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Diversity & Inclusion *in History*

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Diversity, equality & inclusion across the curriculum

It is vital that our curriculum reflects the diversity of the world in which we all live. Following a series of Pearson webinars looking at diversity, equality, and inclusion across key subjects, this supplement distils some of the lessons, advice and tips for reviewing and updating our curriculum provision and looks at Pearson's work in this crucial area



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Who is your curriculum for?

The world is a place of diversity and difference and if we are to prepare pupils for their place in it, then our curriculum offer must reflect this...

An effective school curriculum is a living, breathing organism; it is forever changing in response to its environment.

The purpose of the curriculum is not solely to get students through qualifications, important though that is. Rather, it is to prepare students for what comes next.

In practice, this means we need the curriculum to provide for students' broader development, enabling them to discover and develop their interests and talents.

It means we need the curriculum to develop students' character including their resilience, confidence and independence, and help them keep physically and mentally healthy.

It means that at each stage, the curriculum needs to prepare students for adult life and future success by equipping them with the knowledge and skills required to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society, by developing their understanding of fundamental human values, their understanding and appreciation of diversity, and by celebrating what we have in common and promoting respect for all.

To do this well, the curriculum must reflect the wider world. How else can we prepare students for life if we do not mirror real life in our teachings and reflect the world around us with honesty and transparency?

The world is a place of diversity and difference. The school curriculum, if it is to be successful, must reflect this diversity and celebrate difference. What's more, it must promote inclusiveness so that students learn to embrace the diversity of life and feel a sense of belonging.

She explains: "Inclusion is about creating a secure, accepting, collaborating and stimulating school in which everyone is valued, as the foundation for the highest achievement for all pupils."

Ms Kriel compares diversity and inclusion to a party. **Diversity**, she says, is being invited to the party; **inclusion** is being asked to dance; **equity** is being able to get in without having to ask for help; and **belonging** is being asked for input into the music playlist and feeling able to ask anyone to dance with you. **Privilege**, meanwhile, is what makes it easier for us to move through life, being higher up the ladder without having to climb it, being trusted for who we are without having to gain that trust. In short, privilege is not having to break through a glass ceiling because you were born above it.

Professional reflections

In November 2020, Pearson published a report entitled *Diversity and inclusion in schools* which drew on the views of 2,000 UK teachers sought during 2019 and 2020. It revealed that 80% believe that more could be done to celebrate diverse cultures, people and experiences in UK education (Pearson, 2020).

The report showcases a desire for change among the profession, with many teachers having paused and reflected on the diversity of their curriculum and, importantly, where it is falling short for their students.

According to the research, 66% of teachers were prompted to think about the diversity of what they teach due to the #BlackLivesMatter movement. They also raised concerns about the inclusion of students with SEND and those from black, Asian and minority ethnicities and disadvantaged backgrounds.

At a time when the proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds, who have a registered SEND or are living in disadvantaged

circumstances continues to increase, the percentage of teachers who feel these groups are "very represented" in the topics, materials and resources that are taught in schools could, the report claims, be far greater.

As well as exploring the impact of students not seeing themselves reflected in what they learn, the *Diversity and inclusion in schools* report also drew on the views of leading experts and practitioners to help outline recommendations for change. These included:

- Calls for more authentic portrayals of diverse communities, people and experiences in the content that is taught in schools.
- Greater guidance to build confidence and understanding of diversity and inclusion.
- Ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard.

“The pace of change in schools is painfully slow, but... we must choose to be part of change. Racism is everybody's business”

Initiatives championing inclusion across the sector and within Pearson are highlighted throughout the report, alongside Pearson's commitment to review the content it produces and ensure all children – of all backgrounds and abilities – feel that they belong in education.

The Pearson webinars

In autumn 2021, Pearson ran a series of events on supporting diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) in education. The events were intended to help teachers and school leaders on the journey to

achieving equal opportunities in education.

From discussion topics that impact a whole school or setting, to events based on specific roles and subjects, the series championed real inclusion and progressive conversation – equipping today's teaching workforce with the knowledge and skills they need to make a positive, long-lasting impact.

Throughout this publication, we will summarise the main findings from the webinar series and provide you with ideas, advice and food for reflection to ensure your curriculum is diverse and inclusive.

In particular, we will explore how to embed black British history as part of a diverse curriculum (pages 4-5) and how to embed LGBT+ inclusion across the curriculum (pages 6-7).

We will also focus on how to design and deliver a diverse and inclusive curriculum in:

- English (pages 8-9).
- Science (page 10).
- Maths (page 11).
- History (page 12).
- Drama (page 13).

One of the aims of embedding DEI in the school curriculum is to help build a classroom culture where teachers and leaders are as confident as they are passionate in broadening the scope of the curriculum and promoting equity in the classroom.

Education is key in addressing issues of inequality and promoting diversity to the next generation of young people.

To help introduce some of these issues, Pearson ran a webinar in November 2021 at which Ms Kriel provided practical advice and tips for the classroom to help broaden knowledge, understanding and confidence.

The event explored how to use the right language and tackle topics, conversations, and content sensitively.

Ms Kriel was an inner-city executive headteacher for nearly 20 years. She has a reputation for

excellence in leadership, leading schools with high social challenges to be in the top 0.1% nationally.

She now works nationally and internationally supporting leaders with the strategic development of their schools. She is a regular speaker on subjects including equity, diversity and inclusion and anti-racism. She is also the founder of Above & Beyond Education – a social media platform for educators and schools to celebrate, connect, support, grow, and collaborate.

In the webinar, Ms Kriel said that DEI is "about everyone feeling valued and having equitable opportunities at school".

However, she admitted that anti-racism is a tough journey. She offered Dr Ibram Kendi – author of *How to be an Antiracist* (2019) – and his anti-racism model as a helpful starting point. It describes the journey from the "fear zone" (I deny racism is a problem; I avoid hard questions), through the "learning zone" (I seek out questions that make me uncomfortable; I am vulnerable about my own biases and knowledge gaps), to the "growth zone" (I promote and advocate for policies and leaders that are anti-racist, I yield positions of power to those otherwise marginalised). When you're in the growth zone, she explained, you speak out about racism and injustice.

Ms Kriel argues that the pace of change in schools is painfully slow, but that we must choose to be part of change. Racism is everybody's business, she said.

Racism translates as differences in opportunities and outcomes for students, and it also impacts on staff recruitment and career progression. We should ask: How representative is our staff body at every level?

You can't be what you can't see

Teachers already have the knowledge of how to support children and must draw on the professional toolkit they already have.

Ms Kriel gave a number of powerful examples in her webinar. She told the story of the boy who, when picking a costume for a themed non-uniform day, asked his mother if his skin would turn white if he drank lots of milk because he couldn't find



representation in the most popular superheroes on television.

Ms Kriel said that all the children at that school, not just the boy, needed better access to literature that reflects other cultures. Indeed, all-white schools need a curriculum that offers representation of other cultures, including pictures of black people, so that they can understand and appreciate the world outside their school gates.

Quoting Marian Wright Edelman, Ms Kriel said: "You can't be what you can't see."

Drawing the webinar to a close, Ms Kriel asked delegates to appreciate what power they had to change schools for the better and to identify ways of building belongingness – to go beyond inclusion to make sure all pupils feel they belong and are recognised for who they are.

This includes, among many other things, revising the school's uniform policy to reflect different hair types. It also includes making sure every child has access to an enriched, inclusive curriculum, no matter who they are and where they are from. School leaders and teachers should ask: Who is this curriculum for? Why do we deliver it in the way that we do?

Conclusion and next steps

In conclusion, Ms Kriel said that to enact change, school staff need to become "deliberate leaders" who take conscious actions to address the gaps and the inequities in their school. It is, she said, about knowing what your "why" is.

Pearson has launched its *Gender Equality Guidelines* (2020) and *Race and Ethnicity Diversity, Equity*

and *Inclusion Guidelines* (2021) which are the first-of-its-kind commitment by a learning company to tackle diversity and inclusion in education.

Pearson intends to use the *Gender Equality Guidelines* to develop all its future textbooks, digital resources and qualifications in a major step forward in supporting children across the UK to learn with gender-equal resources.

