still have some distance to go in ensuring greater representation within our staff and governing body. We have made changes to some aspects of recruitment, for example recruitment literature, but we have yet to see any substantial impact. One of the seminars we attended highlighted some of the reasons why it might appear more challenging in the outer fringe of London to attract BAME staff, but we do not want to use this as an excuse and will continue to try to work creatively and with purpose to improve representation in our staff and governing bodies.

In terms of our second aim, we do believe that we have made some movement in the right direction. We have gained a greater understanding of how to effectively address racist incidents in school. We have had some incidents of BAME pupils in KS3 wanting to “deal” with what they have perceived to be racist language used online by other pupils in the school and have worked hard to try to build up trust in our processes so that pupils do not feel they have to take on this responsibility. We are sure there is still a significant amount of work to do here.

As highlighted in our first journal entry, it is still only relatively recently the Black Lives Matters protestors in Hoddesdon town centre (including some of our current and former pupils) were subject to racist abuse. However, we hope that our anti-racist work at the school will, over time, have a positive impact on the culture of our local area.

With respect to the third aim, we think we have taken some significant steps. We have moved away from a traditional year council and school council approach to eliciting pupil

voice through regular meetings with different pupils with different focuses, including issues relating to diversity. Initially, we had some concerns about how to discuss issues with respect to diversity and representation with sufficient sensitivity. We have taken advice in this area from one of HFL's race equity advisers and have begun to see the benefits of careful facilitation of pupils' views.

We are now collecting a steady stream of rich information about the lived experience of pupils from a wider range of diverse backgrounds. This information will help to inform our future direction, and we sense we are already seeing the building up of greater trust with pupils. We believe, importantly, that they now feel heard. Our mentoring of pupils from BAME backgrounds has also been a very rewarding experience. It has highlighted – if it needed highlighting – the “diversity within diversity”. For example, the experiences of a Black African boy from a middle-class Muslim background will clearly differ from those of a Black Caribbean Christian girl from a local council estate, despite their being some commonalities in terms of race. This more nuanced understanding of such intersectionalities has been brought to the fore by more effective and considered work with pupil voice.

In the last substantive area in which we have been attempting to enact change, we have again made some progress. The appointment of a diversity coordinator has already led to some demonstrable change, which we hope to build on. Here again, we have taken a considered approach, establishing in the first instance staff concerns and then working on a programme of INSET to address those concerns. What is heartening is the degree to which staff wish to develop their own understanding of issues related to representation, to better serve our pupil body and community.

We will very much be continuing our journey on the Great Representation path but would like to finish this account with some expressions of gratitude. We have very much enjoyed working with our colleagues from the other hub schools. This group has proved mutually supportive, encouraging and good company. We have been fascinated by the different challenges and the different schools' experiences, and very much encouraged by the intelligence, commitment and integrity they brought to bear when attempting to address these difficult but essential challenges. We would also like to thank the facilitators of the HFL programme; we have been served up an impressive range of speakers, who have invariably challenged our thinking and inspired us to work harder on these important issues. We would like to thank all those inspiring figures for their enormously important work and hope we can contribute in our own way to this work in years to come.

Paula Humphreys and Peter Clift

THE HIGHFIELD SCHOOL

September 2022

Our journey towards developing as an anti-racist school accelerated in earnest following the Black Lives Matter protests. Having spent much time reflecting on and developing what we felt was a truly inclusive culture, our students of colour made us realise that perhaps, in our global context, they did not feel that they belonged in our community – not in the way that our LGBTQ+ students would say they did, for instance. Our students of colour were sending us a clear message by engaging in peaceful protest (on the school field) and by sharing their thoughts through the diversity committee. The message was that they don't see enough of themselves or hear enough of themselves represented in the community in which they belong. We invited the conversation, asking: What can we do together? Why do you feel that you have not been considered as fully in our inclusion work as other groups of students?

It is not fair to say that nothing had happened before this, but in terms of inclusive practice, anti-racism hadn't led the agenda. We had a student diversity team, English texts had been revised to represent people of colour, we had worked to diversify our local governing body, and we had actively invited applications from people of colour through recruitment. But it wasn't enough, and we knew that.

In the summer of 2021, we invited a group of student leaders and a wider group of students of colour to lead a session in our senior leadership conference. They told us that they felt some of the structures of our school community – the curriculum, our library offer, displays and the house system – did not represent them and that this was the place we needed to start. They also talked about our behaviour system, stating that maybe the reflection and education following a racist incident needed more consideration. These were powerful discussions indeed and we needed to listen.

Our house namesakes did not in any way represent our school community, and that needed to change. Our student leadership team got to work and a democratic process started. As a result, we now have a new and more inclusive set of house namesakes. This wasn't without its difficulties, though, as we had to navigate the risk of tokenism or box-ticking. The house system now needs to be developed in an inclusive way so that it truly permeates our school culture and has the impact we desire. This will mean representation of students of colour in our house captains team, and actively encouraging participation of students of colour in house activities through role modelling. This is by no means a quick fix; it is a long-term cultural change, and it is one we are excited about.

One of the key points of feedback that concerned us was that of reflection following racist incidents. Whilst overt racism is rare in our school community, there must be a clear learning point to develop the culture we all desire. As a result, we developed a reflection pack. This requires any student who has openly or inadvertently committed a racist act

to undergo both an educative and reflective process, to avoid further incidents in the future. Having gone back to our students of colour and their parents and carers, they feel this is a really positive development in evolving our anti-racist culture and, indeed, it has impacted on our work on other forms of behaviour. Time spent in behaviour support now has a more educative and reflective tone, focusing more on impact than sanction.

Our library offer was one of the less complex development points to work on. We now have a section in the library focused on Literature in Colour and have been able to work with a charity to fill that. The impact of this is clear in our lending figures. We also bought all the books on the reading list that accompanied the Great Representation programme, so that there is a staff CPD section too.

We realised it wasn't just the senior team that needed to be involved and that whole-staff training was imperative. In February 2022 we asked the HFL race equity lead to offer training to our staff in our conference. This was powerful. Staff feedback from both our staff of colour and our wider staff demonstrated that we have ignited that desire for development in all. Staff reported that it was cathartic, challenging and informative. We now had our staffing body on board, and we needed that if we were going to take our journey further with Great Representation.

October 2022

Our decision to join the Great Representation programme came from our desire to add further momentum to our work. We want to facilitate further work with students, parents and staff and, ultimately, we desire for our students of colour to feel that they belong by seeing themselves and hearing themselves represented in our school community. Practically, this means:

- **diversification of our curriculum**
- **further development of our behaviour system and personal development curriculum to both diversify and educate our students**
- **ensuring that all policies are inclusive and representative of our students of colour**
- **further development of community cohesion across all heritages**
- **diversifying our staff and governing bodies further**
- **ensuring that our students of colour see themselves and hear themselves in our physical and visual environments**

We found the first session of the Great Representation course to be simultaneously inspiring and challenging; we felt motivated to do more. For us, a clear trigger point was

in Professor Miller's session, when he said the words: "I see you, I hear you, I belong." We realised that this was the mantra for all aspects of the work we were undertaking. At the time, we didn't realise just how powerful these words would be.

As part of our work, we have developed with students and staff of colour a group called The Forum. Currently, The Forum is attended by our students of colour and allies. The Forum is supported by both support and teaching staff of colour and allows open discussion about diversification of our school community in all ways. We shared what we had learned from the first session. It was clearly powerful for the students to understand that we were undertaking this development programme. They took the Paul Miller quotation and ran with it. They shared their thoughts on this through an assembly with every year group, which covered past and current role models, including Marcus Rashford, and they used the powerful message in Stormzy's new music video to link the idea of belonging and being empowered. They also thought of practical suggestions for starting to develop physical representation, and we are working on a map to show the diverse heritage of our student body.

This week we have had a visit from a wall art company. A step forward in representing students of colour, and indeed our whole community, is going to be through curriculum wall art in various departments, and a world map showing all the heritages represented in our school community. What's particularly pertinent is that this will be student-led, and our students will see the visual impact and legacy of the work they have done. More importantly, the students involved in delivering those assemblies were previously particularly disaffected. Now all have positive conduct points for the first time since they have been at the school.

