



CONSULTANCY

Westminster School

Race Review
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Challenging Attitudes: Changing Practice

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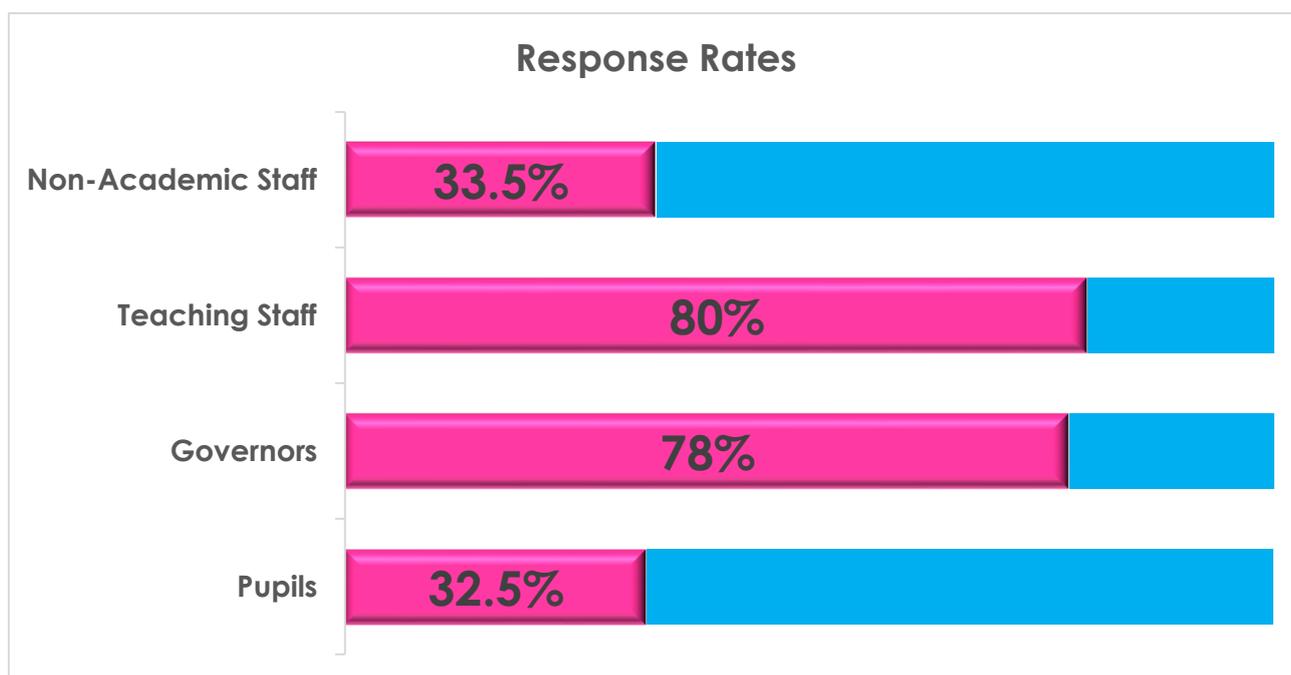
Executive Summary

1. The Commission

Challenge Consultancy was commissioned by Westminster School to facilitate understanding of how staff and pupils perceive the culture around race, ethnicity and cultural diversity and consider how it can better engage with these issues in the future. The work is set against a backdrop of the school's own initiatives including the "Challenging Racism Committee" as well as specific incidents arising out of unacceptable behaviours and views expressed by pupils and staff.

The impact of the wider public discussion about racial and cultural attitudes and need for change following the murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 has also been considered.

A Harmful Sexual Behaviours review commenced during the Race Review. Both reviews will report into the Independent Reviews Oversight Group established by the Governing Body. Liaison has taken place between those undertaking both reviews to ensure consistency and alignment of approach.



2. Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the online survey, focus groups, meetings and interviews suggest there are pockets of good practice in terms of race, culture and inclusion. The school embraces the ethos and values which the new leadership is modelling, and this is broadly welcomed by staff and pupils.

