

## **Overview of work in Equalities: LGBT+ curriculum in Hackney Schools**

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The meeting of Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission, Monday, 10th January, 2011 7.00 pm (Item 7.), included a panel discussion on progress made in tackling homophobic crime in the borough. As part of this there was a question as to how programmes to tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools, similar to the successful one at Stoke Newington School might be rolled out to other schools in the borough. It was noted that the role of Learning Trust in this regard had changed due to new government guidelines. However, the aim of this paper is to show how schools, in partnership with HLT, are working to ensure that the whole school community demonstrate an accepting and supportive approach to and around LGBT+ issues, including through policies to tackle bullying and harassment.

### **1. Guidance and legislation**

HLT does not have a central strategy on LGBT+ guidance. It does not fall within our remit to be able to direct schools in this area. However, schools are bound by equalities legislation, Ofsted Guidance and Safeguarding Guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2017).

These include:

- The relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Schools should pay particular attention to the Public sector equality duty (PSED) (s.149 of the Equality Act). 27. Under the provision 10 of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics).
- The Ofsted inspection framework makes clear that tackling inequalities and disadvantages should be reflected in every aspect of school life, and will be considered as part of all inspection judgements.
- New guidance for compulsory relationships and health education '**Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education**' Published 19 July 2018 and compulsory in all schools across the country from September 2020. All pupils will study compulsory health education as well as new reformed relationships education in primary school and relationships and sex education in secondary school. It will put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds.
- The **Government Equalities Office LGBT Action Plan** July 2018. Pledges:
  - To complete its anti-homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying programme. Aiming to reach more than 1,200 schools in England by March 2019. From March 2019 to March 2020, the Government Equalities Office will provide further funding for interventions in schools. The Anti-Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic (HBT) Bullying Alliance is made up of 13 Partner organisations and is funded by the Department for Education and Government Equalities Office. The overall purpose of the work of the Alliance is to reduce the incidence of HBT bullying in primary and secondary schools in England by supporting schools to prevent and respond to HBT bullying.
  - The Crown Prosecution Service will review and update their LGBT Hate Crime Schools Pack to tackle bullying in schools.
  - To update Sex and Relationships Education guidance to support the Government's reforms to this subject. As we have previously announced, the Department for Education will update the statutory guidance on Relationships Education in primary schools, and Relationships and Sex Education in secondary schools.

- To ensure that schools have access to the guidance they need to support LGBT pupils. The Department for Education will publish an update to its guidance for schools about how to apply the Equality Act 2010.
- To support LGBT teachers to be themselves at work and improve the diversity of the teaching profession. The Department for Education is investing £2 million to establish regional hubs to support teachers from underrepresented groups, including those teachers who are LGBT, to progress into leadership. The Department for Education has also already supported the launch of 'LGBTed' – <http://outteacher.org/>

## 2. Governance

All governing boards are responsible for ensuring their schools comply with the legislation and guidance outlined above. This means every governing board, including school leaders, must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people of all characteristics (those who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not). There is also a duty on governing boards and school leaders to publish on an annual basis, equality objectives and information demonstrating how they are doing this.

The equalities act has ensured equality duties permeate routine practices that governing boards of all schools are duty bound to approve, implement and review the impact on a regular basis. Examples include admissions, curriculum provision, behaviour management and exclusions, as well as HR matters related to the recruitment, development and discipline of staff.

Governors and school leaders have direct contact with lead experts within HLT to seek clarification, to signpost to resources and to provide specific case work. As such, HLT officers provide advice and support to governors and school leaders, in promoting equalities all areas of school operations and school life. This helps schools to develop a learning and working environment, and organisational culture which acts positively to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

To support these themes, governors training sessions address the legal responsibilities of boards and how they effectively review and monitor the impact of statutory policies.

## 3. Current practices ensuring that issues are raised where relevant throughout the curriculum, and demonstrating an accepting and supportive approach to LGBT+ issues.

