



Church Schools: Responding to Racism Guidance from the DBE

Leicester Diocesan Board of Education's (LDBE) commitment to inclusion is set out in our vision. We aspire for our schools to be 'scandalously inclusive' reflecting Jesus' teaching and ministry and exemplifying 'love your neighbour'. We hope this guidance supports schools towards these commitments by initiating discussion and reflection and give some practical ideas which may be appropriate to apply in your varying school contexts across the Diocese. The suggested resources in this guidance are there to promote discussion and do not imply the viewpoints of the DBE.

The topic of Racial Justiceⁱ is of paramount importance as it ensures true inclusion through equity rather than equality. There are some endnotes in this guidance which aim to explain some terms and words that might not be familiar to us all. Throughout this document we use the phrase 'Global Majority Heritage'ⁱⁱ or 'Global Majority Community' rather than black people or 'People of Colour'ⁱⁱⁱ. This is because Global Majority is an inclusive term and defines something of ethnicity and culture but not the colour of the skin. Whilst the term 'People of Colour' has become increasingly popular in recent years, it does suggest to some that white ethnicity is normal and that anyone different to that is not 'normal', therefore we have decided not to use this term in this document.

This guidance is based on that produced by our colleagues at Coventry's Board of Education. They have kindly shared this work with us and given us permission to use it and share with schools in Leicester Diocese. It has then been analysed and adapted to ensure its appropriateness for the local context within the Diocese of Leicester. The Racial Equity Strategy (2022) from the Diocese of Leicester has been utilised when creating this document.

In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist.
Angela Davis (American political activist, professor, and author)

Foundations to work from:

Issues around race and prejudice need to be spoken openly about, and we need to teach ways to be anti-racist within the context of the whole diocese. It is good to encourage respectful curiosity and to allow pupils to ask questions.

Racism is a sensitive and complex issue, and each school and family's context will vary. It is important not to avoid talking about it, despite the difficult nature of the topic.

Children and young people do notice difference and they notice differing skin colour. Not talking about race issues can cause harmful and inaccurate conclusions to be formed by children and young people.

Try not to simplify the message to 'we are all equal', as if racism were only in the past and is now fully resolved. This can lead children and young people to conclude that the inequalities they do see are earned or justified in some way. Without adults, children often fill in these 'data gaps' themselves and can rely on dubious internet resources and social media rather than reliable resources.

It is through our diversity that the full expression of God as Creator is lived and breathed. Our diversity is valued, beloved and needed in our shared world. As educators we can acknowledge difference and remind pupils that all people are made in the image of God.

So God created human beings in His image. In the image of God, He created them. Genesis 1:27

The following quotes may help to have conversations with pupils in school about what it means to be anti-racist.

“We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

Elie Wiesel (Holocaust survivor, author and political activist)

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (South African Anglican Bishop, theologian and human rights activist)

In church schools, we can all be bold courageous advocates when it comes to being anti-racist. Tell children and young people that racism is possible to untangle and that they can be part of the solution. Our Church schools can kindle hope instead of hopelessness. We can teach pupils about justice and what this means.

“With advocacy, you want to allow people to speak for themselves, but you’re also supporting them when they need assistance.”

Amber Coleman-Mortley (Director of programs at ‘The Female Quotient’)

**But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream
(Amos 5:24)**

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it is those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (South African Anglican Bishop, theologian, and human rights activist)

As the Desmond Tutu quote above suggests, being anti-racist can start small and build up as education and understanding increases. Martin Luther King encouraged people to do what they could:

“If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

(Martin Luther King, American Baptist Minister and civil rights activist)

Spend some time unpacking what is meant by the following Bible verse by focusing on the ideas of justice and mercy and what that might practically look like.

**He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.
(Micah 6:8)**

“Community is the human expression of Divine love. It is where I am valued simply for who I am, how I live and what I give to others. It is the place where they know my name.”

