



Leicester
City Council

**RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED TO THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND
SCHOOLS SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

13 January 2021

Ruth Sinhal submitted the following Question/ Statement:

With reference to Leicester City Council's strong position on equality and the recent Black Lives Matter movement, would the committee agree that there is a need to strengthen their approach and consider a role for the authority in encouraging schools to adopt the Anti-Racism Pledge, which is supported by significant groups and individuals involved in racial justice work in our city?

Response to question, provided by the Principal Education Officer for Learning and Inclusion:

We'd like to thank Ruth for her question and the Anti-Racism Pledge that has been shared with us. It was pleasing to hear that the pledge has been developed at the instigation and with the involvement of young people in the City.

The pledge highlights some important principles and steps that schools should take to demonstrate their willingness to engage in meaningful and productive actions that will enable all their students develop Anti-Racist skills and to be proud of attending an Anti-Racist school.

You will be aware of our support, as a council, for the Black Lives Matter campaign and the commitment to dealing with complex and wider issues associated with racism and inequality of all types. Work is being done corporately across the council, led by the City Mayor and his Executive Team, with particular responsibility for Black Lives Matter sitting with Assistant Mayor Councillor Sue Hunter. This work is supported by senior officers across all divisions and is considering how the organisation provides a direction on how to challenge racism within the workplace, our services, our schools and society.

Many elements of education no longer remain the direct responsibility of the City Council. However, in our work with school leaders, governors, education partners and education settings across Leicester, we continue to identify how we can best support and challenge schools to aspire to, and achieve, the aims of the anti-racist approach and goals contained within the pledge. We believe real change will only come from embedding these actions into the day to day life our school settings.

For example, following changes in national guidance, it is some years since racist incidents are routinely reported to the City Council, school leaders are expected to regularly share this information with governing bodies. We need to work with schools to identify ways in which this information might be gathered in a meaningful way without adding unduly to the workload of schools.

Similarly, schools are individually responsible for setting their curriculum within the framework of the National Curriculum and the examination specifications. We will continue to work with experienced partners in the field and encourage schools in order that elements of racism, migration, Empire and colonialism are addressed.

We will also continue to seek to support schools in undertaking equality impact assessments as they review their policies. This will be a significant piece of work and therefore hope this to be carried out over the normal policy review cycle with examples of good practice shared between settings.

The area we will particularly promote is the engagement by schools in racial literacy training to enable staff and governors to understand the impact of unintentional racism and cultural bias on children of black heritage. This is something that must be adopted by all across the education system and carried out periodically.

Through our role in monitoring the performance of schools, our Education service continues to challenge schools on the outcomes for children of black heritage and look to explore with them the rationale for these outcomes and provide appropriate interventions.

By working with our schools to enable them to sign up and meet the aspirations of the pledge, we would hope to see both the attitudes towards, and the outcomes and aspirations within our black heritage children and community improve across the City.