

About Introducing Black History Education into the School Curriculum in Wales

Black History Month Wales Background

Race Council Cymru's Black History in Wales (RCC - BHW) in Wales acknowledges the contributions made by Black people to local, national and world history and culture by delivering an informative educational and celebratory programme annually during the month of October. It also allows the wider community to take part, learn and celebrate together to promote understanding and share our global history. Wales arguably hosts one of the first truly multi-cultural cities in the world where numerous nationalities have lived side-by-side in harmony for many decades. BHM Wales aims to:

- educate people in Wales;
- challenge negative perceptions;
- celebrate the positive contributions and
- promote the history of people of African Diaspora heritage.

The origins of BHM go back to 1926 when Carter G Woodson, (Editor, Journal of Negro History), established African Caribbean celebrations in America to mark the birthdays of two men who greatly impacted on the American black population: Frederick Douglas an American abolitionist who worked to end slavery and Abraham Lincoln, the American President who freed slaves during the civil war. It is still celebrated there in February each year.

Black History Month (BHM) in the UK emerged as part of the African Jubilee Year for Marcus Garvey Centenary celebrations in America with events taking place in October to mark the beginning of the new academic year organised by Akyaaba Addai Sebbo, coordinator of Special Projects at the Greater London Council.

Year on year Black History Month proves to be one of the most engaging, lively and welcoming events in Wales' cultural calendar. It serves both as an educational vehicle and an entertaining experience for those interested in and inspired by African and African Caribbean Heritage and the Welsh connection. Black History Month Wales' unique flavour draws on a wealth of historic and current connections – explored through a host of activities for families, children and people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. And with the support of the wider community we aim to build upon a reputation for quality, diversity and community involvement delivering activities for schools, universities, libraries, museums and art centres.

We earnestly believe that Black History should be taught in school to promote a positive and inclusive schooling experience for all children in Wales.

About Racism in Schools

Over the past ten years Show Racism the Red Card has worked with over 100,000 children and young people in Wales. In the last six months more schools have enquired about workshop provision following racist incidents in schools than the total enquires between 2010 and 2014. Show Racism the Red Card's aim was to investigate and evidence any racism in the Welsh education system to help ensure pupils and teachers in Wales are listened to by decision-makers.

The report has three main aims to discover:

1. How is racism experienced in the Welsh education system?
2. How do schools promote anti-racism in the Welsh education system?
3. How can anti-racism be improved in the Welsh education system?

Four research projects were undertaken between May 2016 and July 2016 to answer the above

See some of the results below... Action is needed to turn around the negative experiences of kids in schools and eradicate racism.

1. a. Perceptions of racial discrimination and racial stereotyping.

94 % of upper Key Stage 2 pupil's state racism occurs between pupils in their school because of differences in skin colour, religion and nationality.

100% of secondary and upper Key Stage 2 pupils think racial discrimination and stereotyping happens where they live.

Secondary and upper Key Stage 2 pupils feel skin colour and religion are the most negatively stereotyped and discriminated against racial characteristic.

Some pupils fail to distinguish between skin colour, religion and nationality. 2/3 teachers report they are aware of pupils being subjected to racism because of skin colour, religion, nationality, immigration status, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage and culture.

86 % of teachers feel pupils have misconceptions and stereotypes towards racial characteristics. The majority of religious racism is aimed towards Islam/ Muslims. The majority of nationality racism is aimed towards Eastern Europeans and those from, or perceived to be, from the Middle East.

1. b. Personal experiences of racism in school.

2/5 upper Key Stage 2 pupils have been victims of racial discrimination.

1/5 upper Key Stage 2 pupils have used racist language towards a peer. In school, racial discrimination can be verbal, indirect or physical.

Negative racial stereotyping can happen towards pupils in class when learning certain topics/subjects.

In the last 12 months ¼ teachers have responded to/reported a racist incident because of discrimination against skin colour (43%), nationality (24%), religion (22%) or Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage (11%).

During the teaching career of those surveyed, nearly ½ have experience of a learner being discriminated against because of their skin colour.

During the teaching career of those surveyed 1/5 have experience of a learner being discriminated against because of their religion, nationality or Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage. A small minority of teachers have witnessed teaching colleagues in school being victims or perpetrators of racial discrimination.

2. b. Recognising and responding to suspected racist incidents.

1/3 teachers do not feel confident recognising racism in the classroom. Some teachers feel staff do not know what a racist incident is, or how to distinguish between “friendly banter” and serious incidents.

2/3 teachers do not feel well trained or confident when supporting and dealing with victims or perpetrators of racist incidents.

There is a difference in knowledge about anti-racism procedures and policy across Wales

The report published by SRTRC makes it very clear that children of all ages continue to experience racism in school. The report also clearly identifies the need for support, training and development to be provided to teachers, teaching assistants and other school workers as well as school governors, LEA, EWC personnel, Local Authorities etc.

This tribute to our Black History Month Patron Mrs Betty Campbell is as follows,

“Mrs Campbell, our teacher, our neighbour, our dear family friend, our Auntie Betty, our community guru. She truly was the most inspirational teacher; we lived and learnt with her, she worked with our minds and hearts in all aspects of our lives. As her pupil, within Mount Stuart Primary School, she instilled in me and us all a passion and pride for learning, to stand for what we believe and expected us all to do our very best and reach our absolute potential. I love memories of her voice and her magnificent storytelling from books as well as tales from her own historic heartfelt adventures, which for me fuelled a passion for lifelong learning, inclusion, fun and authenticity in practice. Mrs Campbell’s love and teaching lit fire in my head and belly, her steer continues to shape my work in my role as a Senior Lecturer at Cardiff Metropolitan University” – Chantelle Houghton Cardiff MET 2017.

Race Council Cymru will continue to lobby for Black History to be included in the school curriculum and taught widely in schools across Wales as our Late Patron Mrs Betty Campbell did as a teacher and head teacher of Mount Stuart School. RCC wishes to commission school appropriate materials and resources to promote racial inclusion and educate and inform all school age children about Black History as well as Welsh History.