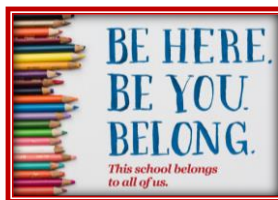


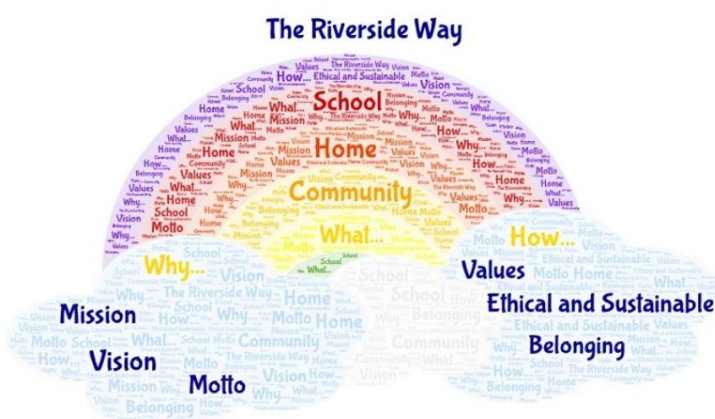
Equalities statement Appendix; Our “Belonging” Implementation

Be Here. Be You. Belong



Staff Engagement Belonging Group

We are proud to have featured Belonging in our most recent School Development Plan. When implementing anything now, staff will ask themselves how this sits in terms of our Belonging agenda, alongside considering our Values and Ethical and Sustainable commitment.



Within every Staff's Professional Learning Plan, they are required to make a Belonging pledge and create a personal focus that they are passionate about working towards. See the below supportive examples that were shared with staff:

...’s Professional Learning Plan 2021/22



I am bringing my whole self to Riverside School. I am committing to:

Example A – Ensuring my whole class team takes an active interest in the different cultures and backgrounds of our pupils, considering their home languages and how we can further incorporate these in to our lessons and class life.

Example B – Considering ways I can further teach the pupils in my class about their own identity/how to better understand themselves.

Example C – Organising family events to engage and reach a wide selection of our families.

Example D – To ensure my classroom and lessons are inclusive and reflective of our diverse and unique population. Focusing particularly on our role play and sensory story offer.

Example E – Being an active member of the Curriculum Belonging group; focusing on helping to ensure that our Topics are fit for purpose and not a Euro Centric Model.

We have delivered a number of staff training sessions and will continue to do so, thus creating a greater understanding across our staff body of why we are prioritising this as a school. Belonging (Inclusion, Diversity and Equal/Equity Opportunities) will be a regular topic of discussion in staff meetings, Governors' meetings and will continue to be prioritised.

Whole Staff Workshop; Building an Inclusive Culture at Riverside School. Covered topics such as Equality and the law; protected characteristics; why it's important for us; understanding and recognising unconscious bias, the impacts of it and how to address it; thinking about our own areas of privilege and the impact this may have; intersectionality and what it means for us at school. The Belonging leads were encouraged to let their groups shape their next steps, taking into account all 9 protected characteristics.

Equalities Conference (Whole Day Training) – Deputy Headteacher and School Business Manager attended. Intersectionality; seeing the whole person, not just one tick box; how someone's protected characteristics overlap. For example, as a disabled person you are twice as likely to be unemployed or underpaid, as a woman you are likely to earn less money than your male colleagues, as a person from an ethnic minority you are three times as likely to be unemployed. This allowed us to consider what this means for us and our commitment to our pupils and families and staff.

My Skin Your Skin, Book Launch. Our staff were invited to a private reading and talk by the author and advised of ways to share this book and similar books that discuss matters such as race and ethnicity with Early Years children.

Day to day school life as well as planned events will encourage an understanding and celebration of every individual within the school community. For example our staff and pupil 'Bring Yourself Day' encouraged and supported staff to come to school and share a part of their identity, culture and/or background. Contributions varied from staff sharing personal adoption certificates; demonstrating how they pray and bringing in an array of different foods from around the world. Many pupils were involved and feedback from families was overwhelmingly positive, with one parent thanking us for the opportunity to share her cooking and home language.

A number of staff shared personal videos of times in their lives when they have or their family members have experienced discrimination. These were extremely powerful and opened up lots of conversations.