However, there are areas which require targeted attention to achieve sustained change. Incremental suggestions have been put forward by various stakeholders, including Challenge Consultancy, as quick wins. These and other recommendations may be combined to inform a cohesive strategy linked to other areas of equity. The overview and implementation need to sit well with senior leadership at the school and achieving the changes will take time. The invaluable feedback from staff and pupils should be translated into action, with progress checking through periodic reviews built in as part of the school's governance framework.

There is a need for co-operation and discussion with staff to achieve broad ownership and future consistency of practice. There are gaps in the curriculum which will also require wider discussion and leadership from staff and governors. Steps to tackle racial harassment and publicise the racial harassment policy and procedures need to be taken with immediate effect. Similarly, recruitment and retention of diverse teaching staff should be prioritised and requires consultation and buy in from staff as well as closer scrutiny and monitoring.

Going forward, independent expertise and oversight is a useful way to assist with building confidence and engagement from the broader school community and stakeholders.

3. Overview

Challenge Consultancy undertook a review of the entire school through an online survey, focus groups, interviews and meetings with designated leads, School Governor led sub-committees and senior leadership. The review commenced on 20 April 2021.

The school's leadership openly embarked on a whole-system review of race and culture that will provide a basis for the school to develop an action plan with meaningful measures to be monitored over time. There are obvious limitations, mainly that the results represent a snapshot of the current situation, and the report does not provide an in-depth longer-term analysis. In addition, whilst the response rate to the online survey and focus groups is impressive, participation was self-selective.

Overall, Challenge Consultancy applauds the initiative and believes it speaks to the school's commitment. Although participation was self-selective, the high level of engagement suggests that staff and students alike believe that there is appetite for change.

From Challenge Consultancy, Managing Director Femi Otitaju provided overall leadership. Senior Consultant Rob Maragh was assisted by Tola Sokoya, Tom Haworth and Saskia Luqmani to deliver this commission. We would like to thank all members of the school community for their contributions

4. Feedback and Findings

The findings and recommendations stem from the data and information gathered from the online survey, focus groups and interviews conducted between May and June 2021.

The school created a Reviews Oversight Group and will need to form a view on how to

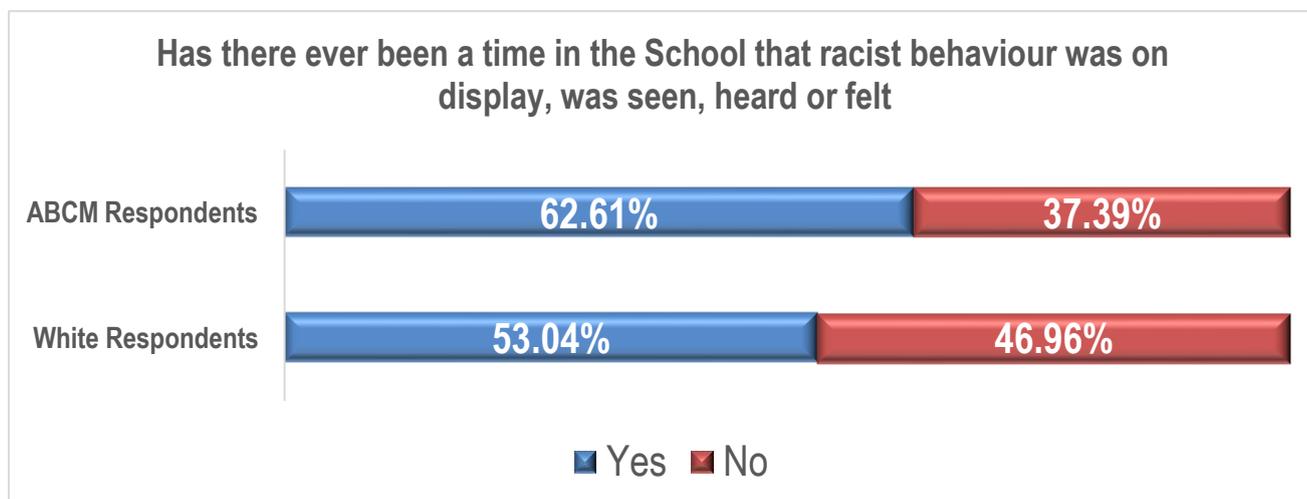
implement the findings from this review as well as the cross-cutting themes from the Harmful Sexual Behaviours Review. It is important to maintain the momentum and appetite for change created by this review.