Pearson developed the gender guidelines in close collaboration with The Fawcett Society, a leading voice in fighting gender inequality in the UK, who provided independent guidance, feedback and training. The guidelines will help Pearson's employees set appropriate gender balance and demonstrate how to actively challenge gender bias and stereotypes.

The guidelines are accompanied by a Gender Equality Checklist that will help Pearson's teams to practically adopt and track progress from conception stage through to final product.

When creating the guidelines, Pearson recognised the importance of designing them to be respectful and inclusive of women, men, and people with non-binary identities.

Sharon Hague, managing director, UK Pearson Qualification Services and Schools, said: "Gender stereotypes strike early and hit hard. The messages we give children, at home, at school and as a society, have a tremendous bearing on the choices we make."

She continued: "As the leading learning provider, Pearson has the

power to support teachers to dispel gender bias, flip stereotypes and play an important part in opening up the choices available to young people."

While Pearson is working to create content that is representative and inclusive, it also wants to ensure that students, teachers and parents have a way of feeding back if they come across anything that they feel lacks diversity, perpetuates stereotypes, or presents any bias.

The Pearson Reporting Bias Form has been set up to facilitate this and to allow Pearson to investigate and address any issues as quickly as possible. **SecEd**

FURTHER INFORMATION

- ▶ *Above & Beyond Education*: <https://aboveandbeyond.education/>
- ▶ *Kendi: How to be an Antiracist, One World August 2019*: <https://bit.ly/3JSN7lw>
- ▶ *Pearson: For more about Pearson's work in this area, visit go.pearson.com/inclusiveeducation*
- ▶ *Pearson: Diversity and inclusion in schools, November 2020*: <https://bit.ly/35cuKcy>
- ▶ *Pearson: Gender Equality Guidelines, November 2020*: <https://bit.ly/31aCeuy>
- ▶ *Pearson: Race and Ethnicity Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Guidelines, February 2021*: <https://bit.ly/35gtXHz>
- ▶ *Pearson: Reporting Bias Form*: <https://bit.ly/3LRsesL>

Teaching racial literacy and black British history

How do we embed black British history in our curriculum? How do we teach racial literacy and intersectionality? We ask key questions to help schools reflect on their curriculum offer

Pearson's *Diversity and inclusion in schools* report (2020) found that one in three teachers thought the diversity of pupils and the world around them was not reflected in the education they provided.

Furthermore, 24% of teaching staff said that the black, Asian and minority ethnic communities were not represented in the resources, topics and materials used in their schools, while 44% said that students from these communities could be more thoughtfully represented.

Representation is important, in part because it improves student wellbeing. As the charity Mind explains, research suggests that loneliness and feelings of isolation – a consequence of a lack of belonging due to under-representation or overt racism – can be associated with an increased risk of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety and low self-esteem (Mind, 2019).

While there are many different causes of loneliness, Mind cites research suggesting you are more vulnerable to loneliness if you:

- Belong to minority groups and live in an area without others from a similar background.
- Experience discrimination and stigma because of your race.

Indeed, 20% of teaching staff surveyed for Pearson's report said they were concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of black, Asian and ethnic minority students in their schools.

Representation matters. After all, the best schools reflect their local communities; they bring that community into their school and take students out of school into that community.

But the very best schools also look beyond their local communities and regard

themselves as part of the national and international conversation. These schools teach pupils how to be active members of their communities and how to be good citizens of the world.

It could be argued that the success of a school's curriculum is measured by the extent to which it prepares all students for their next steps in life, so that students leave school as well-rounded, cultured, inquisitive, caring, kind, resilient, knowledgeable human beings ready to make their own way in the world.

“Teachers need to give young people the opportunity to walk into situations and be equipped to deal with different cultures”

Actively tackling racism

A part of this mission to prepare students for their place in the world is ensuring that schools do more to actively tackle racism, and promote diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI).

To support greater race and ethnic diversity and inclusion, schools must ensure their staff are trained in tackling discrimination and that their systems and structures, and policies and procedures, promote equality and diversity and tackle racism. Schools must also ensure that their recruitment processes are not discriminatory and that their staff body is representative of the pupils and communities they serve.

On this latter point, recent research from the race equality think-tank, the Runnymede Trust (Haque & Elliott, 2019), found

a chronic under-representation of black, Asian and ethnic minority teachers in the UK. There was unanimous agreement among black, Asian and ethnic minority participants in the research that there should be more staff from these communities in the school workforce generally (and within their schools specifically).

Most agreed that role models for pupils were desirable and some went further to argue that representation was a necessity to protect pupils from being stereotyped or misunderstood.

Structural barriers such as racism, including assumptions about capabilities based on racial/ethnic stereotypes, were everyday experiences for the black, Asian and ethnic minority teachers involved in the Runnymede survey.

In particular, they spoke about an invisible glass ceiling and widespread perception among senior leaders that teachers from these communities have, to quote the report, “a certain level and don't go beyond it”.

As well as working to recruit and train staff, schools need to ensure they educate pupils about racism – and other forms of discrimination – and challenge their prejudices; but they also need to ensure that pupils are treated fairly.

Here, it is worth noting that the government's Timpson Review into school exclusions in 2019 found that black Caribbean pupils were around 1.7 times more likely to be permanently excluded compared to white British children (DfE, 2019).

School leaders must not only promote diversity and inclusion, but must take affirmative action, too. One such affirmative action school leaders can take is to decolonise the curriculum. Indeed, there has been much talk of revisiting the national curriculum to ensure it is representative of black voices.

The Pearson webinar

As part of its autumn 2021 programme of online events on DEI in schools, Pearson ran a webinar on embedding black British history into the curriculum.

The event, in partnership with the Black Curriculum and hosted by Kwame Boateng, was designed to support teachers to cultivate the mindset and methods essential to embedding black British history through accessible, practical and impactful actions. Delegates on the webinar, which is still available to watch (see further information), explored the following:

- Positionality and decoloniality – reframing curriculum, pedagogy and school culture.
- Why embedding black British history is important.
- How we can embed black British history.
- Praxis and delivering an action plan for enhanced racial literacy provision.

The Black Curriculum is a social enterprise group that campaigns for black history to be taught in schools all year round. Its aims are to:

1. Provide a sense of belonging and identity to young people across the UK.
 2. Teach an accessible educational black British history curriculum that raises attainment for young people.
 3. Improve social cohesion between UK young people.
- During the webinar, Mr Boateng said that black British history was British history and should therefore be taught all year round, embedded in the curriculum and not taught separately. Embedding black British history, he said, will improve social cohesion between young people and provide them with a sense of belonging and identity.

He also argued that intersectionality is a key concept



that must be taught in schools. Intersectionality is about how your intersecting experiences of race and gender connect to your lived experiences. When personal characteristics intersect experience, it creates either loaded advantages or loaded disadvantages. For example, equal opportunities policies, he said, tended to favour white women and thus disadvantaged women of other ethnicities.

Mr Boateng also explored the concept of “positionality” which is the notion that personal values, views and location in time and space influence how one understands the world. Consequently, knowledge is the product of a specific position that reflects places and spaces. It is, he said, having a set of spectacles that allow us to see the world in a certain way.

The way we read material is informed by our identity. This, he argued, has an impact on classroom dynamics and influences how we teach. As such, teachers need to think about their own positionalities in the classroom and be mindful of the positionalities of their students.

Mr Boateng went on to explore the plural nature of decolonisation. Quoting Mbembe (2016), he said that decolonisation is not an event but an on-going process, emerging out of a state of blindness or dizziness.

It is about what knowledge takes centre stage in classrooms, opening up students' minds and helping them see how we privilege some narratives over others, and challenging the normative or dominant narrative.

To decolonise our curriculum, therefore, we must embed black British history and include multiple narratives. The curriculum needs to acknowledge the UK's diverse history including its history of

slavery, colonialism, and migration. It should explore how Britain's history of diversity has influenced our language and culture.

Racial literacy

The decolonial view of education should be taught explicitly by incorporating racial literacy. Teachers need to give students the opportunity to walk into situations and be equipped to deal with different cultures. The purpose of embedding black British history, Mr Boateng said, is to:

- Improve how the curriculum represents the diversity of our country's past, present, and future.
- Provide a more accurate teaching and understanding of history.
- Elevate the voices and identities of the marginalised.
- Support social cohesion to reduce ignorance.

