

Dear Friends and Colleagues -

³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.^[a] ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'^[b] There is no commandment greater than these."

Mark 12: 30-31

I hope you had a restful break over the October half term and feel excited about the half term ahead.

In this bulletin, I would like to focus on inclusion and belonging. To support schools to cultivate a culture of belonging, the DBE team hosted a conference for church school leaders just before half term.

It was great to see colleagues at the event, valuing the space and time to hear from experts in the field and engaging in practical activities to help us get a deeper understanding of 'belonging'. As we spent the day together, I noted the strong community feel in the room. We talked to one another, we enjoyed lunch together and we worshipped together (thanks to the amazing leadership of pupils from Scunthorpe Church of England Primary School). The event in itself was one where I thought we all 'belonged' as a member of church school family.

If you were not able to make the event this time, we prayed for you and your school communities and look forward to seeing you again soon.

I do not have the space in this bulletin to capture all the amazing content of the conference. For me, there were a few 'stand out' phrases, images, resources and activities that really provoked my thinking about developing a culture of 'belonging'.

For example, Lois Delong from Alive Church rooted her messages about belonging firmly to the Bible and the life of Jesus. She gave us a very helpful four-point guide for cultivating a culture of belonging.

- 1. Start with us** – 'Love your neighbour as yourself'
- 2. Be intentional** – be open to review and challenge.
- 3. Be bold and courageous** – have difficult conversations from a place of love as modelled by Jesus
- 4. Stick with it for the long haul** – don't let inclusion slide down the list of priorities.



We were inspired by the children of Scunthorpe Church of England Primary School – which is accredited as a School of Sanctuary. The children represented a very rich and diverse community and together led an extremely powerful and moving act of worship with reference to the Parable of Lost Sheep to exemplify the importance of inclusion and belonging. Their singing, reading and acting were amazing! Thank you to the children and staff for leading worship.

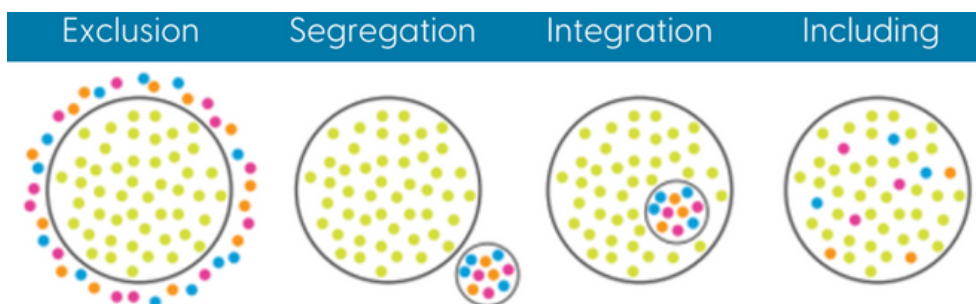
As school leaders, it is of course important to consider how inclusion will be evaluated in an inspection. Hazel Henson (HMI) provided us with a clear overview of how inclusion will be inspected as a discrete aspect as well as through all other aspects of school life. She used a phrase which is worth paying attention to and that is ‘If you get it right for vulnerable children, you’ll get it right for everyone’.

After lunch, Rita and Lorraine from the National Society launched the fabulous free suite of resources for schools called ‘Difference for Primary Schools’. We all needed waking up after lunch and so we actively explore contentious issues such as ‘is it right to have pineapple on a pizza’. This created a healthy debate and helped us to develop three habits, ‘Be curious, Be present and Re-imagine’ – qualities we need to explore more serious issues in our communities to build a culture of courage, hope and empathy.



The DBE strongly promotes the Difference programme for all schools. It is a flexible programme that can be used in Collective Worship, PSHE and across the curriculum. For more details and to sign up for a free training session, there is a flyer attached with more information. A promotional video for the programme can be found via this link: <https://youtu.be/-WnsgqrVuil>

The day ended with our final inspirational speaker, Shammi Rahman. She talked passionately about how we can come overcome barriers to building a sense of belonging. She helped us developed a deeper understanding of inclusion. She displayed a very useful image to help us reflect on our current practice in school.

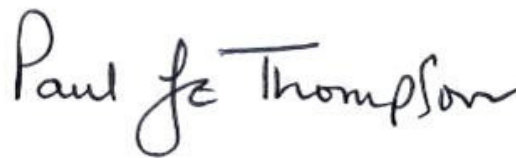


Thinking about the circles above, what does a culture of belonging look like in your context for vulnerable and minoritized groups? Consider how your vision, leadership, policies and practice will move your culture from exclusion to inclusion.

As church schools, we have a powerful Christian vision tailored to our context and community to help us cultivate a culture of belonging. Please don't hesitate to contact the DBE team for further support and advice.

I wish you a happy and successful term through to Christmas.

Canon Paul Thompson Diocesan Director of Education



Signhills Infant Academy - Early Years Setting and Curiosity Approach



With this email comes an article highlighting the excellent practice in a community school, thriving in one of our church school MATs! Signhills Infant Academy is part of St Lawrence Academies Trust.