Most pupils who took part would recommend the school to friends and the wider community and believe there are several positive aspects of the school of which it can be proud. Many of the areas where improvement is needed were identified by academic teaching staff, senior leaders, human resources, and housemasters as well as pupils. These areas require further discussion and consultation as well as practical intervention. The learnings may also benefit the school as it shares its experiences with like-minded external stakeholders and continues its journey towards becoming truly inclusive.

The views, experiences and wishes of pupils and staff who identified as Black, Asian or minority ethnic, people of colour, members of racialised groups and members of the global majority, were specifically sought by offering them separate focus groups and the opportunity to speak with the facilitators on a one-to-one basis.

It should be noted that whilst some of the recommendations and suggested actions are practical, there are other recommendations which require behavioural changes. This will take time and will require attentive monitoring.

For the purposes of this report ABCM refers to Asian, Black, Chinese, and Multiple Heritage Pupils who responded to the survey.



4.1. Positive feedback

1. Several pupils and staff welcome the school's decision to carry out a review and would recommend the school to future potential pupils or employees. There is immense loyalty to the school and its liberal values and ethos.
2. Over 80% of the 19 governors and 114 teaching staff participated in the review.
3. There was recognition and appreciation that the current leadership has shown an

interest in taking the initiative seriously and were inspired to make changes, which was considered to be lacking in previous administrations.

4. Individual teaching staff were mentioned by pupils as the go-to members of the school for support. They are considered understanding, professional, empathetic, practical, and non-judgemental in their approach.
5. Pupils appreciated the insight and empathy provided by staff with a lived experience of race and cultural discrimination.
6. Staff who had previously worked in other schools felt that Westminster shows willingness to learn and is open to change to be genuinely inclusive.
7. Year 13 pupils reported being part of an Anti-Racism Action Group which serves as a peer-support group of pupils who had shared experiences as a response to Black Lives Matter. This a way for pupils to provide mutual support and also seen as a form of co-production for how the school responds and works with this initiative.
8. There was a shared sense that in comparison to other similar schools, Westminster offered a cosmopolitan and modern approach. It tries and makes mistakes, but this is part of its evolution. Having different communities represented within the school has helped pupils feel valued, helped with building relationships and many pupils will continue these in spite of physical and social barriers.
9. There was a willingness to hold more discussions amongst staff. The context of COVID is limiting the ability for closer interactions and discussion which staff have missed.

4.2. Issues and concerns

1. Some staff did not complete the survey and the questions on equality characteristics for sexual orientation and gender were incomplete. This suggests there may have been a lack of understanding of the language, or concern that providing this information may not be relevant or could be used inappropriately.
2. How the school handles racial incidents is not always clear and some pupils did not feel supported and were not offered options or choices of who to talk with.
3. The low numbers of black pupils in the school is seen as emotionally draining for those pupils making them reluctant to do anything to draw additional attention to themselves, for example by challenging racist behaviour. They also felt a responsibility to take on the burden of educating other pupils about racism.
4. Pupils reported that their lived experience of racism is not generally sought and when it is given, it is not understood. In two focus groups pupils reported that what they had shared with teachers was either misconstrued as the pupils wanting attention or used to reinforce stereotypes and generalisations. Pupils did not feel sufficiently equipped or empowered to deal with racial incidents and other discriminatory behaviour.
5. Many staff felt unsure how to effectively deal with racial harassment incidents.

Both staff and pupils identified a lack of training in the content of policies and how to effectively respond to racial incidents.

6. Pupils expressed the need for support that should be both emotional and practical, especially around the trauma they continue to experience. This was mentioned by pupils who had some negative experiences of how individual teachers and/or the school responded to their needs at the time.
7. International boarders, British Asian, British Black, and Chinese and Jewish pupils recounted a lack of sensitivity and delays in effectively responding to the emotions they experience when they call out unacceptable behaviours.
8. In one of the staff focus groups there were suggestions of staff not reporting unprofessional behaviours as they felt to do so would hinder career prospects.
9. Many respondents felt that policies and protocols were not sufficiently explicit to counter racism. There was mention of inconsistency and lack of proportionality in school responses to racial incidents compared to other unacceptable behaviours such as bullying and smoking.
10. In two separate focus groups, pupils highlighted the attention to policy in the Almanac for Vaping and they felt very little attention on how to prevent, respond and support victims of harassment was afforded.

