



Lewisham Learning

Dear Parent/carers

Tackling race inequality in Lewisham schools

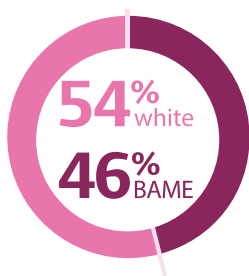
We are writing to inform you about exciting work underway in all Lewisham schools. Our children and young people are our future. We want them all to succeed, to achieve all that they can, and to seize the opportunities available to them in the modern economy, and the world city that is London.

Lewisham is an open borough that celebrates diversity, and has a history of standing up to racism and inequalities, from the **Battle of Lewisham** in 1977 to more recently becoming a **Borough of Sanctuary**.

There is a Council-wide commitment to tackling race inequalities, which includes work in various services across the Council. [Read more about our work to tackle race inequalities](#).

A key piece of this work is actively tackling race inequality in our schools, bringing new energy, expertise and a fresh collaborative approach.

A snapshot of the Lewisham population



Is there a problem with race inequality in Lewisham schools?

Evidence shows us there are historic, systemic inequalities in the education system – not just in Lewisham, but in London and across the UK.

Statistics show there are certain demographic groups with lower educational attainment and a higher exclusion rate.

This then plays out in the future – particularly with young men of Black Caribbean and dual heritage (Black Caribbean/White), experiencing poorer educational outcomes.

This shows us that historically, we have been failing certain groups of young people. This is something we cannot ignore, because we want all of our young people to achieve their potential.

We know there are many factors that lead to these outcomes, and education and the wider support that a school community can provide is one of these factors. This is something we can work to improve.



What is this work in schools going to achieve?

Schools are working together with each other and the Council on this project.

We are starting by asking these questions

- How can we make sure that the curriculum better reflects our communities here in Lewisham?
- How can we make sure that the relationships between teachers and students are positive and productive and backed up by the right school policies?
- How can we make sure that our schools are linked up with parents and the community?
- How can we make sure that more of our black staff in school progress to senior jobs and that there are more black parents and community members on our school governing boards?

The first piece of work is to ensure that every school in Lewisham is on board, and to do this we are asking them to sign a pledge. You can view the pledge and learn more about what it means on the Lewisham Council website.

How will this affect my child?

We know that no single initiative will bring about change, but the changes we introduce will create lasting transformation in the lives of our young people.

We know that these improvements to our education system will be beneficial to all Lewisham children, irrespective of their background.

It is likely that a lot of this work will go unnoticed by your child, as it will be 'behind the scenes' in terms of teacher training and policy work, but in time this will filter down into the language used, subjects studied, books that are brought home, conversations that you are having with your child about their school day. It will ultimately result in a more representative curriculum in Lewisham schools which reflects the diverse community we are proud to be part of.

How can I find out more or get involved?

We have created a [detailed FAQ section](#) on the Lewisham Council website. There you will find more details about the funding for this project, the people involved, and the pledge.

We have also included some useful links for further reading including statistics about the disparities in education and talking to your child about anti-racism.

We will be launching the pledge and more information about this project to the media and wider community on June 22, which is Windrush Day. Your school may contact you about their own activities around this day, celebrating the launch of the pledge and Windrush Day in general.

We are determined that Lewisham is at the forefront of bringing progressive change to our education system and curriculum, and we know that our school communities and residents want to see this happen too.

We will continue to update you with our progress, and look forward to sharing the ways we are actively tackling race inequality together and continuing to support schools to improve education for all of Lewisham's children.

Yours faithfully,

Brenda Dacres
Deputy Mayor,
Lewisham Council

Pinaki Ghoshal
Executive Director for Children and Young People

Councillor Chris Barnham
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Lewisham Council

Roger Abo-Henricksen
Independent Chair, Lewisham Learning

