



Research insights: experiences of Chinese heritage students



The most thought-provoking and fascinating professional development of the year. Hemisphere's high-quality research and training goes beyond simply pointing out the problem. The online programme is engaging, informative and inspirational – and it's grounded in the experience of our students.

Dr Richard Harrold, Director of Safeguarding and Compliance, The American School in London

Hemisphere is an award-winning digital training platform that disrupts bias and builds racial literacy. Trusted by leading UK schools, Hemisphere empowers everyone - leaders, educators, support staff, governors and students - to recognise and challenge racial bias, understand the links between belonging, wellbeing and outcomes, and take practical action to drive change.

Developed on the basis of extensive research and evidence of bias in UK schools, Hemisphere started with a focus on students of Black heritage. The programme has evolved in response to user feedback to encompass new insights into the school experiences of South Asian heritage children and now, informed by our latest research, those of Chinese heritage children.

Three findings

1

Pressure to conform to the 'Model Minority' myth.

75% of Chinese heritage students said they felt pressure to conform to the 'Model Minority' myth - the stereotype that Chinese students are good at STEM and Music, well behaved and without challenges. This resulted in them feeling undervalued and overlooked.

2

Differences not understood.

73% said differences between Chinese heritage students were not understood. Teachers did not understand the differences between students from mainland China and Hong Kong and sometimes made incorrect assumptions about English language proficiency. Watch a short video [here](#).

3

Lack of representation.

Chinese heritage students are often one of very few in a school or classroom, if not the only one. 90% said they did not have access to books with characters that shared their ethnicity and 92% said they did not learn about the role of Chinese people in British history, exacerbating this sense of isolation and under representation.

Three actions

1

Challenge the model minority myth.

Challenge the model minority myth when it appears in your own thinking and when you hear students referring to it. Don't assume Chinese heritage students will excel at particular subjects, or that they'll be able resolve academic challenges on their own. Don't assume they're fine because they are achieving good grades and not being disruptive. Take the time to check in with them to find out how they are and remain alert for wellbeing and safeguarding concerns.



2

Get to know the children you teach.

The UK Chinese population is diverse. It is often assumed that Chinese heritage students share the same history, culture, political views – and language – when they do not. In fact, Chinese people in the UK may have been born in or have cultural norms shaped by the UK, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, the Caribbean, and more.

3

Make sure curriculum and resources are inclusive.

The goal is to ensure that all children in your class see themselves – and each other – positively represented in all areas of the curriculum. Make different experiences and perspectives a common thread throughout the year.

Audit your displays, books, lesson plans, case studies, outings and speaker invitations and ask: do they reflect the diversity of my school community, with all its history and achievements, and the world beyond its gates? Where are the gaps? Are you exposing your students to different voices and perspectives? Are characters and places well drawn or stereotypical?



One of the most important things I've taken away is the reminder that every pupil—regardless of whether they share it openly or not—may be carrying things we cannot see. This applies not only to pupils of Chinese or Asian heritage, but to all pupils and staff in the school community.

Educator at Hemisphere Partner School

Rare Technology

Hemisphere Education has been developed by Rare Technology, award-winning leaders in race equity in education and employment. The programme provides insights into the specific types of bias experienced by students from different minority ethnic backgrounds, how race, class and religion intersect, what schools are doing well, and how you can replicate that success in your own setting.

To find out more about Hemisphere:

[Book a meeting](#)

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