(The late former chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks)

Being anti-racist and standing up to racist comments and actions, does not need to lead to more division and hate. Jesus’ death on the cross can be used as a perfect example of justice and mercy going hand in hand. God wants justice for wrongdoing, but he also paid the ultimate sacrifice himself by becoming incarnate, dying on the cross and rising again three days later. In doing this, he shows immense mercy and love towards us. Encourage reflection and discussion of how we can also be just but merciful in our everyday lives and live well together in love as the Jonathan Sacks quote suggests.

**Always speak the truth even if your voice shakes
*Maggie Kuhn (American activist)***

Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better
(Maya Angelou American poet and civil rights activist)

The above quote reminds us that everyone acts from their knowledge and experience at the time and that as a Church school family, we have a commitment to continue to learn about anti-racism issues and get better at tackling them. The quote by Maggie Kuhn reminds us that it is not just a case of teaching pupils about anti-racism issues but that it involves action, even if we are feeling unsure. This is just as important to discuss and teach about in schools.

What schools can do:

- Ensure staff have Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities regarding anti-racism. This could include watching 'Why is my Curriculum so White?' in a staff meeting which can be found [HERE](#) and using the expertise of external organisations who have experience in this area. For example, the St Philip's Centre or the World Cultures Collection at Leicester Museums.
- Talk about racism and your anti-racist response within the context of your Christian school status and the role that faith has to play. Be honest that Christians in the past have used the bible to oppress Global Majority people and cultures and we now recognised that this is wrong.
- Evaluate your curriculum-where and how are you educating pupils about Global Majority history, the British slave trade and celebrating Global Majority lives and achievements? Is your curriculum Eurocentric and Colonial centric? How can you share stories and experiences from across the world? Encourage critical engagement with history. For example recognising the negative and positive impact that the British Empire had on the world and that we are still living with the global impact of colonialism^{iv} today. Are there opportunities for pupils to be inspired by Global Majority poets, writers, artists and musicians.
- Listen to what voices from the Global Majority community are saying. Make sincere connections with a variety of individuals and cultivate diverse friendships to avoid stereotypes. Making use of the school's linking project found [HERE](#) could help with this.
- Learn more yourself. Read books on how to be anti-racist and educate yourself about GMH history in the UK. You can also make use of articles and documentaries (see list at the end of the document).
- Confront racial injustices when you see them, even when it is uncomfortable. Remember Anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred are both forms of racism. Remember, children and young people are watching for our response- 'actions speak louder than words'
- Say 'sorry' when you don't get it right
- Don't shut down conversations about difference as this will give the message that difference is wrong. If you feel nervous about opening the conversation up, be honest with each other as a school staff about this. This might indicate that more CPD opportunities are required.
- Consider your school environment-are you making use of Global Majority images in posters and other visuals around the school? Consider displaying the image of Jesus from a variety of different cultures around the world.
- Invite visitors to school that can help pupils to understand Global Majority experiences, to include speakers, poets, artists, authors, world faith practitioners as well as members of Global Majority churches.
- Invest in craft supplies that represent a range of skin tones and use clipart in school-made resources that reflect diversity.
- Consider highlighting the multi-cultural and diverse Christian communities both in the U.K and around the world e.g. purchase Bibles and Christian resources that represent a range of cultures and show a map of different countries where Christians live.
- Celebrate heroes of the faith from Global Majority culture and other nationalities so pupils can more fully appreciate the diversity of Christianity.
- Use Black History Month, South Asian Heritage Month, Racial Justice Sunday, and other significant times as ways of celebrating what should be integral to your school all year round. Do not use it as the only or one of a few times you explore Global Majority history or life with pupils.
- Utilise anti-racism resources from the Anna Freud National Centre for children and families found [HERE](#)
- Utilise anti-racism resources from the organisation 'show racism the red card' found [HERE](#).
- Utilise the anti-racism charter by the National Education Union found [HERE](#).

