

## Summer Update

I wrote in our Autumn 2020 newsletter, *Communitas*, that, “We have never viewed our curriculum as innate, a noun or a thing, but rather as something dynamic, flexible, ever-changing, in which ideas, books and concepts come alive. The curriculum is at the very heart of our School”

It has become clear to me, following meetings with our Year 12 and year 10 Change & Diversity Prefects, that it is through our curriculum that we will have by far and away the biggest impact when it comes to change@CCHS and have reflected this with an update to our Curriculum Policy that can be found [here](#).

The Runnymede Trust report into *Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools* reveals that there is, “An abiding sense that the narrow and insular curriculum constitutes a fundamental barrier to a more racially equitable education system”. This becomes compounded throughout the exam years where the curriculum is constrained by the resources and course content prescribed by examination boards. Efforts to modernise the curriculum continue to gain momentum, but in the meantime those of us with a key interest in taking a progressive approach, are maximising the opportunity for teaching about race and ethnicity, particularly in the first three years of secondary education.

Within this May update, we will hear about efforts to modernise our curriculum from our Languages, History and Geography subject leaders.

**Mrs Emma Ledwidge, Deputy Headteacher and Change Project Leader**

### French

MFL lessons naturally lend themselves to the promotion of multiculturalism and the idea of celebrating differences between people. In the French Department, we aim to convey the message, both implicitly and explicitly, that individual characteristics make people unique and not ‘different’ in a negative way, as well as also emphasizing what we share in common.

We work closely with the Prince’s Teaching Institute who have an extensive collection of resources promoting voices from the Francophone world and I have recently attended a lecture looking at ideas to decolonize the curriculum within French lessons which will further inform the process already started.

We have subscriptions such as *Chez nous* and *Un jour un Actu* which provide regular sources of high quality, up to date articles directly promoting diversity or reflecting movements such as recently, the Black Lives matter so that students are exposed to content outside of the more traditional textbook approach.



We mark specific days such as International Women's Day by carefully selecting materials reflective of fresh new voices and current issues and particularly ensured this year that we drew from as wide a spectrum as possible in our choices of inspirational women. (Attached is a resource which had brilliant features on women in successful careers from various French speaking countries).

We have also done away with texts which felt dated in their portrayal of the Francophone African heritage and included new texts to draw attention to more up to date matters.

We aim to draw from as rich a source of customs as possible (after all, French is spoken in over 30 other countries in the world and over several continents!) and this year, we chose to focus on Christmas in Tahiti rather than mainland France to bring in a different perspective. We looked at shopping in Marrakesh rather than in Paris on our Year 11 shopping and transactions topic. When discussing where people live in Year 7, we make the point that not everyone in France lives in Provence or Normandy and showing, through our choices of visuals, a more realistic representation of housing. We also draw attention where possible to the heritage brought over by the North African wave of immigration and how this has enriched the culinary landscape or the musical and artistic scene.

The process is still ongoing and, although the KS5 specification is entirely rooted in celebrating diversity and looking at the history of immigration, we feel that educational publishers of KS3 and KS4 and exam boards still have a way to go and a role to play in using content which is more reflective of this approach.

**Mrs Virginie Caffier, Subject Leader: French**

## **History**

The History Department are reviewing the curriculum currently to ensure going forward it is as diverse and inclusive as possible. This has included ordering new historical texts on subjects including the Haitian rebellion, the queer history of London and black British history for staff subject knowledge development and to use when planning lessons as part of the new curriculum.

History staff have also been engaging in external CPD on black and LGBTQ+ history to learn from experts on how to integrate these subjects into the school History curriculum.

KS3 textbooks are being reviewed and possible replacements inspected to ensure student resources are up to date and reflect current historical scholarship.

Mrs Dawson has been trialling new lessons on the history of the kingdom of Benin with Year 9 and Mr Hughes has been exploring new ways of teaching about the transatlantic slave trade with Year 8.

Mrs Dawson has reviewed existing student and alumnae feedback on the current History curriculum and will also be discussing with students what they feel is missing from their current KS3 History curriculum. She welcomes any further feedback as she prepares a first draft of what she hopes will be a dynamic new CCHS KS3 History curriculum.

**Mrs Nicole Dawson, Subject Leader: History (September 2021)**

## Geography

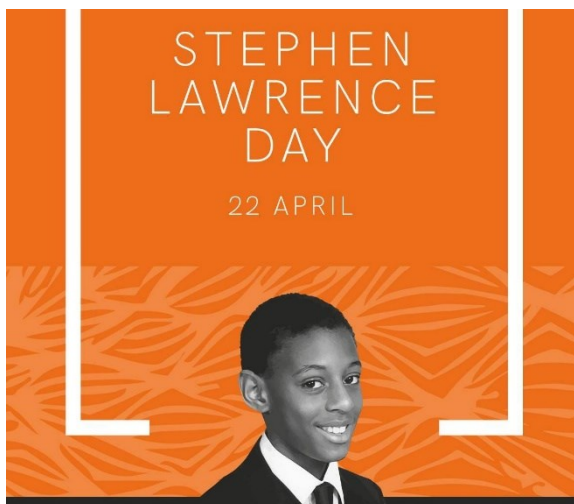
The critical exploration of different perspectives and contexts increasingly underpins the study of 21<sup>st</sup> century geography and are key skills that we foster in our students at CCHS. Yet it cannot be forgotten that Geography the discipline emerged through exploration, exploitation and the dominance of white Europeans (especially in the context of colonialism), and as such the traditional Geography curriculum has furthered a Eurocentric understanding of the world.

In a bid to move away from such narrow perspectives, the Geography Department – alongside work within the Humanities Faculty more broadly – have started to re-assess the ways in which Geography is taught at CCHS and how we can decolonise our curriculum across all key stages. Although our decolonisation journey has only just begun, we have started to update our case study work in Year 7 and Year 12; encouraged critical interrogation of key geographical theories through a decolonising lens (such as Malthusian understanding of population dynamics and the ways in which these ideas are echoed by popular academics such as David Attenborough), and we are planning to overhaul our Key Stage 3 curriculum to consider more comparative studies along specific lines of latitude, rather than the traditional ‘continent-by-continent’ approach that has dominated Geography teaching for many decades.

As part of this work, we are working alongside the Decolonising Geography group, an international group of Geography teachers and academics, all of whom are committed to decolonising the Geography curriculum at all levels. By unravelling the ways in which the world has been previously represented and ‘understood’, we hope our students will be able to engage with a more honest, representative understanding of the world around them.

**Miss Heidi Pocock, Humanities Faculty Leader and Subject Leader: Geography**

### Stephen Lawrence Day – Thursday 22nd April



On Thursday 22nd April, we marked Stephen Lawrence Day through our social media feeds and the sharing of resources from the Stephen Lawrence Foundation.

Launched in 2019, Stephen Lawrence Day marks a celebration of Stephen’s life and legacy. The sharing of his story with our students provoked discussions about building a fairer and more inclusive society.

As well as providing education material, resources and ways for young people to get

involved within their local community, the Foundation is working with schools to help shape a curriculum that will empower young people to address social disadvantage and discrimination that they may face in society.