We ensure that the School's Policies are made public and that everyone working in and associated with the school is prepared to work within the policy guidelines and we give regular feedback to the wider staff body. To emphasise that this continues to be a whole school priority. We take collective responsibility, in other words, everyone working within the school is responsible for echoing and demonstrating our commitment to our Belonging agenda on a day to-day basis.

Where needed, we ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to support staff to be able to fulfil their role. For example members of staff who are dyslexic are able to use a voice note to record their pupils' observations, rather than writing them.

We are implementing a Belonging checklist to support staff when making decisions and to support leaders in keeping it high on the agenda and staff are encouraged to speak up if they hear or see anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Staff Surveys take place in order to illicit honest feedback and find out where there may be gaps or areas we need to focus our efforts on, helping us to identify any trends related to protected characteristics and following staff feedback, we have now developed a Prayer / Reflection space at Riverside SPC.

We encourage staff to take time to self-reflect and provided templates to support this.

Self-reflection

Start by asking yourself a few questions. Find a quiet space, grab a notepad and a cup of tea, and take a few minutes to think about them.

- How important is it to me to be an inclusive, anti-racist educator? What difference could that make to children and families?
- When in my life do I feel like I feel/felt racism towards another person? What can/did I do about that?
- What do I already do in my life to celebrate diversity and challenge racism and other forms of prejudice?
- When in my life do I feel like I feel/felt any other form of prejudice towards another person because of something about their identity, appearance or background? What can/did I do about that?
- When in my life have I personally experienced prejudice or discrimination? How did I feel and what effect did it have on me?
- How might my attitudes and experiences affect what I choose to do and offer the children I work with?
- When in my life have I seen others experience prejudice or discrimination? How did that make me feel and what effect did it have on them?
- To what extent do my personal tastes and experiences define the outer limits of what I offer the children?

A detailed Belonging reading list was created and given to staff and is regularly updated to support staff ongoing professional and personal learning. This includes articles, books, Ted Talks and films to cater for a wide and diverse audience.

If You're Out There; Whole School Project is an innovative opportunity to include every staff and pupil in a meaningful way, to visually express and convey our collective commitment to our Be Here. Be You. Belong initiative:

IF YOU'RE OUT THERE

Whole School Project

What - We would like to represent and include every pupil and staff member in the school through a series of portrait photos captured in a film.

Why - Riverside would like to share our call to action and Be Here. Be You. Belong initiative in a creative, meaningful and engaging way - the Riverside Way.

How - The Expressive Arts Department will lead a choir on each site with the aim to remake the John Legend song *If you're out there*, as we do with everything, in our own truly personalised way.

When John Legend was interviewed about his song he said:
Sometimes you wonder if anybody's listening, or if they care enough about the issues to make a difference. The song is a call to action for anyone who has a mind to contribute and the motivation to actually do it.

What we're trying to say is that the time is now, to start working on the issues that need addressing in this country and around the world.

Involvement - We need singers, signers and musicians to join together for this project to work. We have the expertise to record and we need the enthusiasm and talent of staff to get involved.

Choir will run:
Wednesdays - West Wickham 8.30am
Thursdays - St Paul's Cray 8.30am
Fridays - Beckenham 8.30am
(Starting date TBC)

In addition, arrangements will be made for each staff member and pupil (with photo consent) to have their portrait taken.

The result will be a powerful film of woven voices, instruments and photos to represent our sense of Riverside belonging, and also send a message to the wider community and world that the time is always right to do the right thing.





Be Here. Be You. Belong.



Curriculum Belonging Group

As a specialist school, we have the privilege of working with children and young people as they are exploring and learning how the world works and how to interact it. We are able to introduce our pupils to other lives and perspectives, as such we believe it is our responsibility to do this in a truly positive and affirming way, to help our pupils to develop openness, empathy, and curiosity. We know we do not live in an equal society and that many people face prejudice and discrimination every day - whether open or hidden, deliberate or inadvertent - because of their race, faith, gender, sexuality, age, disability, or other aspects of their background or identity. We believe we have an ongoing commitment to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion, and that this is something that should underpin everything we do, including our Curriculum.

We understand the need to ensure that the curriculum we offer is representative of all our pupils and their families. *By developing a curriculum that is representative and therefore inclusive, some of the barriers to learning that prevent students from engaging are removed. This gives pupils a better opportunity to make good progress whilst preparing them for the wider world that they will integrate into on leaving full time education (UCL, 2020).*

We are conscious of the pitfalls of providing a Eurocentric curriculum and as such we ensure that teachers share best practice and teach topics that are engaging, meaningful and culturally diverse.

