

Dear Mr Shelley, Headteacher of The Sir John Colfox Academy and Mr Bath, Chair of the Minerva Learning Trust,

We are writing to you as students, alumni and parents of The Sir John Colfox Academy and other schools within the Minerva Learning Trust in regards to the recent events surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement and the systemic racism entrenched in our society. We believe that, as educational institutions, you have a way and responsibility to actively fight this racism and therefore we are writing to urge you to take action in calling for, and implementing, a decolonised national British curriculum.

We note that it is currently not compulsory in the U.K. for primary or secondary schools to teach about Britain's role in colonisation, slavery and the long-lasting consequences of these structures in modern society, nor the movements throughout history that have worked to overcome these structures. As we reflect upon our education with you, we feel we were provided with a predominantly white, Eurocentric perspective that has often left many of us ignorant to the racism and injustices that Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) have faced and continue to face, as well their rich, varied and powerful histories and contributions. A decolonised curriculum should teach students about the realities of British history alongside a celebration of BIPOC movements, individuals and contributions to every aspect of society.

This is a national problem. The Impact of Omission survey, released on the 1st June 2020, found that:

**86.2 %** were educated on the **Tudors** in-depth as part of their curriculum, whereas only **9.3%** learned about **the role of slavery in British Industrialisation**.

**72.2%** learned about **The Great Fire of London**, whereas only **7%** learned about **Britain's colonisation of Africa**

**71.5%** were taught about the **Battle of Hastings**, whereas only **5.2%** learned about the role of **BAME soldiers in WWI and II**.

When asked: *"The national curriculum for history aims to ensure that all pupils: **'gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation'**". During discussions of the British Empire in school, to what extent was the role of slavery discussed?"*

**5.5%** replied **'to a significant extent'**

**33%** replied **'to a limited extent'**

**34.9%** replied **'It was mentioned briefly'**

**26.6%** replied **'not at all'**

(All this data is available on the website: <https://impactofomission.squarespace.com>)

We believe it is **vital** that young people are taught an honest portrayal of the British colonial empire, alongside an acknowledgement and celebration of the vast contribution that BIPOC have made to society. This is most clear in teaching related to History, however, we do not believe this is the only area of the curriculum that needs addressing. For example, English Literature reading lists and set texts can be diversified to include a variety of BIPOC authors and postcolonial literature. This diversification will also help equip students to feel confident discussing race and race relations in our society.

We therefore urge you to do all you can within The Sir John Colfox Academy and the Minerva Learning Trust to decolonise the curriculum and join our voice in the demanding that the Department for Education reform the national curriculum to:

1. Include a variety of historical teachings that touch not only on the UK's "highlights", but the realities of colonialism and slavery at the hands of our ancestors. This teaching should also include the movements throughout history that have worked to overcome systemic racism and white supremacy.
2. Include current and historical geopolitical perspectives from other countries, encompassing each continent.
3. Ensure English curriculum readings include texts from equitably balanced white and BIPOC authors, and ensure this balance is reflected in the literature available in the school library.
4. Ensure music, art and textile lessons appreciate the cultural influence BIPOC artists have had throughout history, and how they have used and continue to use their medium to amplify their voices, and that it does so without appropriation.
5. Ensure economics includes an assessment of the UK's role in continuing colonisation through finance, maintaining neo-colonial power and ideas of 'development' through commerce and trade.

As The Sir John Colfox School claims to stand for 'inspiring learning' and 'achieving excellence', and the Minerva Learning Trust for 'creating an outstanding, inspirational and inclusive learning community' that aims to 'meet all the needs of young people for their present and future global citizenship', **we urge you** to put out a statement calling out racism in society and at school, addressing white privilege and providing resources for education and support. We would urge you to continue this allyship with action. For example, reflecting the diversity called for in the curriculum in your teaching hierarchy and enabling support for BAME staff to succeed and lead, supporting students to organise, enquire and learn around social justice issues, and being an actively anti-racist voice in the community, calling out discrimination and injustice. Examples of teaching resources which centre these perspectives can be found at [theblackcurriculum.com](http://theblackcurriculum.com).

We thank you for taking the time to read our letter, and thank you in advance for your action and solidarity.

