

# **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion progress report for Bolton School Foundation Academic Year 2023-2024**

This is the final report of five that we committed to compiling following the death of George Floyd, an event that prompted many schools and institutions to re-examine their approaches to inclusion and diversity. In the same year, testimonies published by Everyone's Invited further emphasised the importance of proactive pastoral education. Our commitment to this process has been reinforced by constructive feedback from our Alumni. To ensure that our actions are sustained and meaningful, we have reviewed our progress annually over the past five years.

As we present this final report, we are now focusing on the next five years of development in our approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This process has firmly integrated DEI into all school agendas, and the DEI committee mentioned in our last report will continue to audit and hold all areas of the school accountable. Additionally, we have partnered with external organisations to support our cultural investment.

## **Key Messages:**

- **Cultural Calendar Development:** The creation of a unified Cultural calendar across the Foundation has been a significant improvement, promoting consistent messaging and allowing families with children in different divisions to share in important cultural moments.
- **Enhanced School Culture:** A cross-Foundation approach to character and learning habits has reinforced a sense of belonging among students, celebrating both individual differences and a collective ethos.
- **Primary Division:** The Primary Division has integrated diversity and inclusion into assembly programmes and the Character Development Programme, celebrating various cultural events and promoting understanding and empathy through discrete PSHE lessons and diverse representation in classroom materials.
- **Girls' Division:** The Girls' Division has focused on a dynamic range of activities celebrating culture, art, identity, and well-being, including a Culture Festival, art therapy workshops, and initiatives promoting mental health and neurodiversity.

- **Boys' Division:** The Boys' Division has embedded a comprehensive PSHE curriculum, promoting respect and understanding for diverse cultures and faiths, and addressing issues like masculinity and stereotypes through programmes such as the Progressive Masculinity Programme.
- **Integrated Curriculum Revisions:** All divisions have made strides in curriculum development, integrating diverse perspectives and historical contexts across subjects like English, History, Drama, Geography and Modern Foreign Languages, ensuring a holistic and inclusive education.
- **Creative Partnerships and Initiatives:** The Director of Creative Partnerships has led various inclusive projects, from public artwork and anti-racist initiatives to creative health projects, enhancing the cultural awareness and creativity of the curriculum.
- **Sustained Development:** Bolton School is pursuing Gender Action accreditation to promote gender equality and challenge stereotypes. We are also committed to improving recruitment strategies to ensure diverse representation and exploring flexible working options to support career progression for all staff.

### **School culture:**

This year the development of a cross-Foundation approach to character and learning habits which will continue to evolve and embed itself has given us much opportunity to reflect on the golden thread of belonging across the school and how we ensure that belonging to Bolton School impacts on how students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment. The key messaging, as we ensure a feeling of belonging, is that whilst we celebrate all that makes us different, at the core we also celebrate an ethos of belonging to Bolton School.

The two-fold nature of this is that we strive to ensure students see themselves represented and celebrated in school life and that we actively construct the curriculum, pastoral provision and co-curriculum to allow students to gain understanding of the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion for themselves, their peers and the local and global communities in which they live. In light of this holistic approach, fostered by each Division as a unique part of the Bolton School Foundation, this report will be organised according to the developments and priorities of each Division in turn and provide both the product of work done over the 5 years and consideration of how this work will be sustained.

**Primary Division:**

Diversity and inclusion are integral to the assembly programmes in the Primary Division, with key dates and events highlighted alongside ongoing work on compassion through our Character Development Programme. Celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, Diwali, Holi, Eid, and Ramadan are prominently featured in assemblies, displays, and materials shared throughout the school. Additionally, a series of assemblies focuses on inspirational individuals from various backgrounds and cultures who exemplify our Hesketh Habits.

