



October 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

The values: Be Kind, Be Brave, Be The Best You, are at the heart of what we do at Sheldon School. With this in mind, I am contacting you to make you aware of work we are currently doing in relation to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging.

We want all students to thrive in school and in order to do this, they must feel safe, valued and represented. It is my new role as Assistant Headteacher to foster an anti-racist, anti-discriminatory culture at Sheldon School.

We, as a school are on a journey and there has been much work done in this area. We are moving forward in our objectives to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relationships in relation to age, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These are protected characteristics in law and it is our job to educate our students to accept each other no matter our differences.

Over the last three years, we have been examining the limitations and biases of the curriculum and the legacies of colonialism. Subject leaders have reflected on the knowledge they want students to learn and have made changes as a result. Teaching resources are providing students with a greater diversity of role models. Tutor work has an increased focus on celebrating our differences. Our PE uniform has changed in an endeavour to remove the divide between students solely based on their sex.

Sheldon has an Inclusivity Community group which has been set up by a group of students and supported by members of staff. This group provides a safe space for students to meet and talk. The students involved have been working with the leadership team to address areas of concern. Our students have a voice and we are listening. We haven't always got it right but we want to learn and we want to be better for our students. Our priority is safeguarding our students.

The second of our TD days in September was focused on our cultural change and all staff received training. We watched a compilation video of students' lived experiences whilst at Sheldon. This was an extremely brave and honest account and at times, it was hard-hitting and difficult to watch. We are aware that homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, racist, ableist and misogynist language and bullying creates a negative and possibly hostile environment for students. We want to work with you and your children to address any use of discriminatory and bullying language and tackle it in a way that educates. Sheldon has a strong pastoral system and we encourage our students to Be Brave upstanders and report when incidences occur. They can also report discretely on EPraise.

Our Keynote speaker for the day was Aisha Thomas who is the founder of Representation Matters. This year, we are engaging with Aisha and her team to support us on our journey, providing training and guidance. Our initial educational phase will focus on Anti-racism and ending prejudice towards the LGBTQIA+ community.

Our staff and students will reflect on the unconscious biases which we all have and through greater self-awareness, identify when our bias may be informing a decision we make or how we respond to a situation. Taking proactive steps to acknowledge our bias will support us in tackling discrimination. Students will hear our values in assemblies, and we aim to re-educate if incidences of discrimination occur. We will continue to listen to our students.

Parents and carers are invited to a workshop on 14<sup>th</sup> November. This will be facilitated by Aisha Thomas and will give you an opportunity to find out about the work being done in school. It will also explain some of the umbrella terms we use in relation to race and LGBTQIA+. More details to follow in a separate communication.

We are all different and that is what makes Sheldon such a wonderful community. Celebrating what makes each of us unique is so important as is keeping each other safe by Being Kind.

I look forward to meeting with you in due course.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danielle Masters', written in a cursive style.

Danielle Masters  
Assistant Headteacher