



ST. MARY MAGDALENE

C OF E SCHOOL

SECONDARY PHASE

*Excellence through innovation,
founded in faith since 1840.*

FEDERATION EXECUTIVE CO-HEADTEACHERS

Mrs Claire Harrison and Mrs Victoria Wainwright

PRINCIPAL

Mr Razwan Hussain

Dear parent/carer,

Equality and diversity at St Mary Magdalene

Whilst the academic year still feels fairly new, and as we welcome new Year 7 and Year 12 students to our school, we thought this would be a useful time to explain some of the work we have carried out to promote equality and celebrate diversity in our school community. We would also request you complete a survey in which we are asking for your views on what we have done, and your ideas for improvement.

<https://www.koinoniafederation.com/form/?pid=5&form=81>

Curriculum

Our curriculum design plays a central role in promoting equality and tackling racism and other forms of discrimination. Over the last year, a large amount of work has been done to ensure we teach a 'decolonised' curriculum. When I asked the heads of our subjects to give me a few highlights, I received enough information to triple the length of this letter; as such, the information below should be seen as just a few examples. More detail about each subject's curriculum can be found on our website.

Creative & Health

In English, we have made sure that students have the opportunity to read a selection of diverse texts and explore a range of challenging themes. For example, in Year 8, students study a cluster of poetry centred around the theme of identity. This allows poetry from different cultures and voices to be discussed and studied. At GCSE, while students follow a prescribed set of texts, the English department have ensured that diverse texts are also used; this includes extracts from 'Life of a Banana' by PP Wong and 'Pigeon English' by Stephan Kelman. The PE team have begun introducing 'world sports and games' to the curriculum and are looking to make links to 'traditional' sports; new sports include Ki-o-Rahi (a traditional Maori invasion game), Australian Rules Football, Ba-taoshi (a Japanese invasion game) and Kabaddi. PE will also continue to celebrate the success of black British sportspeople.

In Art, a range of cultures are represented whilst seasonal events and trending issues are used to promote and display artwork; most recently, we have produced a display of artwork focused around black British artists and designers. Recently, we were fortunate enough to have a female artist visit us to talk about her experience; this allowed pupils to see a different representation in art and engage with her experiences. In Music lessons, students engage with a diverse curriculum, with units ranging from western classical music to the African musical tradition.

Logic & Enterprise

In mathematics, discussions about the origins of mathematics takes place from a balanced and decolonised perspective that takes into account the development of

mathematics in different parts of the world. Displays and discussions are based around successful people of backgrounds matching the demographics of the school. In Economics and Business, a critical, real-world approach is taken, which includes the perspectives of marginalised people. We acknowledge that any inquiry into society (including how that society operates economically) must consider power relations and how some groups are more privileged than others. The Computing curriculum has an emphasis on successful people in the technological world and how BAME communities have contributed to societal changes around the world.

R&D

In science, the curriculum has been reviewed to promote equality and diversity. We celebrate scientists and inventors from all backgrounds and avoid the 'genius' label; when exploring scientific discoveries, we focus on the multi-disciplinary aspect of most discoveries and not only on individuals. We have also exposed 'bad' science: how some scientific discoveries have been used to actively cause harm and division; and we seek to contextualise the science, including stories and case studies that represent the diverse population of our school and local community. Similar work has also been undertaken in Design Technology. Some examples include learning about everyday objects designed by black people (from the three-signal traffic light to the modern-day ironing board), cooking food from around the world (including Caribbean and Nigerian foods), and learning about how migration has transformed the cuisine of the United Kingdom and other nations.

