



The Grinling Gibbons and Lucas Vale Federation

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

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Dear Parents,

We have made it through another week and below is a message from our Executive Headteacher about what we did on Monday.

### **New Cross Fire 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January, pupils from Lucas Vale and Grinling Gibbons Primary schools held a short memorial service at the site of the New Cross Fire and at the nearby Memorial at Fordham Park. The house fire gutted a small, terraced house on New Cross Road, killing 13 young black people and injured many others; claiming the life of another victim two years later when he committed suicide as a result of his experiences on that night.

The failure of the authorities to properly investigate the fire and the seeming indifference of the government to the suffering of the Black community led to a strident but disciplined reaction from the people of Deptford, New Cross and Lewisham. Over 20,000, mainly Black residents, joined a march through London to protest the inaction and indifference. The slogan “13 Dead, Nothing Said” came to define this protest. Local community activists such as Sybil Phoenix, were joined by emergent black leaders such as Darcus Howe in articulating and directing the righteous anger of local people.

Forty years on, the wounds have not healed as those families still do not have the answers they sought. Grenfell and Black Lives Matter have only served to highlight this fragment of the history of Black people in Britain.

“It is not about pulling down statues,” said Dean Gordon the headteacher of Grinling Primary Gibbons school. “It is about making sure our history is recognised and acknowledged. I want our children to see themselves in the history of this country and this place. However hard, we survived, we endured, and we supported one another. We made our space in this country. It our job as school leaders to pass on our history – this event and the struggle for justice that followed, will never be forgotten.”

The children led a minute’s silence at the house, placing flowers for the victims and finishing with the Bob Marley anthem ‘No woman no Cry’.

“I found the words of the song- **“In this bright future, you can’t forget your past, so dry your tears I pray.”** Very moving and apt for the occasion “said Ruth Gomado-Cobblah, the headteacher of Lucas Vale Primary.



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At the memorial in Fordham Park, the park from which the protest march in 1981 started, the children read their own poems and placed candles for each victim at the memorial stone.

May they rest in Peace.

Mickey Kelly  
Executive Headteacher





FEDERATION

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## [Contacting us](#)

Please get in touch with us if you have any concerns or questions via email, phone or on class dojo. You can always come and pick up and learning pack for your child and continue



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to encourage your child to engage with the learning and encourage them to read every day. We are here to help so please do get in touch if you have any issues.

A reminder that we will have our fortnightly [meeting with the Executive Headteacher on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 10:00am](#). We will send the link to you nearer the time.

Once again, we want to thank you for your patience and continuous support. We are very grateful for all the food donations we have received so far, it much appreciated.



Yours faithfully,  
Lucas Vale Team