All of the students involved grew in confidence during the week of delivering the assemblies. One particularly powerful anecdote was shared when praising them for their involvement and growing confidence; one of them said, "I would never have read in class before but when Miss asked me if I would read something out this week, I just did it." We are very proud of the way they have taken on the assemblies and requested to play a bigger part as each day went past. They delivered six in the end to the whole school body. It has had an impact on the confidence of all of the students involved, and they are now planning a proposal for a cultural day.

From this work with wall art, and from a number of discussion points at the Great Representation session, came another discussion with the school business manager. Should we have a separate budget to support this work? This was an interesting concept. We don't want our work to be tokenistic, short-term tick-listing or coming from a one-off budget. It was therefore decided that, rather than a separate budget, we needed to ensure that our development priority around representation was considered throughout all appropriate budget areas. These included curriculum development, the library budget, subject budgets and site development. This is a much more inclusive approach.

The food themes in the school canteen for Black History Month were popular and fortuitously aligned with requests our students had made in September. There were some lovely interactions with the students in The Forum, who were surprised and pleased by the authenticity of the flavours and dishes. We were then approached by a student with Bosnian heritage, who asked if there could be other days when cultural dishes featured on the menus. He gave us the recipes for a main course and dessert and also helped with the poster to advertise them. There will be a new event on 25 November with Čevapi and Uštipći to celebrate Bosnian Federation Day, and then a further event is planned in January for which our Ukrainian students are working on the menu. We will also approach the other students in The Forum to see what they would like to see celebrated. The staff in the canteen have been incredibly supportive of this initiative, and it has been lovely to see the engagement of students with this work.

At this point, we are thinking differently. We are being brave in our discussions and decisions, and we feel motivated on our journey.

November 2022

We made our first school visit to Robert Barclay Academy (RBA) and were impressed with the atmosphere and ethos in the school. The wall art and *just like us* posters were very powerful and ensured a representative range of role models around the school. This has further informed our work around our own learning environment. We have now engaged further with our The Forum to move the designs for the wall art on and have gained quotes to make this a reality going forwards.

There was discussion around ensuring that plans are feasible and that we need short- and long-term aims to ensure that our efforts are not tokenistic and that momentum is maintained. A key issue is around diversifying the curriculum and what that actually means for us if we don't know what we don't know. One way in which we are trying to address this is through our own reading. We have been reading David Olusoga's *Black and British* and are encouraging others to engage in reading that will support gaining the knowledge that we need to be able to move forwards with diversifying the curriculum. That said, curriculum change takes time, so we must give staff the time to review, consider, gain knowledge and plan for changes in the future.

At the secondary heads' conference last year, Bennie Kara was inspiring in the way she talked about diversification of the curriculum. She recognised the time it takes and spoke about examples of how we can tweak and develop aspects of the curriculum to add more diversity rather than undertaking wholesale rewrites. For example, when studying the feudal system in medieval times, we could compare it with that of Japan or other

places in the world, and not just Europe. We made the decision to invite Bennie Kara to be our keynote speaker at our staff conference in February and to give time to staff to consider and plan for some of that development.

We were also interested to hear that RBA are going to do an audit with Toks Olusamokun (from HFL), and we will look at these resources too so that we can use them as a lens through which to undertake a review of different areas of our practice.

The second Great Representation session gave us more insight into the experiences of teaching staff and further emphasised the importance of the change we have made to try to recruit more widely. It was also useful to discuss the journals and the stages that the other members of our group are up to with their own work. Claire Stewart-Hall's piece about White privilege and the need to build our own stress tolerance and not to avoid difficult conversations resonated. We considered our own role in opening up these issues, ensuring that they stay visible, and that people are educated and empowered in order to avoid mistakes/offence/microaggressions, whilst building a more inclusive space.

We were also very interested in Jigna Patel's insights into overcoming Asian stereotypes. In particular, her reference to the "hidden workload" that people of colour feel in addressing inequity. This reminded us of our earlier discussion with one of our diversity committee, where she had told us how tired she was of having to advocate for people of colour. It again reminded us to be cognisant of this and of our role, as allies, in supporting that workload. We again asked questions of ourselves such as:

- **Are we relying too heavily on staff of colour leading on initiatives such as The Forum?**
- **Where can we be more supportive?**

December 2022

We had our second school visit, this time to St Vincent de Paul Primary School. We discussed recruitment and looked at the representation on the website and social media feeds, in discussion with next steps around stakeholder engagement. The tour of the school was a truly lovely experience, and we saw excellent engagement and great interactions between students and staff, as well as lots of supportive and inclusive measures to enable students to achieve. The noticeboards create a truly diverse and representative space as the students are displayed through photographs and self-portraits. They see themselves in the space and therefore know that they belong.

The school has done a lot to make sure that artwork and role models are representative, and the imagery of Mary – in postcards and the children’s own art work – was very powerful. In addition, the work to diversify the reading stock was impressive, as the class readers, student reading books and library material have all been updated and diversified. A strong link has been made with one of the authors too.

Our reflections from the visit were around:

- **the representativeness of our own space – an ongoing project, as we have now had a second quote for art work**
- **the importance of engagement on social media – we are looking at an Instagram account this year**
- **the tweaks we could make to our uniform policy to ensure it is inclusive**
- **the importance of continuing to consider and work on unconscious bias**

We were also signposted to the Runnymede Trust’s work: “Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools”.

January 2023

This month, we hosted our partner schools and enjoyed a wide-ranging discussion around the work we have been doing and our own reflections on the challenges posed by being part of this project, personally and professionally.

During the visit, the member of staff leading our student group, The Forum, talked to us all about the students’ ideas for next steps. They are planning a cultural celebration day and are drafting a presentation for the leadership team. We are really excited to see what they bring and are very pleased that they are showing this level of engagement and confidence. During the discussion, it became clear that there is potential for parental involvement here too, as we could invite the parents in to see their children’s work and then work on ideas for involving parents more widely. This was somewhat of an epiphany, as we have spent much time debating the most appropriate and sensitive way to engage parents in our work. For us, it really demonstrated the positive impact of these visits in both sharing good practice and sparking ideas for further development.

In addition, we toured the school, and one of the areas identified as good practice was the diversification of our library resources and displays there. This was great to hear, as our librarian has striven to create diverse book catalogues and worked with students to obtain our Literature in Colour collection. It also gave us the opportunity to further explore our desire to have more printed artwork in different curriculum areas, and one of the other schools was able to share their experience of that.

During a recent leadership meeting, we raised the issue of representation when looking at student behaviour statistics. The reaction to this was interesting, as it became clear that this is much more at the forefront of our minds, following the work we have been doing this year, than our colleagues'. We were gratified to note that, when looking at top ten statistics, we had three students of colour in the top ten for house points, and only one in the top ten of the two behaviour categories. This suggests that our representation is not negatively biased, but this is something we will continue to monitor.

Discussions around representation such as this, at a leadership level, have become frequent and embedded, and the potential impact on student leadership is now being realised. Quite rightly, students and staff noticed that there was a lack of representation in the student leadership teams of the past: whilst LGBTQ+ students were well represented, students from different heritages were less so.

This provided us with a dilemma, as in the past we had used a blind application process, which was clearly not working. We speculated, whilst we couldn't be sure, that this could be unconscious bias in action. The head of sixth form therefore actively encouraged students of colour to apply for the positions, in a similar way to our approach to general recruitment. This has had a very positive impact and it is clear that, as a result, we will have students of colour represented in our student leadership team going forwards. Our hope is this will reinforce a sense of belonging for our students and encourage future applications from students of colour.

Our work around diversity, and also around attendance, has been leading us towards the concept of belonging. We used an assembly week to address the key concept of active belonging – that we are more than just here; we are here for each other. This provoked an emotional response from students. In particular, one sixth former asked for the Channel 4 clip from “The School that Tried to End Racism” so that they could share it more widely.

The creation of this assembly came from reading Doug Lemov's *Reconnect*, in which he explores the idea that, even prior to the Covid pandemic, there has been a degeneration of the sense of community, alongside the rising sense of individuality. Whilst the book in no way considers individualism a negative, it does address the idea that a balance is definitely needed, and in particular in institutions such as schools, to create that sense of belonging – a community. Whilst the book isn't solely focused on diversity, the concepts really rang true with our work on Great Representation and has certainly inspired our thinking this term.