To do this, we need to search out parallel narratives and ask what does black history have in common with other aspects of British history being taught in school?

Former headteacher and specialist speaker on anti-racism, Alison Kriel, also spoke at a Pearson webinar in November. She shared her views about “broadening the curriculum”, opening up conversations about identity, race and inclusion with the audience.

In a subsequent blog (Kriel, 2021), she reflected on some key points for teachers to consider – starting with the incredible power of words. She wrote: “As a teacher, as an adult, as a person speaking to others, your words matter.

“Your words can foster a sense of care and belonging. They can tell somebody that you see them, and that you understand them. They can also do the opposite: marking somebody out as lesser, as not valued, as somebody not worth taking time to know. Long after a

bruise from an injury might fade, the impact of a hateful word or expression can endure for a lifetime – a throwaway comment that painfully reverberates over the years.”

Ms Kriel continued: “If you were teaching when George Floyd's death sparked protests around the world, you might have witnessed how centuries of meaning can reverberate with impact in the present. If black or brown students in your class showed anger, upset, aggression, how did you respond?”

“As a teacher, you have the power to soothe, elevate and celebrate in a way that is witnessed by children whose minds and opinions are still developing. It's a scary place to be sometimes, with plenty of room to make mistakes. Perhaps you worry that you will use the wrong words. Say the wrong thing. Look ignorant or stupid.”

She accepts that some teachers will feel uncomfortable about this, but they need to acknowledge that what they are doing and saying in their classrooms, in the staffroom, in the school corridors, and so on has an impact that rebounds across communities.

In practical terms, Ms Kriel suggests schools consider the following self-evaluative questions:

- Do pupils see diverse role models on the walls?
- How diverse is the staff team – from the senior leadership level right through to administrators and technicians?
- How representative are the speakers that pupils hear from throughout the year – are they from all sectors of industry and walks of life?
- Which texts are pupils reading, and what impactful words do they contain?
- What are you actively doing to challenge racist attitudes?
- What is being said and heard around you and around pupils?

Pearson has produced a booklet on the Black curriculum entitled *Embedding Black British History – Mindsets and Methods* (2021).

The publication seeks to encourage readers to think critically about the ways in which black British history can be thoroughly embedded within the new Pearson migration unit (see page 12). It contains key concepts, and the definitions for these concepts, as well as prompts for continued research and reflection on the provided case studies. **SecEd**

FURTHER INFORMATION

- ▶ *The Black Curriculum*: <https://theblackcurriculum.com/>
- ▶ *DfE: Timpson Review of School Exclusion, May 2019*: <http://bit.ly/2vHf0t0>
- ▶ *Haque & Elliott: Visible and invisible barriers, The Runnymede Trust, February 2019*: <https://bit.ly/3p6vZkr>
- ▶ *Kriel: Words last a lifetime: Alison Kriel on Broadening the Curriculum, Pearson, December 2021*: <https://bit.ly/3JBYGNY>
- ▶ *Mbembe: Decolonizing the university: New directions, Arts and Humanities in Higher Education (15, 1), 2016*.
- ▶ *Mind: Loneliness, July 2019*: <https://bit.ly/3sSp67n>
- ▶ *Pearson: Diversity and inclusion in schools, November 2020*: <https://bit.ly/35cuKcy>
- ▶ *Pearson: The Black Curriculum: Embedding Black British History (webinar), November 2021*: <https://bit.ly/3H4j6xl>
- ▶ *Pearson: Embedding Black British History – Mindsets and Methods (booklet), December 2021*: <https://bit.ly/33FbjbU>

LGBT+ inclusion across the curriculum

For true inclusion, students must feel represented in their classrooms – but the data on LGBT+ bullying and representation suggests we have much work to do. We look at where to begin

In November 2021, Pearson ran a webinar on diversifying the curriculum to ensure LGBT+ inclusion. The aim of the online session was to help teachers and school leaders create and support LGBT+ inclusivity in schools.

The expert speaker at the event, Laïla El-Métoui, provided delegates with the tools needed to do this and to tackle the challenges that can arise in and out of the classroom.

From understanding pronouns, appropriate language, and providing practical tips to drive change, to using visual cues and creating safe spaces for students, the event was designed to promote inclusivity across and beyond the curriculum.

Laïla El-Métoui is a UK-based equity and belonging consultant at lemEducation. Listed on the 100 Pride Power List 2021 and Stonewall Lesbian Role Model of the Year 2020, she founded and runs global virtual conferences Educating Out Racism and Pride in Education.

During the webinar, Ms El-Métoui told delegates: “If learners are not in an environment where they feel free to talk about themselves – their identities and personal lives, to develop friendship and be their authentic selves, to make meaningful connections with their class mates and peers – then this is very likely to hinder their learning experience and prevent them from achieving their full potential and acquire language.”

She explored the concept of unconscious bias – which happens when our brains make incredibly quick judgements and assessments of people and situations without realising the biases we have that are influenced by background, cultural environment, and personal experiences.

She also explored power and

privilege as well as intersectionality, the lens through which people see various forms of inequality which often operate together and exacerbate one another.

Ms El-Métoui argued that developing a genuine sense of equity and belonging in education takes action at “every step of the learner’s journey”. This, in turn, requires “senior leadership commitment and representation”.

In practice, she suggested that schools put in place:

- Support for staff and learners.
- Effective anti-bullying and harassment procedures.
- Teacher training and inclusive learning resources.
- Visibility and celebration of LGBT+ people.
- A curriculum co-designed, co-produced and co-delivered by LGBT+ people.
- Forums to raise issues.
- Efficient uses of data.
- Gender-neutral facilities (toilets/changing rooms).

We have work to do

Charity Stonewall has published guidance on creating an LGBT+ inclusive curriculum, both for secondary (2018) and primary schools (2019). The guidance says that building an inclusive curriculum is important because it “reflects the diversity of pupils’ lives and experiences in modern Britain”. Furthermore: “It helps all pupils feel included, making them much more likely to engage with their learning and perform better.”

In Pearson’s 2020 report *Diversity and inclusion in schools* half (51%) of teaching staff said that LGBT+ students are not represented by the curriculum and that they do not feature in resources, topics and materials taught in their schools.

That proportion rose to 55% when teachers were asked about the representation of non-binary

students; 40% of teachers said that LGBT+ students could be more thoughtfully included in teaching materials in their schools.

Stonewall warns that, when it comes to learning about LGBT+ people and themes, many pupils feel these are absent from their curriculum. Indeed, Stonewall’s 2017 *School Report* found that two in five LGBT+ secondary pupils are never taught anything about LGBT+ matters and three in four have never learnt about or discussed bisexuality in school or been taught about or discussed gender identity and what trans means.

This, Stonewall says, negatively impacts on all pupils because “when LGBT+ people and their experiences aren’t discussed at school, it gives the impression that LGBT+ people don’t exist, or that these issues shouldn’t be discussed at school. It prevents pupils from understanding and celebrating difference” (2018).

In contrast, when a curriculum reflects the diversity of the world we live in, all pupils can be supported “to develop inclusive and accepting attitudes towards those who are different to them, and feel proud of the things that make them different themselves”.

For LGBT+ pupils, not learning about LGBT+ issues at school can leave them feeling isolated and unsupported. The *School Report* found that 43% of LGBT+ pupils do not feel part of their school community.

Looking back, one student, Grace, 19, told the report’s authors: “Because I’d never had the opportunity to discuss anything LGBT-related at school, I repressed my identity for a long time. I thought it was unnatural and something that was looked down on.”

Pearson’s survey, meanwhile, found that 25% of teachers are

concerned about the mental health of LGBT+ students in their schools.

A positive impact

Stonewall says that LGBT+ pupils who are taught positively about LGBT+ issues are much more likely to feel welcome, included, and able to be themselves at school.

Addressing LGBT+ issues in the curriculum also makes a difference to LGBT+ young people’s attainment and positively impacts on their wellbeing.

For example, delivering an LGBT-inclusive curriculum ensures that those pupils with same-sex parents, or with LGBT+ family or friends, see the people they know and love included in what they learn at school.

