

One Year on ... Diversity and Inclusion progress report for Bolton School Boys' Division

After the death of George Floyd in May 2020 and the subsequent international awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement, many institutions were catalysed to examine their approach to diversity and inclusion. At Bolton School, this was encouraged by Alumni, who wrote to the school and then helpfully and constructively engaged with us in examining the past, assessing the present and making sustainable changes for the future to school life.

This report summarises the activity and change in school one year on. Similar reports will be produced in the summer of every year for five years to ensure a sustained approach to the issues and in order to systematically change habits within school life.

1. Researching pupil voice

One strand of work has been to capture pupil voice about the current life of the school to add to the thoughts of Alumni about their time at the school.

An example of how this was done was to use the time of the census in March 2021 to ask Sixth Formers and Middle school boys about their identify and thoughts on school life.

The boys made several very insightful comments in a free response section as well as in their responses to more structured questions. There are perhaps two main themes:

- A more diverse response to spiritual and religious matters in school life. This led to a discussion at the Governing Body and the identification of a quiet reflection room for private thought or prayer from September 2021. The Governing Body resolved to adopt the following approach to the spiritual and religious life of the school:
 1. We will establish our starting point as the educational focus on the importance of having a set of personal values and the importance of a mutual respect for the values of others. Those values will include, but not be exclusively based on, religious belief and spiritual convictions.
 2. To facilitate this in a number of ways acknowledging and celebrating culture and diversity within the schools
 3. As appropriate celebrating and acknowledging all faiths (including no faith) in our daily round at school, in what we do and in the approach to assemblies.
 4. Understanding and accommodating the requirements of all belief systems where they do not compromise the requirement to be inclusive in our educational offer.
- A focus on acting everyday on casual comment and hurtful language. This has led to discussion about how to help colleagues and boys respond to such comments in a helpful and constructive fashion, creating a vocabulary in school to 'call out' inappropriate behaviour and language without creating division. It is through providing the vocabulary to discuss things, rather than a drive to be fearful of language, that we will make sustained change.

2. Researching Teacher Voice

In May 2021 colleagues were also surveyed about diversity and inclusion issues. These are especially useful when we look at addressing the everyday use of casual comment and hurtful language raised by the boys and how we might respond to it.

Colleagues very clearly felt diversity was a strong part of our ethos and they felt the school as a collective challenged racism. They felt even more strongly that they personally did in their classroom. This identifies the 'free spaces' at school: corridors, changing rooms and coaches as places where we shape these behaviours. The school proctors have been very prominent in this regard. In terms of the experience of daily life in school, a large proportion of colleagues would agree with boys that there are racist attitudes manifest in school, usually at a low level of individual impact but with a cumulative effect. There is a strong commitment to act. These findings, coupled with the strand from the boys, point towards some careful training and information for colleagues and pupils, rather more sustained in nature than any set piece unconscious bias training. Colleagues have had unconscious bias training coincidentally through the examination board arrangements for teacher-assessed grades this summer.

3. Curriculum Modifications

During the year we have evaluated aspects of Diversity and Inclusion in the subject curriculum. This has advanced most in English and History.

In English the following changes were implemented:

- Y7 summer unit on Poetry will explore other cultures.
- Y8 BAME novel taught in Year 8 - The Bone Sparrow (JZS) and Haroun and the Sea of Stories (HKRT) were new novels that were introduced.
- Year 8 media unit re-designed with a focus on representation
- Y8 Shakespeare unit introduced with a Hip-Hop Shakespeare week.
- Y9 non-fiction unit to refocus on Activism, highlighting issues of diversity in both UK and USA. UK focus, in particular, was Bristol Boycotts.
- Last summer for the Pre-A level course, we designed a unit on the George Floyd protests for the English Language A level group, examine the use of power within the protests and the responses to these.
- The Year 12 English students this year were engaged with choice of material to allow a more diverse approach to literature, deciding themselves to study a module on the 'Immigrant Experience'

The History department will change one of the units on our iGCSE History syllabus, with effect from September 2021. They will introduce an American Civil Rights unit, which covers Black Civil Rights, Women's Rights Native American Rights and Civil Liberties. This is actually a return to a unit that we had previously taught before exam board changes made it impossible for a while,

4. The Pastoral Curriculum

A great deal of work was already within the Pastoral Curriculum, which has been collated and audited. The focus here is about building understanding and respect that can be applied in a broader context. Additional, carefully chosen activities are introduced via assemblies and SPACE where they can sit within the context of the curriculum delivered by tutors - the sessions linked to Home cultures, for example.

