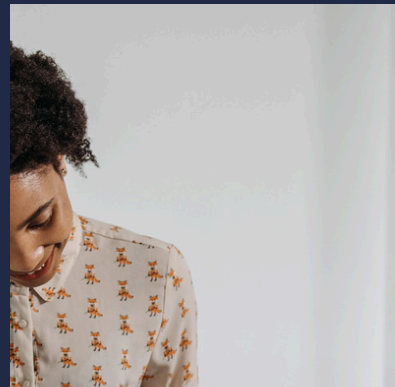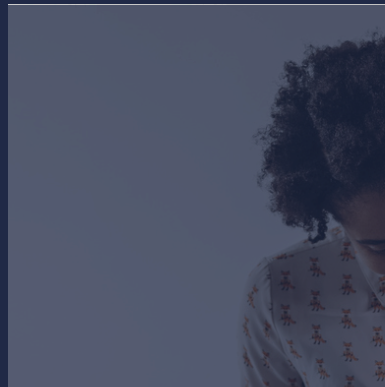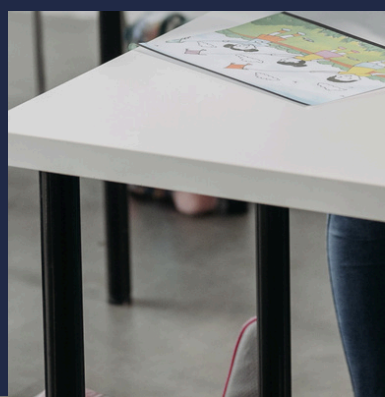independent
thinking

Diversity Health Check

Developing a curriculum and culture for all, that supports equity, diversity and inclusion.

November 2024
Your School

Introduction

Welcome to your Diversity Health Check report, a collaborative effort between Independent Thinking and More Than Flags and Rainbows CIC. Together, we harness our expertise to help every pupil feel safe, seen, and supported within their educational environment.

Independent Thinking is dedicated to inspiring and empowering educators to cultivate creative learning spaces that changes people's thinking. With a focus on innovative approaches to teaching and learning, we strive to ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive.

More Than Flags and Rainbows is a not-for-profit organisation committed to promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion and understanding within schools. Our mission is to create safe and affirming spaces for all students, fostering a culture of acceptance and respect.

In this report, we detail the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion for Your School , aligning with your broader priorities.. This action plan has been developed using feedback from educators at Your to ensure that the voice of the community is at the heart of our approach. As the plan evolves in the coming years, student voice will remain integral to ensuring that the culture and curriculum reflect the world our students inhabit.

We are dedicated to actively listening to and valuing everyone who works for and with Your School. By demonstrating respectful and inclusive behaviours, we aim to create an environment where all individuals feel acknowledged and empowered.

I look forward to continuing our relationship with Your School as we work together to enhance the student and staff community for all.