Taking a whole-school approach to inclusion and celebrating diversity in local contexts and communities is also likely to have a positive effect, not only on pupils, but on teaching staff, parents and carers, building a place in the community where everyone feels that they belong.

Of course, as well as being morally compelled to deliver an inclusive curriculum, schools also

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have a legal obligation to eliminate discrimination, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender reassignment, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relationships between different groups of pupils.

Under the Equality Duty, all schools are required to take proactive steps to promote respect and understanding of different groups of people. Creating an inclusive curriculum is a vital part of this work.

All schools are also required to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, as well as fundamental British values such as a mutual respect and tolerance, and this is something that Ofsted looks at during routine inspections. Promoting SMSC and British values is impossible without reflecting the experiences of LGBT+ people, who exist in all walks of life.

As we discovered on pages 2 and 3, the purpose of education goes further than attainment. As part of preparing children for life and society beyond school, education should reflect the diverse world students live in, helping to promote greater understanding and acceptance of different cultures, abilities, families, and people. But is education reflecting today’s society effectively? One in three teaching staff in Pearson’s survey thought not; four in five said more can be done.

What can be done?

Of course, having an LGBT+ inclusive curriculum isn’t just about helping LGBT+ students to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, or just about preparing them for future success – as important as these aims are; it’s also about educating non-LGBT+ students in order to raise awareness, foster greater understanding and empathy, and prevent bullying.

The 2017 *School Report* found that 45% of LGBT+ pupils – including 64% of trans pupils – are bullied at school for being LGBT+. Stonewall argues that many more young people experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying regardless of whether they are LGBT+ or not, simply because they are perceived to be different in some way (the activities they like, or way they dress or speak).

Stonewall says it is impossible to tackle bullying of this kind effectively without talking about LGBT+ people across all areas of school life, including in the curriculum.

Bringing LGBT+ people to life in a rich and inclusive curriculum that acknowledges and celebrates diversity of all kinds will, Stonewall says, “make it easier for pupils to understand why discriminating against someone because of who they are is unacceptable”.

Doing this “will also help address any misconceptions or stereotypes that pupils have about LGBT people”.

Ultimately, by building more authentic portrayals in our classrooms of the diverse experiences, backgrounds, contexts, and communities that make up modern Britain, we can help prepare students for the modern world and stamp out prejudice, building a more tolerant and educated society, where all walks of life are not only accepted, but celebrated.

So, in more practical terms, how can schools achieve greater diversity and inclusion, including for LGBT+ students? Pearson offers some useful recommendations at the end of its *Diversity and inclusion in schools* report (2020):

1. Include more authentic portrayals of diverse communities, experiences and people in the topics, materials and qualifications that are taught in schools.
2. Offer more guidance and support to help build confidence and understanding.
3. Make sure pupil voice is at the heart of education. The report also offers the following tips to champion the student voice:
 - Make use of school councils, prefects, or any other student leadership group and involve them in surveying peers or leading assemblies on the issues that matter to them.
 - Celebrate students’ work and passions through displays. Can classroom walls be spaces that belong to students? Think about how you can give students the freedom to apply their creativity on topics they care about in a visual way.
 - Help to facilitate participation in community projects and look

“Half of teaching staff said that LGBT+ students are not represented by the curriculum and that they do not feature in resources, topics and materials taught in their schools”

at forming connections with local charities or businesses who can support this.

- Some schools have classroom ideas or postboxes where students can share anonymous letters on issues they care about and feedback on what they want to learn about in school.
- Consider using national awareness days or months, like LGBT History Month, as stimuli for student-led projects or schemes of work.

Writing in a blog for Pearson (2021), Ms El-Métoui said: “We all have unconscious biases that can be influenced by the cultural environment we find ourselves in, our background, cultural environment, and individual experiences. It is important we are aware of unconscious bias and how it affects us as it will impact learners and how it brings the curriculum to life.”

She continued: “We need to bring examples of people from all walks of life into the curriculum, so that learners see themselves represented in the classroom from day one, but they learn to understand all kinds of people and their personal values.

“Everyone needs to feel like they belong, especially young people and children. If they do not feel represented, respected, valued, celebrated, it will impact their learning.

“If those learners do not feel able to be themselves at school, it can have a negative impact on their ability to build meaningful relationships with class mates at the very least and might lead to serious low self-esteem, self-worth, low levels of self-confidence – and has led to self-harm and suicide.”

To help ensure students feel a

sense of belonging and safety at school, Ms El-Métoui says we need them to feel represented in the classroom. This means that we need to:

- Represent all kinds of people – whether that be people with disabilities, people of different skin colours, different body sizes, religion, and those who are LGBT+.
- Introduce the use of pronouns and explain the meaning of gender-neutral language in a non-intrusive way from the first moment a learner interacts with us. For example, when asking someone if they have siblings rather than asking if they have a brother or a sister.
- Think how we can encourage learners to express themselves in a respectful way. Through the power of story-telling, we can use inclusive books that show diversity. It is not about having a “gay lesson”, but it is about developing skills and knowledge contextualised in an inclusive background.
- Ensure our syllabus is co-designed, co-produced and co-delivered by a diverse range of learners and that organisations we involve in our curriculum represent people who are disabled, LGBT+, of different skin colours, different gender identities and expressions.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

- ▶ *El-Métoui: The impact will last a lifetime*, Pearson, November 2021: <https://bit.ly/3BAMD0K>
- ▶ *Pearson: Diversity and inclusion in schools*, November 2020: <https://bit.ly/35cuKcy>
- ▶ *Pride in Education*: www.prideineducation.co.uk
- ▶ *Stonewall: School Report*, June 2017: <https://bit.ly/3LMAKhv>
- ▶ *Stonewall: Creating an LGBT+ inclusive curriculum: A guide for secondary schools*, January 2018: <https://bit.ly/2Wwg3x0>
- ▶ *Stonewall: Creating an LGBT+ inclusive primary curriculum*, November 2019: <https://bit.ly/3m5mhgz>

A safe space to discover the world

When diversifying your English curriculum, considering the books we teach is just the beginning. We reflect on next steps, including some top tips and three things to consider...

As part of preparing students for life and society beyond the school gates, education should reflect the diverse world they live in, helping to promote greater understanding and acceptance of different cultures, abilities, families, and people.

It might be argued that there is no better place to do this than in the English curriculum because English lessons tend to be a safe space to explore feelings and to discover the world through an appreciation of language and literature.

And we might start embedding greater diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) in English by looking at how well all our students are represented in the texts that we teach.

While there are a number of factors that can affect student outcomes, not being able to see yourself or your context reflected in what you learn – or even seeing negative portrayals of yourself – can act as a significant barrier to learning.

Research has found that students who have a “sense of belonging” in schools tend to perform better academically, as well as being happier and more confident (Allen et al, 2020).

Meanwhile, a 2018 report explained how black Caribbean boys and working-class white boys are two of the largest underperforming groups in London schools. They are also disproportionately portrayed negatively, with a focus on crime and anti-social behaviour. Mental health was considered one of the areas to address in order to improve their outcomes (Millard et al, 2018).



conflict with his already tenuous understanding of the world.

“Teachers have the responsibility to seek out cultural building blocks students already possess, in order to help build a framework for understanding.”

Of the teaching staff surveyed for Pearson’s *Diversity and inclusion in schools* report (2020), 27% said that the English curriculum is not yet diverse enough.

To address this, Pearson is diversifying its GCSE English literature text list to include authors like Tanika Gupta and Jamila Gavin. In fact, 25% of Pearson’s English literature titles, including novels, playwrights and poets, are written by authors from ethnic minority backgrounds and the organisation is committed to expanding this range at A level English literature and GCSE drama.

Pearson has also published diversity guides for its A level English literature qualification that introduce students to work from a diverse range of British writers, and which raise contemporary issues that they can engage with and relate to. The guides cover black British literature, LGBTQ+ literature, and British Asian literature (see further information).

Creating opportunities

But it is not just about what is taught through the formal, planned English curriculum, of course. Indeed, Pearson offers various opportunities for students to

express themselves beyond the classroom.

For example, according to Katy Lewis, head of English, drama and languages at Pearson, their free national writing competition, *My Twist on a Tale*, has “empowered children and young people to put themselves at the heart of their own stories, as they assert their modern-day stamp on classic tales and seek to better reflect their personal interests, background and experiences”.