At the end of the year we provide families with a personalised yearly calendar which includes a picture of their own child at school on each month, making it a very popular gift. We include a yearly overview of all festivals and celebrations and reinforce the benefits of us all learning from each other and finding out more. We try and incorporate a wide selection of these days and events within our day to day teaching and school life. We use our website and social media platform to share with our wider community so that they can see the different festivals and cultures that we are including, celebrating and learning about.

Traditional curriculum content has overwhelmingly been white, male European dominated, which has the effect of an alienating learning experience for many students (UCL, 2020). We do our best to ensure this is not the case at Riverside School. As every pupil has their own personalised Curriculum written in the form of their Personalised Learning Plan 'PLP'. We are in a fortunate position to be able to work closely with their family to ensure that their curriculum is reflective of the most important things to them. For example if a family is struggling to take their child to Mosque, and we know about it, we can then support to make social stories, transition supports, sensory items that may help to meet their needs whilst there etc. But we can only do this if we have built the relationship with the family and they have felt psychologically safe enough to tell us that this would help them as a family and would be a priority for us to work on.

Our teachers naturally provide a cross curricular teaching model in many ways. For example pupils may spend a week getting ready for a bake sale, where they will research the different cakes that people in their class like and have at home, plan recipes, write shopping lists, go to the shops, explore new ingredients, bake, advertise the event, host the event etc., all of which would include many cross curriculum elements; communication, literacy, numeracy as well as finding out about the particular likes, dislikes and eating habits of the diverse individuals within their class.

We believe representation is very important, as such we ensure that our pupils are reflected and represented throughout their lessons and within their school environment. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of books, role play and small world props to reflect the diverse pupil cohorts at our school. We ensure that minority ethnic groups are represented in this way as well as using assemblies and curriculum resources to provide positive images and perceptions of people with disabilities e.g. Paralympians. We are creative in our teaching of concepts, to ensure we make it meaningful for our pupils,

for example in PE, students could play STOP, PAUSE and GO movement games to learn about Garrett Morgan, a black man who invented the traffic light system.

We have families and staff members that are part of the travelling community and LGBTQIA+ community and it is important to us that they also feel that they belong and are represented. Dependent on a pupil's stage and as appropriate we would support pupils to understand, respect and value differences in sexual orientation, gender identity and non- traditional family structures. We would always challenge stereotypes and any forms of discrimination in a truly personalised and meaningful way. We might do this through a whole class session or an assembly but it would be more likely to be within smaller dedicated PSHE/RSE Sessions or as subjects/questions arose on a one to one basis. It is important to us that we do not shy away from controversial issues but that we are able to explore them with our pupils in a safe environment. Please see our RSE Policy for more information.

We encourage pupils to think about the world in which they live and to broaden their understanding of others' beliefs, cultures and faiths in a meaningful way to them. We promote British Values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. We support pupils to explore different cultures, social backgrounds and religions including festivals, ceremonies and factors affecting food choice. For example in a Chinese New Year Expressive Arts Session, pupils were supported through a range of sensory and tactile ways to access and understand.

We have promoted opportunities for our female pupils to form a girls' football team which has taken part in integration opportunities; competed in the girls' special league and attended the Women's Cup Final at Wembley.

Our focus on the Expressive Arts has ensured that all pupils are able to access this medium and our Arts and Culture Policy provide further details of this commitment. Our family project enabled families from a variety of backgrounds to meet regularly and form friendship bonds to support the families and pupils alike. The project culminated in a performance celebrating diversity and different nationalities.

We actively raise awareness of multiculturalism, globalisation and diversity. As part of the World Cup, pupils and staff were invited to wear a country's colour that was meaningful to them. Donations were collected with all proceeds donated to a fund collecting money for a SEN School in St Vincents. We are hoping to secure a sustainable link with them to offer further support in the future, in turn providing a meaningful link with opportunities for our staff and pupils to learn from them.

During Black History Month, all families and staff received a letter to explain that as well as having lots of fun celebrating and recognising this important month together, we are also fully committed to ensuring that for the other 11 months of the year, we continue to celebrate, recognise, reflect and include our diverse and beautifully unique population through everything we do.