4.3. Curriculum

1. The staff and pupils welcome being in a school that tries to reflect global diversity and mentioned many cross-cultural benefits of an environment which is trying hard to be inclusive. However, many felt that the choice of materials, educational tools, authors, and representation of characters is almost exclusively white.
2. The central question raised by teachers and pupils alike was: what will pupils feel, think, or take away from the materials – books, learning aids, films, lectures, lessons, talks and other educational tools currently in use? The consensus was that, with the exception of History, Geography and English, they were predominantly Eurocentric, failing to respond to the multicultural environment of the school.
3. Pupils mentioned the invisibility of Black and Asian authors and the lack of positive images or stories in most subjects.
4. Significant events, such as the spotlight on Black Lives Matter, led to an increased awareness of racism. But the continued denial of the racism and the invisibility of the issue as part of the school environment led to a dichotomy between those for whom this was very important and those who felt that they had 'done awareness' – so there is no need to 'keep talking about it'.
5. Other areas of the curriculum clearly omit key stories and experiences that have shaped the world. Issues the school itself is proud to say it is trying to offer and will need to find ways to include.

6. Some pupils about to leave the school and enter the next phase of education/ career journeys, expressed a sense of isolation as a result of the previously mentioned lack of acknowledgement of the contributions Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and nations have made to society. There was an expectation by some pupils that the school curriculum could be richer and it left them feeling unfulfilled.
7. Training on Unconscious Bias, Cultural Awareness, Race, and interconnection or intersectionality with other equalities was identified as need by staff and pupils.
8. There is a view that some teachers were not amenable to change. Some felt that there is a denial of racism in the school and a lack of interest. It was suggested that this group thinks the UK is not as bad as the USA in terms of race, and therefore did not recognise or comprehend the impact of the killing of George Floyd on racialised people in the UK.
9. It was also mentioned that there is a 'colour-blindness' view that is purportedly held by progressive/liberal professionals and thus makes instances of unacceptable behaviours more likely to be attributed to individuals than to systems, processes, and institutional practices.
10. Provision of training for staff to enable them to become more aware and better equipped with the skills and tools to address race and culture in lessons and school activities was highlighted as a gap.

4.4. International Boarders

1. Support to International pupils is on offer at the start of the school journey for the majority of new students at induction. However, ongoing support, joint social activities and cultural understanding and awareness in relation to boarders was highlighted as something that needed to improve.
2. In the staff focus groups there was a view that the school needed to do more to make international boarders feel included. International boarders themselves have also suggested that practical steps should be identified for the school to consider to better meet the needs of new joiners.
3. International boarders reported they are seen as 'quiet pupils with their eyes in their books' and whilst this may be the case for some pupils, it is also way of coping with a new environment. Others perceived international boarders are being consciously excluded or simply not being invited to wider activities in and outside the school.

4.5. Anti-Semitism

1. Pupils reported anti-Semitic language and behaviours that are not dealt with.
2. It was raised in the focus groups by Black/Asian/Jewish pupils that the lived experiences and history of racism of Jewish people was not included in

discussions on race and culture.

3. There were reports of pupils' social media (WhatsApp) showing demeaning and offensive anti-Semitic terms.

4.6. Young Women

1. Young women joining the school in the upper shell is viewed as a positive development and is celebrated. However, some respondents shared experiences that ABCM female pupils were often excluded from social events and were used in public relation activities when it suited the school.
2. In two focus groups, ABCM young women reported that they had experiences of name calling, racist jokes, and were the subject of sexual objectification by boys.
3. ABCM young women spoke about events around promoting better race and cultural understanding and feeling unsupported by teachers. One event which was mentioned in three separate focus groups was on anti-racism which was open to the whole school but attracted only ABCM pupils. The message these young women took from this was that anti-racism was not a priority for the school. ABCM young women also felt let down by other young women as there had previously been a sense of progress being made on a shared sense of discrimination and exclusion.