February 2023

During our final hub school visit, to Prae Wood Primary, we were really impressed by the child-centred spaces and by the positive and inclusive learning environment they have created. There has been amazing work with the No Outsiders project and moving stories about the impact on students being able to talk about their own context and experiences. Particularly interesting was the simultaneous delivery of the No Outsiders texts, covering all of the different age groups in the school and therefore initiating age-appropriate, and somewhat challenging, conversations about representation.

We were also lucky to have Bennie Kara as the keynote speaker at our staff conference this month. Her speech was so inspirational and well received. Moreover, it opened up the conversation for us with all staff. We are able to be braver about our conversations following our experience of this project, and her presentation gave us a perfect way into general conversations and the imperative behind what we are doing. The conference opened with an icebreaker around the problems of equity – one of our school values – not taking representation far enough. This was challenging but allowed us to be vulnerable and open to the conversations. We were able to offer a safe space for conversations with staff going forwards around their lived experiences.

Bennie Kara spoke about “usualising” the representation of diversity in our curriculum, and this is how we will drive our future actions. This work will not be tokenistic or short-term; it will become part of the usual practice and experience of the school. During our visit to Prae Wood, we all spoke about the fact that we had perhaps thought at the outset that this was a project that would involve completing an action or initiative.

We are now clear that it is an ongoing process that will take longer to complete. If the fence is the dominant culture, then we are committed to taking the time needed as part of our moral imperative, and our personal interest and ambition, to remove as much of it as possible for all of our students. One particularly challenging conversation – triggered by Bennie Kara’s presentation – was around the use of language. We were approached by multiple staff, who agreed to share their stories and volunteered important information, for example the fact that staff have heard someone use the N-word when quoting students. This, completely understandably, causes upset and is triggering for staff, and we will absolutely be addressing this immediately. Without an open invitation, this member of staff may never have shared this example with us.

We also had a lot of discussion around supporting students, and an important takeaway for our staff was simply “believe them and listen”. If a person says someone has been racist, then let them tell their story and share their view. If they perceive it to be racist, then let us accept and investigate or explore. If it turns out not to be racist, then it is a valuable learning experience for the student; and if it turns out to be racist, then we can act and improve their lived experiences going forwards. Ultimately, perception matters!

The Ukrainian food day in the canteen was our most popular meals of the day ever, with the exception of the annual Christmas dinner. We all tried Varenyky and Syrnyky. It was very emotional to see how happy the Ukrainian students were, and the team in our kitchen worked so hard and even learned some Ukrainian words to use when serving the students. We are hoping to have Syrian, Polish and Punjabi days too before the end of the year. We feel very proud of this work and we know that our students value the experience and are interested to see what is coming next. This type of activity, and the chance for students to be involved, feels very powerful in terms of allowing our students to see themselves represented and for all of us to learn about each other.

We end February on a high – positive, and sharing that positive energy with our staff body. Feedback has demonstrated already that they desire the time to explore, evaluate and develop the diversity of their curriculums and practice further, and we are committed to making that happen.

March 2023

This may be the last entry, but it certainly still feels like the beginning of the journey. Following our really successful conference, with Bennie Kara speaking, staff have fed back that they are eager for time to enact the ideas and thoughts around diversifying the curriculum that they have. Therefore, in light of our work around Rosenshine's principles, we are focusing on review in the summer department time, giving staff that opportunity and then ensuring impact across the curriculum. We are also designing next year's CPD programme around this and recognise the ongoing process of review and development.

During the penultimate seminar, whilst looking back at the journals and discussing language, we noticed that we began this journal using the term "people of colour" but have since moved away from that to using the term B-A-M-E (not pronounced "bame"), but we know that this also has issues. The original choice was based on a consultation with students when setting up The Forum, but we quickly found that, whilst some students did identify with "people of colour", others clearly did not. Following a further consultation with the group and group leaders, we chose to use BAME, but it is clear that language evolves, and it is important that we remain sensitive and willing to adapt and learn.

It was very interesting to hear Reni Eddo-Lodge talk at the HFL Education Race Equity Conference, and we noticed her comments around the language choices she made in her book *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* and the fact that she may not use the same ones if writing it today. The phraseology and inference with terms such as "global majority" and "racially minoritised" feels a lot more acceptable, as they

do not reduce or potentially demean in the same way, but we are not complacent about this. We are also willing to lean into this discomfort and continue to work to ensure that we make changes and improvements where we can.

Our next action is to meet with our The Forum group early next term to discuss the plans for our cultural day, our wall art designs and – most importantly – their vision for a more diverse curriculum. The group recently presented to the SLT, and we were so impressed with their ideas and passion, and how aligned they are with our own. These students represent a complete cross-section of our student body – some currently on report and others with immaculate records. For them to come together in this way and share these ideas feels like a fantastic closing chapter for this journal, but it is really only a bookmark in our narrative.

The intention that is clear from this work is around our absolute responsibility to be allies. We must not just support – we must drive and initiate in order to ensure that our school is anti-racist. After all, to quote Ibram X. Kendi: “There is no neutrality in the racism struggle.”

It is not enough for us to simply not be racist. We must be active to ensure that our institution works towards being anti-racist in all ways. Great Representation has given us the knowledge, courage and ideas to do so.

Lucy Miles and Katherine Hutton

**WATFORD
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL FOR
GIRLS**

September 2022

Watford Grammar School for Girls (WGGS) is proud of its 300-year history of providing outstanding education for girls. The context of the school has changed significantly over the past ten years, with the ethnic diversity of our cohorts increasing extensively. For example, the size of our White British cohort has reduced from 53.3% of the school population in 2007 to 15.6% in 2022.

In 2021 the school rewrote its vision. Through a rigorous process of consultation with all stakeholders, the new vision reads: "As a girls' school with a proud history, we strive to empower our community to become innovators, drivers of change and leaders to create a more sustainable and equitable society." It is clear from this vision that inclusion is at the heart of what we aim to achieve.

We are pleased with the progress we have already made with regard to promoting race equity. However, we are also aware that there remain many areas in which further improvement can be made. For example, there is a low level of reported instances of prejudiced-based bullying or discrimination, yet we are keenly aware that incidents are likely to be underreported. As such, we are focusing on creating a culture in which our students and staff actively address instances of discriminatory behaviour, and students know that all reports will be investigated and followed up.

Data collection of bullying or discrimination based on the individual protected characteristics has begun but is in its infancy. One of our goals is to be able to more intuitively analyse this data, to identify trends at both individual and cohort level and intervene appropriately.

Work has also begun on diversifying our curriculum and, whilst department curriculums are at various stages of development, this remains a priority for this year. Staff training (delivered by the HFL race-equity team) has been a key part of this process. Our aim is to provide students access to a curriculum in which they can see themselves reflected.

Diversity is an embedded feature of our extended curriculum, with events such as Fusion (a multicultural dance show) and Culture Day taking place annually. A wide variety of faith and culture clubs and societies have an established presence within the school. Students regularly take part in workshops and seminars such as Stand Up, Solutions not Sides, and Bold Voices, to help develop their understanding of diversity issues.

Along with the diversification of the curriculum, a key target on the school's public sector equality duty (PSED) report is to develop a diverse staff profile, to reflect the school community. With the appointment of Sylvia as headteacher in 2019, work has begun and, although the profile of the teaching staff is still predominantly White British, diversity is increasing. Since the start of the year, new appointments to the governing body have increased the representation from ethnic minorities to just under 50%.

October 2022

The prereading provided on BAME employment, which was further developed in Professor Paul Miller's session at Seminar 1, highlighted the importance and long-term impact of employing a more BAME-representative staff. Students from all ethnic backgrounds need to feel seen by having role models in schools who are of the same ethnic background. The school is in the "experimenting" phase of Miller's "Institutional Interaction and Black and minority ethnic (BAME) Staff Progression Matrix", with few BAME staff in post and fewer in leadership roles. Our ambition is that, through more proactive recruitment strategies, we will move into the "engaged" category, with BAME representations at all levels.

Following a conversation with Paul, our work in this area will focus on the development of an application process that does not discriminate against potential applicants (including School Direct trainees), by considering the barriers they may have faced due to their race or ethnicity. Part of this process will be to review our marketing (website, prospectus, etc) to ensure BAME representation in these materials better reflects the diversity of the school.

