7th July 2020

Dear parents/carers

I am writing to you today in connection with the Black Lives Matter movement and how we intend The Portsmouth Academy to take part in the global discussion on racism.

The Portsmouth Academy prides itself on its values of inclusivity and unconditionally stands against racism. We are actively encouraging our students, staff and wider community to support those who seek to change it.

We would like to thank everyone who has contacted us across the last two weeks, specifically the students and alumni of the City of Portsmouth Girls' School, Portsmouth Academy for Girls, The Portsmouth Academy and the 213 signatories of the *Portsmouth Schools 4 Change* petition. We are proud of you all for taking the brave step in speaking out – it is clear from the emotion within your letters that you are passionately advocating for change.

I want to reassure you that as the current Principal at The Portsmouth Academy, I share your sense of concern and do not take these matters arising lightly. I didn't want to rush in to releasing a kneejerk response or offer empty words. I wanted to take my time, consider our response and ensure that we make the right decisions to have the maximum impact.

Across the last three weeks, I have been speaking with both current and past students and teachers at TPA to have opening discussions about their experiences and about how we can work together moving forward to create a fully inclusive, safe and representative curriculum and school experience for all our students. It is clear from these initial conversations that there is already great work being done here at TPA, as our school community has always been diverse and we have aimed to celebrate this at every opportunity. Our humanities curriculum has always included migration, the impact of the British Empire on the world (positive and negative) and has a keen focus on religions and cultures across the world.

This letter brings a further commitment to you; we intend to do everything within our power to:

- Create a fully inclusive learning environment that our students are proud of
- Review our curriculum further with a keen eye on developing the areas of cultural diversity we already celebrate and actively seeking opportunities for more examples
- Develop our internal staff culture showing we understand what it means to be a BAME student at TPA

This is by no means a complete list. There is a lot of work that we need to do to achieve this and we will continue to communicate our plans with you. We have already begun to work on these projects by contacting ex-students to investigate past problems. We have created a working party headed by myself within our Senior Leadership Team to which we have invited alumni and members of the community to join.

We will also be looking to work with external groups such as students and staff from Portsmouth University and members of our Academy Advisory Board to undertake a review of our curriculum alongside our staff and students. I would encourage you all to continue to consult and advise us as we develop. The following has either been developed at TPA over the past few years, or is what we intend to move forward with over the coming year:

- Our Inclusivity and Diversity lead, who has been in post for two years and has done some fantastic work in this area already, is writing a project plan to incorporate a training programme for staff and for students. She is setting up a working party from different members of staff and the wider community and this will launch formally in September.
- Our student leadership team also includes an Inclusivity and Diversity lead, and has done so for a number of years. This role will form a part of the above working party and be a voice for the student population. In the past, this role has led to some excellent school projects. One example of this was working alongside Miss Sheppard and with the African Women's Forum for Nelson Mandela's 100th birthday celebration where our children performed at the New Theatre Royal.
- Our PSHE Leads map the curriculum each year and have ensured that opportunities to be inclusive and explicitly teach diversity and mutual tolerance are evident.
- The Anti-Bullying policy is currently being updated and there is a working party, which has a diverse membership of both staff and students.
- From September we are delivering RE (Ethics) up to KS4 for all students; this is being driven by the English Department and will focus on '20 Big Ideas' and 'Diverse Shorts' texts.
- As part of our ongoing school improvement, our curriculum plans and offer are constantly under review. Our team of very strong Curriculum Leaders is committed to inclusivity and through this review, will actively seek opportunities for teaching diversity through subjects where appropriate.
- Contacting outside agencies and members of the community who have reached out to the school to support us in ensuring TPA is a fully inclusive place to learn and work for all.
- The Thinking Schools' Academy Trust is equally as committed to celebrating diversity across all our schools and I am delighted that I will be representing TPA on our Trust Diversity working party.

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It will be wonderful to have our school community back together in September, to really begin to explore this work in more depth with the children. It will be important for me to be able to update you on our progress in these areas and I am committed to building our website and social media outlets into a force for the school to continue to champion, and be at the forefront of inclusivity and diversity.

As stated, our values of inclusion, diversity and a sense of belonging are key to the vision of The Portsmouth Academy and we accept our role is to educate our students to actively stand up for and be anti-racist! My goal is that everything we do at TPA supports our students to grow into self-reflective learners, that we support them to gain a strong knowledge of the world around them and equip them with the skills to be a valuable and active member of their community.

With kind regards

Rachel Grey

Principal

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