



Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Families,

### **'Strength lies in Differences'**

The death of George Floyd in May stopped everyone in their tracks and encouraged communities to stand up and challenge all forms of racism and racist behaviour. We as educators have a major role to play in how we influence children and in providing all children with a safe, open and honest environment in which to have discussions around our own, and others', cultural and racial identity.

A selected, small team of staff from across the Federation have been working hard to develop a Federated 'BeDifferent' philosophy to support our understanding of how to discuss race and discrimination. These staff are: Miss Thomas, Miss Akhtar, Miss Annor, Miss Searle, Mrs Barrett-Mason, Mrs Edwards and myself. Everybody in our BeDifferent Federation is unique and exceptional in their own way and the affirmation of our cultural identity is crucial to how we feel about ourselves. We feel that it is time to take the opportunity to discuss race and diverse perspectives. We want to nurture a safe or brave space, practising respectful engagement, feeling free from fear of being criticised, which encourages all of us to get curious and ask open questions to better understand the other persons' viewpoint. We all have a responsibility to learn, develop and grow in our understanding of others.

Our aim is to develop an awareness that supports how we behave and how we support the behaviour of others from our youngest children to those preparing for Secondary School. This understanding and development has started with us all as a team of staff. We will be entering into these discussions first.

### **How will we achieve our BeDifferent philosophy?**

All staff and members of our Governing Body across the Federation are taking part in a series of workshops led by Paul Mortimer. Paul Mortimer was an ex Charlton, Crystal Palace and Aston Villa first division football player in the 1980's and 90's. Paul Mortimer has become an active member in Show Racism the Red Card, a UK anti-racism educational charity. Since 2009 Paul has been working in schools in the South East and East of England as a coach and education worker. The workshops have included discussions and a better understanding of:

- discrimination (racism)
- the appropriate use of terminology and vocabulary, and the impact of words
- skin colours and identity
- self-awareness regarding difference
- Knowledge of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- How we communicate what we know and understand





- Exploring how personal experiences impact individuals learning
- An all-inclusive environment.

These series of workshops have been planned throughout this autumn term and then once all staff have taken part in these discussions, my 'Strength lies in Differences' team will work together to review our History Curriculum, ready for the spring term 2021. Our History Curriculum from the Early Years to the children in Year 6 will explore:

- what makes us unique and different**
- similarities and differences amongst families and communities**
- our understanding of key historical events that have contributed to national and international success**
- the lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievement**
- a non-European society that provides contrast with British history**
- our understanding of stereotypes on society and history.**

This developed Curriculum will also include a bank of language with definitions that are commonly understood by anyone that works within the Federation. Once our reviewed History Curriculum is shared with staff, I will of course have this accessible to you all on our website.

We will also be reviewing a number of school policies and partnership documents to ensure that these include statements and information reflective of our 'Strength lies in Differences' philosophy. Please do look out for these on our website.

The first document that has just been updated is our Partnership to Success agreement, which we will ask all children, parents/carers and staff to sign. Please may we ask that you have a read of the attached updated agreement and then sign it from both your child and yourself. Our staff will sign it too.

We feel that this is an exciting development to the wonderful work of our BeDifferent Federation and we look forward to involving you, as much as we can and are able to.

### **Attendance update**

We are very pleased to be able to report that our attendance percentage for last week was **92%**, a slight decline on the previous week's attendance at 92.7%.

### **PE kits**

Please do make sure that your child is wearing their PE kit on their allocated day. As the weather cools, we are more than happy that your child wears tracksuit bottoms. Your child must have a bottle of water too, as we are very much encouraging all children to be active as much as they can during a slightly more restricted day.

### **Somewhere over the Rainbow**





All children and staff enjoyed our Rainbow themed 'dress up' and dedicated learning to themes such as hope, gratefulness, self-belief and staying connected. The highlight of this fabulous day was the remarkable appearance of this beautiful rainbow overarching Mitcham and Colliers Wood. Please do look out for many photographs of our special day on the website.



Look after yourselves,  
Mrs N Bull  
Chief Executive Headteacher