Cynthia Howe's presentation on her lived experience of racism prompted some interesting discussion. Whilst we may be empathetic to people who suffer discrimination, it is impossible to know exactly how they feel or to understand the impact that prejudice has had on their lives. When considered alongside the concepts of White fragility and privilege, the significant challenge of developing a more diverse curriculum becomes clearer, especially given that it is a predominantly White staff who will be undertaking this work. It is therefore essential that we provide staff with a framework in which to undertake this work. Furthermore, the power of White privilege in the fight against racism is significant. If we can empower our White staff to be actively anti-racist in their development and delivery of the curriculum, this will undoubtedly have a significant impact.

A further aspect of this will be to consider the work the school is currently doing to develop a new values statement. It will be important to ensure our new values emphasise our commitment to diversity and the importance of being actively anti-racist.

We conducted our first school visit to The Broxbourne School. The leadership team have shown a commitment to reflecting greater diversity within the school, through the appointment of an equalities, diversity and inclusion lead to oversee this work. Like us, they face the challenge of attempting to diversify a predominantly White workforce and produce a more diverse curriculum. The new build project has allowed the school to start with a fresh canvas. For example, many of the display boards in the corridors include displays about diversity, to include Black History Month and destinations of students

from diverse ethnic backgrounds. As a result, we would like to review what we have on display around our school to explicitly promote diversity.

The school has also undertaken an initial diversity audit of their curriculum, with departments summarising their progress on diversifying their curriculums. This consisted of a paragraph from each department to explain the extent to which diversity was part of their curriculum and identify any areas for improvement. This was similar to an initial audit, which we had conducted in November 2021. However, our own audit did not allow us to identify the extent to which diversity was part of the curriculum and how strongly it featured across year groups or within key stages. This has led us to consider how to further develop on our own audit to map our curriculum more explicitly. We would like to use this process to identify gaps or opportunities to further increase diversity across all subjects in all key stages.

An interesting discussion arose around the inadvertent exclusions – in attempts to be inclusive – of minority groups such as White students from disadvantaged backgrounds. An example of this may be through events such as Culture Day in which students are encouraged to wear their own cultural dress. This echoes the findings of June Sarpong, as evidenced in her book *The Power of Privilege: How White people can challenge racism*. She states that that to eradicate the fear of immigration and the perceived threat that it poses to job security amongst disadvantaged White people, it is essential that people from this background have an “equal share of the pie”. As such, White children need to continue to be included in our drive to diversify our curriculums, regardless of their White privilege, as they need to be shown that opportunity exists for them too. However, their inclusion needs to be representative and in proportion to that of other ethnic backgrounds.

Having attended the first seminar and conducted our first school visit, we have decided that it will be important to identify our priorities for this academic year. Our areas of focus will be:

1. diversification of the curriculum
2. recruiting a more diverse workforce
3. the development of a values statement that clearly expresses our commitment to equality and diversity as a community

We have chosen these three whole-school initiatives as we feel that they are likely to have the greatest initial impact. Updates on our progress against these areas will feature throughout this journal.

Additionally, to ensure that this work does not lose momentum, equality and diversity is to be a standing agenda item for line management meetings with key staff.

November 2022

Claire Stewart-Hall's keynote presentation, which focused on the socialisation of staff and how this may affect their interpretation of policy, strongly resonated with us. In the previous week, a parent had complained about a member of staff's interpretation of the school's uniform policy. The stipulation that hair should be of "natural colour" and that "no extreme styles" were allowed had led to an experienced head of year challenging a Black student with blonde braids.

This issue was raised in the SLT meeting and generated a remarkably interesting discussion (which further exemplified Claire's notion that socialisation plays a part in the interpretation of policy). Whilst we all agreed that braids were not an extreme style, our differing interpretations of "natural colour" threw varying interpretations, with scenarios of various hair colouring being discussed. We concluded that, to be truly inclusive, we would have to clarify that "natural colour" would mean that that colour should appear in nature, regardless of the ethnicity of the student. This highlights the need to clarify policy language to ensure that policies cannot be interpreted in a way that inadvertently advantages or disadvantages any group, and that a member of staff's own ethnicity cannot affect their interpretation. This will be an ongoing project.

The idea of socialisation has also led us to reflect on the issue of unconscious bias and possible microaggressions that may arise as a regular occurrence. Whilst training for staff is the obvious response, the challenge will be identifying a time within the academic calendar to address this, whilst also giving it the gravitas it deserves.

Part of this work will be to consider how we empower the community to be upstanders who actively challenge racism. At present, we rely on the victim (usually someone who is Black or Brown) to report racism. This is a theme that has recurred frequently throughout the programme thus far and is deserving of some consideration. However, this may be something that we prioritise for the next academic year as we need to be realistic in our ambitions for this project. It is not something we will solve in a brief period.

However, one way in which we feel we can make a quick impact is to record students pronouncing their names and uploading these into a shared area for staff to access. This, in turn, will hopefully go some way to helping staff to ensure that names are pronounced correctly, thus avoiding this form of microaggression, the impact of which was highlighted by Jigna Patel in her presentation. We have already been in contact with Jigna, who has very kindly shared her school's process with us for aurally recording names. Our IT and data-management teams are working together to begin this project with all students. It will then be for us to consider how we incorporate this as part of our induction process for new students.

Progress update 1 – Diversifying the curriculum

We have created a template (shown below), adapted from Bennie Kara’s suggested format in diversity in schools. This has been explained to heads of department, who will complete it by February half-term.

Curriculum Diversity Mapping	Year 7		
	Topic	Explicit Links to Diversity	Diversity Category
EXAMPLE			
Autumn 1	Ancient Egypt	Links to West African civilisations, the Benin Bronzes. Comparisons to the Assyrians.	Race
Autumn 2	Number Lines	Arabic Numbers 0-9	Race

The underpinning ethos of this work is the maxim, “If I can see myself then I am seen”. This has threaded through not only the reading but also several of the keynotes, and we felt it was an appropriate lens through which to conduct an audit of our curriculum. Our hope is that this will allow us to see more explicitly how diversity is spread across both subject areas and within year groups. It is difficult to focus only on race within this audit – we feel it is right to ensure that all the nine protected characteristics are included. Again, time is a challenge – with several other priorities, it is difficult to provide staff with a block of time to dedicate to this work.

December 2022

Having heard about Margaret Wix Primary School and the challenges that its leaders face, we were especially looking forward to our visit. The school is in one of the more disadvantaged areas of St Albans and has a higher-than-average level of students with English as an additional language (EAL), as well as students from the Traveller community.

During our visit, we had the opportunity to talk to two students who had been recently elected as equality and diversity representatives – a post that they had had to apply for. They explained their role and then took us on a tour of the school, to highlight ways in which the school promotes equality and diversity. We were particularly impressed with the school’s library, which was well kept and clearly displayed, and which promoted books that featured characters from ethnic minority backgrounds, to allow students to be able to see themselves reflected in the books that they were reading.

We also had the privilege to observe short sections of a KS1 and KS2 PSHE lesson. The Year 5 students were discussing discrimination and ways in which people might be discriminated against. The students in Year 1 were discussing how people might feel sad when they are different from their peers and ways in which they could help others feel more included. What was remarkable was the enthusiasm and conviction with which these young people were so clearly advocating for diversity, equality and inclusion.

As a result of our visit to Margaret Wix, we have since spoken to our school librarian about ways in which we could help students of minority ethnic backgrounds more easily locate books that reflect their own ethnicity. Our library has a long-standing policy of continually incorporating more diverse literature into its stock and already boasts numerous reading lists that promote equality and diversity (LGBT+ and global literature, to name but two). However, on discussion with the librarian and an explanation of what we had seen at Margaret Wix, she has identified a need to create (a) reading list(s) to catalogue these books in which students may see themselves reflected and make these books easier for students to identify. Initially, student requests, their recommendations and the borrowing figures will inform this list. She will also create a display of new titles that promote equality and diversity, which will be updated regularly.

The presentation from The Black Curriculum at Seminar 3 helped to confirm that the work we had already begun in our diversification of the curriculum was well placed. The presenter, Orell Lawrence, briefly focused on the concept of racial literacy, which may be something we will potentially investigate further as the next stage of our journey. The presentation again highlighted the imperative that weaved throughout all three seminars, exemplified concisely in the quotation, "The opposite of love isn't hate; it's silence".

