

From:

Sent: 09 June 2020 09:06

To: Pattison, Emma (CRY) Staff <E.Pattison@cry.gdst.net>

Subject: Coverage of black history and racism at Croydon High School

Dear Mrs Pattison,

The recent Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted racism across a number of areas within our society. As a school that was founded by a great suffragette activist, we, as a community, have a responsibility to take action. We felt it necessary to reach out and recommend some steps the school must take to make progress towards societal equality.

We recognise the various endeavours of the school and the efforts it has made with Amnesty and promoting feminism. However, there is insufficient coverage of racism and this needs to change. It is necessary that these issues be included in the core education provided by the school. To this end it is no longer acceptable for only well-meaning individuals to lead initiatives, rather we need a strategic approach from the school's leadership team and governing body. This is an opportunity for Croydon High School to be a best practice leader on racial equality amongst GDST schools.

The existing curriculum does not sufficiently address anti-racism, white privilege, British Colonisation and the current and historical oppression of people of colour. It is essential that cross-curricular teaching of anti-racism is put into place, in subjects ranging from English and History to Geography and Mathematics. These should be strategically facilitated with long-term provision to match so as to ensure that any curriculum-based changes are maintained after the media attention passes. It is important that, if we are serious about this issue, it is resourced, prioritised and mainstreamed.

In addition to curriculum changes, we also propose the school commits to raising awareness for Black Lives Matter, for example by fundraising on multi-days, running assemblies and arranging visitors from relevant charities and organisations. Furthermore, it is essential that resources on anti-racism are available in the Learning Resource Centre, for example online talks, such as those from Baratunde Thurston and Jane Elliot, and books, such as those by Reni Eddo-Lodge, Ibram X. Kendi, Robin Walker and Maya Angelou. Form times and PSHE lessons can be enriched by using those opportunities to hold open, honest and safe discussions to educate on the topic. In order to use these as a forum, we need to ensure that the teachers have the requisite skills, support and training to address any concerns or issues that students might have.

Education is a key factor for social mobility in our society. This is an opportunity for us as a school community to note that, whilst our student body is diverse, sadly this is not reflected within the staffing body. Students need to see diversity within their role models.

We are fiercely proud of our Croydon High School students' independence and ability to navigate life after school, whether in higher education or places of employment, and we want to equip them all so that they have the vocabulary to confidently challenge racism in society.

Signed,

71 alumnae, pupils, parents and friends of the School signed the letter. (The letter was an open one but the school did not feel it had the authority to forward the names & email addresses of the signatories.)