**Round Table Talk Part 1**

*Diversity and inclusion*

*in primary schools*

**We recently had 3 round table talk discussing Diversity and Inclusion in Primary school. Joining in the table talk were over 35 parents with children in both Independent and state schools. This round table consisted of two thought-provoking questions, providing insightful discussions regarding the lack of inclusion and diversity within certain schools.**

**The first question allowed parents to share the experiences of their children’s unfair treatment within their schools.**

The stories shared by the parents were informative, enlightening, emotional and some surprising.

Parents spoke about their experiences where early judgment was placed on their children based on minor incidents, some of their children have been labelled "disruptive", and some children were wrongfully diagnosed with having learning disabilities, behavioural challenges, mental health issues. Others expressed instances where schools had taking notes on their children without permission. In one instance a child was refused admission without any assessment other than the statement "He would not be a good fit here"

Parents expressed comments their children had shared with them. “Black skin, black skin, when shall you leave” A song shared in school between his black daughter and her best friend. Or a son adamantly dismissing the notion of a black God or black angle.

From the stories shared by the parents, there was some unpopular conclusion that the UK schooling system is against black children's progress. However, the general consensus around the table was that black children are often limited at a very early age and emphasised the constant neglect of their true needs.

**This led to the second question which focused on methods in combatting discrimination against black children.**

The common response to this question was the need for more education on discrimination. Some parents emphasised the importance of targeting the mindset of children. While others suggested the use of diverse stories books can be significant to teach children how to treat one another equally.

Furthermore, the significance of reconstructing the curriculum was discussed; by changing the curriculum to be more diverse and inclusive will help educate and bring awareness to **all** children on the different races and cultures. This will ensure children appreciate their identity and cultural heritage without leaving anyone behind or making any child feel insecure about themselves.

 Most importantly, there was a recommendation to start to educate children from the private sphere and then move into the public sphere. This idea pointed to the role of the parents in making their children know their self-worth and identity from home. Some gave examples of making their children recite daily affirmations, others pointed to replacing the regular bedtime books to  more cultural and diverse books that will inculcate the values and assurance that would make their children identify with their culture

In conclusion, this round table provided insight into the impact of the education system on black children. It shows the failure of some schools in supporting black children who may be the only black child in the class. Lastly, and most importantly, it reflects the lack of recognition of non-British culture in the curriculum which clearly needs to be addressed.