

We're all
in this
together

One Year On

A Review of GSAL's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Policy and Practice



*"... good education
should (and
outstanding education
will) challenge prejudice in
an appropriate and sensitive
way so that ignorance is dispersed
and positive attitudes flourish."*

An extract from the
Investigating Committee's
report.



THE GRAMMAR
SCHOOL AT LEEDS

Be Inspired

Introduction from Sue Woodroffe, Principal

It has been a year since the killing of George Floyd sparked global protests calling for racial justice. In the weeks following his death, our school—alongside organisations across the world—faced some hard truths about the past. This undoubtedly brought challenges. More importantly, however, it gave us an opportunity to learn and grow as we sought to put our commitment to racial equality into practice.



As you will know, we have now completed an unflinching investigation into a historic allegation of racial abuse made against the school by two former students. While this distressing incident was investigated promptly and with appropriate action at the time, our review shone a light on how unclear procedures led to the victims' needs not being fully met. For this, the school has apologised without reservation.

“There’s been a cultural shift not only in how our students feel listened to but also in how they can approach us about the issues that matter to them.”

Joanna Haynes-Boyd
EDI Coordinator

Our investigation highlighted how practical details matter when creating a culture of anti-racism. Be it related to the policies we write or the texts we teach—we must be vigilant when championing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

With this in mind, the school began a broader examination of our approach to EDI. This has led to a series of ongoing projects aimed at challenging intolerance in all its forms and placing EDI at the heart of our policies, staff development and pupil experience.

The aim of this one year review is not to draw a line under this work. Rather we wanted to update you about where we are and what our plans are for the year ahead.

We recognise the importance of providing a nurturing environment where—irrespective of race, religion and belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or neurodiversity—all students feel respected and valued. In doing this, we will provide our young people with the understanding and tools to take these values with them into the world.

• Championing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Through Policy

A team of staff and external experts have now completed a comprehensive policy and website review with a focus on EDI. We are confident that our policies comply with all current anti-discrimination legislation and safeguarding best practice.

Our policies are not to be shuttered away in a filing cabinet; they are working documents that underpin our values. As such, they will be kept under review.

In evaluating our action plan too, we will use data from anonymised student surveys to monitor the effectiveness of our support structures, and EDI will remain a standing agenda item on all Senior Leadership Team and governing body meetings. Our action plan, policies and procedures will be further strengthened as the school seeks **accreditation from the National Centre For Diversity (NCFD) by summer 2022, the first independent school to do so.**



“The responsibility for creating safe, inclusive spaces falls to each of us and requires that we continually challenge bias—both conscious and unconscious—not just when we see it happen but also within ourselves.”

Itee Odekunle, Legal Counsel,
Anixter, speaking to our
senior school students.

• EDI Staff Development

Over the last year, our staff have shown their commitment to reviewing teaching practice with a focus on EDI.

This year's INSET days have covered the management of **bullying** investigations, recognising and tackling **microaggressions**, and ensuring a **zero-tolerance** culture towards racism and discrimination in any form.

Over 1,700 students, staff, parents, and governors responded to the recent NCFD survey about **FREDIE**. This feedback will be invaluable for informing future priorities, including our staff development.

Working with **FREDIE**

As part of our work with the NCFD, we will place the **FREDIE** framework at the heart of all we do:

Fairness
Respect
Equality
Diversity
Inclusion
Engagement

• Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Student Experience

In the classroom

At the core of our student experience is our curriculum. Our recent review found our curriculum was broad-based and offered a variety of opportunities to study the contribution of people from different races and cultures. Students also learn about societal attitudes toward race and religion. This spans from learning about **Diwali** and **Eid** in our Early Years Foundation Stage, to studying the **American civil rights movement** in Year 10 and 11, through to our English A-level students looking at language in relation to place and ethnicity. We have also introduced '**caring about our diverse communities**' as one of our new primary school values, and this has been reflected in our assemblies and classroom projects.

This is not to say the school should not look for more opportunities to deepen and enhance our syllabus. This is why we are delighted to have appointed **Peter D'Sena, Associate Professor of Learning and Teaching at the University of Hertfordshire**, as our new Visiting EDI Fellow. Professor D'Sena will be working with staff across the school to further embed all aspects of EDI in our teaching and learning.