Ian Timbrell

Independent Thinking
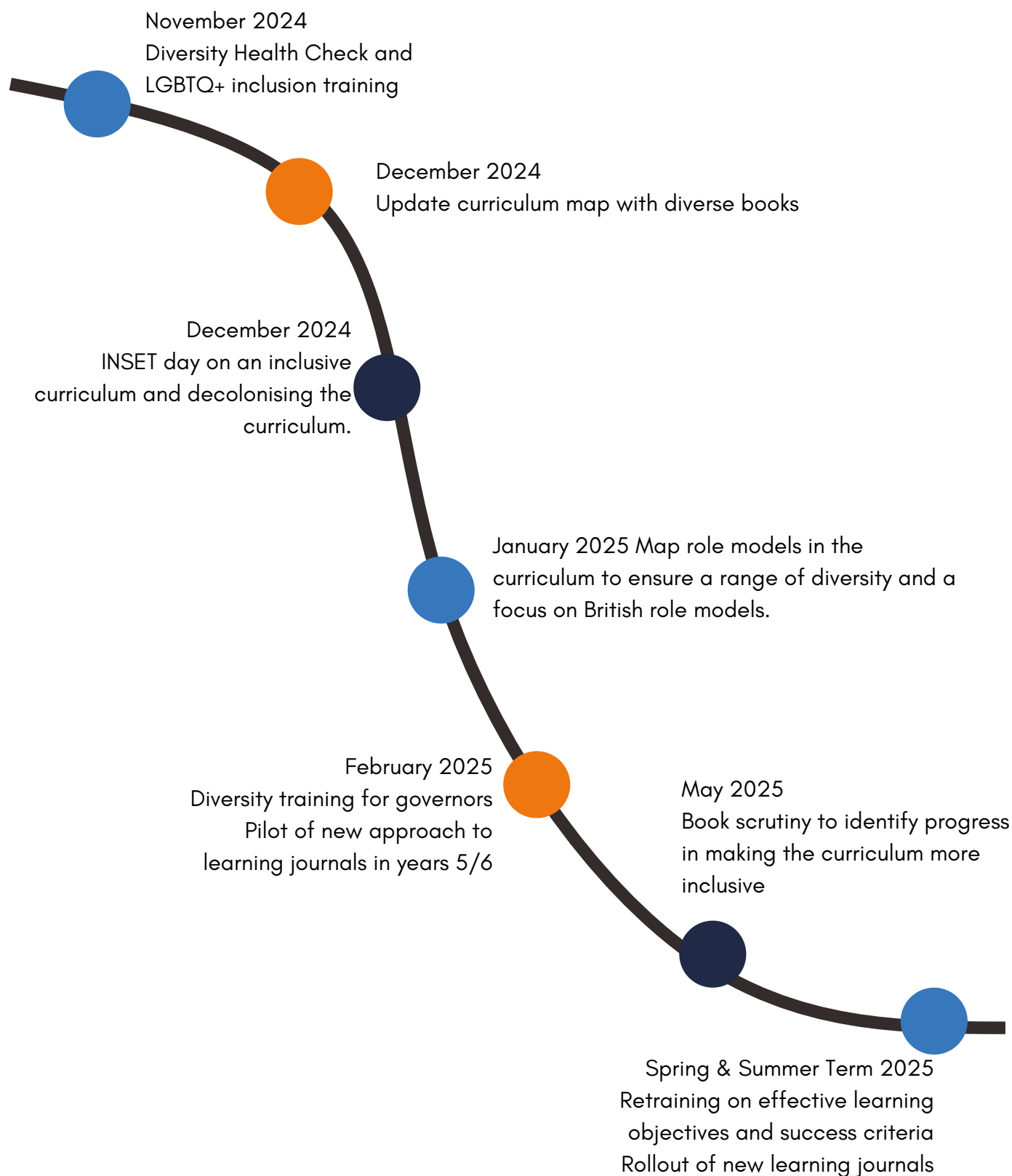More Than Flags and Rainbows

Our approach

Our plan for promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) draws upon a wealth of knowledge, research, data, and expertise gathered from various sources within the education and diversity sectors. We have actively engaged with educators throughout the trust, and as this plan develops, we will engage with wider stakeholders.

Furthermore, future actions will consider recommendations, EDI concerns, and challenges expressed through student feedback and surveys on, racial, disability, gender and sexuality disparities, as well as through community and stakeholder interactions.

Our efforts have also been informed by our previous initiatives and experiences, as well as the insights derived from the research in the University College London Inclusive Curriculum Health-check. Additionally, staff training utilised research from organisations such as Stonewall, Terrence Higgins Trust and Just Like Us.

We extend our gratitude to all those who have generously shared their valuable perspectives, experiences, and insights, as their contributions have been instrumental in shaping our action plan and driving meaningful change.

Proposed Timeline

November 2024
Diversity Health Check and
LGBTQ+ inclusion training

December 2024
Update curriculum map with diverse books

December 2024
INSET day on an inclusive
curriculum and decolonising the
curriculum.

January 2025 Map role models in the
curriculum to ensure a range of diversity and a
focus on British role models.

February 2025
Diversity training for governors
Pilot of new approach to
learning journals in years 5/6

May 2025
Book scrutiny to identify progress
in making the curriculum more
inclusive

Spring & Summer Term 2025
Retraining on effective learning
objectives and success criteria
Rollout of new learning journals

Diversity Health Check

Through a collaborative process between members of staff from across the trust, the provision for LGBT+ pupils, diverse communities, and the wider school community was audited and evaluated.

The methodology used utilised a semi-structured interview technique, where members of staff fed back on aspects of their school's provision from their perspective. Although the direction of the interviews was led by the facilitator, interviewees were empowered to branch out into adjacent topics in order to gain an 'on the ground' perspective of the current inclusion in their schools. The school organised the day into several sections with relevant members of staff present:

- Student-led tour and interviews
- Policy and provision audit
- Staff interviews
- Book Scrutiny

To provide supporting data, evaluation and targets, an audit tool was used where a RAG (Red, amber, green) system was used. This will be discussed in subsequent sections.

The following pages discuss the findings in detail with a summary on the final page.
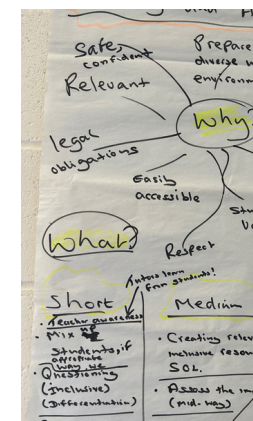
Conversations with Pupils

We don't want to be told every single lesson what we have to do

Our school is really friendly

**Some teachers always blame the boys for arguments**

Can we have some newer books?

