

**CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL AND CITY OF LONDON  
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

# **RACE EQUALITY REVIEW**

**JANUARY 2021**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, many organisations in the UK have realised the need to reckon with racism. Prompted by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, there is now increasing recognition that all institutions, including schools, suffer from systemic racism. In independent schools, people of colour are underrepresented in the staff and pupil bodies and experience racism that their white peers and colleagues do not. This is true in our wider society, but the impact on pupils at a critical time in their lives can be profound. All schools have a responsibility to give their pupils the best possible educational experience free from racism and discrimination.

In September 2020, City of London School (CLS) and City of London School for Girls (CLSG) decided to commission an independent review of race equality in their schools in response to concerns about racism raised by members of the school community. The schools agreed that every aspect of school life should be open to scrutiny. In deciding to confront racism in their schools, the schools' leaders understood that they would need to face hard truths and make a long-term commitment to change.

This review sets out how racism manifests in the schools and offers practical solutions to support the schools to build an anti-racist community. We do not seek to blame or point the finger: everyone in the schools has a responsibility for the culture, safety and happiness of the school community. Many of the people we spoke to felt that our review was overdue and keenly awaited "*real action*" from the schools. We hope this review will help the schools to move beyond good intentions to meaningful action that makes the schools more diverse, and builds inclusive and anti-racist environments for current and future generations.

## KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

We found the schools to be positive and cohesive environments for staff and pupils. The people we spoke to felt pride in their schools. They emphasised the schools' academic achievements, progressive values and the genuine encouragement given to pupils to "*be themselves*". Inevitably, we heard about very difficult and painful experiences from staff and pupils, which highlight the systemic and pervasive existence of racism in society. We focus on these issues in this report, but they should not undermine the fact that the schools offer their staff and pupils great opportunities to flourish and build happy school lives and careers.

Both schools have already made progress to promote racial equality and inclusion. At CLS, the adoption of a diversity and inclusion action plan and the recent appointment of a teacher as Diversity and Inclusion Lead was welcomed by everyone we spoke to. CLSG established a Research and Action group to create the school's equality action plan and staff took the initiative to survey pupils on their experiences of racism in June 2020. Both schools have held classroom discussions about the BLM protests. The CLS inset day in September on

anti-racism, attended by a former Black pupil, was widely praised by the staff. But the schools commissioned this review in the knowledge that there is much more to be done to fulfil their ambition to build inclusive and anti-racist school environments that will be sustainable in the long-term.

We summarise our findings and recommendations on the areas of school life that we examined below. We have identified specific areas where the schools could collaborate to share learning and resources and we encourage the schools to do this wherever possible. The schools and their communities will be strengthened by working together.

## **ETHNICITY MONITORING**

We asked the schools for ethnicity data on a range of topics, including their admissions and recruitment processes, pupil evaluation and attainment and disciplinary sanctions. Both schools struggled to provide meaningful data to the review, revealing systemic failures in their data collection and ethnicity monitoring that present a serious obstacle to taking action against racism in the schools.

- Urgently improve the schools' systems for collecting, storing and analysing ethnicity data. They should think carefully about how ethnicity is recorded so that they are capturing the range of ethnic groups in relation to any particular issue.
- Obtain ethnicity data for all current pupils. This should be prioritised for pupils currently in Years 11 and 13 to inform the equality assessment of teacher-assessed grades awarded in place of exams in this academic year.
- Ethnicity monitoring should be routinely integrated into school processes for both pupils and staff where appropriate.
- Parents and pupils should be encouraged to provide ethnicity information with an explanation of its importance to the schools and how it will be used.

## **ADMISSIONS**

The schools' current admissions processes do not do enough to take advantage of the opportunities to purposefully diversify their intake or to mitigate the risks of unconscious bias in the selection process. The schools need to improve data collection and analysis, review their selection process and develop outreach opportunities.

- Collect information on ethnicity and class background during the admissions process and ensure this is systematically processed and reviewed to understand application and success rates, including for bursaries. This information should be reported annually to the governing body to enable appropriate oversight.

- Review the academic selection process with the support of specialists in educational assessment in order to minimise disadvantage to children from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Consider aligning the two schools' selection processes in order to share resources and knowledge.
- Review the information on the schools' websites to ensure that it is inclusive and attracts pupils from all backgrounds.
- Use the schools' connections with the City of London Corporation to develop outreach and partnerships with schools in the state sector in order to attract pupils from different backgrounds to apply.
- CLS should remove the condition that pupils meet standards of academic performance and behaviour in order to continue to receive a bursary.
- CLSG's governing body should consider increasing resource for its admissions and communications functions.

## **STAFF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

There was consensus from everyone we spoke to, including parents and governors, that the teaching staff at both schools were not sufficiently diverse. Staff of colour reported concerns about inclusivity and obstacles to career development. People agreed that the lack of staff diversity represented a very significant obstacle for the schools' efforts to combat racism. The schools should take immediate action to increase their diversity and ensure an inclusive working environment for their staff of colour.