A few classes are currently trialling Lyfta Global Stories; an online platform containing a vast catalogue of global immersive real life stories. The intention being that staff and pupils can enter someone's life; their living room from anywhere around the world, hear their story and see a real snippet of their life. Allowing our pupils to access different stories from around the world, providing the power of lived experiences, and empathy. We are hoping to use these resources to help us to understand how interconnected we are. They will provide a meaningful way to experience living in another country or being a part of another culture and will enable pupils to hear diverse narratives, and broaden staff and pupils horizons. We are keen to work with Lyfta to make their offer even more inclusive for SEN settings; devising sensory elements to support their stories.

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents. We promote inclusion for all our faith groups in all parts of the curriculum. We have visited local places of worship and created opportunities to engage with different religious and spiritual communities around us (e.g. our local Mosque, Church and Temple). We have involved parents and families in celebrations based on their different religions. These have included special assemblies, displays, talks and sharing experiences and customs around significant festivals.

In Early Years education nationally, there is a concern that some nurseries are deterred from taking on children with SEN, thereby depriving them of the same opportunities for education that are available to others. We now have a fully established Nursery at Riverside, meaning we are able to offer early intervention and support for some of our pupils from a younger age.

Teachers have high expectations of all students and deliver appropriately differentiated lessons. Leaders ensure that the curriculum delivered is balanced and objective and does not reinforce prejudice based on any protected characteristics. Our Drop In's are being updated to include a Belonging section, in order for leaders to be prompted to look for this whilst on learning walks and when completing observations.

We ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to Be All That They Can Be through providing a truly personalised curriculum. No two pupils have the same curriculum as each pupil's PLP (Personalised Learning Plan) is created individually for them, including therapists and their parents/carers in the process to ensure they have a holistic and meaningful personalised plan to support their learning and progress.

Class based staff, overseen by their line leaders ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to access learning and are supported to achieve in a truly personalised way. One pupil may have two Communication and Interaction Focuses set within their PLP, whilst another may have two Sensory and Physical Needs to focus on depending on their identified priority areas.

We use Ipsative Assessment (that is, it compares a pupils' present attainment with their own prior attainment, how they have progressed from their starting point); in the form of our RPS 'Riverside Progress Scale'. This allows us to celebrate the various strengths and needs which our pupils have in different aspects of skill development, for example, a pupil's ability to maintain skills in relation to their ability to refine them or to work without support.

We also celebrate the unique progress our pupils make within their Ups 'Unique Profiles'. We encourage our teachers to make these documents a real celebration, with the hope that they may end up being shared on their family fridge. In the past we had found it challenging to show the progress made by our pupils working at early cognitive levels as language around targets have suggested 'they can' or 'they can't'. The RPS is a very inclusive assessment tool as it allows us to show and compare the individual progress each pupil makes from their starting point rather than comparing them to other pupils. We believe this is far more meaningful for our pupils and their families and gives us real scope to teach new skills at a more profound level. See the Riverside Assessment and Curriculum Guide for more information.

Our achievement and progress reports provide evidence of progress across different cohorts and do not indicate that any groups with protected characteristics are underperforming. The development and recording of progress for early cognitive skills is enhanced by use of ipod recording devices across all classes.

Research into mainstream trends suggests that Black Caribbean boys maybe more likely to underachieve due to a number of reasons, including teacher expectation. As such we need to be mindful, as our ipsative

assessment relies on teacher judgement. Our data does not suggest that any particular groups are underachieving linked to race or ethnicity, but we believe it is our responsibility to monitor this and we will be drilling down on this further moving forward in order to identify any potential trends or patterns and plan next steps if needed.

Our last Progress Report - White British Pupils – Achieved- 60% Exceeded – 23% Not achieved – 12% Regression -5%

Pupils other than White British – which is a larger group – Achieved – 58%, Exceeded – 26%, Not achieved -11%, Regression – 5%

Raising Attainment – Leaders ensure that the progress of pupils within their phase is monitored through target setting, moderation and line led meetings. Staff identify aspects of their programmes of study and attainment targets that may present specific difficulties for individuals and make adjustments or next steps as needed.

Record keeping and monitoring – We keep an accurate record, where possible and appropriate, of the protected characteristics of our pupils and employees. Within our My Concerns Safeguarding information, we would keep a record of any prejudice related incidents and bullying. We keep a record of pupils that leave us and are mindful of any protected characteristics.

