

career. Her report 'Race in the Workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review' was published in 2017. It has led to many changes in Government policy.

Baroness McGregor-Smith advised me to lead a series of focus groups, in order to hear the voices and experiences of pupils. I then identified 17 different groups whose voice I wished to hear I later

hear

the Governing Body at its last meeting, I put before them the words that were spoken by the pupils in the various focus groups. I do not propose to do that now but I want you to know that your unfiltered thoughts and opinions were faithfully reported. From those words, we have formulated a variety of proposals, questions and actions. This was not just a listening exercise the focus group process is only validated by actually doing something substantive in response.

I have divided responses into five key areas. I will begin with the curriculum what we teach. The first thing that we will do is revisit

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support. Some pupils felt that they came under pressure from their parents to choose certain subjects to study, and were guided to follow certain career paths. They asked the school to help them express who they were and to be allowed pursue their interests. You unequivocally have that support. We support all our subjects equally and we want you to be happy. We will promote that attitude and if you ask for our help we will give it.

I do not want any group of pupils to feel that they are discriminated against. I was glad to hear that pupils in the focus groups felt appreciated and well looked after. However, it is clear that their experiences of school were not free from unpleasantness. Although slurs are rare, they are sometimes heard. We can have none of that. If a racial slur or a derogatory term is reported to me, the expected outcome is, as it always has been, a fixed term exclusion.

And while we are about it, let us

their approval to do so.

Finally, a very few reported an experience of racial stereotyping. A small number of pupils have found that assumptions were made about them according to their ethnicity. These assumptions were that someone would be good at something rather than that they would not be good at it, but that is not important. The person getting it wrong may even have thought they were paying a compliment when they told someone else that because of their ethnicity they could be expected to be good at sports, or Maths or Science. However, it is not a compliment. We cannot behave in such a manner. To generalise from ethnicity to have certain expectations of an individual is just plain wrong.

The third important area is the extra-curricular. There were some interesting findings here. One thing that struck me is that sports and sports fixtures can be flashpoints for bad behaviour. Our pupils have

occasionally heard racist abuse from players from other schools.

When it has occurred, our teams and players have behaved with real dignity and courage. Should it occur again, immediately report it to the referee. Of its nature, sport combines moments of high emotion with an informal context. This means that people can let themselves down. Let us stay aware and demand the best behaviour from ourselves. Moreover, cadets, let us offer them the best behaviour and total respect. They have the right to visit our school and feel valued.

We will also continue to ensure that the range of clubs and societies we offer meets the needs of every pupil. One new club is the Afro-Caribbean Society. I am glad it has been formed and I look forward

History Month and Steven Lawrence Day.

Finally, we conclude with well-being. We are exploring two ideas with regard to this important aspect of school life. The first is to

promote more awareness of heritage or faith in the lunch ~~of~~

welcomed; I think I can truthfully state that we have concluded the exercise with a great sense of positivity.

It is important we all understand that this process has started a discussion rather than concluded it. We have begun a process of reflection and self-exam