

BAME School Insights Programme

Sharing opinions, improving school inclusion

The programme was created as a result of earlier projects in Sussex schools that highlighted the need to better understand the current situation for pupils of colour, and for those pupils, their parents/carers and teaching staff to share their thoughts on school equality practices. The BAME Insights Programme aims to shine a light on school practices and resources that encourage and celebrate diversity and to enable the creation of inclusive learning environments for all.



METHODOLOGY

Schools from across Brighton & Hove, East and West Sussex have taken part. The schools' BAME community and their teachers shared their opinions and experiences via an online questionnaire on a wide range of school-related topics including recruitment, role models, learning, curriculum and support. The resulting evidence-based insight reports, with a focus on how BAME pupils are represented and perceive this representation, were then shared with the schools to highlight what they were doing well and where improvements could be made. This information enabled the schools to improve inclusion through modifying or stopping practices that weren't serving their BAME young people and to celebrate successful initiatives.

IMPACT

The BAME Insights Programme gained a broad perspective on inclusion from pupils as well as teachers and parents/carers. This in turn led to direct action plans and real change being implemented within the schools.

By working closely with schools, the programme acted as a vehicle to increase the visibility of BAME children and members of the school community. Reports from parents/carers and teachers have shown that the programme gets conversations started and acts as a conduit for making improvements.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Context

We know that nationally there is an attainment gap between BAME pupils and their white counterparts. Despite the changing demographic of many areas of Sussex, where the population is becoming increasingly diverse, we also know there is a low percentage of teachers who are visibly BAME. This results in a lack of positive role models for BAME pupils to identify with and look up to. Also, it is not uncommon for students of colour to experience a curriculum in which their culture, civilisation and background are not represented.

Duration

Started in 2020 and ongoing

Partners

St Catherine's College, Ratton School, King's School, The Littlehampton Academy, Portslade Aldridge Community Academy, Seahaven Academy and Thomas Bennett Community College.

Funding source

Uni Connect

Quotes from participating schools

St Catherine's College, Eastbourne

"The questionnaire feedback was very positive... the overriding message is that a lot of our BAME pupils feel safe, comfortable and very included at school."

"The BAME Insights Programme has been used as a stepping stone to continue our work with diversity, and we hope to do more on decolonising the curriculum."

"The BAME Insights reports have challenged us as professionals and supported our pupils directly, as well as gathering their viewpoints."

"It has encouraged us to rewrite our British Values and Citizenship Programme – to diversify it more, encourage critical thinking and ask pupils to look at global events from different perspectives."

Ratton School, Eastbourne

"Students came up with actions points for a Say No to Racism statement...from creating culture days and making teaching more inclusive to making a variety of ethnic foods and more BAME books available in school."

"The BAME Insights report encouraged us to compile a list of areas to strengthen with regards to equality and diversity, and to set up a seven-step action plan to try to eradicate social injustice within the school and local community."

"As a school, we had been identifying the gender gap in learning and representation but didn't have anything on the BAME gap. We are doing the right things now and tracking this."

"As a result of BAME Insights, students and staff recommended that Black History be integrated into all subjects and taught throughout the year."

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The BAME Insights Programme provides schools and their communities with a window on to what they are doing well and an opportunity to see where the learning and social experiences of BAME young people can be improved.

The Insights reports provide a clear and current picture of schools, their successes, and the educational environment from the perspective of pupils of colour, their parents/carers and all staff. It gives staff and governors an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments and make positive changes.



TALKING POINTS

Discuss the benefits a more inclusive school brings to BAME students, their parents/carers and staff.

Discuss the benefits a more inclusive school brings to all students and staff.

How can you continue to ensure schools are inclusive spaces with inclusive curriculums?

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