Pupils in KS4&5 have personalised AQA Unit Awards designed for them to evidence the individual skills that they have mastered e.g. 'To be able to take orders in the school Café using...' This will give pupils an opportunity to achieve and leave us with a personalised record of achievement.

Dependent on pupil's individual abilities, within KS4&5 they are offered a work experience placement or a community experience placement, ensuring that every pupil can access and experience a meaningful opportunity, linked to their interests and abilities.

We introduced Happiness Passports in September 2019 for all pupils which consolidate and capture vital information about each pupil to support all our pupil's Wellbeing, Communication, Sensory Needs and Engagement in order to ensure that they are fully supported to be in the best state to learn. We believe our pupils need to be happy and regulated in order to be able to meaningfully participate and learn. This document allows us a way to reflect and capture all the pivotal information regarding each pupil to ensure they are supported to be able to succeed.

The HP can be shared with families, other agencies including respite care, as appropriate, to ensure an easily accessible and consistent approach to supporting our pupils' happiness and wellbeing. The HP Working Party is currently focusing on ways to include our pupils identity, culture, faith, celebrations, family, and other things that may be important to each pupil and their identity within this document; due to be launched in September 2022.

We have improved communication systems to enable all pupils to have a voice. Pupils are also provided with a personalised Communication Passport/book where needed. We also provide personalised Sensory Plans to ensure pupils sensory needs are met consistently in order for pupils to access their personalised curriculums.

A series of pathways are offered to provide learning options to help to provide skills leading to greater choice and opportunity during their transition to placements after they leave Riverside. Increased work experience opportunities are also available.

As a school we are passionate about spending time learning outside of the classroom and create meaningful opportunities for our pupils to regularly experience the wider community. Many of our families ask for support in this area, whether it be to be able to participate in a meal in a café setting, to complete a food shop or walk safely within the community. As such we plan for time either as a whole class or in small groups to access a range of visits and experiences.

We feel it is important for our pupils to play an active role within their wider community and to have the opportunity to help others and meaningfully integrate. We create opportunities such as visiting Care homes, where our pupils might sing in a choir or act as a buddy, to give residents company, supporting both our pupils' self-worth and self-esteem. Pupils have participated in taking food to the local food bank centres and in creating and sending shoe boxes filled with special items to pupils in other parts of the world.

Recruitment and Retention Belonging Group

Riverside School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We do not discriminate against pupils or staff based on any of the protected characteristics.

In respect of staff recruitment we re-iterate our commitment to equal opportunities in all adverts and monitor our recruitment process. We have undertaken whole school equality training and highlighted expectations and responsibilities. This has provided all staff with the opportunity to reflect on and consider equality, equity and inclusion issues for all staff and pupils including those with any protected characteristic. This is reflected in our ongoing professional development and performance appraisal process to ensure all staff receive the same opportunities for professional development to support their roles in school.

The Headteacher and School Business Manager are responsible for ensuring that all recruitment activity adheres to the Equal Opportunities policy. We ensure that our procedures are fair, honest and open.

We will monitor staff recruitment and career development by: age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, religion and belief, sexual identity, marriage and civil partnership. All members of staff have an identified line leader and during staff PLP meetings, staff are encouraged to set their own areas of focus and targets in order to have autonomy and interest in their own professional development and next steps. Line leaders meet with staff regularly and discuss their progress in a supportive way. In the same way that we want our families to feel psychologically safe we want our staff to. If a staff member is more comfortable with a particular line leader then we are able to ensure they have that support.

Most research suggests that reflective role models for pupils are desirable. Some suggests that representation is a necessity to protect pupils from being stereotyped or misunderstood. We are aware that although our recruitment systems are not discriminatory, our staff body currently is not representative of the pupils and families that we serve.

As an SEN School within the borough of Bromley we are proud of our diverse pupil make up. Our multicultural mix is not reflective of the borough in which we are based. We have a higher proportion of pupils from BAME communities than our neighbouring mainstream schools. Bromley Schools on average consist of 85% White British pupils in each school. Our school pupil population in contrast consists of 46% of White British pupils. As such we feel a real responsibility to consider our staff/pupil demographic; as we do not have high diverse staffing numbers to reflect our diverse pupil population.

We believe the fact that the borough we are based in is less diverse than our school population makes it harder to recruit a more reflective staff body and this is something that we are looking into.