The 2019 collection celebrates a diverse Britain, with winning stories such as *Cindermedia*, *The Eco-Friendly Wolf*, and *Little Brown Riding Hood*, while the 2020 collection looks our nation’s take on *Everyday Heroes* and 2021’s competition took the theme *Our Tomorrow*.

Ms Lewis added: “Diversity, inclusion and reliability matter and as such, at Pearson, we believe that at whatever age – from early stages to adulthood – people should feel included in the literature they read and the stories they write.”

By building into our classrooms more authentic portrayals of the diverse experiences, backgrounds, contexts and communities that make up modern Britain, schools can work to prepare students for the modern world and stamp out prejudice, building a more tolerant and educated society, where all walks of life are not only accepted, but celebrated.

And this is vital because, in England, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds continues to increase. Likewise, the number of children with a registered SEND or eligible for free school meals (FSM) has also risen. Yet these groups came out of Pearson’s 2020 survey as the top three who could be more thoughtfully included in education. The percentage of teaching staff who felt these groups are “very represented” in the content taught in schools was low.

Despite a third of all school-age pupils being of minority ethnic backgrounds, only 20% of teaching staff who completed Pearson’s survey felt that black, Asian and minority ethnicities are “very represented” in the content that is taught in schools. Indeed, 34% of senior and middle leaders went as far as to say that these groups are not reflected in school topics, resources and materials.

Only 19% of teaching staff thought their disadvantaged students are very represented in the topics and materials that are taught in schools. In the UK today, according to the Child Poverty Action Group, more than one in four children are growing up in poverty.

Elsewhere, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA, 2022) suggests that children and young people are more likely to be bullied in schools because of their race, faith, gender, disability, sexual orientation or trans status.

Moreover, “education is the key” to helping end racism according to Sue Schofield from charity Show Racism the Red Card. She has said that what is taught in schools and homes is crucial to tackling discriminatory attitudes and helping children to develop anti-racist instincts.

The Pearson webinars

In December 2021, Pearson ran seven online sessions on diversity in English literature, a number of which are still available to watch (see further information).

The webinars build on the work of Pearson’s first Plotting Ahead event – which had led to the creation of 10 aspirations for the future of diversity in children’s literature. Following this, Pearson ran a roundtable to form practical steps to continue the fight to end systemic racism in education, affect real change, and create bias-free content reflecting the diversity of all learners.

During the Pearson webinars, speakers united with attendees to discuss the implementation of those aspirations for literature 18 months on – following global lockdowns, widespread debates on racism and the #BlackLivesMatter movement, and the rise of digital access to education. Writing in *The Headteacher* in May 2021, Sophie Thompson, head of primary and extended curriculum at Pearson, said that it was “important to consider whether the English curriculum we teach represents and reflects the diversity we see in the modern world”.

She continued: “We know that diversity, inclusion and belonging matter. They matter in the literature we consume and the books, poetry and plays we put in front of our young people. The impact of this can last a lifetime. Young people should feel represented in the literature they read and by the authors who write for them.”

Speaking at Pearson’s first Diversity in Literature webinar, subtitled *Plotting Ahead*, English teacher and deputy head, Bennie Kara, suggested some ideas for how schools might diversify the curriculum in a meaningful way – not merely as a bolt on.

She told delegates: “It is no longer acceptable to claim your school celebrates diversity because there are posters of black sports

“Teachers have the responsibility to seek out cultural building blocks students already possess, in order to help build a framework for understanding”

people in the PE department corridors or because there is an effort to put on an assembly on black history in October every year.”

There are, she said, three key things to consider when thinking about a diverse curriculum:

Being an ally: Allyship is the act of supporting someone out of your own personal experience and is a powerful way of creating a cohesive society. When someone feels like they are a minority, it is extremely important to have an ally. As teachers, the act of allyship will come somewhat naturally through the necessity of being an ally for your pupils.

Equity not equality: Equity recognises fundamental differences, then allows and caters for this difference. Bennie believes teachers are more in tune with this notion than one may think, through individually knowing their pupils and recognising their starting points. The goal, therefore, is to build a curriculum that embraces, celebrates, highlights and foregrounds this diversity.

‘Usualise’ the presence of different cultures: “Normalising” suggests there is a standard into which everyone should fit. To “usualise” is to acclimatise your pupils to what is usual. Let’s throw-out the concept of “normal” and encourage our pupils to accept the myriad ways we all exist together. Ms Kara added: “We live in a world that is quite tribal, with a lack of understanding of the other. Schools have a responsibility to build a sense of cultural cohesion, enable students to make informed choices about what they believe in, and a responsibility to show them that the world is bigger than just us.”

Some practical advice

Here follows some practical tips to get English teams started...

- Take a look at your existing curriculum and work with it. The ability to add diversity into the everyday life of your pupils is at your fingertips.
- Take a look at the books you are sharing with your students in lessons. If you feel they are lacking a well-rounded view of the world, try to fill those gaps.
- When thinking up an anecdote to illustrate a point, what names are you using? Is it Mike over Mohan? Charlotte over Chen? If we only ever signpost characters that are centred in white Western Europe, we are implying that this is all that matters.
- When looking at historical events, consider which viewpoint you are focusing on. If you are introducing your pupils to the Second World War, for example, why not include accounts of Asian soldiers who served in the allied forces? You can show the next generation how people with different skin colours, religions and cultures made this country what it is.
- Consider how stereotypes of good and evil are often attached to women (think of the witches in *The Wizard of Oz*).
- Challenge misconceptions and prejudices with books such as Zanyb Mian’s *Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet* or Sharna Jackson’s *High Rise Mystery* which follows two young black British girls investigating a crime that their father has been wrongfully accused of committing.
- Consider what is on your classroom walls – what your pupils are seeing day by day. What colour and gender are the toys they play with? Which faces are looking down at them? What words and phrases are being used? What music can they hear? Does the environment you are creating represent the wider world? On this last point, Pearson, Penguin Random House UK and The Runnymede Trust have introduced *Lit in Colour Pioneers*, a programme designed to help teachers overcome barriers to offering a more diverse English

literature curriculum. Pearson has also developed a new unseen text anthology for those studying the Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1) English Language 2.0 in order to highlight the importance of a diverse English literature curriculum.

It is essential, says Pearson, that students across the UK are given access to books by black, Asian and minority ethnic writers and those from a range of backgrounds, to ensure a better reflection of contemporary culture and society, and to provide students with both experiences beyond their own and experiences that may resonate with them.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

- ▶ *ABA: Groups of young people more likely to experience bullying*, accessed March 2022: <https://bit.ly/3MJ6uGK>
- ▶ *Allen, Riley & Coates: Belonging, behaviour and inclusion in schools, Art of Possibilities & UCL Institute of Education, November 2020:* <https://bit.ly/3BF5yr6>
- ▶ *Millard et al: Boys on track: Improving support for black Caribbean and free school meal-eligible white boys in London, Ikmco, December 2018:* <https://bit.ly/3LRdb2s>
- ▶ *My Twist on A Tale:* <https://bit.ly/3saQT3G>
- ▶ *Pearson: For more on the Lit in Colour partnership with the Runnymede Trust and Penguin Random House, visit* <https://bit.ly/3ARzmVK> and follow #DiversityInLit
- ▶ *Pearson: Diversity and inclusion in schools, November 2020:* <https://bit.ly/35cuKcy>
- ▶ *Pearson: The Plotting Ahead webinars ran in December 2021, featuring pioneers from the Lit in Colour programme:* <https://bit.ly/3BGDCTF>
- ▶ *Pearson Edexcel: GCSE English literature 2.0 (9–1):* <https://bit.ly/3JNZx11>
- ▶ *Pearson Edexcel: AS and A level English literature texts:* <https://bit.ly/35ensVy>
- ▶ *Pearson Edexcel: AS and A level English literature diversity guides:* <https://bit.ly/3p75Guy>

Removing barriers to science

There are a number of barriers to science study for students with SEN and disabilities. A Pearson webinar considered how schools might begin to break these barriers down

In November, Pearson ran a free webinar on diversity in science aimed at helping to build a culture of inclusivity for those pursuing an education in science (Pearson, 2021).