Peter D'Sena

Professor Peter D'Sena has championed EDI in education for over four decades.

Beyond the classroom

This year we raised the profile and widened the scope of Black History Month (BHM) with the support of GSAL's active equality, diversity and inclusion society (UPSoc). In October 2020, students took part in varied projects celebrating the outstanding contributions of people of African and Caribbean descent. They expressed their learning through art, music, poetry, and film.

The school is mindful that discussions around black history should not be contained to one month a year. Therefore, UPSoc initiated a BHM+ programme, with events across the school calendar.

We are excited to see these programmes grow and develop over the years to come. We will also expand our broader EDI programme as we continue to discuss and champion equality in all areas.



Jacquie Harper MBE

"The considerably expanded EDI activities at GSAL signals that inclusivity is a clear priority. I am sure this means pupils will go into the world with a better understanding of society's difficult issues."

Jacquie Harper MBE, coach, author and GSAL governor.



"The virtual walking tour around Leeds brought to light how Africa isn't recognised enough as a great power in things like architecture."

Reflections from a Year 9 student after taking part in the virtual black history walk around Leeds.

Highlights from our EDI Programme 2020/21

Students created a website dedicated to black film, television and literature on GSAL World, with curated resources for both primary and senior school students for BHM.

The school held events and talks to celebrate International Women's Day.

David E. Hull-Watters, Inclusion Consultant, gave a talk about LGBTQ+ role models as a precursor to Pride Week in June 2021.

Amnesty International's Patricia Bartlett and human rights defender and lawyer Azza Soliman spoke to senior school students about their work to create legal equality for Egyptian women.

GSAL hosted an event with Dr Samir Puri, author of *The Great Imperial Hangover: How Empires Have Shaped the World*.

Dr Jasjit Singh, Associate Professor at the University of Leeds, led an interactive session on religion, media and representation.

Information sessions were held to mark World Autism Awareness Day.

As part of our BHM+ programme, students took part in a virtual black heritage walk and also heard from Eileen Taylor, Leeds' first black Lord Mayor.

Next Steps

This last year has challenged us to take stock. We are now determined to expand and deepen our EDI work as we strive to ensure all students from all communities feel supported and heard. This will include:

- ▶ working towards achieving National Centre For Diversity accreditation by 2022;
- ▶ implementing further curriculum recommendations from Professor Peter D'Sena;
- ▶ continuing to investigate any reported incident of intolerance or discrimination promptly and thoroughly, placing the victim's needs at the heart of the process;
- ▶ developing our programme of EDI events, including unveiling our diversity walkway mural, designed by our students;
- ▶ expanding the role of our EDI Coordinator to research and promote further initiatives across all areas relating to equality;
- ▶ increasing our connections with local community organisations under the direction of the EDI Coordinator and UPSoc;
- ▶ improving GSAL's internal links between our faith groups, houses and academic departments;
- ▶ establishing a GSAL EDI Committee to include pupils, staff and members of the wider GSAL community.

"I really enjoyed discussing my work on religion, media and representation with staff and students at GSAL ... I'm humbled to hear that students stayed on after my talk to discuss the issues raised."

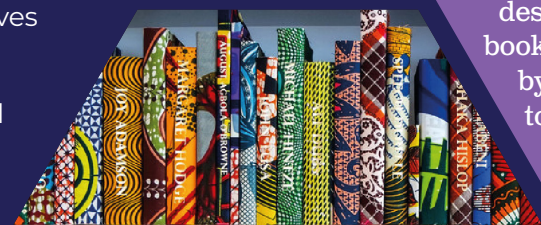
Dr Jasjit Singh, Associate professor at the University of Leeds.



Dr Jasjit Singh



British Library by Yinka Shonibare CBE (RA) contains thousands of batik-bound books to celebrate the diversity of the British population. Our new student-designed mural will draw on this book motif while featuring artwork by our primary pupils. It aims to encapsulate UPSoc's ethos of 'many branches, all the same tree'.



British Library by Yinka Shonibare CBE (RA)