A key focus for our work on equality and diversity next year will be to consider ways in which we promote reporting and empower students to stand up to any form of prejudice-based behaviour, in a way that avoids confrontation and leads to an escalation of the incident.

Christina Anderson and Ryan Bratley's presentation about their project, Routed in Stevenage: Stories from our hometown, was truly inspiring. The project aimed to highlight the diversity of Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School's community through art. Visual representations of diversity create a significant impact, and this led us to consider how we could visually celebrate the diverse range of ethnicities that we have within our own community. An established part of our Year 7 transition programme is to ask our new cohort to create a shoe box that represents themselves as a person. Students share these in their first religious studies lesson. Woolenwick's project made us realise that the students' shoeboxes are not displayed or celebrated enough. Next year, we will collect students' shoe boxes and create a display that we can share with the whole cohort and their parents when they visit the school for the Year 7 informal parents evening in late September.

January 2023

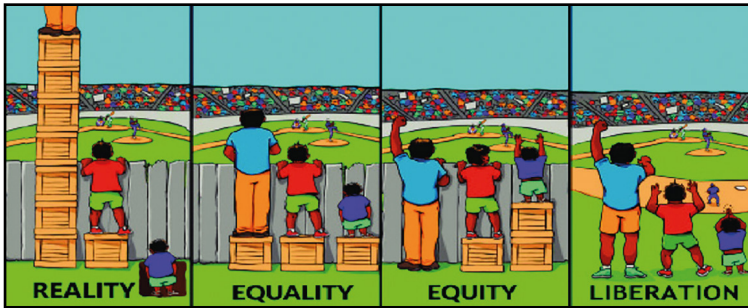
January provided us with the opportunity to visit Knebworth Primary School. The school contrasts Margaret Wix significantly in terms of its context. Located in an affluent village, the school has only recently started to experience a diversification of its intake, as people move out of London to settle in the home counties. Knebworth is working hard to bring diversity into their curriculum and environment, given that their challenge is more about educating their predominantly White staff, students and parents about diversity and race equity, whilst addressing some of the stereotypes or unconscious biases that may exist within the community.

It was particularly interesting to hear from the school's equality and diversity lead, Melissa Lowry, who spoke to us about the training she had been delivering to staff to improve their racial literacy. This is something we are keen to incorporate into the CPD programme for 2023–24 at WGGS, and we aim to do this by developing a programme of short “spotlight-on” sessions, which will form the key focus of our weekly staff meeting. The conversation about developing the racial literacy of staff also led us to discuss how creating a framework of common language around diversity, from KS1 to KS5, would be beneficial. This is a project that our hub group would like to consider once we have completed the Great Representation programme.

At the start of Seminar 4, Sylvia volunteered to speak about her lived experience as a student, teacher and headteacher, and as a child growing up in Watford, as a person of a mixed ethnic origin. The preparation for the speech allowed Sylvia time to reflect on how her experiences have influenced how she views the impact of racism. She feels her mixed heritage has enriched her life, and that the isolated instances in which she was seen for the colour of her skin or judged by name have not had a long-term negative effect on her. However, it has allowed her to see just a little of the profound challenge it can have.

In this seminar, Jess Boyd put forward her case for culturally relevant pedagogy. This is defined as “an approach to teaching that aims to integrate, promote and maintain the cultural background of students in schools.” Essentially, this challenged us to consider the aspects of our own culture – the dominant culture that we as educators impose on our students – and what impacts this may have on undermining or eroding the culture of students who are not rooted in the dominant culture. This is still a question that we are grappling with. It will take us some time to come to an agreement about how we can diminish the extent to which the dominant culture is imposed whilst still maintaining a school where rules and regulations ensure a harmonious and well-ordered environment. As schools are microcosms of society in general, this is something that is going to require a greater societal change before it becomes possible. However, this does not mean that we cannot attempt to make changes within our school to be more welcoming of other cultures when considering policies and procedures.

Jess also challenged us to “see the water”. This means taking account of the reality around us. In the well-known illustration shown below, the real barrier (the water) to the three boys is the fence. If we can remove the fence for our pupils where possible, this will lead to a much more liberated society.



The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated;
© Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

Progress update 2 – Values statement

Significant work has been undertaken to identify a new set of values to accompany the school's new vision. A working party was formed and, along with input from the SLT, school council and a governor, 37 suggested values were identified that align with the school's vision. These values went out to all stakeholders for consultation. From this process we have selected the following values that best reflect our school:

- **courage**
- **curiosity**
- **compassion**
- **creativity**
- **collaboration**

The next stage in this journey is to begin to define what these values mean for the WGGS community. It will be important that, within these definitions, our commitment to equality and diversity is clear. The completed statement will be ready for launch at the beginning of the next academic year.

February 2023

As hosts to our Great Representation colleagues at Watford Girls' this month, we were proud to have the opportunity to show off our school. For us, the highlight of the visit was hearing the student representatives of our Equalities and Diversity Committee express so eloquently and confidently the extent to which they feel included in our diverse and tolerant community. It was also very encouraging to hear the positive feedback from our hub schools, especially about the quality of our displays (something we identified in October as an area of focus).

In contrast, however, we have had to respond to an incident in which a heated debate in our Afro-Caribbean Society led to some inappropriate behaviour. The students had decided to discuss whether Black people can be racist to White people. Interestingly, whilst Year 7 students thought this was indeed possible, our older students were arguing that Black people cannot be racist to Whites. This is a very common view held by some of the commentators on social media, but it is a view that concerns us. Whilst much of our focus in this journal has been on improving racial literacy of staff, this incident has highlighted the fact that there needs to be an important part of our work focused on educating our students to critically analyse the information they are accessing via social media.

Our library has also wholeheartedly taken up the challenge when it comes to providing students with a lens in which to see themselves reflected. Inspired by our primary colleagues, a new “See yourself” display, which aims to promote BAME literature, has taken pride of place at the library entrance.



The librarians have also started retrospectively cataloguing older books that were not indexed to the nine protected characteristics. In this way we will gradually begin to see a truer picture of the diversity of the stock.

Furthermore, the £220 HFL book tokens that we received in March 2022 were spent on improving the ethnic diversity of the stock. 19 of the 32 books purchased were written by BAME authors or featured BAME characters, and the remaining 13 books were non-fiction titles that address issues of race, racism and culture.

A new report has been developed to monitor the numbers of incidents of prejudiced-based behaviour. This will now be run termly, with data highlighted to governors, the SLT and heads of year. This will allow us to identify trends and necessary interventions more actively.

Progress update 3 – Developing a diverse workforce

Both the preparation for the visit and the visit itself have prompted us to reflect on how far we have come on our journey since September. One point that was raised by our Equalities and Diversity Committee during our host visit was that our Black community had remarked on the lack of representation they felt, not only within the student body but also within the staff body.

We have made progress in this area, with the creation of an online diversity questionnaire, which will be included with all application packs. This will allow us to analyse more efficiently the process from application through to interview and then appointment, to see if any unconscious bias may exist and address this accordingly. We are yet to amend our application forms as discussed in our October entry. However, we have taken steps to diversify our school website further. The photographer will be in school later in the year, and we will work to ensure the pictures taken more truly reflect our community.

Our next step in this process will be to look at our application forms and try to incorporate Professor Paul Miller's advice. Additionally, we are working on a statement, to accompany all job adverts, which actively encourages applications from underrepresented groups. Once a new application pack had been developed, we will give copies of our application packs to BAME colleagues from within our wider professional networks. We will ask for their feedback on how to make these materials more appealing to potential candidates from a BAME background.

With regard to the ongoing work with the diversification of the curriculum, our heads of department have completed their detailed curriculum-mapping documents, which show where diversity features within their curriculums. Our next step will be to collate this data into a summary sheet, which will hopefully highlight gaps and allow us to focus our development work more clearly.

What has become clear through this process is that, for some subject areas, this has been a straightforward process. However, for others, such as maths and science, this has proved particularly challenging, and it will be necessary to find support for these departments in helping them to think about how they could include diversity more explicitly in their curriculums, without it being an add-on. This support may come in the form of current research and exemplification, and/or visits to other settings to see how they are achieving this. We would also like to get some student voice feedback about their impressions of how representative they feel the curriculum is. This work will be a priority in the summer term.

