

Head of Year 8 – Mr Digby

Good morning Year 8,

Finally, Premier League football returns! I can buy a Big Mac, I can pop to the shops, I can bubble with other family members and I can finally see Year 10 and Year 12 students in school (we have had key worker children continually in school by the way).

Some normality is returning, not fully but we are slowly starting to open up the restrictions small steps at a time. Take the football for example, there were no crowds, I managed to watch the football with EA Sports sound effects in the background courtesy of SKY TV, all a bit strange if I am honest.

I also noticed that the players, officials and staff took the knee before the start of the game and all players had Black Lives Matters on the back of their shirts.

Are you aware of what this is for and what it means?

Black Lives Matters was founded in 2013 www.blacklivesmatter.com/about/ but have been given added impetus by the death in police custody of George Floyd.

There have been worldwide protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. The vast majority of these have been peaceful and have raised the topic of racism within everyday lives.

There have also been some interesting discussions, as well as some unsettling comments made, about where society should go from here.

National statues have been vandalised and the Edward Colson statue in Bristol was torn down and thrown into the river.

I have taken some of the comments from Mr Simpson's last week's pastoral message, I'm sure Mr Simpson won't mind as his narrative is an important one and one that I could not improve upon.

"So what do you think about statues being removed and street or building names being replaced? Does it sound over the top? Many people have expressed opinions about this and a lot of the discussion has become quite heated.

As a result many have found themselves having to make an "either/or" sort of choice. As a teacher of ethics and philosophy, I'm always interested in this because most decisions in life aren't simply a question of "you're one thing or you're the other." Except, perhaps, the question of Marmite (Mr Digby – I hate Marmite btw).

People have a legal right to peaceful protest. What happens when we see people protesting violently? Is it an act of violence to tear down a statue? You could argue that it is. When the statue of 17th century slave trader Edward Colson was destroyed by a group of protesters, they were doing something that was, strictly speaking, against the law. But since then, we've been reminded of how a lot of Britain's wealth and standing in the world has been built on slavery.

Other statues and prominent historical figures have come under the microscope. We've been reminded that, when slavery was abolished in the 19th century, British slave traders were compensated for their loss of income by the government. This debt was only completed in 2015. Bizarrely and outrageously, this means that the taxes of BAME Britons were being used to pay off a debt of money that had been paid to people who mistreated and brutalised some of their ancestors! So, was it wrong to destroy Colson's statue?

The campaign to have it removed had been going on for years, peacefully, democratically, but had met a lot of resistance in terms of administrative issues. Most people who have had no opinion on this so far have questioned why we ever had a statue celebrating Colson in a prominent UK city in the first place.

The most important thing is that we're talking about it!"

Britain is a multi-cultural nation, as members of that nation we should celebrate every aspect of that. We should not care what colour our skin is, our sexuality, or even our upbringing. We should embrace each other for the person we are not the label that is placed upon us.

Take time to watch the news, do your own research. It is very easy to form opinions based on what we see on social media, or what we are told by our family and our friends.

Isn't it better to find out for ourselves?

Keep an open mind, do your own research, form your own opinions based on fact and not prejudice.

Above all else, be kind!

Stay safe and best wishes

Mr Digby