Culture & Society

In Religious Studies, students engage in a rich and diverse curriculum. Students explore all major world religions as well as the varied cultures and traditions that inspired them. Students also study a theologically focused Christianity curriculum with consideration of the wider Christian faith practiced globally. In History, many of our enquiries introduce young people to neglected histories, like those of the African Romans who travelled and lived in Britain for over six centuries before more recent migrations; of Claudia Jones, the Trinidadian socialist who became the inspiration behind the Notting Hill Carnival; how Black people have fought for racial equality and against injustice in 20th century Britain; and the Muslim scientists of medieval Baghdad who confound the prejudices of those who claim that religion and science do not thrive together.

Within Geography we teach a vast and diverse curriculum. From Year 7, students start their Geography journey by learning about each continent; during this, students not only learn about the different physical features, but different human features and cultures. This continues from Key Stage 3 up to A-Level, throughout which time students study a range of locational case studies. Furthermore, throughout the course we look at differing viewpoints on global issues, such as climate change and diamond mining, which allows students to respect others' opinion and allows them to consider how they can make a difference in society. The MFL curriculum is inclusive in its approach, with positive images of minority groups, people with additional needs and other groups. Names and images reflect diversity, and resources are available by different means. Course content also

celebrates multilingualism and use of other languages; and there are opportunities for first/second language discussion.

Finally, across the Social Sciences, we endeavour to teach an inclusive curriculum, to enable students to gain empowering knowledge and to develop skills that allow students to understand and question issues around equality and inclusivity and respect others (even when we may disagree with their viewpoints). In Sociology we also engage with a huge range of social thinkers from a variety of backgrounds, including some of the most influential and empowering intellectuals, including Tariq Modood, Paul Gilroy, bell hooks and Kimberle Crenshaw.

Assessment

A focus on academic success and the fair assessment of all students is essential to tackling inequality. Evidence suggests that where teachers know the identity of the student, this can lead to inaccurate marking; further research shows that this is more likely to negatively impact students from black and minority ethnic groups, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. To reduce the impact of any 'unconscious bias' and ensure the highest level of accuracy of assessment, all students are given 'candidate numbers' when they begin at St Mary Magdalene and students use these on all formal assessments; this is known as 'blind marking'. In subjects where practical skills are assessed, other teachers are used to assess or moderate wherever possible. We regularly review levels of attainment and progress for different groups in each class and in the school as a whole.

Behaviour

In line with our Christian ethos, it has been our long-standing policy that any form of discrimination is a clear breach of the behaviour policy, will not be tolerated and must always be publicly challenged, whilst we use restorative justice methods to address wrongdoing. We routinely review evidence of students' achievements and behaviour by protected characteristic, and use training opportunities to raise awareness of unconscious bias, discrimination and language, sexism, sexual harassment and peer-on-peer abuse.

Worship and PSHE

We want equality to be understood by staff and students as central to the school's Christian ethos and embedded in the daily life of the school. We therefore use our daily act of worship to promote positive messages about equality and to challenge discrimination. Diverse role models are promoted and celebrated and we recognise and celebrate the holy days and festivals of the faiths and cultures represented in the school community. RSE and PSHE are also used to promote equality and challenge discrimination, with regular references to the school's Christian ethos.

Training, enrichment and resources

We have used training opportunities, including working with other schools and outside agencies, to develop staff understanding of all the areas above in order to equip staff to promote equalities and challenge discrimination and inequalities. Our staff have enthusiastically embraced this work and frequently shared best practice. We encourage

and monitor the participation of all students in extracurricular activities, and seek to provide opportunities for developing students' leadership potentials, monitoring this involvement to ensure participation of all groups. Resources, including displays around school and books in the library and e-library, are reviewed to ensure they reflect the student body and promote equality.

I will soon be speaking to students about what we have done and asking for their thoughts. I would also like to receive your view on what we are doing well, and what we could do better – please get in touch by filling out the survey on our school website using the link below. The closing date for this survey is Monday 27 September. Every response will be read and considered but we regret we can't reply directly to every piece of correspondence.

<https://www.koinoniafederation.com/form/?pid=5&form=81>

Yours sincerely,

Tom Greenwood
Vice Principal

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