What schools can teach pupils:

- All children understand the concept of fairness, justice, and mercy. The quotes used at the beginning of this document can be used as a starting point as well as other Bible stories. This could be explored in an assembly or Collective Worship.
- Discuss the difference between equity and equality. The visual in resources might be helpful. Act on issues of equity in your own context and encourage pupils to be active in this also as part of your work on 'courageous advocacy' ([see SIAMS Schedule](#)). Explain how to engage in social action that supports those who are discriminated against by policies and structures that support racist ideas.
- Consider teaching pupils about what white privilege^v is, whilst also recognising that many individual white British children and families do not experience explicit privilege and can have similar socio-economic challenges as Global Majority Communities. Professional sensitivity needs to be exercised if teaching this to pupils.
- Visuals such as the White Supremacy^{vi} Pyramid or Allport Scale of Prejudice in Society (found later in this document) might be used to help pupils understand how bias, stereotypes and prejudice can lead to racist words and actions, leading to physical harm and death. Consider carefully your local context and age of pupils if using these resources as they may not be appropriate in your context.
- Explain how to have difficult conversations about race and racism and share feelings and frustrations about racism in a safe space. Explain how to channel responses creatively, such as through art and music.
- Teach about Britain's history with regards to slavery and racism, encouraging critical engagement with the stories not just acceptance of one interpretation. Where possible, share histories of world cultures and world religions.
- Teach how to use social media responsibly and in a way that protects mental health/well-being.
- The 'Spider Web' activity. Give children balls of string and ask them to move around the room unravelling their balls of string to make a very tangled web. Once they are finished, ask them to untangle it. They will soon find that it is much more difficult to untangle the web than it was to create it in the first place. Then explain that working to make society fair is a lot like untangling this web. This activity is suggested by Dr Erin Winkler (child development expert and associate professor).
- Encourage pupils to say 'Tell me more' when they have caused offence. The hope is that this can lead to open and honest conversations in which the offence is made obvious and more about racism is understood.
- When pupils say wrong things, take the first step of listening to understand, before leading them to a better understanding of what racism is and how they can act differently.
- Encourage pupils to say sorry when they intentionally and unintentionally cause offence on racial grounds and to ask, 'How do I not make this mistake again?' The whole class can learn from commonly made errors.
- Putting learning in their historical context through studying of the past will help children and young people to better understand why some actions, words and beliefs are offensive.
- Teach about bias. We each have bias, both conscious and unconscious^{vii}. Examine it and acknowledge that it exists and be curious about why it is there. A simple visualisation exercise is to imagine your bias and prejudices on the palm of your hand. What does it look like? What colour is it? What shape is it? Who put it there? Owning our bias and prejudices without judgement is our first step towards doing something about them.
- It's ok for you, as the adult, to not know the answer. Express your intention to learn together and draw on resources and people that will help you.
- Allow pupils to ask questions and exercise their curiosity with regards to the issue of racism and any faith-based prejudice.
- Consider using prayer spaces to support pupils in reflecting on their thoughts and feelings.

How schools can support families:

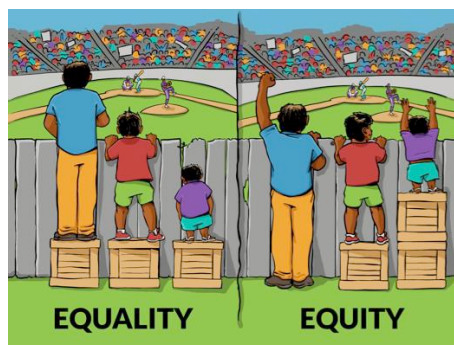
- Encourage children to channel their questions about race, difference and diversity towards safe adults, at home and at school.
- Find ways to say something when family members make racist or stereotypical remarks or jokes.
- Schools should provide families with appropriate research links to guide pupils to safe internet use for homework activities.
- Schools can encourage the following through use of the school's newsletter and homework activities:
 - Celebrate diversity and difference so that children learn this from their lived experiences at home

- Talk about white privilege and acknowledge it, talking about your biases.
- Read books and watch films with diverse characters and by diverse authors.
- Learn about Global Majority and World History together.
- Listen to Global Majority voices and discuss what they say.

