

Minutes of the Parent/School Anti Racist Action Forum. Via Zoom Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 4.00-

Staff Present :- Jeanette Brumby (JB) Sara Anderman (SA) Ellie Whilby (EW)  
Amy Leslie ( AL) Ceian Fairclough ( CF ) Tine Jenner (TJ) Parents x 20 2x  
Governors

JB: Introductions and reasons for the meeting. Explained process in school to get us to this point. Shared some feedback from similar meeting at Fairlawn. Idea to provide a platform for parents and to provide ideas for moving forwards. Understand the need to listen to colleagues and parents who have a lived experience that HT,EHT DHT do not have.

SA: Welcome and thanks to all. Zoom protocol and chat function. Introduction of Amy Leslie. Stressed commitment of all staff at Haseltine to the Anti Racist journey. Becoming an Anti Racist school is priority on the SDP (School development plan) . Self education of staff, talking to pupils etc has been happening. Long term commitment to really embed as a school. Need support of Haseltine community.

AL: Gave background to why school began the discussions around death of George Floyd. Black Lives Matter (BLM) formed a big part of school discussions and the parent /teacher discussions during lockdown. Feeling that the school we had let our parents/community down at this time in not sending out a clear and timely message and support to staff and the rest of community. Meetings then held in school – looking at ways to support school and staff in moving forward to becoming an anti-racist school. Children speak of very real experiences about discrimination even at a young age. Spoke of how well parents have empowered their children to have these conversations. Talked about how changes to the national curriculum are necessary and will not be a quick fix. We need to empower children to know how to deal with the challenges that they may face as BAME Britons and how they can prepare themselves for these and overcome them. The school is also looking at representative staffing so that children can see themselves represented at all levels.

JB: Some easy fixes around the curriculum have been undertaken such as looking at black influencers and pioneers in science, art, Maths etc. Spoke of the work that we have already undertaken with BLAM and Dr. Jason Arday. Handed over to parents.

1X parent – new to the school. Keen to learn more about the English curriculum as is from overseas. Has personal experience of apartheid and wants different for own children. Talked of how he has used books etc with own children to explain/understand different cultures and bias/unconscious bias. Agree that issue needs to be tackled early. Keen to support the school in any way. We have a responsibility to teach children about kindness/respect. Glad that the school supports Afro hair day and Anti Racist Day.

JB:- Agreed with ideas and suggested that we share the books/titles with parents- both pupils texts and adults texts. We understand that as long term educators we are complicit with the racist curriculum.

SA:- responding to tackling issues with children of very young age- school has a range of age appropriate texts to start these important conversations at a very young age.

AL:- Important just to see yourself reflected in books. Children in all year groups love seeing themselves in these texts. Shared some examples of how books can be used with very young children to ensure that children feel proud and empowered by what they are.

SA:- Vast improvements in children's literature in the last 20 years.

Parent 2 : - Can teachers share with parents the topics and key figures that they are teaching so that parents can research and keep up the conversations.

JB: Need to ensure then that curriculum newsletters are more explicit. Website will be updated soon too.

Parent 3: More information needed about various aspects of the curriculum. Lockdown gave parents a glimpse into school that they would like to continue. Information has improved.

SA:- Agreed lockdown ensured that we reached out to parents much more and we need to ensure that it continues.

JB: May be variation from teacher to teacher so must ensure consistency.

Parent 4 :- General acceptance of how the curriculum was in our past. Buying books for their own children. Aware that values around differences is crucial and to calendar in events around different cultures.

JB- Agreed. RE curriculum covers a lot of the areas mentioned but we need to look at where else they can be covered. Young children internalizing all the books etc that they are reading no matter how young they are. Described the 'chipping away' at young people's perceptions with every conversation we have. Even as adults we need to reflect upon what we say before we say it.

Parent 5:- Afro hair day (AHD) – opinions around why we need a day? Is it not similar to Black History Month (BHM)? Children's hair is just hair- only a focal point for something and perhaps misguided intentions to make BAME people included.

SA: Agreed that we need to change approach. We want BHM to be a thing of the past and Black History/ British history to be interwoven. AHD is a way of starting conversations

CF: Important to have these days like AHD to ensure that children know that their hair is ok. When we get to the point that our children feel included every day then maybe we won't need 'days' anymore.

SA: Agreed with CF.

Parent 3: Struggle perhaps to be involved in AHD as child is white. As a family we cannot then get involved in it.

JB: Not just about taking part but also about children who are not black to learn more about each other and for children with afro hair to be able to teach their peers.

Parent 3: Support from school may be needed to help us as parents support our children and to say the right things

SA: Lots of books can be recommended. Big part of AHD is to challenge perceptions of beauty and for children to see the beauty within themselves.

Parent 3: Agreed but more information sent to parents to support them with the conversations.

CF: Repeated her point that once all children feel included all the time so that we won't have the need for the days.

JB: I want to do some training for parents. Looking for the right person to invite.

Parent 2;- Talked about experiences as a mixed race child during apartheid – around Afro hair/ pencil tests etc. Still present in some communities today. AHD triggered the conversation with his children.

Parent 5: Understand the need to start somewhere with AHD but also needs to be reflected in what else is around the school. AHD – as the other parent said can exclude some families. Focus needs to be on a range of cultures- involve all cultures.

AL: Agreed it is all about equality but the key issue at the moment is around black people and the disproportionate nature of things that happen. In Haseltine black children are the majority so they must therefore never be felt to feel like the minority. Until history/ equality is better embedded then the 'days' that we hold help us to have the discussions and helps us challenge some things that they have internalized – allowing them to wear their hair naturally and with pride.

Parent 6: Good idea to have AHD – even though every hair should be Afro hair day. Different races day- although good that it is being talked about. Own child had had comments about her hair. Parents have to prepare their children for what is coming. Mixed race children are also seen as black. We need to think of all children who are not Caucasian.

JB: When do we start the conversations to prepare them about the unfairness, we are feeling our way here. Our black colleagues & our parents will need to help us with this.

Parent 5 : What is the status of the curriculum, can parents inform these changes, is it just H or is it a national curriculum issue?

JB: New curriculum leader being appointed, yes please to parents helping us, Dr Jason working with Education Secretary, no the government aren't really working on this. We can make a difference at our school and we will shout about it to others. We will make it right for us first and then make a difference for all. We do have to follow the NC but we can make our own changes too. Does anyone else want to share? Especially people who have just joined us.

Parent 5-asked on the chat: who do we send ideas to? SA put up her email address. JB spoke about setting up a Padlet but for now to email Sara.

Parent 3 asked: how do we challenge stereotypes that children come to school with?

AL: spoke about the need to talk and to unpick racism and what it means. She spoke about the need to be honest and age appropriate but not to shy away from it. Children are very aware already of what is happening, it's important that we are chipping away at preconceived opinions, and also important that we are using experiences of black teachers to do this.

EA: forms and ticking ethnicities – sometimes this isn't necessary. People have expectations over surnames that don't match with the ethnicities.

AL: spoke about the importance of names & learning about what names mean – gives children an identity & sense of empowerment. 2 parents agreed with this.

Parent 6: there is a difference between culture, ethnicity, identity.

Actions:

- Better, consistent communication
- Sara to send links out to parents
- Book lists to send out parents
- Padlet of ideas
- Working with parents on the curriculum
- Setting up future forums & getting more parents on board