Can someone have two mums?

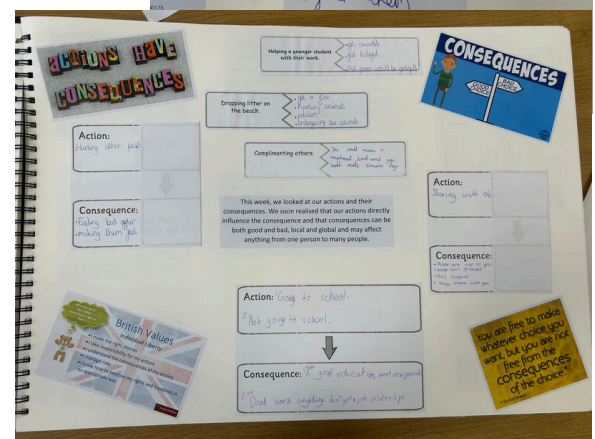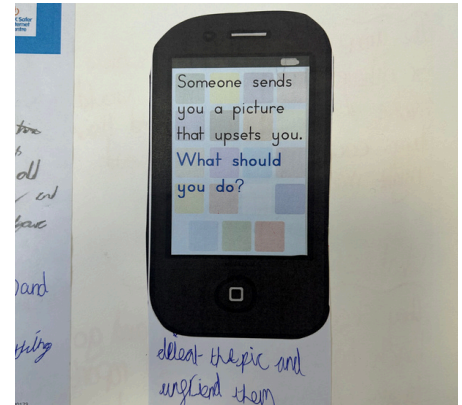**We think we've got a good range of authors, but would like some more ideas**

Below is a summary of the conversations.

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Pupils were very happy in the school - There was a feeling of safety and support from all pupils - Behaviour is of a high standard - There has been good progress in developing the purpose of diversity and inclusion.	- Staff are nervous about what vocabulary to use, particularly surrounding non-binary and transgender identities. - Some staff feel that large groups of parents clash with LGBTQ+ inclusion. - There are not clear processes for tackling homophobic and transphobic language. - Staff would be clearly supportive of a pupil coming out, but the approach isn't consistent. - There isn't a clear curriculum map to ensure that there is progression and coverage of representation and diversity across the trust.

Opportunities	Threats
- The trust is rapidly evolving and so this is a good chance to update curricula. - Future training has already been put into place to ensure that changes are built upon.	- Several classes face challenging parents who question any LGBTQ+ inclusion. - There isn't a clear 'script' of how to talk to parents and there is inconsistency in approach. - There is a potential that the curriculum could become a 'tick box' of representation. - The lack of transgender guidance is concerning for staff.
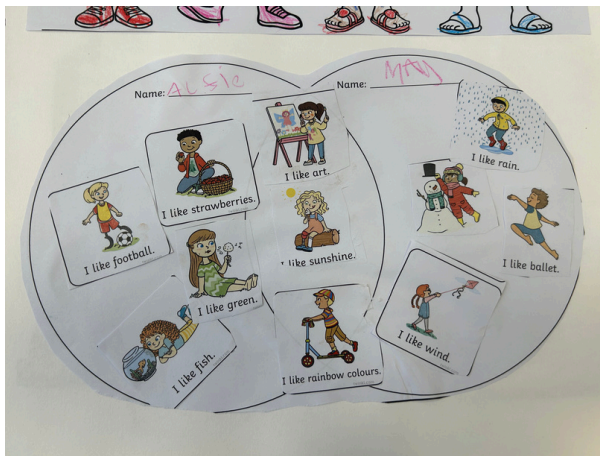
In EFYS there is heavy use of animated characters. For children with limited life experiences, this will be very abstract. This activity could be more effective by children in the class taking the photos and printing them out. Although this would take more time, it would be far more meaningful for them.


In upper KS2, answers to PSHE questions are often very limited and do not represent the complexity of many of these issues. This type of limiting activity suggests that there is a 'correct' answer, and is unlikely to be useful for the pupils. These discussions should also include debate around what people would realistically do and the difficulties around some of these actions.

The purpose of some activities is unclear and appears to be for evidence's sake. Learning vocabulary is far more effective across the curriculum and when embedded in conversation, rather than as a worksheet. It is not clear why some words are needed in primary school and there are also inaccuracies, particularly in the definition of asexual.