We have reviewed our recruitment, retention and promotion strategies, particular with staff from diverse backgrounds in mind. Research suggests that diversity in the school workforce is particularly important for those schools where there are high numbers of Black children. We have added interview questions in all of our job application processes to be reflective of our Belonging agenda. We feel it is equally important for us to ensure we are providing psychological safety for all our staff. We don't feel it's enough to simply have more seats at our table for underrepresented groups, we want to ensure that once with us, all staff feel that they truly belong. We are proud to host initiatives such as our 'Bring Yourself Day' which encouraged and supported staff to come to school and share a part of their identity, culture and/or background. Experiences like this always receive positive feedback and are a great opportunity for us to learn from and celebrate each other.

We are now considering whether we should also include positive action statements. Such as 'We warmly welcome applicants from different backgrounds to reflect the diverse backgrounds of our pupils.' Or 'We welcome male applicants as they are currently underrepresented at Riverside School'. As like most schools we are also under represented in terms of our male staff numbers.

Our Recruitment and Retention Belonging Group are reviewing other ways in which we could advertise and reach diverse groups, considering how and where we should/could advertise. Reflecting on who are we appealing to? Reviewing our prospectus information and website to ensure potential applicants see themselves reflected in our website/job spec.

We support staff wellbeing through our Staff *Matters* forum. We regularly share and celebrate staff events including marriage and civil partnerships; and new arrivals. We support staff who are pregnant and are flexible in consideration of requests for reduced working days to support other members of the family whether children or carer responsibilities.

Our pupil admissions arrangements are fair and transparent and do not discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, religion, belief, disability and/or socio-economic background.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat pupils, parents, governors, third party organisations and former staff members.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. We will continuously improve the implementation of equality related policies and procedures to ensure due regard is given to the impact of actions and decisions for all pupils and staff.

We have developed a culture of openness and welcomed the need for 'uncomfortable conversations' which we hope should no longer feel uncomfortable in our setting. We have shared videos in trainings to encourage staff to ask each other questions, to discuss acronyms and the language we use, to learn from each other and supported staff to not be afraid to ask questions and check their own understanding. We have asked staff to challenge each other and to talk to a member of the Belonging Team or a line leader if they are unsure or see anything that makes them uncomfortable. We believe together have created a culture of openness in order for us all to do better.

We reviewed the FWAS – Enable Flexible Working for women in the work place report. Which talks about the benefits of allowing female teachers the flexibility of completing their PPA at home at a time that worked for them, in order to support child care needs. We are now considering if this flexible approach is

something that we could offer to all of our Teaching Staff, irrelevant of gender/parental status, as some of our staff are carers for parents etc. and we feel this would be a more equitable and inclusive offer.

Our Governing Body is fully supportive of our Belonging agenda and holds leaders to account when reviewing policies and processes. Governors complete Staff Exit Surveys and are able to ascertain any reasons why staff move on.

The School has a full and separate Equalities Policy which can be viewed on our website.

Family and Community Belonging Group

The relationship between home and school is extremely important. All families are offered a home school contact book but can arrange phone calls or emails with their teacher or TA if they prefer. Families are asked what type of communication and information they would like to receive as we understand that different things are important to different people. For example some families may want to hear about their child's bowel movements or eating habits and others may want to know about more academic areas or matters relating to friendships and social opportunities.

In order for class based staff to best support our pupils' progress, as we have discussed earlier, we need to know from families what their priorities are and how best we can support them.

As a school we emphasise to our staff how important these relationships are. There are lots of opportunities in staff meetings to discuss and even role play scenarios so that staff are best prepared to support their diverse families in a range of situations. We remind our staff to always have empathy/understanding of how best to support our families and to be aware of when they may be forming judgements. We remind staff to always be respectful and understanding of differences in life styles.

We acknowledge and celebrate their diversity. We ask our staff to be curious and interested in our families and to try to get to know them. We are revising our school entry forms and the support we give in completing them. Ensuring that they are fit for purpose and gives the information we need in order to really personalise and tailor support e.g. finding out which home languages are spoken, which pronouns parents may want to be used, who lives with their child who and what are the most important things in their life currently. We learn from our families in an ongoing way and ensure they feel treated as a source of knowledge and expertise. We ask for our families to contribute to the writing of their child's PLPS and we also ask for a home achievement contribution to add to their UP Celebration. It is important for us that our families know that we value and need their input, after all we recognise that they are the most important people in their child's life.