Yours sincerely,

1. Alfie Edwards, Class of 2012
2. Makeda Downes, Class of 2021
3. Bethany Letherby, Class of 2012
4. Kaitlyn Wellman, Class of 2020
5. Ellie Charnley, Class of 2015
6. Isabel Mullen, Class of 2014
7. Hannah Noonan, Class of 2015
8. Thomas Roberts-Wray, Class of 2014
9. Harvey Hopkins, class of 2021
10. Amy Davies, Class of 2015
11. Leah Crabtree, Class of 2011

12. Charlotte Moreton, Class of 2016
13. Anna Roberts-Wray, Class of 2012
14. Megan Furner, Class of 2017
15. Alana Pollock, Class of 2015
16. Imogen Thomas, Class of 2015
17. Abigail Letherby, Class of 2008
18. Georgia Clarke, Class of 2016
19. Laura-Kate Thomas, Class of 2010
20. Bethany-Jane Thomas, Class of 2012
21. Rebecca Pattinson-Smith, Class of 1984 and parent 2005-current
22. Tom Pattinson-Smith, Class of 1991 and parent 2005-current
23. Beth Hedges, Class of 2015
24. Janet letherby parent 2001-2012
25. Patrick letherby parent/governor 2001-2012
26. Jay Pattinson-Smith, Class of 2019
27. Elizabeth McNulty, class of 2020
28. Sam Marsh, class of 2021
29. Karhisa Vincent-Janes, Class of 2017
30. Adam Halford, Class of 2015
31. Leia Benneyworth, Class of 2019
32. Kayleigh Holder, Class of 2010
33. Florence Little, Class of 2014
34. Tori Foote, Class of 2014
35. Jessica Tewson, Class of 2018
36. Cassidy Sorrell, Class of 2021
37. Lauren Hitt, Class of 2015
38. Ellie Taylor, Class of 2016
39. Daniel Martins, Class of 2021
40. Tiana Foot, Class of 2016
41. Niamh O'Mara, Class of 2014
42. Phoebe Stewart, Class of 2016
43. Nicole Kimber, Class of 2016
44. Imogen Gordon, Class of 2016
45. Shannon Lee Collins, Class of 2019
46. Abbie Bird, Class of 2019
47. Harry Poole, Class of 2012
48. Nia Kanellaki, Class of 2015
49. Miles Edwards, Class of 2011
50. Sophie Dawe, Class of 2012
51. Amanda Downes, parent 2014-2021 and employee under Minerva Trust
52. Sarah Williams, Class of 2015
53. Imogen Slade, Class of 2014
54. Marcella Sadatian, Class of 2012
55. Joseph Scott, Class of 2015
56. Tobias Hibbs, Class of 2014
57. Sarah Brown, Class of 2016
58. Hollie Kenway, class of 2015
59. Saffrah Hughes, Class of 2017

60. Patrick Harper, Class of 2015
61. Danielle Donovan, Class of 2011
62. Olivia Beecham, Class of 2012
63. Emily Donovan, Class of 2013
64. Lilli-Mae Stordy, Class of 2021
65. Sophie Rowe, Class of 2016
66. Sasha Dick, Class of 2012
67. Wendy Collinson, parent 2008-2015
68. Molly Sales, Class of 2013
69. Monisha Vij, Class of 2016
70. Merlin Wills-Bradley, class of 2010
71. Lucy Young, Class of 2015
72. Jordan Crabb, Class of 2015
73. Kadie Foot, Class of 2012
74. Marty Muir, Class of 2010
75. Esther Stone, Class of 2020
76. Ben Howell, Class of 2021
77. Leon Edwards, parent 2006-12
78. Eleanor Sliwa, Class of 2016
79. Kirsty East, Class of 2011
80. James Watts, Class of 2017
81. Molly Overall, Class of 2021
82. James Wilkinson, Class of 2015
83. Hope Tait, class of 2016
84. Phoebe Levien, Class of 2012
85. Alex Middleton, Class of 2012
86. James Filosopo, Class of 2016
87. Beth Thomas, Class of 2012
88. Finley Layton, Class of 2020
89. Aaron Derrick, Class of 2012
90. Elizabeth Blake, Class of 2011
91. Jack Cullingford, Class of 2016
92. Tom Wilson, Class of 2014
93. Jamie Cox, Class of 2004
94. Sally Parmiter, parent 2000-2011
95. Emily Parmiter, Class of 2017
96. Edward Parmiter, Class of 2011
97. Lianne Dunk, Class of 2005
98. Katie Neame, Class of 2013
99. Chloe Shepherd, Class of 2015
100. Caitlin Shepherd, Class of 2013
101. Eleanor pinkett, Class of 2015
102. Naomi Hole, parent 2003-2012
103. Gary Hole, parent 2003-2012
104. Eve Appleton-Scott, class of 2017
105. Caitlin Appleton-Scott, Class of 2014
106. Emellia Alner, Class of 2015
107. Scarlet-Holly Mealing, Class of 2019

