

Change@CCHS

Autumn Term 2022

Change@CCHS continues to be a central part of our school; our commitment to ensuring that our staff and students are equipped to work against all forms of discrimination and to pursue a fair world for all. This term we continue to develop our curriculum provision and have embraced the joy of cultural expression and celebration with our wonderful Black Excellence Fest, our brilliant Culture Fest Week, and our amazing Christmas Concerts which took place at the end of term.

We would like to thank this year's Change and Diversity Prefects for their contributions and ideas and look forward to welcoming new students into the roles next year.

Miss Harrison and Mrs Cross, Deputy Headteachers.

Black Excellence Fest 2022, Martha (organiser of Black Excellence Fest 2022)

The BE Fest 2022 at the start of November was a fantastic, fun event that students and teachers alike thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated. I took inspiration from my sister and her own celebration of black culture a few years ago, making my own version bigger and better with a wow factor more than before. With Black History Month on the horizon, I knew I wanted to create an event that reminded people with joyous singing and dancing that despite the black community being overlooked and underappreciated we have a lot to offer. I wanted to show people the vibrant and lively culture of the black community and show how far we, as a race, have come despite the constant hardships and tribulations. So, after lots of hard work the event came together, and it was explosive.

As soon as the doors opened, I could not believe the amount of people that flooded in, creating a buzzing, excitable atmosphere that put a smile on everyone's faces. There was colourful, delicious African cuisine- jollof rice, coconut fried rice, fried plantain, etc to eat and a bake sale, all money raised going to the charity we selected called 'the Black Curriculum' which teaches black education (among other things) in schools across the UK. Also, there were various activities, promoting not only black excellence but diversity and change too, for example a photoshoot with writing on a whiteboard to tell us why you are proud to be black/why you are proud to you, and a paper chain activity to write what you wanted to see in the world- the responses were beautiful. The main activity, courtesy to my mother's sewing skills, was a bedsheet that had the words 'all colours are beautiful' stitched on, inviting people to draw round their hands in different colours in a beautiful attempt to stomp on racism and colourism.

The performances that followed tied the event with a bow, getting the whole crowd excited and amazed at the songs performed, inspirational poems read, dances done to their favourite songs. The atmosphere was electric, and the event was wonderful, I look forward to BE Fest 2023!

Culture Fest 2022, Louisa, Tal and Toni, Change and Diversity Prefects

From the 28th of November to the 2nd of December, CCHS held a Culture Fest, a week of lunchtimes dedicated to celebrating the vast range of cultures and backgrounds represented at CCHS. Organised by the Change and Diversity Prefects, the celebrations ranged from talks to food to henna to performances, with the climax being Friday, as it included a Cultural Dress Day. Starting off the week, a lecture on 'How My Cultural Identity was Formed' was delivered to years 11-13 by Louisa, one of our Change and Diversity Prefects. Taking the idea from 'The Map Woman' by Carol Ann Duffy, she discussed how her memories of growing up in the UK impacted how she viewed her culture, and the personal growth it took for her to connect with her culture again. We have two more talks planned for the coming term – more information to follow!

It was wonderful to taste many different cultural foods - from Jalebi to meat pie to Syrniki, there was an array of tastes available. Many people came to buy food between performances and on their way to get Henna done. There were many contributions from people across all year groups, displaying how culinary talents are not limited to any age group. Skilled volunteers in Year 13 conducted the Henna designing, with many wonderful designs being presented to students and staff. As Henna has a place in many Asian and African cultures, it was wonderful to see others appreciating the talent and art that created each design.

The performances were arguably the highlight of the week, taking place on the 1st and 2nd of December. The overwhelming flurry of auditions meant that a change of plan was required to allow for twice the number of performances than originally envisaged. Many students witnessed talent from a number of performers, primarily singing and dancing acts, which ranged from West African High Praise to Afrobeat to fusions of Nigerian and Ghanaian dances, as well as Bharatanatyam, Bhangra, Giddha, Bollywood and many more. The hall was overflowing with people and their enthusiasm only made things better.

Lehengas with both long and short cholis, Agbada, Kente, half or full sari, Gele, tikkas, Qipao – these are just examples of the wide displays of cultural clothing, headpieces and jewellery worn on Friday. There was an admirable explosion of colour and style. The students were eager to express, and they did not disappoint. Being able to witness the pride people had in their cultures reminded us of why Culture Fest was created in the first place - to celebrate and appreciate culture in its purest form.

We can't wait to see how this new tradition will blossom and grow within CCHS.