Approaches and activities which help young children understand and celebrate both similarities and differences are embedded across all subjects, and also in discrete PSHEE lessons focused on themes like "Celebrating Differences" and "Keeping Safe." Religious Studies (RS) continues to be taught as a separate subject, covering a broad and balanced range of topics. In Beech House, parental engagement sessions have involved whole families in celebrating and representing the cultural, religious, and social identities within our community through displays and play areas. The Think Equal and Jigsaw PSHEE schemes, for which EYFS staff received training, provide a framework for delivering DEI-themed lessons, sharing vocabulary, definitions, and fostering a culture of interest and celebration of differences. Pupil voices are recorded in floor books for easy revisiting, and weekly learning updates are shared with parents, who appreciate the guidance on navigating important conversations.

We have placed a significant emphasis on ensuring greater representation in the imagery, music, and texts available to children. By using diverse classroom texts and library selections, pupils develop an awareness of cultural differences and spiritual appreciation. In Beech House, baskets of books that represent children and their families are popular, helping to model appropriate vocabulary and cultural understanding.

Across all areas of our work, we encourage children to understand and empathise with people from different cultural backgrounds. For example, examining how other cultures have influenced 'British' culture provides opportunities to learn about historical figures, such as those from the Windrush generation, through author talks, Black History competitions, and displays. By studying connections between local, British, European, and world history, children gain a better understanding of our multicultural society. They also explore their feelings about the people, cultures, places, and environments they learn about, understanding the importance of scale

and recognising how small changes can have far-reaching consequences for others worldwide.

Teaching students to respect and value diversity is encouraged in the day-to-day teaching and learning through showing respect for different viewpoints and ideas, listening to others during class time, as well as in the ability to work effectively together both individually and in groups. This was clearly reflected in the findings of the Boys' division inspection (which includes inspection of Park Road Junior School):

*In the Junior School, an atmosphere of mutual respect is evident in classrooms, with a calm and purposeful working environment. Pupils are supportive of their peers, keen to praise examples of their work. They co-operate both with each other and with staff willingly. Pupils, for example, give advice and support to their peers in order to enable success in tasks set. Pupils make thoughtful choices regarding lunchtime and after-school clubs and activities, opting for clinics and clubs which support their learning or help younger pupils in paired reading clubs.*

Our creative curriculum has provided particular focus for exploring ideas around diversity both through self-expression and understanding how artists in all spheres have intersectional identities that influence their work. In their music lessons, we teach children to appreciate and evaluate the work of a range of performers and composers who both originate from a wide range of backgrounds and represent cultural influences in their music. We make it a priority to ensure that the backgrounds of our own students are represented in these choices. Across the Division, children have also been part of Art and Design projects that include: Eco Engineers, the work of Frida Khalo, the history of Islamic Art and "This is Me" - a mixed media piece expressing identity.

**Girls' Division:**

This year, the Girls' Division has seen a dynamic range of activities focused on culture, art, identity, and well-being. The highlight was the Culture Festival, a two-week event filled with diverse activities aimed at exploring and celebrating culture, art, and personal identity. During this festival, students engaged in surveys to reflect on their own cultural perceptions and identities. The festival included dance events, the Red Card to Racism initiative, and own "personal culture" clothes days, fostering an inclusive environment.

Significant projects during the festival included the Year 8 art installation and workshops, which allowed students to express their creativity. Additionally, Year 12 students had the unique opportunity to participate in a Q&A session with Naziha Arebi, the director of Freedom Fields, a documentary about women's football in Libya. Comedy workshops led by Ali Khan focused on women's comedy and mental health, providing a supportive and engaging platform for students.

In our ongoing commitment to student well-being, we have incorporated art therapy into our social prescribing through the Beewell initiative. A key pastoral staff member, trained in art therapy, has facilitated workshops that several girls have already embarked on, offering them a creative outlet for mental health support.

Furthermore, all Thrive representatives participated in creative thinking projects centred around mental health, fostering innovative approaches to well-being. We also trained a new cohort of anti-bullying ambassadors who organised an event at HH focused on neurodiversity, promoting understanding and support for neurodivergent students. These activities underscore our dedication to nurturing an environment that can be both supportive and creatively stimulating for all students.