We strive to recognise and celebrate individual pupil's identities. Lots of our pupils are from blended families or may have two mums, or may be living with a foster family. It is important that our families feel safe to share with us their situations so that we can support in a meaningful way. Due to our pupils complex needs it can often be difficult and isolating for their siblings. We host a number of sibling events throughout the year in order to involve them and support connections to be made with other siblings.

We support and celebrate different families' cultures and faiths. We also invite family members to share their celebrations at home with us so we can learn more, and we share pictures and information on our school website and social media with permission.

As well as celebrating the diversity of the families we work with, we recognise that we can also positively affect the way that they think about inclusion and diversity. We do this by sharing ideas for play at home, recommending books, signposting local places, events and opportunities and talking openly and positively about the importance of diversity and inclusion.

At times we may need to have potentially difficult conversations. We remind our staff that if they invest in strong relationships with families – listening, understanding, creating a culture of trust, they will then be in a better position to tackle more challenging issues if necessary.

We believe we need to take an interest in the communities we're working with, if we want to ensure we're valuing our pupils and their families and celebrating the diversity around us. This doesn't mean we need to put our families on the spot and ask them lots of personal questions. Instead we ask our staff to try to build trusting relationships. In staff trainings sessions we have gone through questions that staff may want to ask new families, such as "what do you prefer to be called?", "are there aspects of your child's background, family life, language or culture that we can learn about or celebrate at school?", "can you tell me about your child's name? Why did you choose it?"

We remind staff to ask families about their first language and encourage staff and peers to use key words and celebrate it, if their families would like them to.

Whole staff training on unconscious bias was delivered to all staff to support their understanding and awareness.

We believe it is really powerful for staff to hear positive messages and stories from different families, particularly in regards to a family's faith that certain staff may not be familiar with. One family provided a video for a staff training showing wonderfully inclusive footage of their children dancing and singing with other children at their church. This footage really supported staff's understanding of how supportive their church is for them.

We think it is really important for our families to see our pupils or people that reflect our pupils having successes. We share lots of positive videos on our website, and support our pupils to be visible at special events as helpers and monitors.

EHCPs; we continue to support our families to understand and access this process. It is vitally important that these documents are fully reflective of their child and their needs.

We are reviewing school events to ensure that all families and carers irrelevant of any protected characteristic feels included and are represented. The Family and Community Belonging group are looking at the best ways to reach families. For some, Zoom was a positive during Covid restrictions and they felt more comfortable to log on to events virtually. Moving forward we will try to always give our families the option of either coming in person or joining virtually.

Families have been given surveys to complete to try and ascertain the best events to run to increase engagement e.g. coffee mornings, after school talks, trainings etc. We have provided a wide range of different options with mixed uptake. This is something the Belonging Group is keen to work on as we move out of Covid restrictions. We know from our previous Riverside Connect successes that supporting parents to meet each other has helped to reduce feelings of isolation and a lack of confidence. We are also keen to invite people in from different communities to talk and share experiences, rather than it always being members of our school staff that talk at events. Some of our most successful Riverside Connect Sessions were when siblings or parents themselves came in to share their personal stories.

We have distributed reading lists to staff and families; including a range of age-related resources, activities and tips. These can all be found on the school website. We are always updating and reviewing our School Website; asking ourselves how we can make it even more meaningful and useful for our families. We actively share lots of SEND information from within the borough. Over lockdown as part of our home learning offer we added lots of virtual sessions for families to access at home. Teachers and TA's pre-recorded sessions and or did live Zoom sessions. These were positively received and we are considering further ways we can meaningfully provide increased virtual support for when we have pupils who are at home or in hospital.

We are gathering case studies and information to further explore our pupil's destinations in more detail; colleges, residential settings etc. This will enable us to see if there are any trends. Do placements fall down with particular families, are families with EAL less likely to make college enquiries/applications? By doing this it will help us to see if there are any areas that we need to offer more help in.

We have created Be Here. Be You. Belong. Keyrings that we give to all of our families when they join us. We know that joining an SEN School like ours can be a time of mixed emotions for family members. This is our way of warmly welcoming them, their child and their whole family to our extended Riverside Community. A way for us to let them know that we are here for them, and that they all belong.