The panel explored practical steps that teachers and school leaders can take to support and enable those with disabilities as they develop their scientific knowledge. This is not only crucial for young people with disabilities at school, but illustrates principles that can underpin the learning experiences of adults in the workplace.

Webinar leader, television and radio presenter Angela Lamont, said simply: “We don’t have enough scientists.” One of the reasons for this, the webinar heard, is that barriers prevent some people from pursuing a career in the field.

Greater inclusivity will allow people to find a fulfilling career and will help organisations to recruit a more diverse workforce which will bolster innovation and productivity.

The expert panel helped delegates to understand the barriers and shared some practical ways of overcoming them and of raising awareness in schools. The panel included:

- Jesse Dufton, a principal patent engineer who has a degenerative condition which has led to blindness.
- Dr Batul Daulby, an educational psychologist, specialising in diagnostic assessments for children and adults with learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, intellectual disability and ADHD.
- Matt Mears, a senior lecturer at the University of Sheffield, who has a genetic condition which has led to hearing loss and who has also been diagnosed as bi-polar.

Ms Lamont asked the panel to share their insights into the barriers that students face to studying science. Mr Mears said that there was not much guidance on how to support students who can’t get into



the lab because the benches are too high or on how to help students who are hearing impaired, for example. A lot of learning in school, he explained, is practical and so “that area needs to be developed”.

Another aspect, harder to pin down, is the lived experiences of disabled students and their ability to grapple with complex ideas. Being disabled doesn’t afford students as much time as their peers to think through ideas because they spend so much time simply working out how to live and function. Structuring the timetable to help disabled students find this “time to think” is therefore crucial.

Mr Dufton said that when he was at school, accessing physical textbooks was hard but that technology has since helped to some extent. However, being visually impaired is still an issue in some aspects of lab work where reading data is required and in accessing some equipment.

Screen-readers are particularly helpful, he added, but they are fragile and require plain text rather than heavily formatted documents, and pdfs are not always accessible. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of the types of written material that can be accessed using screen-readers and adapt their materials accordingly.

In terms of the unseen barriers students face, such as dyslexia or

dyspraxia, it is important to look beyond the obvious physical constraints. Dr Daulby said unseen disabilities are underpinned by cognition. There is, she said, an issue of underdiagnosis of learning difficulties and disabilities.

Even though schools have a responsibility to identify students who have disabilities, it is only those with the greatest need that tend to attract funding.

Other barriers are a lack of awareness, with some teachers not understanding how learning disabilities manifest themselves and what to do to help, and stigma, with some students not wanting to highlight their difficulties.

Mr Mears shared some ways of improving representation in science. Having role models is one solution, as is making sure support services are more visible for those who fear they will struggle.

It is important that schools address the issue of staff recruitment if they are to provide role models to students with disabilities and make them feel represented in the field.

While focusing on higher education, a report on behalf of the Royal Society last year – *Disability STEM data for students and academic staff in higher education 2007/08 to 2018/19*, *Jisc, January 2021*: <https://bit.ly/3svJnOo> – found that, although the percentage of STEM academic staff with a known

disability was rising year-on-year (from 2% in 2007/08 to 3.8% in 2018/19), the percentage of staff with a known disability was still lower for staff working in STEM than for those in non-STEM.

Mr Dufton argued that, although staff representation was important, ultimately students also had to find solutions for themselves. Getting students to contribute to finding a solution to the barriers they faced would, he said, help them feel involved and ensure “buy-in”.

Dr Daulby said it was easier to talk to students with disabilities about their strengths and to use those to help identify reasonable adjustments. Recognising the ability of the student, not just the disability, is key to unlocking potential.

Talking in terms of “cognitive weaknesses” is also helpful. Labels, she said, are important because they can provide an identity and help students discuss with others who have similar cognitive weaknesses what works for them.

Among its recommendations, the Joice & Tetlow report (2021) urged the higher education sector to carry out further research into students with disabilities’ engagement with STEM at primary and secondary school level, and what can be done to increase engagement. The sector should also, it said, investigate ways to improve support for STEM postgraduate students with disabilities to ensure they can complete their studies. SecEd



FURTHER INFORMATION

- ▶ *Joice & Tetlow: Disability STEM data for students and academic staff in higher education 2007/08 to 2018/19*, *Jisc, January 2021*: <https://bit.ly/3svJnOo>
- ▶ *Pearson Webinar: Disability in Science, November 2021*: <https://bit.ly/3laVEjD>

Data bias and representation

How do we make the study of mathematics diverse and representative and what pitfalls should we avoid? We look at five ways to challenge data bias and support better representation

“Data bias makes assumptions about the population and can omit a group of people by design.”

Hannah Fry – a best-selling author, award-winning presenter, and professor in the mathematics of cities at the UCL Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis – spoke at an online event run by Pearson in November 2021.

The session explored diversity in data and set out to support maths teachers to promote and embed inclusivity and diversity in the classroom. During the webinar, Ms Fry helped attendees understand the power of numbers and ethics within research and data collection. She also explored gender inequality in STEM and ways to remove bias to ensure fair results. In particular, she offered five ways to challenge data bias and support representation.

1, Challenge assumptions

A lot of unintentional harm can be done by someone who simply isn’t thinking about the impact of their words or the data that is presented, Ms Fry said. And a lot of good is done by someone simply speaking up to point it out.

“Data bias makes assumptions about the population and can omit a group of people by design. This can lead to racial, gender and exclusion of other groups of individuals, such as learners with SEND. It is essential that children and young people are not given the message that ‘you don’t belong’ and we must not be afraid to challenge where intentional biases appear.”

And so, instead of reinforcing assumptions, Ms Fry argued that schools could spread positivity and representation through data and promote diversity through numbers and maths education.

2, Alert for stereotypes

Pay careful attention to stereotypes in the classroom. Ms Fry advocates

“flipping the stereotypes” and ensuring there is gender, racial and SEND representation in the portrayal of careers, home life and achievements. Teachers can “use visual and verbal representation to reinforce the message” because “our classrooms must represent a version of the world that we want”.

Stereotypes are particularly problematic within STEM subjects, she added: “During an experiment in the 1960 and 70s, less than 1% of students drew a female when they were asked to draw a scientist. However, this is changing, and girls are driving the shift. By 2016, around one-third of the drawings were female.”

It is important that we pay special attention to stereotypes and provide students of all ages with diverse role models. Among Pearson’s resources are a series of diversity and inclusion posters (see further information) showing how key mathematicians have positively impacted the way we live today.

Also available is Pearson’s scientist of the month resource, which showcases the amazing work of diverse scientists and mathematicians.

However, the role-models don’t just have to be the “leading” mathematicians and scientists. In fact, argues Ms Fry, “role models that make the biggest difference to students are just one step ahead, so employ the help of diverse students one or two school years ahead, to inspire in the classroom”.

3, Myth of innate ability

Boys are not better at maths than girls and yet girls struggle with maths anxiety and fewer of them choose maths as a subject.

Scientifically, there are very few differences in the male and female brain and very little difference in maths performance. Gender differences in confidence, imposter syndrome, maths anxiety and choices of math-intensive career choices do exist, but the evidence suggests that socialisation and

social influencers create these differences in the brain.

As such, Ms Fry argued that “a growth mindset is essential in STEM” because “the false idea that some people just inherently ‘get it’ is so prevalent and will invariably tip towards a gender imbalance”.

Effort must be rewarded and resilience praised: “We must remind our learners that any difficulty and struggle only reflect on the complexity of the subject, not the ability of the person. Constant reassurance and a reward system are needed to ensure that everyone is equally equipped to succeed in maths.”

4, Biases

Teachers must accept that we have biases so that we can act against them. Ms Fry explained that the fact we are working to stop data biases being ingrained in the young people of today means we must recognise that they are inevitably ingrained within ourselves as teachers. She advocated teachers “take time to pause and recognise what (they) personally struggle to overcome (so they’re) better prepared to question (their) own decisions and actions”.