This year, the Girls' Division has continued to advance its commitment to an inclusive, and dynamic curriculum through various initiatives and enhancements. A significant development has been the establishment of the Curriculum Council, which has significantly amplified the pupil voice within the school. Each form nominates a representative to participate in discussions and debates on curriculum issues, ensuring that student perspectives are integral to our educational strategies. Recently, the council has been instrumental in developing a standardised pupil voice survey, which Heads of Department will use to enhance their ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities.

Additionally, professional development for staff has been a key focus. At the beginning of the year, our SENCO led an impactful INSET session on adaptive teaching with a particular emphasis on dyslexia, equipping teachers with strategies to better support students with diverse learning needs.

In terms of curriculum content, the Drama and History departments have made noteworthy strides. In Drama, students from Year 8 to Year 13 engage in a rich array of studies, from puppetry and costume design to live performance analysis and exploration of complex texts such as "Find Me," "Hamilton," and "Chimerica." These studies not only enhance students' understanding of theatrical techniques but also encourage them to engage with critical social issues such as mental health, gender identity, and geopolitical dynamics.

The History curriculum has similarly expanded to include diverse perspectives and historical contexts. From the roles of medieval women and the Islamic Golden Age in Year 7 to the impact of Windrush migration and the civil rights movement in later years, the curriculum ensures that students receive a broad and inclusive historical education. Additionally, activities such as the Model UN debates and the Great Debate competition further enrich students' understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion issues.

These developments reflect the Girls' Division's ongoing commitment to fostering an educational environment that is inclusive, dynamic, and responsive to the needs of all students. By integrating pupil voice, enhancing teacher training, and broadening curriculum content, we aim to provide a holistic education that prepares our students for the complexities of the modern world. Future plans will continue to build on these foundations, ensuring that our curriculum remains relevant and impactful.

## Boys' Division:

The Boys' Division ISI inspection found the schools' approach to diversity and inclusion noteworthy in their report:

*Cultural diversity is broad within the school and pupils enjoy celebrating the traditions of their own and other cultures. Through a well-planned PSHE curriculum, assemblies and other activities, pupils learn respect and understanding for other cultures and faiths. Pupils of all ages show respect for the differences between people....Pupils comment frequently on how the school is an inclusive community and one in which differences are accepted and diversity is celebrated.*

Our previous report commented on the development of a complementary PSHEE curriculum across both senior schools and this academic year, we have been able to embed this approach. The use of these sessions to tie in with the assembly schedules and cultural Calendar has gone some way to ensure that students do not experience tokenism in the recognition of significant events, religious celebrations, or awareness dates. The pastoral sessions explore pupils' knowledge, understanding and response to the issues raised and create a space for challenging assumptions. Following last year's pupil voice which highlighted that experience was not always consistent, these sessions are now well -resourced, with staff having the opportunity to prepare in pastoral meetings. These triangulated sessions, across all year groups include: Black History Month, Anti-Bullying Week, International Men's Day, International Women's Day, LGBTQ+ History Month and Neurodiversity Week

A combined focus on allyship and ambassadorship has formed a sustained theme for the development of boys' education around masculinity and stereotype. The work in this area focusses on countering regressive masculine narratives to which students report being exposed through their activity on social media. One such initiative is the Progressive Masculinity Programme which has created ambassadors amongst the older students.

Curriculum developments in the Boys' Division continue to shape a more inclusive approach across subject areas. Our inspection report highlighted a GCSE Religious Studies lesson *where students expressed a moral duty to speak out against discrimination, referencing their studies of the Holocaust.*

In English, the curriculum for Years 8 and 9 now includes texts that address themes of diversity, racism, gender, and prejudice, emphasizing the power of language. Year 7 students explore global poetry through the "Voices Around the World" unit, studying poets such as Inua Ellams, Benjamin Zephaniah, and Rumi, and the intertextuality of Nina Simone in "Clap When You Land" by Elizabeth Acevedo. They also research global poetic traditions and hear from visiting poet Karl Nova. At IGCSE, students analyse non-fiction texts exploring cultural aspects, including works by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Adeline Yen Mah. Traditional texts like Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" and J.B. Priestley's "An Inspector Calls" are contextualised in modern terms to highlight limitations of the writers' perspectives.