Books for diversity – supporting schools to develop a culture of belonging

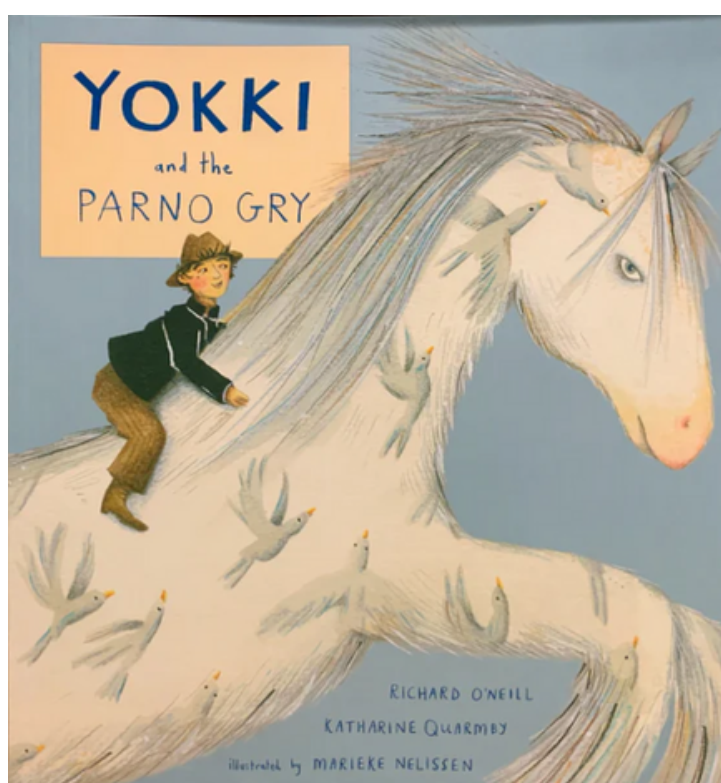
I was on my travels before half term, when a new display of books caught my eye at Hackthorn Church of England Primary. Emily Lister (headteacher) has kindly shared the source of these books which is attached to this bulletin for everyone – thank you Emily. The document, produced by Jon Biddle, links the books to significant events in the school calendar such as National Poetry Day, Recycle Week, National Stammering Awareness Day, World Adoption Day and many more.

This one particularly caught my eye. It is based on a traditional Romani tale and gives insights into Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture and history.

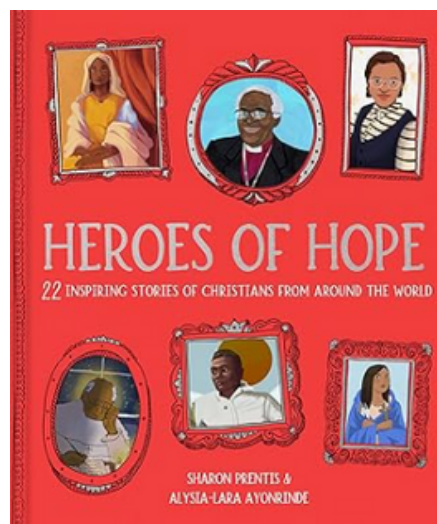
Whether or not your school currently has pupils from these communities, sharing books like this is a proactive way to foster understanding and welcome.

It can help to create an environment where all children feel seen and valued—even before they arrive. For church schools especially, this reflects our commitment to dignity, inclusion and love for our neighbour.

From - *June Richardson*, **Schools Effectiveness Advisor**



Book for all primary schools – **Heroes of Hope**



The Church of England's Racial Justice Unit have bought copies of this book to make it available in all Church of England Primary schools. School leaders who attended our conference have already received their copies. For other schools, we will deliver your copies to you when we visit or meet you at training. Please look out for your copy.

This book celebrates the achievements of Christians of Global Majority Heritage from across the world. Stories show how they have lived out their faith and made a positive difference in their communities and beyond.

This book will support learning as part of RE or PSHE. The stories also lend themselves to a series of collective worships. It is also a wonderful addition to each school library.

Inside the book you will find a postcard with a QR code on it. The authors are hoping to hear stories about how you use this book in your school.

Please do share your reflections, stories or feedback.

Reading for school leaders and governors

There are also a number of useful publications to support school leaders and governors to expand their understanding of diversity. The list, attached to this bulletin is also available in the Diversity section of our website

What Would You Tell World Leaders? **Live COP30 Webinar from Brazil!**

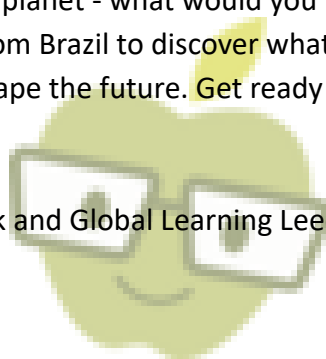
Tuesday 11th November, 2-2.30pm

World leaders are meeting in Brazil to help save our planet - what would you like to tell them? Join us, alongside special guest Jenny Cooper live from Brazil to discover what COP30 is all about, why climate action is important, and how your ideas can help shape the future. Get ready to think big and ask questions!

Suitable for: KS1 & KS2 classes.

Hosted by: Picture News, Leeds Climate Joy Network and Global Learning Leeds.

[Register here](#)



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