

Embedding Race Equality in Lewisham Schools



Summer/ Autumn 2020 activity



- **Schools Race Equality Steering Group now established** – to coordinate action to address this across the borough
- **Stakeholder Consultation** – parents, Young Mayor’s Programme, Lewisham Council BAME Professional Network, Head Teachers and community group representatives
- **Good practice** – practice in other London boroughs considered
- **Supplementary Schooling** – exploring proposals for a supplementary school with Lewisham parents

Schools Race Equality Steering Group



- **Established:** June 2020 and supported by Lewisham Learning
- **Membership:** eight head teachers, two representatives from teaching school alliances, two Governors and senior representatives from the Council.
- **Purpose:** Embedding race equality and raising the attainment of Black Caribbean pupils across Lewisham. A three year approach is being developed

Why it matters in Lewisham



- Every child, regardless of their background, deserves an excellent education
- Black Caribbean pupils have been present in our schools for over 70 years
- Currently across our schools 17% of pupils are Black African, 12% are Black Caribbean, 5% White and Black Caribbean and 5% Any other Black Background
- The achievement and progress of our Black Caribbean pupils is lower than other groups at the end of both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4

Lewisham Race Equality Analysis



- Of the broad ethnic groups, the group with the lowest attainment and progress was consistently Black pupils. Of the black ethnic subgroups, this was specifically true for Black Caribbean pupils, and to a lesser extent pupils from Any Other Black Background. Black African pupils were generally the highest performing of Black subgroups.
- White & Black Caribbean was also one of the lowest performing subgroups for attainment and progress.
- The ethnic subgroups with the lowest attainment and progress also had the highest rate of fixed term exclusions, although recently we are seeing some improvements here.
- Attainment of Black Caribbean pupils on free school meals (FSM) was relatively similar to Black Caribbean pupils without FSM. However, there is a large FSM gap for other ethnic subgroups.

Recent Engagement with Parents



- Lewisham Learning commissioned Dr Nadena Doherty to undertake research to support the development of a local action plan. This included interviews with 56 parents. Key conclusions were:
 - There are not enough Black staff in schools, in particular senior Black staff
 - Many parents expressed concerns about the impact of school policies on their children and that largely White teachers were not aware or interested in the wider issues faced by mostly Black boys in the borough and the challenges they face outside the school walls
 - Good communication between schools and parents is critical, but most parents believe this should be improved
 - What is taught in schools does not properly represent the local and specifically Black Caribbean community

Key Recommendations (1)



- 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 racism.
- All schools in the borough to undergo understanding racial microaggressions training in order to facilitate learning and positive improvements in unpacking unconscious bias.

Key Recommendations (2)



- Schools to ask all Heads of Subjects to set up task-and-finish groups 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, should include a question on a understanding 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.

Lewisham Race Equality Pledge



The Race Equality Steering Group is expecting all Lewisham schools to publicly sign up to a pledge to Embed Race Equality and address Black Caribbean and BAME underachievement.

This will entail a commitment to:

- Targeting ambitious outcomes for Black Caribbean and BAME pupils
- Leaders and governors taking a whole school approach to embedding race equality

Lewisham Learning and Lewisham Council will actively support this work over the next three years and ensure that progress is made