The History curriculum ensures comprehensive coverage of women's roles, racial discrimination, and minority perspectives, spiralling these themes through various contexts. Topics include women's rights, explored through female monarch as well as 20th-century wars, the Civil Rights Movement, and the rise of Fascist Italy. Students also explore racism, war, colonialism, and Empire, studying Black Tudors, Slavery and Abolition, and developments in the Far and Middle East.

Geography curriculum enhancements focus on multiculturalism. Students examine segregation and multicultural cities, exploring both forced and voluntary reasons for the uneven distribution of ethnic groups. The curriculum covers global systems' impact on national development, including colonialism and modern geopolitical conflicts. Students also study global governance, learning about organisations like the United Nations and the World Bank.

In Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), A Level discussion on immigration, racism, and integration provide critical perspectives on contemporary issues. Lower school students explore customs and festivals, with updated resources highlighting diversity. Discussions on Europe's colonial past help students connect with History and Geography lessons, enriching their understanding of global historical dynamics.

These curriculum developments aim to provide a holistic and inclusive education, fostering a comprehensive understanding of complex global interactions and their effects on diverse populations. Through systematic changes and ongoing enhancements, the Boys' Division remains committed to creating an engaging and culturally aware learning environment.



### **Creative Partnerships, Initiatives and Learning:**

The work led by the Director of Creative Partnerships has continued to enhance the inclusivity and creativity of the curriculum, building on previous surveys and consultations. Key initiatives include creative thinking exercises, leading to projects like "The Best of Us is the Rest of Us," where Year 7 pupils created public artwork with a local primary school. Celebrations of home cultures, anti-racist initiatives, and workshops in international dance, theatre, and comedy addressing gender stereotypes were also conducted. Film showings with director Q&A sessions focused on women's agency and sport, alongside happiness surveys and a visit to the Whitworth Gallery to discuss significant cultural impacts.

School productions have addressed global themes, updating scripts to tackle issues like colonialism and women's status. Creative health projects have focused on pupil well-being, resulting in various artistic outputs. The Cultural calendar has been aligned with UNESCO dates to integrate into pupil activities. The school has been involved in national studies on creative thinking, contributing to policy progression and lifelong learning programmes.

### **Accreditation and Sustained Development:**

Bolton School is actively pursuing Gender Action accreditation and our application is currently pending for the Initiator Award. This initiative aims to challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender equality across all aspects of school life. Our application outlines a comprehensive plan designed to ensure that all students, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities to thrive and succeed. This will also include work with Lee Chambers of Male Allies UK, focusing on the experience of boys through sessions exploring their experiences and action learning around the future of masculinity, online disinformation and allyship.

By pursuing Gender Action accreditation, Bolton School aims to lead by example, demonstrating our dedication to creating a school culture where every student feels valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential.

**Staff Recruitment and Remuneration:**

Building on last year's findings, our continued analysis of recruitment data reveals an ongoing need to enhance applications from diverse backgrounds. To further this goal, we have refined our recruitment strategies to be more inclusive from the outset, considering where and how we recruit, to ensure wide access to our system.

While the Gender Pay Gap calculation reveals a statistical gap which we continue to address where we can, we also recognise that most senior and middle management roles are held by women and that there is no pay disparity between men and women in the same role. We are keen to explore more flexible ways of working for those for whom this would be of benefit and to facilitate career progression for all.

**Diversity in Student Recruitment:**

We remain dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive student body, reflecting a wide range of cultural, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds. To achieve this, the school has refined its recruitment strategies, ensuring they are more inclusive and accessible. Efforts continue to broaden the reach of recruitment initiatives, utilising various platforms and outreach programmes to attract students from underrepresented communities. The goal is to create an environment where all students feel valued and included, contributing to a rich tapestry of perspectives and experiences within the school.