



Bedford Academy: Proud to be

Aim:

- To engage their diverse student community in learning.
- To promote strong community links, giving students relatable and diverse role models.
- To raise aspirations of students.
- To launch a more diverse curriculum.
- To embrace and learn more about all the cultures within the school community.

Background

Bedford Academy welcomes students from one of the most deprived areas in Bedford with over 40 languages spoken in the schools and a diverse surrounding community. Catherine Ross, Editor, www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk said "Everyone deserves the right to be Proud to Be everything they are and want to be in life." This was the inspiration for Bedford Academy to use October, Black History month, to the be start of a more inclusive school.

Action:

The stories of people they know...

A dynamic black maths teacher, Farida Nelson, drove the months activities, and led with her own personal experience. Sharing her moving story of travelling to the UK as a young child and growing up in East London, she shared with students how she was able to make choices that led her to her current profession.

Broadening their careers horizon....

To enthuse students about careers they may not have considered before, Bedford Academy invited Black professionals, leaders and entrepreneurs from their local community into school to showcase their careers, their career pathways and their individual stories. This was a chance for the young people to see people like themselves in careers they might not previously have considered.

Vicki Horlock, the AHT with responsibility for Inclusion at Bedford Academy, said

"Young people need to see others like themselves in a variety of fields and industries, and they need to know that regardless of their background, family circumstances, socio-economic situation, they still have the hope of becoming whatever they aspire to be. The invited speakers have done it and the journeys that they have taken to get to where they are should serve as an inspiration to students, and promote high aspirations."

BlacktoFront Day...

Diversifying the curriculum may seem overwhelming to schools, Bedford Academy used a day in Black History Month to put Black history and culture into the curriculum for an entire day. This is a



starting point, a chance for teachers to explore how best to move this forward and to raise their awareness of the need for more diversity in their subject areas.

Rep our country (cultural) Day...

The aim of black history month was to highlight and celebrate the achievements and contributions of Black people, until it was so integrated into life, learning and history, that there was no need to celebrate separately anymore. Bedford Academy chose to embrace all the cultures in their school by inviting students to wear cultural dress, carry a flag or wear the colours of their flag. If they had no national costume, national football shirts could be worn: everyone was included. This positive work has been continued in a display by students and staff visually representing the diversity of the school.



Impact:

- All students and staff have increased awareness of the different cultures within their school which increases their understanding of people they meet from different backgrounds.
- Welcoming students' cultures into the school and giving them a chance to share and celebrate them will help them feel valued and welcomed in the school community. This increases the sense of inclusion in the school which, combined with local community links, can strengthen connections with students' families. This can then help to support and engage students in their education.
- All students are empowered about their future choices: having seen and spoken to a diverse range of role models they have seen that people from a diverse range of backgrounds have made choices about their futures. Not only does this broaden their ambitions, but it also raises their aspirations.



- Linking directly with employers increases teachers' awareness of jobs available and the variety of career pathways. The diversity amongst the career links will challenge teachers' and students' biases.
- The foundation for diversifying the curriculum has been laid, and resources are being developed to challenge stereotypes, provide diverse perspectives and link to careers. As teachers start to interrogate and change their curriculum, they will develop further awareness of where they can expand their students' learning to encompass a wider range of perspectives. This will reduce the bias in students' learning and broaden their understanding of the world and their potential within it.