5, Recognise the scale

Teachers should “try as much as (they) can to mitigate against data bias and point out issues when they arise, but recognise that this is not something that can be easily solved”. Data bias is global, nuanced, pervasive, and persistent, she added. Minor changes can easily feel meaningless and hollow when held up against the world at large, but they might mean the world to your students: “It may be chipping away at an iceberg, but when every chip is a child who feels like they belong where they previously didn’t, it’s worth it.”

Maths: The least diverse?

Acting on Ms Fry’s advice matters, because teachers report that the maths curriculum is the least

diverse. According to Pearson’s *Diversity and inclusion in schools* report (2020), 35% of teaching staff felt that the maths curriculum lacks diversity, compared to the creative arts where only 21% felt the curriculum is not diverse.

One school in the report said it invited business partners in to support children in greater need of positive learning role models including with their reading in maths. It also uses a “scholars project” to facilitate visits to Cambridge University to raise aspirations.

While maths is considered to have the least diverse curriculum, its origins are far from monocultural. The report *Black mixed-race male experiences of the UK secondary school curriculum* (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017) states: “The fundamentals of math developed from Arabia, from Asia, not from England.”

“The fact that the number taught was created by an Indian – how many children actually know that? Is it important for them to know that? Yes, because it means mathematics becomes culturally diverse.” SecEd



FURTHER INFORMATION

- ▶ *Fry: Five ways to challenge data bias and support representation in maths*, *Pearson, December 2021*: <https://bit.ly/36q8Brz>
- ▶ *Pearson: Diversity and inclusion in schools, November 2020*: <https://bit.ly/35cuKcy>
- ▶ *Pearson: For more on Pearson’s work on diversity and inclusion in maths*, visit <https://bit.ly/3hcH3rL>
- ▶ *For Pearson’s maths diversity and inclusion poster series*, visit <https://bit.ly/3hbNrQ4> and for the scientist of the month resource, go to <https://bit.ly/3M5sjcK>

A sense of duty: ‘Black British history is British history’

Pearson’s new migration topics within the GCSE history specification are creating a greater sense of agency and helping schools with their work to decolonise the national curriculum

In October 2021, Pearson and the Migration Museum held an event to launch Pearson Edexcel’s GCSE (9-1) History topics Migrants in Britain and Notting Hill.

The launch included a fascinating and emotive panel discussion and Q&A on why migration is an important area of study; what benefits Migrants in Britain brings for history teachers and students; and how teachers can prepare themselves to teach this topic.

The panel featured Kwame Boateng, lead educator at the Black Curriculum; Aaron Skepple, history consultant for Harris Federation; Samantha Slater, subject leader of history at Chatham Grammar School; and Martin Spafford, a retired history teacher and honorary fellow of the Schools History Project and the Historical Association.

The Migrants in Britain topic was introduced as part of Pearson’s commitment to building a more representative and inclusive history curriculum and is ready and available for teaching with first assessment in 2022.

As part of the new topic, students have the opportunity to explore inspiring people like Dr Harold Moody, one of Britain’s first black civil rights activists, the Suffragettes, and events like the Notting Hill Carnival and the Bristol Bus Boycott. Textbooks, revision materials and free teacher resources have also been developed to support the new topic.

Sharon Hague, managing director, UK Pearson Qualification Services and Schools, said: “Making the history curriculum more representative and inclusive is important work and I’m proud of the steps we’re taking with experts, teachers, learners, and the wider education community to help drive



change so everyone can realise the life they imagine. To create vibrant and enriching learning experiences that have real-life impact we must listen to – and work in partnership with – a diverse range of voices. We’re fully committed to this as we move forwards together.”

Asked how teachers and students are responding to the new migration topic, Mr Skepple said his students were happy with the change and felt it represented them better within the curriculum.

Ms Slater added that her department’s attitude is that “all our history is all our history” and the new topic helps her team to build a “more cohesive curriculum” and consider the “deeper, broader history of the people of Britain”.

Mr Boateng agreed that teachers were responding to the new curriculum well and that the topic was creating a greater sense of agency for students. The Black Curriculum, he said, was an attempt to provide key resources to teachers to “cut down time” needed to research the topic.

Asked about the challenges schools might face when implementing the new curriculum, Mr Skepple said that time and a lack of resources could prove difficult but that the opportunities far outweigh any minor barriers. The main opportunity, he said, was that “the curriculum is so open and can be tailored to the school

community” and it can be taught “however you want”, allowing you to “choose personal stories which you wouldn’t necessarily teach”.

Ms Slater agreed that resources were a challenge, as was subject knowledge. But the opportunity to choose stories that talk to students’ lived experiences was worth any short-term adjustments.

Summing up their final thoughts, Mr Boateng said we need to understand the context of the world and teachers have a responsibility to their students to help them “understand migration as a core principle of our history”. It’s a “sense of duty” to teach this, he said.

Decolonising the curriculum

As we learnt earlier in this publication, school leaders must not only promote diversity and inclusion, but they must also take affirmative action. And one such affirmative action school leaders can take is to decolonise the history curriculum. Indeed, there has been much talk of revisiting the curriculum to ensure it is representative of black voices.

In November, Pearson ran a webinar on embedding black British history into the curriculum (2021).

The event, in partnership with the Black Curriculum and hosted by Mr Boateng, was designed to support teachers to cultivate the

mindset and methods essential to embedding black British history through accessible, practical and impactful actions.

During the webinar, Mr Boateng argued that black British history was British history and should therefore be taught all year round, embedded in the curriculum, and not be taught separately.

Embedding black British history, he said, will improve social cohesion between young people in the UK and provide a sense of belonging and identity to young people in the UK. SecEd

FURTHER INFORMATION

- ▶ *The Black Curriculum*: <https://theblackcurriculum.com/>
- ▶ *Pearson: For more on Pearson’s work on diversity and inclusion in history*, visit <https://bit.ly/3LNxHWy>
- ▶ *Pearson webinar: GCSE (9-1) History: Migrants in Britain and Notting Hill, October 2021*: <https://bit.ly/3HfcGeR>
- ▶ *Pearson: The Black Curriculum: Embedding Black British History (webinar), November 2021*: <https://bit.ly/3H4j6xl>
- ▶ *Pearson Edexcel: GCSEs New Migration thematic study*: <https://bit.ly/3v8rt8Q>
- ▶ *Pearson: Embedding Black British History – Mindsets and Methods (booklet), December 2021*: <https://bit.ly/33FbjbU>
- ▶ *Pearson: Notting Hill Teaching Guide, January 2022*: <https://bit.ly/3s7uRij>
- ▶ *Pearson: Case studies of diversity and inclusion in the history curriculum*: <https://bit.ly/3p61kDX>
- ▶ *Pearson: History topic of the month resource*: <https://bit.ly/3h6OtWS>

Inclusive practice in drama

Drama naturally lends itself to exploring other cultures and beliefs and Pearson has recently revised its GCSE qualification with inspiring new texts that reflect the diversity of the world

We have heard throughout this publication about the importance of embedding diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) in education.

DEI not only helps students feel better represented, it also helps students become more understanding and tolerant of those from different backgrounds and cultures, and those with different beliefs and of different genders.

Drama is a subject which naturally lends itself to exploring other cultures and beliefs, and Pearson recently revised its GCSE qualification to ensure it better reflects the diversity of the world and is more inclusive of that world.

To help introduce the new GCSE, and to explore ways of embedding DEI in drama more widely, Pearson ran a “Representation and inclusive practice in drama” webinar in December 2021, in which guest artists guided delegates through a presentation, discussions, and exercises to support the development of an inclusive drama practice, enabling them to create a space for their students to belong and thrive.

The purpose of the webinar was to introduce delegates to the new set texts being examined for Component 3 of the Pearson Edexcel GCSE while also exploring performance texts that reflect students’ identities and help them to broaden their knowledge of story-telling and theatre-making

The webinar also sought to support teachers to find new ways of introducing and using new stimuli for devised work and to support students to become theatre-makers.

All four set texts, which will first be examined in the summer of 2022, have been written by global theatre-makers with a view to educating students in different cultures.

For example, *A Doll’s House* was adapted by Tanika Gupta from an original Ibsen text. Gupta’s version

explores British colonial history and issues of race relations as well as gender politics and class.

Another new text, *Gone Too Far!* by Bola Agbaje, depicts the experience of young multicultural Londoners and the issues of identity and culture that both unite and divide the cultures.

