

# DIVERSITY

## Defined.

# S for Stereotypes

## Building unity within the school community

We all have stereotypes and perceptions of one another – mainly acquired through what we see and hear in the media – and they have the potential to cause harm to all of us.

Assumptions are made about what we excel at in school. A Chinese pupil told me that she was expected to be good at Maths whilst her excellence in Art was completely overlooked. Another Chinese pupil talked about deliberately hiding his strength in music because the assumption was that he only did it well because of parental pressure to excel. Black pupils are regularly pushed to excel as athletes rather than academics. This in turn leads to inevitable feelings of failure as there are very limited opportunities for professional athletes.

**“ We currently have a lot of discussion on cultural capital. ”**

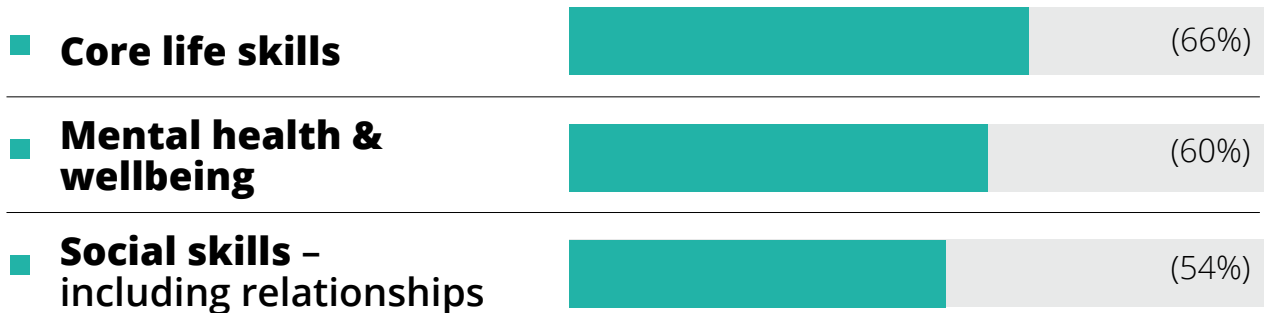


Written by  
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The assumption is that by encouraging all pupils to take on the cultural capital of the middle classes it will lead to levelling up. It devalues the cultural capital of all other groups. The stereotype of white middle classness is being sold as the ultimate doorway to success, and that we cannot belong unless we let go of our culture, is both dangerous and dehumanising.

The **most popular themes teachers want to see incorporated** into the national curriculum with as much time and emphasis as core subjects.



\*Pearson School Report - April 2022.

As educators we need to keep asking ourselves how we see each other and our pupils. Do we make assumptions about ability, potential, lifestyle based on each person as an individual or based on our assumptions of what we believe their cultural group is like? Do we make assumptions that our culture is better than stereotypes we've formed based on their culture? Saviourism, which is a desire to make a difference by imposing the cultural values of one over the other, is informed by cultural stereotypes and values based on what it therefore deemed to be better. It undermines a sense of belonging to self which leads to poor wellbeing, feelings of failure, self-doubt, and severely hampers opportunities for happiness and success.

**“ Stereotyping stigmatises individuals and leads to underperformance, poor wellbeing, it leads to marginalisation, creates divide and a fear of each other. ”**

As educators it is our responsibility to build unity within the community and provide every child the opportunity to reach their true potential whilst celebrating their uniqueness and their culture.

**Get involved** by sharing your thoughts on what diversity in education means to you.

Tag **@PearsonSchools** and use:

**#DiversityDefined**