5. Review of Extra Curricular activity through Creative Arts

There has been an enormous amount of activity delivered through the creative activity in school life.

- **Black History Month:** The Missing Chapter Exhibition and linked Y13 'Race and Representation' SPACE session in 2020.
- **Home Cultures:** Pupils carried out the Mass Observation 'Mantlepiece Directive'. A proportion of the information fed back from pupils has been coded and provides interesting immergent culture/heritage trends about what is of primary importance to families in our school community.
- **CreativesNow:** Spring/Summer edition includes an article titled 'We (Still) Need to Talk About Last Summer' reflecting on lasting changes since Floyd, Colston and BLM resurgence; an interview with artist Ibrahim Mahama (his work follows colonial trade routes + seeks to culturally connect Ghana with international arts and culture); diverse literatures (SPH) + reading recommendations; a series of articles from Y12 English Language on various topics including racial slurs and racism in sport; diversity in the classroom (JZS). The Autumn edition included a range of articles on banned books, including some banned for racial reasons and an interview with Stephen Welsh (National Slavery Museum, Manchester Museum) on the decolonialisation of arts and culture organisations.
- **YourManifesto:** Creative project group across 8 Bolton secondaries led by Bolton School and supported by Manchester International Festival. Young people involved in designing projects that engage and are representative of communities across the Bolton Borough for the town's Summer of Reconnection festivals and digital project packs. Young people involved will share their project's politics, process and artistic results within MIF's programme of cultural discussions this summer.
- **RSA Pupil Design Awards:** 7 Y12 AG&T boys are working on the Roots to Empowerment brief - 'How might we challenge systemic racism by redefining heritage to ensure that future generations engage with a more inclusive story of our past?' They have carried out research, a series of design thinking workshops and have been involved in conversations with experts - Ibrahim Mahama, Stephen Welsh, Old Boy Anthony Lilley. They will design and run some focus group conversations in school to inform the next stage of their project. This project involves some focus on the White Cube in Lusanga (formerly Leverage).

An additional extra-curricular activity, which all boys in year 7 to 9 have experienced this year, made possible by the covid secure restrictions, has been a 30 minute session on Black Lives Matter looking at black role models. Boys have then been asked to write a short one page review of a black role model, explaining why that person has had an impact on them in their thinking.

6. The Leverhulme Legacy

We have been active in shaping an educational approach to the live story and events associated with Lord Leverhulme. The website carries this narrative about Lord Leverhulme as the basis for using his life and times as an educational experience.

This has involved collaboration with the Leverhulme Trust, which is ongoing and a Radio 4 documentary called 'Descendants', which will be aired this summer.

In terms of activity we have been focused on Leverhulme and the creative arts as part of assessing his impact holistically.

- **Project arising from Design Awards:** Pupils are designing a town-wide project to engage young people in an exploration of Lever's impact on Bolton and thereby Bolton's regional and international connections. They will enter their project plan to the design comp; there has been early discussion of pursuing their project, pupils co-designing resources and workshops with staff, pupils, Bolton LMS, Port Sunlight Trust and the Lady Lever Gallery. We are in the process of applying for a National Lottery Fund Grant for this work.

We have also established connections for primary school work with the Leverhulme Memorial primary school in Leverburgh on the Isle of Harris.

7. Recruitment of Staff

We have monitored much more closely our pipeline of supply in the recruitment process.

The data shows the key issue is the range of backgrounds of applicants rather than any subsequent part of the process. We will continue to review where and how we advertise and how we make clear the diversity of the pupil body within advertisements.

May 27 2021