

Dear Parents and Carers

## **Black Lives Matter**

Like all of you, Rhodes Avenue's governors have been profoundly affected by the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests which followed. We acknowledge that events in the US affect us too, in our families and communities here in the UK. We would like all members of our school community to know that we are listening and will continue to listen to the concerns that you raise, and that we support you and recognise the anxiety, anger and frustration many of you are feeling.

Today we held an Extraordinary Governing Body Meeting to discuss our board's response to this issue and to the related question of whether we should change our school's name. We wanted to let you know about some of the areas we and the school will be focussing on in response.

### Curriculum

As a governing body we scrutinise and monitor the school's curriculum, including how it teaches black history, and how it deals with the topics of racism and inequality. The school strongly believes that black history should not only be explored in the month of October but throughout the entire curriculum, and that is the approach that is taken.

But more can be done, so the school will be arranging a committee of interested parents to discuss broadening the curriculum. It will meet as soon as possible, bearing in mind social distancing restrictions. Ideally, a topic as important as this should be done in person even though the committee may initially have to 'meet' digitally.

### School name

You may be aware of the campaign to change the school's name. This is because of the fact that the Rhodes family, who used to own the surrounding land, were related to Cecil Rhodes, an imperialist regarded as one of the main proponents of white colonial domination at the end of the 19th century. Neither the school nor the road were actually named after Cecil Rhodes, although we recognise that the connection is uncomfortable.

The school and the governors are listening to our local community and the concerns over the school name. There are now two reviews of place, street and building names in London, one set up by the Mayor of London and one by Haringey Council, and we are going to ask these commissions to review our situation. We would encourage parents, carers and others in our local community who have strong views on the name of our school to make their views known via one or both of these forums. Details of the reviews are at the end of this letter. The governing body will also be considering its

response to these reviews, and how best to engage with you about this. We will keep you updated about our response .

### Next Steps

This is the end of our first week of the wider opening of the school. We recognise that addressing the current events with our children, at school and at home is an opportunity to encourage deeper learning and understanding of race that will extend far beyond the curriculum. It is also an opportunity to explore our local history. We want them to be aware of injustice and racial prejudice past and present, so that they will be equipped to be able to stand up to them. Hopefully we all can come together as a school community and learn from each other. This is just the beginning of the conversation.

In the meantime we will keep you updated on all matters.

Best Wishes

*Helen and Katy*

**Helen Walsh and Katy Jackson**

**Co-Chairs of Governors**

## How to Make your Views Known on the school name

Our **local authority**, the London Borough of Haringey, announced a review this morning. The Council aims to work with residents, BAME communities and organisations, and experts to consider the history of local street names and other memorials, to understand their true meaning and reflect on whether or not they are appropriate for our society today. Local residents with concerns or queries about place, street or building names in the borough are asked to contact the Council. Views should be sent to [Leader@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:Leader@haringey.gov.uk) and they will be considered as part of this review. A public consultation on the outcome of the review will follow.

The **Mayor of London**, Sadiq Khan, has announced a commission to ensure the capital's landmarks suitably reflect London's achievements and diversity. The Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm will review all London statues, buildings, street names and works of art. It is not yet clear how individuals will be able to engage with this Commission but we will let you know, once we receive more information.