- Develop and implement a recruitment strategy to recruit teaching staff from more diverse backgrounds with the support and oversight of the governing body. The strategy should include measures of success.
- Appoint a recruitment consultant specialising in diversity and inclusion to help the schools revise their recruitment materials and hiring processes. This should include considering positive action under the Equality Act, blinding applications for educational institution and adopting a contextual approach to recruitment.
- Undertake effective data collection and ethnicity monitoring of recruitment processes.
- To retain staff of colour, the schools should review current performance management processes to ensure that staff of colour receive equal treatment and equal access to development and progression opportunities. The schools should consider whether to take positive action under the Equality Act to encourage, train and promote staff of colour in the schools.

- Provide regular opportunities for staff of colour to meet the Head Teachers and SMTs to talk about their experiences and to help guide the schools' work on diversity and inclusion.

## SCHOOL CULTURE

We found the culture in both schools to be open, welcoming and reflective. Pupils told us they felt safe in school and they were able to "*be themselves*". Nevertheless, pupils and staff experience persistent, entrenched and harmful microaggressions on a day-to-day basis in the schools. These are not always recognised as racism because staff lack understanding and confidence. The schools must take urgent action to address microaggressions, with a focus on increasing the confidence of the school staff to understand and manage racism.

- Provide regular, mandatory anti-racism training for staff. It should be delivered by trainers who understand the education context and can provide tailored, practical advice on issues such as teaching racist materials, misidentifying pupils and managing disciplinary incidents.
- Provide regular anti-racism training to pupils to address the culture of racist language and bullying in the schools.
- Create a diversity and inclusion reading list and resource bank to support staff to undertake their own learning and development.
- Develop a school-wide system, such as a phonetic register with photos, for ensuring staff do not misidentify pupils and pronounce pupils' names correctly. In the meantime, staff should ask pupils for the correct pronunciation, make a note of it and if they pronounce the pupil's name wrong in the future, apologise clearly for the mistake.
- Review school policies, mission and aims statements to ensure they refer to the schools' aspiration to be anti-racist environments and acknowledge structural barriers to achievement.
- Diversify the counselling staff so that pupils of colour are comfortable seeking counselling support after experiences of racism.
- At CLS, consider whether the Lead for Diversity and Inclusion should sit on the SMT. At CLSG, consider creating a similar position. The schools could also consider whether to create a joint lead to oversee implementation of these recommendations.
- Encourage pupils from different ethnic backgrounds to put themselves forward for prefect and other leadership positions.
- Ensure adequate staff supervision in lower year groups to tackle racist language by pupils.

- Consider using regular anonymous, pulse surveys to track the incidence of racist behaviour by pupils.
- At CLS, review the paintings and busts on display in the main corridor and Asquith and Hale room and consider whether it could be reorganised to feature more representative and relevant artwork or other materials.

## CURRICULUM

Pupils and alumni of both schools voiced strongly-held views about the curriculum. Pupils we spoke to described the curriculum as “*white washed*”. There was a deep desire for change from pupils of all backgrounds and the white pupils we spoke to felt as strongly as their peers of colour. The schools have made some progress on diversifying the curriculum but they now need to take more concerted and systematic efforts to embed change.

- The SMTs should clearly articulate their vision for diversifying the curriculum and the positive impacts they believe it will have for all pupils.
- Establish a joint curriculum working group that will oversee a curriculum development plan for both schools. The group should include governors, senior leaders and pupil representatives and impose clear targets and timelines.
- As part of the curriculum development plan, heads of department, supported by their teaching staff, should be asked to identify opportunities for diversifying taught content, including texts, resources, case studies, homework and assessment tasks. Heads of department should collaborate across the two schools, to share good practice and support teachers so they do not duplicate work.
- Librarians in both schools should be included in curriculum development plans.
- Pupils should be given an opportunity to contribute to the curriculum development plan, and encouraged to share ideas about topics and texts they would like to study. The schools should explain their work on curriculum development to parents and give them an opportunity to express their views.
- Teachers must be supported by professional development dedicated to exploring how to diversify the curriculum in their subject area. This professional development should be made available in protected time to address workload concerns.
- Teaching material should include positive starting points to learn about racial and religious diversity and be mindful about narratives which cast minorities as victims.
- Review the teaching of PSHE to ensure that the schools are applying the Independent School Standards, which require the PSHE curriculum to teach pupils respect for all the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Use the PSHE curriculum to increase

the opportunities to learn about the modern experience of different ethnic groups and focus on racial diversity and racism in the UK.

- Create a curriculum resource bank, taking advantage of the many web-based diversity and inclusion resources, to support staff in accessing suitable resources to update their curriculum.
- Teachers should consider the educational value of resources, such as literature, that contain racist slurs and stereotypes and decide whether to select different resources. If resources are retained, teachers should develop a plan to ensure these are properly contextualised and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds do not feel singled out. Pupils should never be expected to read out racist language in the classroom.
- The schools' anti-racism training should directly address methods of teaching racist materials with sensitivity and context.

