

The Lit in Colour programme helps form a foundation for diversity and inclusion in English lessons

The Lit in Colour Pioneer Programme is a chance for secondary schools across the UK to commit to diversifying their English Literature curriculum by changing to a new set text from the Pearson Edexcel GCSE or A level English Literature qualifications. We talk to Tabatha Sheehan, Head of English at Westonbirt School, about her experience as a Lit in Colour Pioneer.

Giving students the opportunity to think about diversity in the wider world

We chose to apply to become Pioneers because as a predominantly white, middle-class school in the Cotswolds it can feel like a bit of a bubble – but our students are really open-minded and needed more opportunities to consider diverse stories and cultures; to really think about the diverse realities of the wider world and their, and others', experiences in it.

Empowering students to process issues they see in the news

We have found our involvement in the Lit in Colour programme really powerful – our students are really keen to critically and compassionately think about the world and the information they access about it online. We have worked hard to integrate Lit in Colour in our KS3 units too – to make sure that students from 11+ are experiencing diverse and inclusive stories, not just at exam level.

It has also helped our students be more inclusive and feel like they know more about the world. Our critical thinking approaches with Lit in Colour texts has also enabled them to better process and counter issues that they are seeing constantly in the news and on social media.

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The Pioneers programme inspires staff and students alike to think more inclusively

Being part of the programme has inspired staff and students to read more widely, to think more inclusively. My colleague Sally Price has launched a pupil book club where pupils, and staff, can read and discuss any of the wide range of Lit in Colour books provided and this has really helped boost interest beyond the classroom. We are also integrating many of the Lit in Colour books into a Staff Diversity Policy and Training group too, which is feeding into our Behaviour Policy, our Curriculum Development Team and our enrichment programme.

Becoming a Pioneer helps form a foundation for diversity and inclusion in the whole school

If any schools are interested in becoming a Lit in Colour Pioneer, then I would definitely say 'do it' and to make sure you embed the ideologies and ethos into the school beyond just Lit in Colour in exam texts. I think the opportunity to be able to celebrate Lit in Colour in English lessons is superbly exciting and valuable, but more importantly it can help form a foundation for diversity and inclusion in the school as a whole.

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Tabatha Sheehan, Head of English at Westonbirt School

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Like what you hear?

Find out more about Lit in Colour Pioneers at: go.pearson.com/litincolour

Lit in Colour