Although coverage is good, learning journeys are sporadic and limited in many PSHE books. This leads to a lack of depth in activities. For example, in this Year 6 activity, the complex nature of stereotypes is not discussed. Although stereotypes is also covered elsewhere in the year, as there is such a large time between them, progression and depth in the topic is limited. Reorganisation to develop the subject areas into topics could result in more in depth and meaningful coverage.
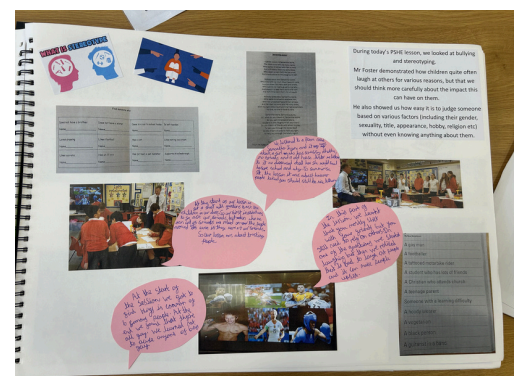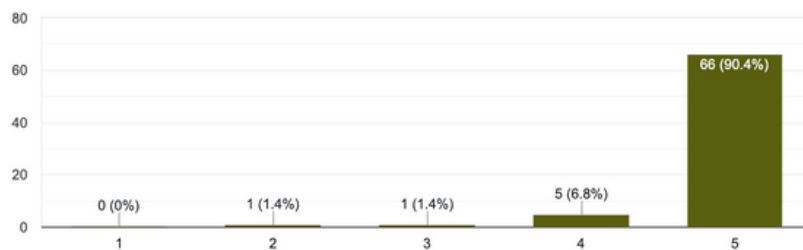
Feedback from LGBT+ training 25th April 2024
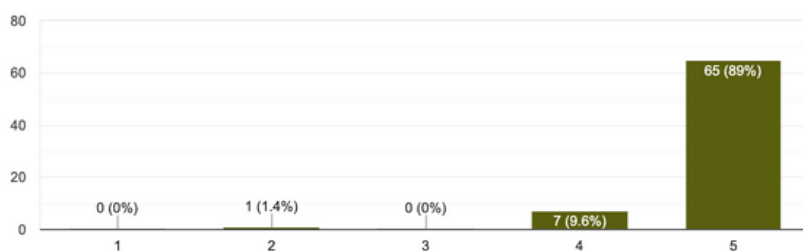
How satisfied were you with the training?
73 responses
Copy

- 0 (0%) — 1
- 1 (1.4%) — 2
- 1 (1.4%) — 3
- 5 (6.8%) — 4
- 66 (90.4%) — 5

How relevant and helpful do you think it was for you?
73 responses
Copy

- 0 (0%) — 1
- 1 (1.4%) — 2
- 0 (0%) — 3
- 7 (9.6%) — 4
- 65 (89%) — 5

What were your key take aways from the training?
68 responses

More understanding

Celebrate everyone for who they are.

Very knowledgeable

Understanding terminology

Vocabulary

New vocabulary. Statistics.

keep an open mind

To understand the correct terms and what they mean.

Learning more about aspects of the LGBTQ+ identitys

Recommendations

Recommendation 3:

Create a script for speaking to parents who are challenging LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Staff raised concerns as they did not know how to respond to parents who questioned LGBTQ+ inclusion, worried that they will say the wrong thing who get into a debate. With headteachers, a script was developed for staff to use. It is recommended that this is introduced to all teaching and support staff, and that during a training session, they get the opportunity to rehearse it with each other.

- You have told me…
- Our school values are…
- We are a fully inclusive school.
- (The ***is supportive of this view…)
- If you would like to talk more about this…

Recommendation 4:

Provide training to PSHE leads on effective PSHE activities and learning journeys.
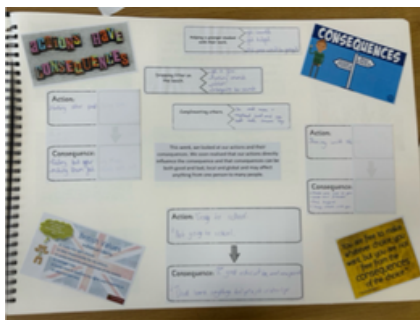
Although there is excellent PSHE coverage across the trust, lessons are often isolated, not given a context and are limiting. Using the feedback on the previous pages, it is recommended to provide training to PSHE staff on effective teaching, particularly focussing on developing learning journeys, facilitating open ended activities and using photographs rather than cartoons.

Recommendation 5:

Develop trust-wide expectations for LGBTQ+ education and a central book list.

There is excellent practice across the trust but much of the hard work is being duplicated and so reduces efficiency. There is also inconsistency in LGBTQ+ expectations leading to some inappropriate vocabulary being introduced.

It is recommended that a central list of LGBTQ+ inclusive books is created so that if schools need to find books, there is a central place to look.

Also, it is recommended that a group of headteachers create a framework of minimal expectations for when LGBTQ+ concepts and vocabulary should be taught. This would allow flexibility, but improve consistency and aid ensuring age-appropriate teaching.