

# Anti-Racism Charter

## Case study: Leadership in schools



### Southwark Diocesan Board of Education

The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) serves a diverse and vibrant family of schools and academies, colleges and universities, which educate and support pupils and families across the Diocese. Our church schools are for everyone entrusted to our care and our vision – to serve thriving schools where all belong – is central to our approach to racial justice.

Between 2022 and 2025, the SDBE focused on its key strategic objectives:

- Raising the profile, engaging and developing understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Promoting curriculum design underpinned by theological understanding
- Increasing and sustaining diversity of leadership in our schools and SDBE
- Building partnerships and relationships

#### Raising the profile, engaging and developing understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion

Engaging and developing understanding of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, at the SDBE, as well as our school communities, has been essential. Our team has undertaken a range of training including unconscious bias, racial literacy and inclusive curriculum courses. These opportunities have deepened our understanding, built relationships and driven our action in serving others.

The Anti-Racism Charter has been a foundational document for SDBE. It has inspired the annual conference, contributed to training and our work with schools. For example, Junior Leaders at Holy Trinity, Merton, have written their own Race and Ethnicity Charter. As we continue to challenge ourselves and look to the future, we are creating further resources for our schools.

SDBE has developed a comprehensive development programme for school leaders, including governors, and EDIB (equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging) is now included in our Bishop's Certificate. Schools



Pupils from Bishop John Robinson and Archbishop Tenison's Church of England Schools.

have been invited to share their excellent practice with one another and bespoke training, such as sessions exploring identity, has helped meet all schools where they are on their own journey with belonging.

*Senior Leader:* "I know that racism matters to the Diocese and they are actively doing something to address inequalities in our schools".

#### Promoting curriculum design underpinned by theological understanding

Following a comprehensive review, our Religious Education syllabus launched in 2024, featuring opportunities for deeper learning and the exploration of belonging. The unit 'Fearless woman of faith' module covers knowledge and understanding of women from the Bible to those who serve in ministry today. The syllabus also now includes an anti-racism unit ('How can people of faith serve God and bring freedom and justice to others?'). Crucially, shaped by our Christian vision, there has also been a shift to ensure that equity and diversity is woven meaningfully through the fabric of the whole curriculum.

*School Governor:* "Moving forward, I am going to ensure that questions about Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) form part of every monitoring visit."



School Leaders and Governors from across our schools awarded the Bishop's Certificate.

### Increasing and sustaining diversity in our schools and SDBE

In 2022, SDBE introduced the first EDI survey to benchmark who are we and who are we representing. The 2024 survey data, with a 73% response rate from schools, will also help shape our strategic direction including identifying how we can better represent the communities we serve. The recruitment of senior leaders has been a significant piece of this work. As well as a new equality statement for advertisements, consideration of how to reach the widest audience has been crucial. Currently, more than 20% of our headteacher workforce and 13% of the SDBE team are of global majority heritage. In 2025, SDBE committed to funding a two-year post to help deliver the SDBE EDIB strategic plan.

*Senior Leader: "I feel more confident to approach people personally to speak to them about our vision for broadening the representation on our Governing Body and the potential role they could play in that".*

### Partnerships and relationships

Growing partnerships and finding opportunities for collaboration has been crucial. Our EDIB Headteacher Steering Committee, comprised of school leaders from across the Diocese and SDBE staff, has strengthened us all to be advocates for racial justice and helped shape our future direction.

We also value the support of the National Racial Justice Leads and work with the National Society to bring 'Leaders Like Us' to schools. SDBE schools have been represented as mentors and participants every year since the programme's inception. In addition, and with the Southwark

diocesan staff team, we have developed a partnership with Palace for Life (Crystal Palace FC) to offer our schools racial justice workshops and resources.

In 2024, SDBE became an Education Partner of *Hemisphere*, multi award-winning experts in race equity in education and employment. Funded by a racial justice grant, we have been able to offer this innovative racial literacy programme to every SDBE school. This forms a core part of our mission to grow staff and drive educational success for every pupil in our diocese.

*Headteacher: "I've received practical advice that I could implement straight away, especially ways to empower staff and student body".*



Start of the year Eucharist and celebration of new Headteachers.

### Moving forward

Aligned with our diocesan vision for racial justice, the Board of Education remains ambitious for the future, to continue to learn, grow and make progress. We walk together with our schools on this journey, knowing God's love and wisdom can inspire what a school is, does and achieves: the transformation of all children's and young people's lives.



The Diocese of  
**Southwark**

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