Physical Environment Belonging Group

We consider our equipment and resources, with 'Belonging' in mind. We ask ourselves how do our display boards/class room environments reflect and represent our diverse pupil population. We ensure that they are regularly updated, meaningful and current and always have our pupils in mind. We create welcome signs in different languages and always use visual supports to ensure our pupils and families can access. We collectively strive to create a school environment where people feel expected and reflected. Where possible we ensure our pupils have positive and meaningful interactions with role models/staff who reflect them. We incorporate culturally diverse foods, smells, tastes within sessions and leaders use Drop In's and Learning Walks to focus on Belonging.

We have created a Pupil library with a diverse range of books, many of which focus on inclusion and diversity. We know that only 5% of children's books in the UK have a BAME main character and only 10% have a BAME character featured at all. We strive to represent and include our pupils within their sessions and literacy offer. We also strive to use books showing ethnically diverse content from BAME authors. Our Physical Environment Belonging Group completes audits of our books and resources asking if they reflect the diversity in society, in our school.

In planning any maintenance and refurbishment we consider 'general' adjustments which may be needed for our pupils and families. We also consider which of our three school sites would best suit each pupils needs when joining us.

We are creating an inclusive learning environment that enables pupils to recognise and celebrate difference and develop empathy. We encourage pupils to support each other and to help in other classes where appropriate. We have successfully supported pupils to complete work experience in a different site, allowing them a new experience and challenge whilst remaining in a safe environment.

We ensure we have resources from other places and cultures, to accompany our rich and exciting topics, for pupils to explore and bring meaning to. We know that the things we have in our environment send messages about what we value and how we see the world, and can open up opportunities for thought and communication.

We ensure our songs, rhymes and stories come from a range of different cultures, traditions and languages. The Physical Environment and Curriculum Belonging Groups work closely together to remind staff to share their best practice and save sessions, music and stories to our collective shared drive in order to continue to use and share as needed.

As appropriate we talk to our pupils about diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. Alongside books and resources that depict all sections of the community, our staff deepen pupil's thinking through talk and play. We communicate in an age, stage and ability appropriate way, if a pupil asks us a question about something, we do our best to answer. We encourage pupils to recognise differences; different skin colours, family structures or disabilities, and to depict them in their drawings and paintings. We have recently bought a set of skin tone colouring pencils for every class throughout the school. In a recent staff training we explored 'colour blindness', where people say that they see the person, not the colour of their skin. We established that although this may come from a good place, this isn't helpful and denies the reality of our differences. As a school we recognise that it is much healthier for us to talk openly and positively rather than to ignore a person's colour or our differences.

We use books, sensory stories, identi-play and massage stories to support pupils to access, understand, think through issues and at times develop empathy. We often include all our pupils' senses to engage and reach them; what they see, hear, taste, feel and smell.

There is an increasing number of resources being created to support schools to focus on diversity, inclusion and equality to help teachers give children a sense of belonging. In school we are creating a lot ourselves. For example the Physical Environment Belonging Group has provided staff with training in order to change the colours on Communicate and Print symbols in order to be more representative and inclusive. They also held a 'My Identity' display board competition across all sites and the contributions were outstanding, allowing us to stop and reflect on the impact of seeing our own pupils reflected on our walls.

Impact and Next Steps

We know it will be difficult to measure the success of our Belonging work as it's not a journey with a fixed destination and things are evolving all the time. When we achieve success in one area, we will strive to do more in another. We have registered our commitment to both the **Race Charter** and **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION QUALITY MARK**. We are excited about where this will take us and how much more it will allow us to do.

We will continue to consider the needs of all the people in our school including: students, staff, governors and visitors. We are aware that the commitment and involvement of parents/carers, staff and governors are vital to achieving our aims.

We will continue to identify where there are any additional staff training needs in order to better support certain groups of pupils and we will actively seek to invite guest speakers to talk to us about certain communities; faiths, cultures etc to improve our collective understanding.

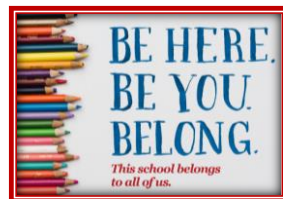
We will continue to consult and involve people from a variety of backgrounds in our decision making, to avoid any level of group think and complacency.

We will ensure we continue to keep the Riverside Community updated and informed as we continue our Belonging journey.

We are keen to document our Belonging journey, particularly as there is currently little available research or data to document the impact of Inclusion and Diversity work within distinct SEN Settings.

Diversity is like being invited to a party
Inclusion is being asked to dance
'Belonging' is dancing like no one's watching

Be Here. Be You. Belong.



Charlotte Downs – January 2022