



NOTTINGHAM GIRLS' ACADEMY

*We believe in creating a community empowered with the qualities,
skills and qualifications to enter the next phase of life with
confidence and ambition.*

Principal: Mr D Tungate
PA to the Principal: Mrs H Thornton

Robins Wood Road, Aspley
Nottingham NG8 3LD

Telephone: 0115 748 3410
Email: admin@nottinghamgirlsacademy.org
Website: www.nottinghamgirlsacademy.org
 @NottmGirlsAcad

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Dear Nottingham Girls' Academy Community

Recently, most of my communication with you has been about school closure due to Covid-19, but this time I wanted to write to you about another issue that has affected the world's consciousness - and my conscience.

The killing of George Floyd has sent shockwaves around the world. Last weekend saw global protests, including one at the Forest Recreation Ground. Protesters were demanding racial justice; defying social distancing rules to make a clear statement about the need for change in our societies.

I spoke to a fellow headteacher on the morning of the protest about attending. He did. I used social distancing as an excuse not to.

A colleague in school also asked if she could talk to her pupils about the shocking events of George Floyd's death, and asked whether I might want to say something as well. I readily agreed to her saying something, but I hid behind being a middle-class white man as a reason that no one would be interested to hear what I had to say on the subject. A coward's way out of not putting my foot in it and unintentionally causing offense or pain. She rightly called me out on it – and I can't thank her enough.

There is no escaping the fact that I am a heterosexual, middle-class white man. I can't speak from a position of experience. I have not been subjected to the awful prejudice that is still all too prevalent in our society. But that is all the more reason for me to speak out. If people in my position don't say or do anything, if we just lazily let others continue to battle for equality, then nothing will change. And it must.

My wife and I are bringing our children up to treat everyone equally; to accept and celebrate all differences whatever they are. I don't want them to grow up in a world of intolerance, fear and hatred. I don't want them to grow up in a society in which people are prevented from making their way in the world because of the colour of their skin, their gender, their sexuality, their faith, their disability or any other reason. But what am I actually doing about it?

At NGA we try to celebrate our diversity. We are so lucky to have pupils and staff from such a wide variety of different races, faiths and backgrounds - from countries all around the world. Our curriculum teaches about inequality and our policies state that we won't accept it. But we can do more. Conversations about race have been taking place for decades. Now change is needed on an institutional level. We are committed to action, not just words.

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- We strive to fulfil everyone's learning potential. • We value high standards, hard work and a ceaseless desire to improve.
 - We provide a safe, kind, nurturing and inclusive environment. • We enjoy the journey together.



To challenge the present requires our pupils to understand the struggles of the past, to properly appreciate each other's culture and heritage and to have pride in who we are. This week I have asked teachers to reflect on the curriculum in their subject area and whether it fully embraces the following statements of intent:

"We want the young women who leave our academy to have choice. To feel they can challenge stereotypes and break from tradition. To be socially mobile. To be well rounded, self-confident and proud of who they are. To think both locally and globally."

"We want our curriculum to reflect what it means to be a young, British woman today; for our pupils to know about the struggle and sacrifice that has led to the freedom and opportunity they have. We want them to know about their heritage and culture, and that of others in our community, enabling them to celebrate it and contribute to the progress of democracy as global citizens."

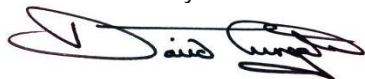
The most publicised recent events have been about race and skin colour and our most immediate response will be to help our pupils understand this. The 'Black Lives Matter' movement is, quite rightly, calling for justice and equality and I would like to share some ideas and resources with you that will hopefully help you open, or continue, conversations with your children:

- All pupils will be sent a Black Lives Matter PowerPoint on Monday 15 June, through their Teams community page. This has some resources, reading and tasks they can complete. It would be great if parents were able to go through this with them.
- The PowerPoint contains a list of documentaries that can be accessed through Netflix and Amazon which parents could watch with their children.
- In addition to this, there is a list of books which might be of interest. (Parents should ensure that all films and books are age appropriate for their child.)
- A Newsround article exploring the story of George Floyd's death can help you to discuss the facts about what has happened in a way that is aimed at children: www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/52976675
- Black Lives Matter website: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>
- The website, 'A Mighty Girl' has a few book lists with suggestions for books about girls from different backgrounds <https://www.amightygirl.com/books?cat=77>
- A TV adaptation of Malorie Blackman's Noughts + Crosses (which is 12+ years) can be found on BBC iPlayer.

As a school, we understand that we are an essential part of the ongoing process of change. We will reflect on all of our policies and curriculum and will implement change where needed. There is no place for prejudice, of any kind, in any society or community and we will not tolerate it in ours.

We are determined that the young women who attend Nottingham Girls' Academy continue to be educated about how essential equality is. We want them to be equipped with the knowledge and understanding to peacefully challenge inequality wherever they see it. The adults in our community need to model that for them. With your support we can make sure our children grow up in a fairer, kinder and more equal society.

Yours faithfully



David Tungate
Principal

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