The remaining two texts are *The Free9* by InSook Chappell in which nine teenagers flee North Korea, dreaming of a new life in the South, and *Antigone* by Roy Williams, which places the Sophocles play into a contemporary setting.

The London Theatre Consortium’s (LTC) Representation in Drama (RinD) initiative has created a set of filmed resources to support the study of these four texts, which feature interviews with key creatives from the original productions of the plays (see further information).

The Pearson webinar

The panel for the December 2021 webinar included Mezza Eade, who worked for seven years as an administrator for Motionhouse and now, among other roles, works with the Cultural Learning Alliance and also manages RinD (Representation in Drama) for the LTC, which has recently published *Representation in Drama: 150 plays by playwrights from the global majority* (2021).

During the webinar, they said that preparation is key – teachers can’t know everything but undertaking research around the “history and contemporary impacts of racism and ableism, working with people who are disabled, and around gender identities” allows teachers to have an understanding of how “history shapes our behaviours”. They said that teachers should “be generous and compassionate” to themselves and lead with their “curiosity”, otherwise leading this work can become overwhelming.

Teachers should decide what they want answers to – the most



important thing is to “ask and be ready to learn”, for example about the right language to use.

Also on the panel was Romana Ffello, who is deputy director of the Open Court programme at the Royal Court Theatre, and chair of the LTC Creative Learning Group. She has produced and delivered schools tours, directed youth and community theatre group performances, and produced youth festivals.

She talked to delegates about her recent work developing various programmes, including writers’ groups, cross-industry partnerships, teachers’ panels and forums, digital resource packs and the Royal Court’s Young Agitators programme. She explored issues of race and, in particular, the use of accents in performance and the dangers of cultural appropriation. She said students should not be penalised for choosing not to adopt an accent if it was inappropriate or uncomfortable.

Also speaking at the webinar was Yasmin Shomalzadeh who is a British/Iranian trans actor and writer. He is an associate artist at The Gate, HighTide and Outbox Theatre. He talked about co-founding The Queer House

FURTHER INFORMATION

- ▶ *LTC: Film resources to support the new Pearson Edexcel set texts*: <https://bit.ly/3h8z4wa>
- ▶ *LTC: 150 plays by playwrights from the global majority, Representation in Drama (RinD), November 2021*: <https://bit.ly/3s7LlqF>
- ▶ *Pearson: #IfIWere: Ever imagined yourself at the centre of your favourite drama?* <https://bit.ly/36meA0A>

What next and where now?

This supplement has shone a light on Pearson's work to support schools to embed diversity, equality, anti-racism, and social equity in teaching and learning. What next and where now?

At Pearson, we believe everyone should have the same opportunity to achieve their potential and to be successful in education and in later life – whatever their background, ability, or identity. Last year, we surveyed thousands of learners in our *Global Learner Survey*. We discovered that most learners believe schools are making progress providing an equal education for all, but that there is still work to be done.

Specifically, learners globally have concerns about the content of their education and most of them want to increase their understanding of equity and social issues (Pearson, 2021).

Committing to diversity, equality, inclusion

Our goal is to create learning environments and educational content that reflect the diversity of the modern world, that are accessible, and that provide a choice of pathways for all learning styles and abilities.

As the world's learning company, Pearson is entrusted by millions of learners around the globe to provide high-quality, relevant, evidence-based, and inclusive learning content and experiences. This trust and privilege is something that we take seriously.

That's why, across the business, there is a growing momentum and amount of work underway to increase representation, diversity and inclusion in our products and services.

Working with you

We know this is a journey. It is a journey that is complex and far-reaching, and one that we need to work on continuously to make progress.

And to get things right we are committed to – and we value – listening, learning, and working

Suha Yassin

...is Pearson's lead for diversity, equity and inclusion

with teachers, learners and the wider community.

Challenging ourselves

We will continue to challenge ourselves to lead the way with new initiatives, products, services, and sector-wide campaigns to make education more inclusive. But this commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) also needs to be reflected in the way Pearson operates as a business.

So, in 2021, Pearson launched its refreshed *Global Content and Editorial Policy*, which outlines the principles that govern how we will work to ensure the provision of high-quality content and learning experiences that reflect the individuals and communities we serve every day (Pearson, 2021).

This policy is underpinned by Pearson's purpose, global commitments to DEI and Pearson's Sustainable Business Plan 2030.

This policy is supported by Pearson's *Gender Equality Guidelines* (2020) and our *Race and Ethnicity Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Guidelines* (2021). Coming soon are Pearson's disability guidelines and LGBT+ guidelines.

Pearson's efforts to build an inclusive workplace have been reflected in the organic growth of our Employee Resource Groups and the impact the hundreds of employees have had on the business. Pearson has also joined initiatives to change the landscape of work, like award-winning mentoring from The 30% Club and Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index. In addition, we are signatories to the Publisher's Association Sustainability Pledge,

CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion, and the CBI's Change the Race Ratio campaign.

We are proud to have achieved 100% on the Disability Equality Index ranking for best places to work for people with disabilities, 100% on the Corporate Equality Index for LGBT+ equality, and the Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index. We are also a three-time winner of The 30% Club's mentoring programme of the year and a Stonewall Top 20 Employer.

Partnerships drive change

We know that diversity, equality, and inclusion in education cannot be achieved by one group alone. So, we are also working with respected partners, learners, educators, training providers, and employers through lifelong learning to drive change that will make a lasting difference.

When it comes to our work with schools in the UK, Pearson has been leading the way partnering with organisations, charities and social enterprises to diversify its qualifications, including our work on GCSE English Literature, Lit in Colour, GCSE History, and GCSE Drama – as you have read about in this publication – to name a few.

We have produced free resources for teachers to use in the classroom and draw on when lesson-planning. From maths posters showing diverse mathematicians, resources showcasing unsung scientists, history topics of the month, our girls in computing campaign, LGBT+ inclusive curriculum guides, and much more. And this is only the start! We have many more plans underway, so watch this space.

What's next?

Despite our work in this area, we acknowledge that this is part of an on-going journey. There is much more that needs to be done, and more we plan to do to ensure every

child and young person sees themselves reflected in the education products and services Pearson offers, and in the way Pearson works with learners, teachers, school leaders, parents and stakeholders.

Pearson's commitment to DEI extends beyond the direct materials placed in the hands of teachers and learners. We strive to proactively support schools and education institutions on their own journeys.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

- ▶ *Pearson: For more about Pearson's work on diversity and inclusivity, visit go.pearson.com/inclusiveeducation*
- ▶ *Pearson: Gender Equality Guidelines, November 2020: <https://bit.ly/31aCeuy>*
- ▶ *Pearson: Race and Ethnicity Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Guidelines, February 2021: <https://bit.ly/35gtXHz>*
- ▶ *Pearson: Global Learner Survey, 2021: <https://bit.ly/2Q5tS21>*
- ▶ *Pearson: Global Content and Editorial Policy: Version 1, September 2021: <https://bit.ly/3pblBb7>*
- ▶ *Pearson: Sustainable Business Plan 2030: <https://bit.ly/3lhwcJ7>*
- ▶ *Pearson resources cited in this article include: diverse mathematician posters (<https://bit.ly/3hbNrQ4>), unsung scientist resources (<https://bit.ly/3M5sjcK>), girls in computing campaign (<https://bit.ly/3hqXWiv>), history topic of the month (<https://bit.ly/3h60twS>), and LGBT+ curriculum guides (<https://bit.ly/3tkZrET>).*

Lit in Colour

Become a Lit in Colour Pioneer

Together with Penguin Random House UK and The Runnymede Trust, we want to highlight the importance of a diverse English Literature curriculum. Following a successful pilot last year, we're offering a further 100 secondary schools the chance to join the **Lit in Colour Pioneers** programme.

The programme will include free access to:

- **Copies of the chosen set texts** for every student in the relevant GCSE and/or A level year group
- A **programme of work** and series of **free resources** including CPD training such as Racial Literacy training and marking support
- **Creative content from authors** and a range of **resources to support the specification**
- A Lit in Colour **mini-library including 300 free Penguin books** by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic writers
- A **student ambassador** programme

To find out how to join,
visit go.pearson.com/litincolor