4.7. Lower Shell

1. International Boarders and British Black and Asian pupils reported the use of inappropriate and derisive language/jokes being more widespread in the lower shell and the negative impact not dealt with by the school.
2. There was a view that in most cases the use of negative behaviour and language was due to ignorance, not an intention to cause offence.
3. Many pupils and staff said that they were aware of discriminatory incidents that had happened to them or others in the school
4. In the focus groups, details of the inappropriate incidents included threatening language, name calling, emotionally 'quietening' of individuals, and inappropriate use of social media.
5. There were references to poor attitudes and behaviours by teaching staff who were not equipped to handle derogatory and offensive language and expressions. ABCM pupils reported in two focus groups examples including the use of the 'N' word by pupils in front of teachers as well as the use of offensive language in rap music, and reference to gangster and 'curry king' to describe Black and Asian pupils.

4.8. Representation of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic staff

1. Low representation of Black and people of colour in the workforce and leadership at all levels of the school community was highlighted in survey and focus groups.
2. Many of the pupils and several members of staff raised this as a concern. There is a recognition that diversity and representation is evident in the catering and cleaning roles. However, it was a gap in other roles and teaching was singled out.
3. Several mentions were made of cleaning staff and food service assistants being treated dismissively and occasionally disrespectfully by students. Untidy rooms and toilets being left dirty were seen as indicators of lack of respect for cleaning staff. We were given one example of seriously unacceptable language being used about a member of cleaning staff.
4. It was noted by many that supervisory and managerial cleaning roles are almost entirely held by white staff.

5. Recommendations

These are the key recommendations made by respondents that we wish to highlight as we conclude this report.

5.1 Racial Harassment

To tackle and prevent racial harassment, the display of racism and lack of consistency in approach, the school should take firm and immediate steps including:

1. Increasing the profile and publicity for tackling racial harassment
2. Include the need to treat cleaning staff and food service assistants with dignity and respect in induction for staff and pupils
3. Promote awareness of racial harassment and racism through workshops, training, and themes as part of the curriculum for staff and pupils
4. Review and reinforce standards of required behaviours including sanctions for online communication and ensure widespread communication to pupils and staff
5. Increase the choice of support including counselling to victims inside and outside the school
6. Review the policies and procedures in the Almanac to address discrimination, equity and inclusion

5.2 Diversity of Staff

To address the lack of visible Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic within senior leadership, teaching and support staff for a London school, we recommend:

1. Review the recruitment, induction, and retention processes to ensure diversity and representation in the teaching and leadership positions
2. Consider the establishment of targets as part of a race equality strategy
3. Take steps to attract and grow talent amongst ABCM pupils who are keen pursue teaching as a career choice
4. Utilise the "Positive Action" provisions of the Equality Act 2010 to target staff from underrepresented communities
5. Work in collaboration with other schools to develop strategies to attract more Black teachers and connect with the Teach London initiative
6. The school governors seek to lead this change by reviewing and increasing their own diversity over time.

5.3 Curriculum

To ensure the curriculum embraces race and culture in positive and effective ways, the school should:

1. Review and involve relevant stakeholders in the shaping of the curriculum
2. Explore with pupils in Year 13 their experiences and how this can be used to shape and develop innovative solutions

5.4 International Boarders

To improve the experience for international boarders beyond induction, the school should provide information, support, activities to deal with social isolation, and ignorance by:

1. Reviewing processes as well as the proposals from international borders to promote inclusion that is long lasting beyond the first term, covering weekends
2. Provide and promote pupil led activities that are inclusive

5.5 Anti-Semitism

To eliminate the display of anti-Semitic behaviours and attitudes the school needs to:

1. Ensure that anti-Semitic behaviours and attitudes are tackled through awareness, review of materials, publicity to pupils and training

2. Review / reinforce standards of behaviours in key documents (e.g. Almanack)
3. Ensure the experiences of Jewish pupils are included in wider discussions of discrimination, equity, and inclusion

5.6 Young Women

To ensure that ABCM young women's experiences are heard and valued, the school should:

1. Ensure that future publicity including the use of images of ABCM young women reflect the efforts to reflect a genuine diverse and progressive school as illustrated in the marketing of the school
2. Ensure the findings of the harmful sexual behaviour review is communicated including an action plan
3. Consider introducing girls into the school at an earlier stage (co-education)
4. Explore the best options for commissioning and procuring professional support for young women who wish to have talking therapies
5. Find ways to ensure future extra-curricular activities are promoted by staff specifically to girls
6. Future training for staff takes on board the interconnections with discrimination, equity, and inclusion

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Appendix 1 The Task and Methodology

Challenge Consultancy was commissioned by Westminster School to undertake a project on race and culture. This review aimed to understand and inform future responses and initiatives that would better support and equip the school to address and act within the school setting. The motivation to address this issue and to undertake this review and inform it, was borne from a recognition by the school that racial incidents reflect the concern that pupils and staff may not be supported to identify and resolve the root causes of issues, needs and situations that are leading to lack of confidence and not supporting the welfare and safety of pupils and staff.

From a well-being and behavioural perspective, pupils and staff who experience significant distress and trauma (including what is perceived as inaction by managers, colleagues, and fellow pupils) often re-traumatise individuals who may have experienced negative impact of racism outside the school and in their own past. The absence of support or intervention for pupils and staff does little to address the fundamental root causes driving the safeguarding concerns. There are more problems faced by pupils who live away from family. Their ability to cope, their confidence and potential feelings of shame when dealing with issues as well as their potential to be scapegoated, then allows the situation to repeat itself, re-burdening the pupil with additional trauma.

The objectives of this project were to:

1. Understand the experiences and views of pupils of diverse races and cultures
2. Understand the experiences and views of teaching and Administration and support staff and governing body to inform and support recommendations.
3. Hear the voices of children and young people who are experiencing the negative impact of racial incidents; specifically, to understand what support they feel they did and did not have in place, pre and post incident(s) as well as what may have better supported them
4. To understand the barriers within the school's community in accessing support in making changes and progress.
5. To understand the vulnerabilities of international pupils and elicit ideas for overcoming barriers.
6. To get professionals' views on what contributing factors exist.

To undertake this work and achieve the outcomes set out above, Challenge Consultancy conducted ten focus group sessions with the purpose of listening and learning. This involved 85 pupils; 14 teaching staff and 18 Administration and support staff. Challenge Consultancy also conducted seven interviews involving pupils and staff and seven specific meetings with designated leads, School Governor led sub-committees and senior leadership. To ensure genuine participation additional focus groups were subsequently added.

Challenge Consultancy worked with the school to identify and draw up a list of relevant stakeholders within the school. Whole school communication outlined the project rationale and invited stakeholders to take part in qualitative and quantitative methods. As a result of these, 418 responses were received in the online survey.

1. External secure online platform

The online survey was hosted on an external platform called SmartSurvey in order to ensure objectivity, maintain confidentiality and data security. SmartSurvey is based in the UK and has certified secure processes and infrastructure. The online software used for the school survey collects and stores data securely and is fully compliant with EU data legislation (GDPR).

2. User-friendly design and response scales

A series of 15 questions were designed to ask about experiences and opinions using various Likert response scales.

The demographics of pupils and staff with lived experience are set out below. The views highlighted here are those that were self-disclosed by the respondents themselves and those noted by Challenge Consultancy.

3. Focus groups

3.1. The focus groups were open to pupils and staff at Westminster School. There was broad representation from teaching and Administration and support staff who participated, representing various departments, length of service and levels of seniority. Focus group data, in general, intends to capture the breadth of viewpoints more than to quantify the extent to which more or fewer participants share those views. Thus, this report conveys comments that were made, in order to capture what was shared and to honour the experiences. The sessions were over one hour long and comprised of a facilitated discussion based around pre-determined questions.

3.2. The agenda for each focus group was outlined to the participants as follows:

- Introductions of and expectations of the session.
- Ground rules about confidentiality of discussions within the session.
- Provide 8-10 questions for participants to respond, discuss and use of the Chat to capture responses.
- Participants were then given the opportunity to suggest ideas or add anything else worth considering as part of the review.
- Participants then had the opportunity to contribute their ideas for improved practice.

3.3. Notes were taken by both the facilitator and observer from Challenge Consultancy throughout the sessions.