



## Children & Young People's Select Committee

### Reason for lateness and urgency

This report was not published with the original agenda despatch and has not been available for five clear days before the meeting. This was to allow officers to meet with the Chair to ensure the Committee's expectations were met. The report is urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting because the issue is of high priority, and the Committee has to deliver its agreed work programme.

### **Report title: Embedding Race Equality in Lewisham Schools and Raising the Attainment of Black Caribbean Pupils**

**Date:** 26 November 2020

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

**Contributors:** Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director for Children & Young People's Services

### **Outline and recommendations**

This report and the PowerPoint presentation that will be shared with the Committee seeks to share the work the Council is currently doing with schools to address race equality and to improve educational outcomes for Black Caribbean pupils.

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. Nationally certain BAME groups underachieve at school and one of the groups which have been impacted by this across London and indeed across the country are children and young people with a Black Caribbean heritage. This has been recognised in many reviews and reports over the years and most recently in a report commissioned by London Councils called 'Boys on Track.' This issue has also been recognised previously by the CYP Select Committee.
- 1.2. Young people with a Black Caribbean heritage, including those with a mixed heritage background constitute nearly a quarter of the school population in Lewisham.
- 1.3. Over the last few months the Council, through Lewisham Learning have been working with schools across the borough to address concerns about race equality and in particular the educational outcomes of pupils with a Black Caribbean heritage. As part of this work recent research in this area has been considered in addition to good practice in other Local Authority areas and specific research in Lewisham was carried out by Dr Nadena Doharty.
- 1.4. A steering group of Head Teachers has been established which is working closely with

senior Council officers and there has been very good engagement with schools on this project. There has also been good engagement with community representatives.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the information contained in the attached powerpoint presentation which will be shared with the Committee on 26 November.

## **3. School's Race Equality Group**

- 3.1. In the summer of 2020 a School's Race Equality Steering Group was established, supported by Lewisham Learning to explore how the education system might better address race equality and tackle underachievement. There is good representation from schools on this group and also senior representation from the Council.
- 3.2. The Steering group has examined the existing data that is held within the Local Authority area and is commissioning more analysis to support it's work. It also commissioned a short piece of research from Dr Nadena Doharty from the University of Sheffield which involved interviews with parents, supported by meetings with school head teachers and senior Council officers. There has also been a review of good practice in some other London boroughs.
- 3.3. Through the research the following recommendations have emerged which are now being followed up through a three year action plan for schools.
  - The Race Steering Group to draft a letter that all schools could distribute to parents/carers about this race equality plan
  - Greater consideration needed on engaging with Black parents in the borough.
  - All schools in the borough to conduct an audit of their behaviour/sanctions, dress code and attendance policies
  - Parents need to understand the procedure for reporting racism
  - The Race Steering Group to develop a policy on addressing racism
  - All schools in the borough to take part in understanding racial microaggressions training in order to facilitate learning and positive improvements in unpacking unconscious bias
  - All schools to ask all Heads of Subjects to set up a task-and-finish group in order to conduct a critical appraisal of where (and how i.e. topics) diversity and specifically, Black History, appears across curricula. The sharing of best practice to be disseminated across schools
  - Interview questions, for all staff grades in Lewisham schools, must include a question on a understanding of the definition of racism, and how they will commit to supporting race equality in their school
  - The Race Steering Group to obtain and analyse quantitative data on the proportion of Black staff employed in Lewisham schools school
  - All schools to actively seek feedback from parents and then to advertise a 'you said, we did' board in school in order to close the feedback loop during the subsequent term.

## **4. Financial implications**

- 4.1. This three year project has been allocated £100,000 to support it's work over the next

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three years from Lewisham Learning. Lewisham Learning in turn is part funded by the Council and part funded by schools.

## **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1. There are no legal implications for this report as schools are not governed by the Local Authority and the committee is being asked to note the work that is taking place.

## **6. Equalities implications**

- 6.1. The work of this group is specifically focussed on addressing the poorer education outcomes achieved by young people from a Black background and in particular with a Black Caribbean heritage.

## **7. Crime and disorder implications**

- 7.1. Young people with a Black Caribbean background are currently over-represented in the youth criminal justice system.

## **8. Background papers**

- 8.1. A powerpoint presentation will be shared at the Committee.

## **9. Report author and contact**

- 9.1. Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director for Children & Young People's Services.  
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