March 2023

Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga's presentation, which highlighted contemporary examples of antisemitism, was eye-opening. It was deeply concerning to hear that incidents of antisemitism were currently on the rise and saddening to see the ways in which it presented itself. From parents writing letters describing Holocaust education as "indoctrination" to pictures of defaced Jewish gravestones, these examples further stressed the importance of education's role in tackling the many forms of racism. Ruth-Anne helpfully shared some key principles to keep in mind when dealing with potential racist incidents, which we would like to use in training with pastoral staff and even write into guidance that we will share with students and parents.

David Gillborn encouraged us to develop a critical understanding of racism, which starts by looking at the outcomes of racism and identifying ways in which we can address race inequity. He emphasised the stereotyping that still exists today in schools, with Indian and Chinese students being seen as high-achieving, whereas Black students are categorised as low-ability. This was further exemplified through data that showed the overrepresentation of Black students in exclusion and underachievement figures, and how these figures are normalised by policy makers. This echoes back to Claire Stewart-Hall's presentation, in which she challenged us to look at policy through the lens of race and the work we aim to do when reviewing policies.

Having met Melissa Lowry on our visit to Knebworth Primary, it made listening to her presentation about her lived experience even more poignant. Melissa talked about her experiences growing up as a child of mixed heritage in a predominantly White school. From offensive nicknames to the continual microaggression of having her hair touched without permission, Melissa explained that the only time she ever felt seen at school was when she read *Half Caste* by John Agard. Melissa then went on to talk about how she uses books with BAME characters within her teaching to ensure that her students feel

seen, and how this had particularly impacted a young Black boy in her class, who was struggling to find his identity.

Melissa's story made us realise that all it takes is one teacher to change the life of a child for the better. Working with our staff to give them the skills and confidence to not only identify that child but take that action is going to be fundamental to our diversity work moving forward.

March also saw our last school visit, this time to St Helen's Primary School in Wheathampstead. The school faces some interesting challenges, including recruitment issues and a falling number of primary-aged children in the area.

We were invited to talk to the school's newly elected diversity champions, who explained to us their reasoning for applying for the role. It was encouraging to hear children talking about how they wanted to make each other feel welcome and part of the school community. It was clear that the school wanted to create this group to give voice not only to the students who were of minority ethnic backgrounds but also to the students who would not usually take part in other groups or roles of responsibility. This seemed to us to be a very fitting way to approach the selection of a group who will be working towards building a more inclusive community. The students had several ideas about the types of initiatives they would like to set up, and it will be interesting to see how the group develops over the coming academic year.

The Christian ethos of St Helen's was very evident as we toured the school. It led us to reflect on the additional benefits and challenges that being a faith school might bring to inclusion and diversity. The school has been working hard to develop understanding of other faiths through their RS programme, which was praised as exemplary in their latest SIAMS report.

The Great Representation programme has provided us with opportunity to reflect on, discuss, investigate, research and share each stage of our race-equity journey since September. Listening to experts talk on issues such as representation through the curriculum or analyse critical race theory has allowed us to broaden and deepen our understanding of the complexities surrounding equality and diversity, especially with regard to race.

We have also been privileged to hear the lived experiences of people of colour. Firstly, it has cemented the importance that our race-equity work has on the educational experience for all our students. Secondly, it has given this work a human face, thus confirming our moral commitment to it. Sharing our progress along this journey with the schools in our hub group has been invaluable; not only have we been able to celebrate our success, but we have also talked candidly about issues we have faced and where we have got it wrong.

The support, understanding and advice received from our group has been exceptional, and it is both comforting and encouraging to know that there are other colleagues in different schools across the county who are as committed to making change happen.

Summarising our experience of this programme has led us to reflect on our next steps once this programme has concluded. Whilst we have focused on the three key areas identified in our October entry, we are aware that, throughout this process, we have identified myriad other actions that we would like to undertake. The reality is, however, that due to the busy day-to-day life of a school, we have not yet been able to begin work on many of these additional actions. However, we are determined not to let these fall by the wayside, and so we will use our reflective journal as a way of synthesising our learning, reflections and intentions into an equality and diversity action plan, which will sit either within or alongside our school development plan. This plan will aim to ensure the sustainability of the work we have started this year.

Area	Actions
Curriculum diversification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete mapping documentation to highlight gaps • conduct student voice activity on representativeness of the curriculum • departments to identify next steps in curriculum development
Diversification of the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update marketing and website, to ensure that it is more reflective of our community • redevelop application form, to allow candidates to express barriers • develop application pack, to include diversity recruitment statement • ask BAME colleagues to independently review application packs and website information • regularly review equal opportunities data for applications, to identify any unconscious bias present in the application process
Values statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that a commitment to equality and diversity is evident in the values statement • consider how new values will be promoted and become interwoven into school structures, for example rewards system, assembly rota, etc

<p>Developing an anti-racist culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop colleagues' racial literacy through programme of "snapshots" in staff briefings • arrange for a BAME speaker to talk about their lived experience • develop students' racial literacy, through PSHE programme • continue to promote the reporting of prejudice-based incidents • establish key principles for dealing with prejudice-based incidents, and invest in training for pastoral staff
<p>Create a sense of belonging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver an opportunity for Y7 transition project to be displayed and celebrated • continue to diversify the library stock and promote texts by underrepresented authors, or that feature protagonists that reflect our school community • create an audio database of student names for staff to access

We are very grateful to have had the opportunity to take part in this programme, as a strong first step in our vision to create an equitable society.

Sylvia Tai and Kevin Coetzee

September 2022

Yorke Mead Primary School is a two-form entry all-through primary school, situated in the village of Croxley Green. We currently have 424 children on role, with 48 children identified with SEND, 42 eligible for the pupil premium grant (PPG) and 66 with English as an additional language (EAL).

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive school, with a strong focus on the development of the whole child. We have many initiatives and strategies embedded into our curriculum to help us to achieve this aim, including a Forest School, Philosophy for Children (P4C), First Access (a music initiative) and a dedicated PE teacher.

The pupils, on the whole, are children who want to learn and who feel safe and happy at school, as commented on in our last Ofsted report. Nonetheless, we are always looking for ways to develop our positive school culture, and therefore an enlightening conversation with a Black parent made us stop and think about what we were doing to promote equality (racial and other) within our school.

The parent approached the headteacher, voicing her concerns for her son, who was in Year 5. She was worried about his future and the disturbing statistics relating to Black boys, for example data around low GCSE pass rates for English and maths combined, access to “prestigious” universities, and retention in education. She wanted to know whether we could do anything in response to this data. She wanted Yorke Mead school to take a leading role in the local community to tackle inequality and racism in a structured way.

We have of course always been committed to dealing with racism within our school setting, but this conversation was the catalyst for the start of our anti-racism work. We decided on a two-pronged approach – learning from our parent community whilst educating our school staff – and we were lucky to have several parents who came on board with our vision to form our PEER group in October 2020.

PEER (promote, embrace, educate, respect)

Still in its infancy, the work of this group was disrupted by the Covid pandemic. Nonetheless, we established the aim of PEER, which was to develop a parent group to enable all children to have a positive experience at Yorke Mead and to ensure our curriculum celebrates the experiences and contributions of all cultures and communities.

Fast-forward to September 2021. We were moving to a post-Covid situation in school, and we attempted to restart the PEER group, with an impressive 20 parents joining the mailing list. We have since that date held half-termly PEER meetings, with approximately 25% to 50% of parents attending in person, and minutes being sent out to the group as a whole.

This group has been influential in shaping the direction of our general work in school. The parents wanted positive experiences for their children, where differences were acknowledged and celebrated. They wanted their children to be part of a more inclusive society, in terms of representation for all, regardless of race, disability and family type. Pupil voice activity showed that pupils too wanted a chance to share more about themselves.

To give this work a higher profile, we established a PEER display board, which is kept up to date with a calendar of significant events for different cultural groups and a display of recent work. Currently, our board asks “Who is your Black hero?” to showcase an activity that was undertaken by the whole school. The wider school community are kept informed of the work via a half-termly update in the school newsletter.

The work of the PEER group culminated in Yorke Mead’s first ever International Day, which was a huge success. 14 parent helpers came in to classes to run workshops for the children, ranging from Kenyan dancing to teaching Mandarin. The children wore national dress or the colours of a country of choice. It was a great day, which allowed children to celebrate a part of their identity that is not always seen in school, and all the children showed great interest and respect when learning about different cultures.