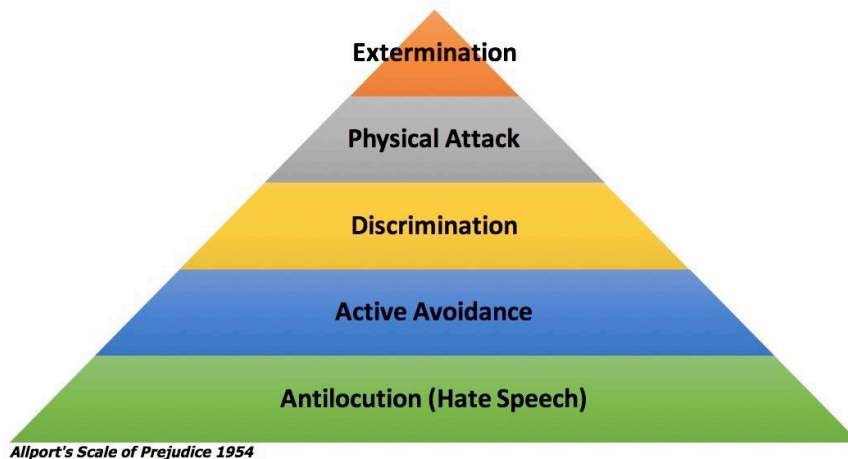
Appendices

Useful Resources

These resources and suggested books are here to help support you and your staff teams as you develop your curriculum. They do not imply the viewpoints of the DBE and do not form the basis of a recommended curriculum. School staff are encouraged to exercise care when selecting resources to share with pupils.



- Information relating to equality and equity can be found [HERE](#).

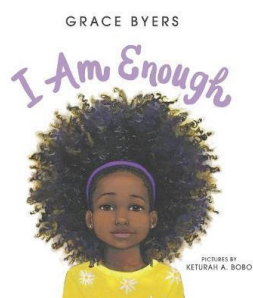
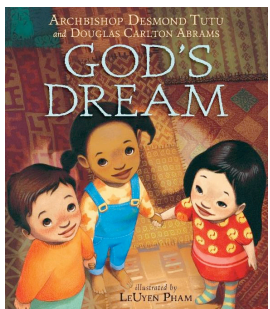


- Useful white supremacy and prejudice visuals above from Allport's scale of prejudice. This can be used to explain how racism can escalate. Information about this can be found [HERE](#).
- The Fair Trade Article on decolonising^{viii} the curriculum is an interesting read for further exploration and can be found [HERE](#).
- There are some great teaching ideas in the Hope Not Hate Education Pack which can be found [HERE](#).
- A useful one page resource entitled 'What is Justice?' from Together at Home can be found [HERE](#)
- An interesting article which outlines how to talk to children about racism can be found [HERE](#).

Books for adults:

- How to be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi
- White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo
- Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge
- Use fiction to explore your own prejudices in this area. Andrea Levy, Toni Morrison and Zadie Smith are excellent authors to dip into.
- Author Beverly Tatum explains the concept of racism versus "antiracism" in her book, "Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race".
- Black and British by David Olusoga.
- We Need To Talk About Race by Ben Lindsay (SPCK publishing)

Books for children:



- God's Dream by Desmond Tutu is a good starting point.
- I Am Enough by Grace Byers is also a beautiful book to get pupils thinking about respect and diversity.
- Does God have a Big Toe?: Stories about stories in the Bible by Marc Gellman (published 1989, Harper Collins)
- The Enduring Art by Jaydeb Chitrakar and Gita Wolf (an Indian version of the great flood illustrated in the Bengal Patua style of scroll painting)
- Black and British by David Olusoga (An illustrated version)

Next Steps: Audit Tool

- Use the accompanying audit tool on the next page to begin evaluating what your school's response might be to Racial Justice.
- Use the outcome of the audit to begin to review resources and curriculum as needed.
- Governing bodies should build in questions about Racial Justice into your review of your policies more generally.
- Consider how your school vision supports the response to racism which you wish to cultivate in staff and pupils.