108. Ben Mayne, Class of 2012
109. Ellie Shepherd, Current Student YR10
110. Honor Slade, Class of 2013
111. Polly Sutcliffe, Class of 2014
112. Sophie Smith, Class of 2015
113. Lauren Podger, Class of 2008
114. Fleur Handyside, Class of 2020
115. Caitlin Pask, Class of 2018
116. Connie Jolliffe, Class of 2016
117. Halla Pinkett, Class of 2017
118. Callum Pattinson, Class of 2014
119. Miranda Mullen, Class of 2016
120. Jess Letherby class of 2006
121. Milly Edwardes, Class of 2020
122. Harry Lockett, Class of 2016
123. Aimii Kimber, Class of 2012
124. Pedro Warner, Class of 2012
125. Matt Huxley, Class of 2008
126. Rebecca Ayling, former student.
127. Amelia Mundy, Class of 2015
128. Jessie Nichols-Stevens, Class of 2019
129. Charlotte Symonds, Class of 2011
130. Hester van Hensbergen, Class of 2010
131. Liv Murless, Class of 2012
132. Hannah Rist, Class of 2014
133. Connor Munro Class of 2012
134. Vicky Furner parent
135. Charlotte Parsons, Class of 2016
136. Becky Hughes, class of 2015
137. Grace Crabtree, class of 2013
138. Tegan Furner student
139. Jo Harp class of '94 parent 2000-
140. Archie Dunbar, Class of 2020
141. Lucy Timbrell, class of 2010
142. Tommy Green, Beaminster and Colfox sixth form, class of 2017.

Member of staff at Beaminster school 2019-2020

143. Matilda Dixon, class of 2014
144. Ollie Turner, Class of 2012
145. Remy Brown, Class of 2013
146. Tilly Jeune, Class of 2013
147. Alice Haskins, Class of 2013
148. Katy Bird, Class of 2013
149. Luke Bennett, Class of 2009
150. Jesse Jeune, Class of 2009
151. Toby Hawker Class of 2014, Teacher of History.
152. Poppy Smith, Class of 2012
153. Joe Nava, Class of 2009
154. Jim Jaggard, Class of 2009

155. Rudi Roberts, Class of 2009
156. Andy Farmer, Class of 2008
157. Tad Hulacki, Class of 2008
158. Dillon Creedan, Class of 2013
159. Jay Bradon, Class of 2011
160. Waldo Etherington, Class of 2004
161. Matthew Lockett, Class of 2014 (sixth form)
162. Chelsea Smith, Class of 2013
163. Lucie Fry, Class of 2014
164. Rachel Shepherd, Parent 2008-current
165. Anya Loudon, Class of 2013
166. Sophia Courtice, class of 1991, parent 2016 - current .
167. Amy Laurence, class of 2017
168. Karen Etherington, parent, class of 2004
169. William Allen, Class of 2004
170. Judith Griffies, parent 1995 - 2004
171. Jordan Daniels, class of 2012
172. Rachel Van Zyl, class of 2014
173. Sophie Matterface class of 2017
174. Ellie Griffies Weld, class of 2004
175. Asha Ali class of 2017
176. Jake Hart, Class of 2021
177. Abi Reid, Class of 2020
178. Aidan Daniels, class of 2017
179. Cara Hatch, class of 2020
180. Lily Jaggard, Class of 2004
181. Matilda Jaggard, Class of 2006
182. Rebecca Whaley, Class of 2009
183. Josie Overton, parent 1999-2009
184. Maia Whaley, parent of alumni 2009 & 2011
185. Genevieve Timmins, Class of 2009
186. Jay Timmins, Class of 2008
187. Laura Dron, parent Class of 2008 & 2009
188. Amy Van Zyl, Class of 2013
189. Sofia Chamberlain, Class of 2010
190. Emma-Jane Dennis, Class of 2010
191. Hendrikus van Hensbergen, Class of 2006
192. Rosa van Hensbergen, Class of 2006
193. Abbie Stewart, Class of 2010
194. Alexandra Rowe, Class of 2010
195. Martha Howlett, Class of 2011
196. Emily-Celeste Pearse, Class of 2009
197. Romy Smithwick, Class of 2010
198. Lauren Raymond, Class of 2010
199. Gary England, Class of 2005
200. Erin Langdon, Class of 2012
201. Jenna Nicholls-Stevens, Class of 2020
202. Stephen Sorrell, Class of 1985

203. Hermione Wheeler, Current Student YR10
204. Tierney Thomas, Class of 2013
205. Morgan Barnes, Class of 2018
206. Cameron Dearnley, Class of 2013
207. Bob Buchanan, current student
208. Beth Buchanan, current student
209. Joshua Courtice, Class of 2015
210. Barney Johnson, current student
211. Yzadora Tiffin, Class of 2015
212. Katherine Upton, Class of 2015
213. Matthew Bernsen Wilks, Class of 2015
214. Georgina Imber, class of 2014
215. Cary Jon Allard, Class of 2013
216. Antonia Petchey, Class of 2015
217. Lauren Rabbette, Class of 2010
218. Bronwyn Wright, Class of 2018
219. Sam Van Zyl, Parent (2008-present)
220. George Butler, Class of 2011