## **CO-CURRICULUM**

The schools' co-curriculum consists of assemblies, clubs and talks by visiting speakers. We found that a great deal of the schools' discussions about race and racism, as well as other aspects of diversity and discrimination, took place in these spaces. The schools both provide some diverse co-curricular activities but they do not plan activities systematically and pupils complained that planning these activities is sometimes delegated to them. The schools should take the opportunities the co-curriculum provides to more consciously and systematically address diversity and inclusion.

- Increase the number of outside speakers of colour to input into the co-curriculum and PSHE. These speakers should be used to speak about a broad range of topics, and not only race and religion. The schools should monitor the range and backgrounds of the speakers they invite to ensure balance.
- Include consideration of the diversity of co-curricular trips and activities in the schools' work on curriculum development in order to balance areas where it may be harder to diversify the curriculum.
- At CLS, consider whether the prize-giving ceremony should be modernised and whether photos of the event should be displayed on the school website or marketing materials.
- When CLS holds Christian services, consider providing alternative activities for pupils who do not attend.

## **BEHAVIOUR & DISCIPLINE**

We looked at the schools' behaviour and discipline policies, and data on behaviour sanctions, to determine whether there was any evidence of discrimination. While the

schools' policies are good and at CLS contain a proactive commitment to antiracism, evidence from CLS suggests that their discipline sanctions may be disproportionately applied to pupils of colour.

- Collect data on the application of disciplinary sanctions, including ethnicity data, and analyse it regularly for potential bias. Ensure that the records enable the schools to assess the effect on Black pupils specifically.
- Ensure unconscious bias in applying the school's behaviour policy is directly addressed in anti-racism training.
- At CLS, a member of senior leadership should attend a meeting of Afro-Caribbean society to listen to pupils' experiences of disciplinary sanctions and discuss what steps could be taken to address the issue.
- Review the schools' uniform policies to ensure they are clear and inclusive.
- At CLSG, amend the behaviour policies to include a commitment to anti-racism.

## CHALLENGING RACISM

It is essential to creating an inclusive school environment that the schools take action to challenge racism when it occurs. This requires clear articulation in school policies about what racism is and what sanctions apply to people who engage in racist behaviour. Critically, pupils must feel able to raise concerns and report incidents with confidence that staff will take the issue seriously and without fear of retribution. We found that pupils at the schools did not feel confident to report racism to staff because they felt they wouldn't understand and they would be ostracised by their peers. The schools need to take action to support reporting and consistently call out racism when it occurs.

- Review schools' aims, mission and value statements and introduce a clear and prominent commitment to anti-racism.
- Reinforce messages on anti-racism and reporting racism at relevant points in pupils' school life.
- Ensure anti-racism training includes training on identifying racism and managing reports of racism by pupils.
- Make it clearer in disciplinary policies that "jokes" or "banter" about a person's race, or other protected characteristics, can be particularly hurtful and pernicious.
- Adopt the same attitude to children who disclose racist behaviour as the schools take towards children who disclose safeguarding issues.

- Consider how to increase transparency about behaviour sanctions for racist incidents for both staff and pupils.
- Consider implementing an anonymous reporting system for racism and other discriminatory incidents.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The schools benefit from a diverse, engaged and highly skilled group of parents and alumni, as well as opportunities as part of the City of London Corporation's "Family of Schools". The schools could do more to take advantage of what their community has to offer by deepening relationships with parents and alumni, and taking the opportunity to build reciprocal and enduring relationships with state schools.

- Provide opportunities for parents to engage with the schools on their anti-racism work, including sharing resources and training opportunities with parents.
- Consult parents of colour about their children's needs and experiences in order to inform pastoral care and anti-racism work.
- Consider how the schools can learn from each other's approach to development and share appropriate development resources.
- Develop reciprocal relationships with the City of London state academies further in order to share learning on diversity and inclusion and explore potential opportunities for staff development.
- CLS should discuss the connection between HMC and the East India Club with HMC with a view to bringing the association between HMC and the Club to an end.

## GOVERNANCE

Like the schools' staff bodies, the schools' governing bodies lack ethnic diversity. The composition of the governing bodies may change following the Corporation's recent governance review and we recommend that the schools ensure ethnic diversity when they recruit new governors. The governing bodies have not regularly considered race or racism at the schools. They should now appoint governors with a specific remit for diversity and inclusion who can take responsibility for overseeing the schools' work.

- Appoint a governor on each governing body with specific responsibility for equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This person should have relevant experience of overseeing or implementing EDI initiatives.
- Recruit governors from ethnically diverse backgrounds in the next and future round of governor recruitment.

- Provide mandatory anti-racism training for governors. It should be delivered by trainers who understand the education context.
- Make EDI a standing item on every governing body agenda to ensure that the schools regularly update governors on their anti-racism and other equality-related work.

