



Parent focus group - Race and ethnicity  
Vale Hall Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021

Agenda:

- 1) Welcome and contracting
- 2) Update from Louise Jaunbocus-Cooper (Deputy Headteacher) about EDI and anti-racism Wellington School
- 3) Small group discussion based on key foci identified by parents and school
- 4) Whole group feedback and next steps

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Thank you for what was a very insightful, productive evening.

Minutes below:

Abbreviations- Louise Jaunbocus Cooper (LJR), Stuart Beeley (SBY), Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

1: We have students who do not report racist language or micro-aggressions. How can the school further create safe spaces and a culture of “speaking out”?

Parent discussion:

Racism/micro-aggressions are “normalised” or trivialised”, fear of reprisals if you speak up, unwanted /negative attention. Students just “put up with it”. Allyship in a predominantly White-British school is critical- racism is everyone’s problem. Do students know who they can report incidents to? Many would struggle to speak directly to staff- what other methods are they? Safe spaces are good- but what happens next? Are children aware micro-aggressions are not ok? More education needed to create a culture, where other students speak out on behalf of their peers if they hear inappropriate language.

Feedback:

LJR explained that schools reflect the community/world we live in- racism and bullying (against all protected characteristics) is therefore present, especially with influences of family and social media and the news- media. That we are committed to ensuring a zero -tolerance approach. Staff and governors have had training on how to deal with things they hear/see, racial literacy. Anti-racism ambassadors often report incidents, but we still have work to do on this constant reinforcement of message to stand out/call it out

We are working around four areas- students/staff training, curriculum and recruitment and policy.

We have created safe spaces for students e.g. Halo Focus group – to discuss the hair policy and protective hairstyles for afro textured hair

Parents were keen to know if this work is carried out in isolation- how is it shared. LJR explained the Halo group delivered at the whole staff inset in September and also narrated a power point for Black History Month (face to face assemblies could not take place at the time. Parents were not aware of this- and there is nothing on website.

Actions:

1. Create a tab on new website launching in January- Equality and Diversity and keep it updated with work we are doing so parents can follow it.
2. January 2022, LJR to deliver assemblies across all years (7-13) and create a clear message of what zero-tolerance means- from extreme racist language to “banter”, explain micro-aggressions, memes (specific examples welcome from group)
3. Promote and highlight these messages more- new website to have an Equality and Diversity tab, Electronic screens to display zero-tolerance- constant reiteration and reaffirmation
4. LJR to again signpost the ways students can report racism – confidence boxes, Class Charts messaging, Ambassadors
5. 2022- set up Student Racial Equality Council- which opens up the space to all. Maintain small focus groups who have expressed their wish to have their own space.
6. January 2022- Year 7 and Year 12- Anti- Racism Ambassador training (Year 12 missed out due to school closure/early study leave last year)
7. Further staff training about this
8. Sharing of these minutes with all Wellington staff and governors and copy on website

2: There is a perception that we do not do enough to “punish” perpetrators of racist language. Our policy is to educate in the first instance- then sanction if there is a repeat. Is this approach the best/right one?

Parent discussion: Consensus education is critical. However, intent must always be considered- is this genuine ignorance or malicious intent? This must always be considered case-by-case and clear consequences in place. What can be done in terms of repair? Be proactive- not reactive.

Feedback:

SBY explained that suspensions were issued last year, but parents may not be made aware of this.

LJR explained the Prevent Duty and again the safeguarding aspect of some issues means it is hard to information share. However, communication home is key when a child has been the victim of racism and there have been occasions when parents would have liked a conversation about incidents.

LJR explained restorative conversations that take place – this can re-empower the victim

LJR explained how all racist incidents are logged regardless of “proof” (using definition of McPherson report in wake of Stephen Lawrence’s murder)- this builds up patterns and where education needs to be put in.

Actions:

1. Inform staff that parental contact is to be made home when the school is aware of an incident. This is built into our anti-racism policy already, but will be reiterated at next staff training – LJR
2. Clear flow chart about procedures- consequences built into behaviour code and shared with stakeholders
3. Signpost the school's procedures clearly on new website- LJR
4. Build anti-racism into Home-School agreement for next academic year- to be discussed at next SLT meeting

### 3: As parents what more would you like the school to do in the area of:

#### Anti-racism?

Parent discussion:

To explain the concept of zero-tolerance to young people. To expand work to Islamophobia, report to parents on work being done. To build diversity into everyday

Actions:

1. Setting up of Muslim focus group- if any of our Muslim parents would like to co-facilitate this please let LJR know
2. As above, better communication with parents

#### The curriculum?

Parent discussion:

Increase number of ethnically diverse books in library. Recognition of diverse leaders, starting at an early age and across all subjects. Using assemblies to educate about topical issues that can lead to prejudices due to media reporting- e.g. refugees

Feedback:

Re library- the library is one area where we have made excellent strides in diversification- also English and texts studied

LJR shared that Wellington are doing a lot of work on decolonising and diversifying the curricula Education is critical- that students see themselves in the curriculum and not just "single story narratives. (Please see separate resource- as this will be the starting point for this work)

1. LJR to feedback at next meeting the work of Decolonise and Diversify staff working party

#### Community links?

Parent discussion:

Suggestion of a "human library" where parents and members of the community come into school and talk to students about their lived experiences and the commonalities we all share, as well as celebration of difference and how that enriches everyone. Sharing community experiences- between students

Need to encourage whole community to celebrate diversity- e.g. Diwali, Eid .

Actions:

1. Build in outside speakers from community into assemblies – build in oral history
2. Racial Equality Council set up in January- LJR
3. Focus on Islamophobia next- thank you to two parents who have offered their assistance

#### 4) Additional areas/feedback:

Parent discussion:

Increase representation of diversity in staff body. How diverse in governing body, how involved are they on EDI work?

Feedback:

LJR explained all governors had received same training as staff. There is a link- governor for EDI- Louise Speed Governor Christie Spurling who was present- confirmed this and noted he. works on 5 other school and Wellington is far ahead in the work they do

SBY explained we had already worked to diversify the governing body and they are more diverse than staff body

Actions:

1. New website- governor profiles –better signposting – SBY