At present, there is no way of ensuring that all schools are to the standard of the best, however, best practice is promoted and shared through key HLT forum including;

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Headteachers' Briefing              | • Curriculum Deputies Meeting | • Subject Network Meetings |
| • Behaviour and Wellbeing Partnership | • PHSCE Coordinators Network  | • Governor Training        |

### School examples of good practice:

Primary School A

We have a diversity week every year where we celebrate LGBT people and different families. This is a mixture of our own planning and using some resources from Stonewall. We have a wide range of books that explore identity and diversity including different family make up and these are focus texts for Year 1 - Year 3 during that week. We hold regular refreshers for staff in

tackling homophobic language. In RSE we use the Christopher Winter project where children learn about different relationships including same sex.

#### Primary School B

We celebrate LGBT+ by holding special events in school and visiting the Hackney Museum. We have also begun looking for ways we can weave things into our literacy curriculum such as gender stereotyping, cultural capital and family make up, rather than just having 'special weeks'. We did the following to celebrate LGBT history month last year:

Dedicated Circle Time to introduce this by discussing what LGBT+ means and LGBT+ bullying discussion prompt cards to lead discussions.

Each class studied an inspirational LGBT+ person in ICT and Topic and created a piece of writing about this

Green time activity designing LGBT+ flag

We also received that nice feedback from Hackney museum about children's comments about LGBT+ people when they were visiting the museum.

#### Secondary School A

At our school we renewed our Stonewall Champions Status in summer 2018 and we are working towards becoming a Stonewall Bronze champion school. In the last 12 months we have:

Established a LGBT+ history month focus for February (including assemblies, displays, role model posters, rainbow stickers on every class room.

Sent a member of staff on the 'Train the Trainer' course run delivered by Stonewall/renewed our champion status.

Trained all staff in September INSET around HBT bullying and LGBT+ mental health concerns

Run Stonewall Anti homophobic bullying workshop for Y7 PSHE day.

Liaised with our sponsor's Pride network for support and advice. They have donated money to the Academy which has enabled us to buy LGBT+ Young Adult fiction to include in the library.

Established a Staff LGBT+/Allies group that meet 3-4 times per year to discuss how to make the school more inclusive and facilitate LGBT+ history month. We have visited other schools who have an LGBT+/Equality student group who meet for support/discussion. We planning to start something similar.

We have rewritten the Anti bullying policy to include specific reference to LGBT+ bullying and updated the recording of this on paperwork/SIMS to highlight specific incidents of LGBT+ bullying.

We are liaising with the sponsor's Pride network to write a Trans Policy for the school.

#### Secondary School B

Whole school initiatives:

All subject areas will be having at least a starter around LGBT+ History Month in February. The focus is Year 7, and many subjects have lessons embedded into the curriculum.

There are guests coming in to do whole school assemblies in February and work with particular PSHE classes around LGBT+ issues.

The school Pride group are doing year assemblies.

Tutorial activities are sent to all tutors around LGBT+ History month

Students present what they've done in subject areas at our Community Evening, which showcases all the work in the Diversity over the year.

The work in history (as an example of curriculum content) is as follows:

Year 7 – when looking at medieval cities we are introducing a lesson around Delhi (with the 3rd gender) and looking at Meso-American attitudes to LGBT+ people.

Year 8 –Studying James Farmer as part of the civil rights movement.

Year 9 – Studying the Holocaust, and the treatment of LGBT+ people within that.

Year 10 – Studying the Women’s movement in Contemporary America, and all the different types of women who were part of that. (They will also look at the “Jazz age” of the 1920s with reference to sexuality).

Year 11 – Study Elizabeth, with discussions about her sexuality, and a focus on the Globe theatre. Exploring cross-dressing as a normal part of plays, reflecting both attitudes to women, and men identifying with a different gender.

Year 12 – look at Chou En Lai (gay leader of China)

In addition, a significant number of our schools make use of the highly regarded Young Hackney offer (See additional paper). This includes the teaching of strands of PHSCE, including relationships and sex education by specialist staff who will visit the school. They also offer support to individual students identified by schools.

The CCG are also planning to invest £33K in improving access for LGBT+ CYP.

### **Conclusion**

Whilst it is pleasing to hear the examples of the work going on in Hackney schools, the voices of young people tell us there is still much to be done to ensure all students are able to fulfil their potential in supportive and positive settings.

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