We recognised that working with parents and our children was only one half of the picture. To strengthen our approach to equality and to show our commitment, we undertook training, involving all members of the staffing community, including site, office and pastoral, and all levels of teaching staff. Led by Toks Olusamokun, one of HFL’s race equity advisers, the training explored the language around race and gave us information on how to improve diversity in our school.

The work with the PEER group and Toks led us to look more closely at our curriculum. Did it reflect our school community? Were we taking every opportunity to show diversity? We invested in books and magazines that offer greater representation and started to make changes to our curriculum, where appropriate. For example, a unit about Uganda was changed to focus on Kenya, as we had children of Kenyan heritage at the school.

Every year we acknowledged and celebrated Black History Month, but now we actively sought to weave this throughout the school year, for example as part of the jubilee celebrations. We also looked at the contribution of the people of the Commonwealth and Windrush. This strengthening of the curriculum to develop equality has been tasked to all subject leaders, who continue to look at ways in which to promote equality and representation through the individual curriculum areas, with the aim that all children see themselves reflected positively at Yorke Mead.

October 2022

Session 1 of Great Representation began with an insightful introduction with discussion points around race, race equity and racism. The statistical information highlighted how systemic racism is unfortunately embedded in many British institutions, including health, law enforcement, workplaces and schools, negatively impacting lives and society as a whole. Therefore, race equity and anti-racism need to be an important and integral part of every school's agenda.

Having attended Session 1, the predominant thoughts are around how we can build on and secure the work we have begun on our curriculum so that the positive steps taken in the last year can be embedded into our curriculum for the future. As our best means of invoking change for the future lies in education, this feels like it should be the main focus of our work.

Other thoughts that we will consider as we move forward are:

- **How can we help our children from Black and minority ethnic groups feel heard and supported?** A positive strategy developed for PPG children has been to establish PPG champions, who meet regularly with the PPG lead. This results in pupil-led strategies. This model may be something that could develop alongside the PEER group, focused on children of colour.
- **Can we do more to attract a Black teacher / teaching assistant and widen the representation of adults working in the school?** We have adapted the advert we use to ensure it includes an equality statement. This has, to date, had little impact in widening the range of cultures we receive applications from. We need to consider where this is placed in the advert, and where we advertise.
- **How well does the website inform people about our work?** We are considering adding a page on the website under "Parents" to inform them of the work we do on race equity.

The key speakers – Professor Paul Miller and Cynthia Rowe – brought a personal dimension to the discussion. They powerfully highlighted how racism can come in many forms (overt and direct, subtle or unconscious) in modern-day Britain.

Armed with this information, our first school visit, to Richard Hale – a secondary school in an affluent area of Hertford – was very interesting. It was a chance to visit a school with a fresh pair of eyes. The visit focused on their equality work. It was encouraging to see that there was a clear message in the school, through visual posters, that "Racism stops here" and that "Banter is not an excuse for racism, homophobia, sexism or any discriminatory comments". Time to talk with colleagues from our hub was valuable and has sown seeds of thoughts about how to proceed with this work in our school.

November 2022

Session 2 of Great Representation was a hard-hitting session, which enabled deep thinking of the experiences of members of the Black community in their day-to-day lives. As Jamini was not able to attend the session due to a funeral in her family, Lucille attended this session alone. It is possible this would have been even more impactful had Jamini been there, as she could have related to the experiences shared from her own experiences too. Lucille remembered one comment by Claire Stewart-Hall that struck her hard: "All the people who murdered Steven Lawrence went to school!"

This comment hit home. Our role in school is essential, and we must not fail to address the issues around race, culture and equity. Claire also enabled us to understand better the principles around White privilege and the implications of this for how we look at systems and challenges for any group of children. We must ensure we look at any changes we make as we move forward, by considering the systems and not the group.

Another key element of the day was considering which groups are currently foregrounded in our schools and the impact of this – those who we give our focus to benefit, and we must ensure we engage in the discussion about race within the hidden curriculum as well as in the taught curriculum.

The powerful speech by Sufian Sadiq highlighted the importance of questioning what we see and hear. It focused on media and the way reporting can mean we see just one side of the discussion. It also brought to our attention the significance that language can have in helping families to know you are working *with* them, not doing things *to* or *for* them.

Sufian emphasised that we are either allies or part of the problem, making clear that being non-racist is not enough; we need to be anti-racist. Less hard-hitting, but equally as important, was Jigna Patel's talk. This helped us to consider the impact that stereotypical views and simple failures to correctly pronounce names can have on people and their futures.

In line with the sentiments of these speakers, we now have an anti-racism statement, which was drafted with the support of parents who form part of our PEER group. This statement has been approved by our school governing body and is ready to be published on our school website. It is a clear declaration of our intention to not only be non-racist but to be anti-racist, and it is a summary of our intention to improve equality through an equitable approach.

Overall, Session 2 of this project opened our eyes to the experiences that some of us may never have, enabling us to consider events such as those in the news this week (when a person of colour was repeatedly asked where she was "really from" by a member of the

royal household) with greater understanding of the significance that comments such as these have on an individual's sense of belonging and identity.

Moving forward:

- **How can we adapt our language and systems to ensure our work to support our families and children of colour is as effective as possible?** This must also ensure that all children – regardless of skin colour – can empathise with and understand the importance of challenging stereotypes and be educated to ensure that the next generation has an anti-racist stance.
- **How do we help the staff understand the principles of White privilege?** It certainly was powerful listening to a Caucasian person sharing their journey of understanding the race conversation, and helping all staff in school develop this will be essential.

Our visit to Sandringham, a large secondary school in the suburbs of St Albans, was another informative trip. It was evident that the school was actively seeking to reflect the multicultural world in which we live and provide inspirational role models and active student participation. The school had the “Maya Angelou” building and a “Michelle Obama” room, alongside those named after White inspirational figures. A student leadership team has been set up to lead on diversity with the aim of organising a Cultural Day, which would be a celebration of all of the students within that school community. Again, such initiatives have left us with more food for thought about how to strengthen our equality work so that all members of our school community (pupils, teaching staff, wider staff, parents, community) understand its significance and are committed to this area.

December 2022

In the weeks between Seminars 2 and 3, the issue of race, equality and equity appeared to be at the forefront of our minds. Maybe it was due to our increased awareness of the need for greater representation, as a result of being attendees on this course. The fact is that the inequalities surrounding race seem to be everywhere. This was clearly visualised in the warm-up “What’s been happening?” slide from the course, which referenced Lady Susan Hussey and her ill-judged questions, which were directed at Ngozi Fulani, founder of the charity Sistah Space. This was just one example of the systemic casual racism and microaggressions that pervade British society.

We are currently dealing with an ongoing uniform-policy issue, where a parent, in defending her decision to not adhere to our school uniform policy, has questioned why religious jewellery or a hijab are allowed, but her child is not allowed to wear small,

hooped earrings. Such examples highlight the need to educate – to educate ourselves, our children, our staff and our whole community. With this in mind, we were excited to hear that our next guest speaker, Orell Lawrence, was from The Black Curriculum. His talk helped us to develop tools that will be useful when discussing race, which we need to continue to do if we are to evolve and become actively anti-racist.

Orell's definition of White privilege – “The colour of your skin is not the first thing that people notice about you” – was one that was easily understood, and which resonated with everyone in the room. He then went on to give examples of how the existing curriculums in our schools can be challenged, changed and developed, to be more accurate and representative of our individual schools and Britain. This fits in well with the work we have already started at Yorke Mead. Part of our remit as subject leaders has been to start to look at how we can develop more representation in our individual curriculum areas. For example, in Year 6 the children have been introduced to Black Tudors so that they have some awareness that Black Africans have lived in Britain since the 16th century.

Furthermore, Woolenwick School's talk and video from their project, Routed in Stevenage: Stories from our hometown, have inspired us to start to think about planning our own community-based project, which would build on the success of our inaugural International Day last year, allowing us to celebrate the heritage of our children in a different but complementary way.