Aspects of Anti-Racist Practice in schools	Red – requires immediate action	Amber – requires further development	Green – this is in place
The school vision publicly supports anti-racism			
Pupils are encouraged to ask questions about difference and there are systems in place for them to be able to do so			
The curriculum supports the understanding of racism, racist structures and the celebration of black history, including the history of Britain’s involvement in the slave trade and the acknowledgement of Black achievement			
Resources in school reflect the diversity of British society, including books, webpages and teaching resources (both bought and school created)			
The school environment celebrates diversity, to include posters and signage used and in displays			
Pupils are given the opportunity for the encounter with the lived experience of a diverse range of lives through visits and visitors			
The creativity within a wide range of different communities is celebrated and forms parts of study in areas of the curriculum such as art, music, writing and poetry, as well as achievements in maths and science. This should take into account local, national and international context			
Bibles and other Christian resources embrace an array of diverse representations of Jesus and Christianity			
Heroes of the faith from many cultural origins are encountered through Collective Worship and studied as part of RE and the wider curriculum			

Aspects of Anti-Racist Practice in schools	Red – requires immediate action	Amber – requires further development	Green – this is in place
The schools anti-racism work extends beyond just celebrating Black History Month and other significant days and is integral to school planning and policies			
Anti-racist perspectives will be included in curriculum planning			
RE planning and teaching will both reflect the internal diversity in Global Christianity as well diversity within other faiths and worldviews			
Policy, guidance and support for teachers is in existence and utilised to assist managing difficult conversations in the classroom			
Justice features in Collective Worship and is studied in areas of the curriculum, with links made to the Bible and Christian teaching			
Support is given to parents on how they might support their children in discussing issues of race and racism			
Racism is part of the school’s anti=bullying and disciplinary processes			
Governors are included in the development and monitoring of the Anti-racism policy with school leaders			

Guidance Notes

These notes / definitions are intended to help the reader of this document understand why we have chosen the language we have included it's not intended to prescribe to others the identification language they prefer to hear.

ⁱ **Racial Justice:** The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

ⁱⁱ **Global Majority Heritage / Community:** This term acknowledges the fact that white people are, not actually the demographic majority of humans on the planet; White is not “majority” and people who do not identify as White are not “minority”. We agree with the explanation that people who do not identify as White should not be described by what they aren't (“non-White”). In instances where we are referring to people who do not identify as White, we use the term “global-majority.”

ⁱⁱⁱ **People of Colour:** The dictionary definition of this term is “a person who is not white”. It should not be confused with the pejorative ‘coloured people’. It has grown in popularity as the preferred collective noun for referring to non-White racial groups as it unites across different racial groups. However, it does suggest to some that white ethnicity is normal and that anyone different to that is not ‘normal’, therefore we have decided not to use this term in this document.

^{iv} **Colonialism/ Colonial:** Colonialism is defined as “control by one power over a dependent area or people.” It occurs when one nation subjugates another, conquering its population and exploiting it, often while forcing its own language and cultural values upon its people. The concept of colonialism is closely linked to that of imperialism, which is the policy or ethos of using power and influence to control another nation or people that underlies colonialism. Colonialism is an important part of British history. At its peak, the British Empire was the largest and most influential empire in the world.

^v **White privilege:** Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.

^{vi} **White supremacy:** The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to the Global Majority Community and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and Global Majority Community as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and “undeserving.”

^{vii} **Unconscious bias:** Our unintended people preferences formed by our socialisation, our personal experiences and the representations of different groups in the media. These experiences act as social filters, in which we make assessments and judgements of people around us. [enei.org.uk]

^{viii} **Decolonising the curriculum:** We mean by this encouraging pupils to question the viewpoint the information is coming from. There is a good definition on Keel University's website - Decolonization involves identifying colonial systems, structures and relationships, and working to challenge those systems. It is not “integration” or simply the token inclusion of the intellectual achievements of non-white cultures. Rather, it involves a paradigm shift from a culture of exclusion and denial to the making of space for other political philosophies and knowledge systems. It's a culture shift to think more widely about why common knowledge is what it is, and in so doing adjusting cultural perceptions and power relations in real and significant ways.

Definitions of more terms are available [here](#)

Review date: June 2024