

From *Jackie Waters-Dewhurst*, Diocesan Director of Education

Colossians 3:11

Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, **slave** or **free**, but Christ is all, **and** is in all.

Firstly, can I say thank you for all of your responses to last week's bulletin, for your support, encouragement and teaching. They meant a lot.

And so, to this week.

What do we teach our children?

Over the weekend we've seen protests both peaceful and less so. We've seen protestors pulling down a statue in Bristol and rolling it into the harbour. What do we say to our pupils?

"Destruction of property/statues by a mob is always wrong." But wasn't there a cheer when Saddam Hussein's statue was torn down in 2011; wasn't it trumpeted as a sign of a people taking back their country, of freedom and democracy – whatever may have followed?

Maybe what we teach them are the facts:

Edward Colston was a slave trader who played an active role in enslaving over 84,000 Africans including around 12,000 children. Over 19,000 died on the journey en route. As an MP for Bristol he defended the city's right to trade in slavery. He also donated vast sums of his wealth to build hospitals, churches and schools. These did not benefit all, certainly not those who were enslaved and not those who did not subscribe to his politics or religion.

Discussion about the removal of the statue in Bristol has been ongoing for years. The changing of the plaque to include the facts about Colston's involvement in slavery has been going back and forth between council and various powerful Bristol groups for years and still the statue stands with the plaque talking of 'philanthropy' alone.

These are the facts.

So, once our pupils have the facts, then they can debate the various views:

- What should be done with statues such as Colston's?
- Was the statue celebrating or condoning slavery?
- Would removing it be sanitising our past, rewriting history?
- How might it feel to be black in Bristol walking past this statue every day?

Our pupils deserve all of the facts because without them we cannot hope to have a valid conversation.

Is now the time to teach a history that looks from a different point of view?

- Black people making a difference in Britain since the roman times
- Black people contributing to industry, science, the arts and politics for centuries
- The injustice of colonial Britain
- The Windrush generation
- And what about other minorities?

Is it time to think of a new history curriculum?

If that feels like just one thing too many right now, one more thing on top of all the other expectations heaped upon schools, could we be looking at it together?

Our pupils are going to be asking whether it's right to pull a statue down whether we have a curriculum that tackles it or not. What will our response be?

If you are interested in looking at any of the above please do get in touch. You continue to be in our prayers as you meet the needs of all of your pupils in school with love and care and hope.

God bless -

Jackie

Resources

NATRE – Spirited Arts

Click [here](#) to view the NATRE Spirited Arts update.



Called, Connected, Committed

Click [here](#) to view the latest from the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership.