The course and the school visits so far have also helped us to become more certain about the steps that we'd like to take next:

- **How can we understand what it feels like to be a child at Yorke Mead?** Inspired by the PPG champions in our own school and the school council bodies in the schools visited, we are going to invite a group of children to be our diversity champions. This will give our children a voice and will complement our parent-led PEER group.
- **Developing our understanding of what it means to be an anti-racist school.** We will be anti-racist in our approach. Where we see unconscious bias and microaggressions, we will seek to address them through education and dialogue, where appropriate.
- **How can we develop racial literacy and talk about race more freely?** We want to continue to educate our staff and develop racial literacy within our school and, to that effect, we have kicked off the year 2023 with whole-staff training to share the rationale of the course and the importance of this work.

All three Great Representation sessions have supported our thinking and helped us to reflect and consider our next steps, which we have in turn extended to the staff via some whole-school training. This has enabled conversations and reflections to extend across the staff and supported a greater understanding. Increasing awareness of the issues faced is essential to bring about the much-needed change.

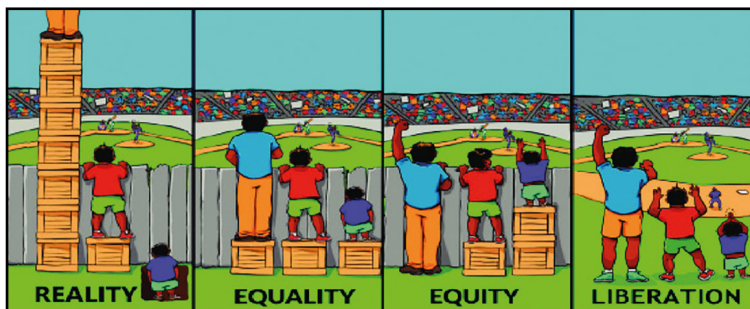
January 2023

Session 4 was once again informative, with guest speakers who started to steer our thinking to the culture and curriculum we have in our schools. Jess Boyd who works for Teach for All – a charity that places teachers in disadvantaged areas of the world – spoke at length about the dominant culture that we have in schools. This is the culture of “Britishness”. It is a culture that is intrinsic and, as such, one we sometimes don’t see and therefore perpetuate.

Some attributes of Britishness include, in no particular order:

- **perfectionism**
- **a sense of urgency**
- **worship of the written word**
- **fear of open conflict**
- **paternalism**
- **only one right way**

Jess’s talk awakened us to the fact that we may have aspects of a culture in school that are at odds with those of some of our families. Jess likened the dominant British culture to a “fence” and suggested that, primarily in our diversity work, we work with the principles of equality and equity; but to really have an impact, we need to achieve liberation by taking down this fence.



*The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated;
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Also, with a focus on pedagogy and curriculum, Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson, founder of Impact of Omission, was an inspiring speaker. Her mission to campaign for a more diverse curriculum in the UK highlighted a key issue: that diversity is rarely taught in

meaningful ways. Her online campaign resulted in 56,000 respondents, showing that people do care.

The two speakers have made us consider the following:

- **How can we achieve “liberation” at Yorke Mead? How can we have the culture of the children at the centre of everything that we do?**

We must work hard to get to know our children and the families that they come from. It would be informative to look at the systems we have in place at Yorke Mead when children join our Nursery and Reception classes. Do the classroom settings reflect the cohort of the children? Do the children see themselves and their culture represented, for example through home language displays, diverse books, kitchen utensils such as chopsticks, and topics taught? As the children progress through the school, how do we continue to understand their cultures? Our daily “meet and greet” at the classroom door is helpful in developing a positive teacher–parent relationship, but is there more that we can do? We have a parent-led PEER group, which meets regularly. The challenge lies in encouraging more parents to see the value of the work and become part of the group.

- **How can we make sure that our curriculum is diverse – in a meaningful way?**

At Yorke Mead, subject leaders have this year been tasked with finding diversity links in their curricular areas. We have allocated dedicated staff meeting time for subject leaders to work in groups to enhance their curriculum. Alongside this, the newly formed group of diversity champions,” (from Years 4 to 6) have also been asked to think about their school experience at Yorke Mead. We will have fortnightly meetings – the hope being that this regular pupil voice will inform us as to how the children perceive the curriculum and also give them a chance to suggest changes that we can make.

In terms of celebrating the cultures of all, we are also busy planning a creative project, which will centre around the concept of Belonging and Identity. This project will be an alternative to the International Day, which we held last year. We hope that, once children have completed their projects, all parents will be invited to look at the work, which will be displayed to celebrate our Yorke Mead community.

Finally, Sylvia Tai’s talk about her experiences as the headteacher of Watford Girls’ Grammar School was a timely reminder of why any work around diversity is as important now as ever before. Watford has recently been labelled a “rainbow” town, due to the fact that the number of people living with neighbours from different backgrounds is on the rise. As our schools becomes more diverse, we play a crucial role in ensuring representation.

February 2023

Between Seminars 4 and 5, we were very excited to both visit another school in our hub and to also be hosts. Both visits were conducted on the same day, due to the proximity of the schools to each other. The morning kicked off with a visit to Cassiobury Infant School, which is located in a leafy suburb of Watford. This school was welcoming and was a chance to look at diversity and race equality with the youngest children in education. We talked to a group of children about the work in their books; this gave us an opportunity to look at the curriculum links that strengthen representation.

The hub school visit to Yorke Mead was an opportunity for us to reflect on our practice and to showcase those aspects that we felt had had the biggest impact in our race-equity work. Therefore, as well as a school tour, our visit centred on two key aspects of Yorke Mead practice: P4C and our diversity champions.

At Yorke Mead, we use P4C throughout the school as a way of opening up discussion about a whole range of topics. Using critical, collaborative, caring and creative thinking, children learn to voice their thoughts and opinions, whilst listening respectfully to the views of others. In terms of race equity, P4C can be a great vehicle for getting children to think about issues from a range of perspectives and to encourage a respectful debate.

For the school visit we had chosen a whole-school P4C theme of Belonging, with three carefully chosen stimulus books:

- **In KS1 the children were reading *Beegu* by Alexis Deacon. This is a book about an alien who finds himself far away from his home as he has landed on planet Earth.**
- **Years 3 and 4 were reading *Coming to England* by Floella Benjamin. This is Floella's autographical tale of coming to England in the 1960s, as part of the Commonwealth migration to England.**
- **Years 5 and 6 were reading *The Island* by Armin Greder. This extremely powerful graphic novel raises the question of what you would do if a stranger turned up on your island looking for help.**

These stories allowed the children to discuss their own ideas of belonging, and the visiting teachers who watched were impressed with the open conversations the children were encouraged to have within the P4C community.

Our school visit was also a chance for our visitors to meet with our newly appointed diversity champions, who have been selected to ensure representation for our children. We have a fortnightly meeting, in which the children come forward with ideas and thoughts about how to continue to develop our diversity work – an area that they all feel passionate about.

Therefore, in summary, our school visit was a chance to reflect on the strides that we have made in the area of representation and left us feeling proud that we are in the process of making meaningful progress.

March 2023

Finally, Session 5 introduced us to yet more information that we had not previously given enough thought to. The antisemitism talk, led by Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga from the Centre for Holocaust Education, was incredibly informative. On the surface, it would appear that at Yorke Mead we have not had experience of antisemitism in our school. However, this talk was a reminder of the fact that we must reach out to all of our communities, both those with larger numbers and those with fewer, as all communities and their children need to be heard and represented.

This message was reinforced by David Gillborn's insight into more alarming data about the negative relationship between some ethnic groups and the educational establishments that serve them.

Fittingly, the final seminar ended with an extremely beautiful and powerful talk by Melissa Lowry, whose personal perspective on "Growing up mixed up" traced her journey through childhood, where casual racism was rife, to the present day, where racial ignorance and insensitivities still exist. This provided a compelling illustration of why this work and the understanding it entails are necessary when educating our children.

In summation, the key questions that we have been left with are:

- **How do we continue to make changes that will mean that all children are positively represented and celebrated?**
- **How do we continue to strengthen links with our parents and school community so that they work alongside us to make positive changes?**
- **How will we continue to help grow our staff's understanding of the importance of race equity so that they too want to champion this cause?**

We are very excited about the work we have started. There is not a foreseeable endpoint yet, but we look forward to the little victories we will achieve along the way, and we will endeavour to make sure that Yorke Mead is a school where racism is not accepted, and where all children know that they are truly valued and belong.

Jamini Arora and Lucille Pollard

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