

Dear Parents and Carers

This week, our assemblies have been led by Mr Richardson, who has been helping students reflect on the significance of Black History Month. This is an important time in our calendar, not only to recognise and celebrate the contributions of Black individuals throughout history, but also to deepen our understanding of the diverse society we live in today. At the Open Academy, we believe that learning about different cultures and experiences strengthens our sense of community cohesion — helping us all to appreciate the value of respect and equality.

One of the most powerful ways to explore these themes further is through reading. Books open doors to stories, perspectives and histories that might otherwise go untold. Whether it's reading about inspirational figures who have shaped our world, or exploring fiction that helps us see life through someone else's eyes, reading builds empathy and understanding — qualities that lie at the heart of a cohesive and compassionate community.

I would encourage all our students to make reading part of their daily routine at home. Just twenty minutes of reading each day can make a significant difference to vocabulary, confidence and attainment across all subjects. Parents and carers can support this by taking an active interest in what their children are reading and discussing it with them — whether it's a novel, a biography, or an article about someone who has made a difference.

By celebrating Black History Month and by nurturing a love of reading, we continue to grow as a learning community that values knowledge, curiosity and kindness in equal measure.

Recommended Reading Linked to Black History Month

Below are some suggested titles that families might enjoy exploring together:

For Years 7–8

- *The Boy at the Back of the Class* – Onjali Q. Raúf
- *Ghost* – Jason Reynolds
- *Windrush Child* – Benjamin Zephaniah
- *Young, Gifted and Black* – Jamia Wilson

For Years 9–10

- *The Hate U Give* – Angie Thomas
- *Long Way Down* – Jason Reynolds
- *Freedom* – Catherine Johnson
- *Black and British: A Short Essential History* – David Olusoga

For Year 11 and beyond

- *Noughts & Crosses* – Malorie Blackman
- *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* – Reni Eddo-Lodge
- *Between the World and Me* – Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Born a Crime* – Trevor Noah

These books highlight courage, identity and hope — values we are proud to see reflected every day in our students at The Open Academy.

With best wishes for the weekend

Dan Bagshaw
Principal