

Accelerate progress with changes to the curriculum

Aim: that every school has redeveloped their curriculum to reflect the lives, culture and history of the diverse communities in Ealing

The aim is that every school has redeveloped their curriculum to reflect the lives, culture and history of the diverse communities in Ealing, with a particular focus on the history and contributions of Black Caribbean and Black African communities.

A key message from parents' groups who participated in the Ealing Race Equality Commission was the need for a curriculum that "enhances self-esteem rather than causes harm" for pupils' of Black heritage.

It can be a challenge for school leaders to know where to start when thinking about how to adapt their school curriculum. We strongly recommend that all staff participate in training in regard to diversifying the curriculum so that there is an understanding of both the intention of the changes and also the knowledge of what to include – see ELP Support section for details of training on offer.

Key principles when adapting the curriculum

There are some key principles that need to be understood regarding adapting the curriculum:

- The teaching of Black history is significant for children of all ethnicities growing up and living in a multi-ethnic society – including for mono-cultural schools and settings – as it can help to challenge the often-negative perception of the Black community, that can contribute to conscious and unconscious bias.
- The teaching of Black history and the contributions Black people have made to our society is often presented from a deficit perspective, with a focus on oppression and inferiority, and with few positive references.
- It is therefore essential that any changes to the curriculum are approached from an aspirational perspective. For example, the teaching of African civilisations to illustrate the complexities and sophistication of African societies, including their various disciplines:
 - architecture
 - art
 - astronomy
 - economics
 - education
 - intellectual achievements
 - judiciary systems
 - literature
 - mathematics
 - medicine
 - science
 - written scripts
 - etc.

To progress with adapting the curriculum, school leaders should:

- critically evaluate the approach to the teaching of Black history; and cross-curricular contemporary and historical Black contributions; to ensure alignment to the approaches undertaken for the teaching of European history, and cross-curricular contemporary and historical contributions.
- ensure all staff have access to subject knowledge relating to Black history, including African civilisations; and cross-curricular Black contemporary and historical contributions
- raise whole-school/setting awareness of, and sensitivity to, the emotional and psychological impact on Black Caribbean children, young people, parents, and staff, of approaching the teaching of Black history from a deficit/oppression/inferiority perspective.
- remain sensitive, alert, and responsive to the fact that:
 - in early years, children of all ethnicities can already be implicitly aware of the socially constructed racial hierarchies
 - by the end of Key Stage 1, some Black Caribbean children explicitly verbalise their wish to have white skin, long blonde hair, blue eyes, etc; and give indirect recognition to the fact they are aware that they no longer wish to be at the bottom of the socially constructed racial hierarchy
 - the approach taken to the teaching of Black history does not exacerbate these above, less-than-positive, notions of racial identity and racial esteem
- Consider how Black Caribbean parents might be informed, in advance, of the teaching of Black history and the content (in the way in which parents are informed prior to the teaching of sex education):
 - To co-construct and inform the school/setting's approach to the teaching of Black history to ensure that teachers have the confidence and ability to teach topics that deal with diversity and confront "difficult" issues, such as Empire, in an age-appropriate way

Share with your parents of Black Caribbean children and young people, the importance of their children hearing their own family history and family storytelling being told at home e.g. recounts of real stories from the past about specific family members growing up: parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents, etc.

This, alongside the provision of a diverse curriculum at the school, helps to foster in the child or young person a sense of:

- positive self-identity, racial identity and racial esteem
- connectedness
- 'place' and sense of belonging within the family, community, society and geographically
- intergenerational links
- cultural heritage.

Please see the [ELP Support section](#) for more information regarding training and networks to support schools when adapting their curriculum.

Further resources

Books

- When We Ruled, 2nd Edition, Robin Walker, 2014
- Black and British: A Forgotten History, David Olusoga, new edit, 2021
- Black and British: A Short Essential History, David Olusoga, Jan 2020

- Teaching Resource - 30 Black History Icons -500 Years of Global Black Influencers UK, USA, Europe, and Caribbean, and India, 2020
- Before the Slave Trade - African World History in Pictures, Robin Walker, Sept 2008
- Black Scientists & Inventors in the UK: Millenniums of Inventions & Innovations (Book 5), Michael Williams and Manyonyi Amalemba, Feb 2015
- 101 Black Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics: Leaders in Black History, L.A. Amber, Jan 2020

Websites

- The Black Curriculum [The Black Curriculum](#)
- Black history books for children www.noordinarybookshop.co.uk
- The Black Cultural Archives [Black Cultural Archives](#)
- The National Archives [National Archives Black History](#)
- Descendants – an Ealing based charity [Home](#) | [descendants](#)

Related content

[Rapidly close the attainment gap for Black Caribbean pupils](#)

[Make training for teachers on race equality and unconscious bias part of core training](#)

[Empower parents to play an active role in their child's education](#)

[Every school should have a lead for race and diversity who is identified to parents](#)

[End the disproportionate rate of exclusions](#)

[Increase the number of Black teachers in leadership roles](#)

Contact:

- **Ealing Learning Partnership (ELP)**, Business support: elp@ealing.gov.uk 020 8825 7803
- **Sarah Thompson**, School partnerships and enrichment: sthompson@ealing.gov.uk 020 8825 7372

Was this page useful?

- [Yes](#)
- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

Last updated: 10 Nov 2023
