

Principles into Practice: Teaching about the British Empire, Migration and Belonging

An Oxford Education Deanery Event

Friday 31st October 2025, 10:00-15:30



The
Oxford
Education
Deanery



Join us for a practitioner focused CPD day focused on the teaching of British Empire, Migration and Belonging with the purpose to:

- Support teachers across subjects in understanding why teaching about the British Empire matters
- Equip teachers with practical strategies for curriculum, pedagogy, and professional

This practitioner-focused CPD day draws on an unprecedented, three-year national study, the first comprehensive mapping of how the British Empire, migration and belonging are taught in English secondary schools, into immediately usable classroom approaches.

Working from the report's Principles for curriculum, pedagogy, and professional practice—including spiral curriculum and exploring identity/locality links—we'll explore adaptable approaches relevant for a range of subjects from History, English, Geography, RE and PSHE, alongside ways to work with community partners

Programme

10:00-10:30 **Registration and coffee**

10:30-11:15 **Opening session**

Jason Todd, Senior Department Lecturer in History Education, University of Oxford

- Welcome & introduction
- Why the British Empire matters for schools today

This session introduces the key themes that shape our project—the complexity and diversity of the British Empire, its lasting legacies, and the contested debates it still sparks. Grounded in specialist historians' perspectives and wider educational insights, it highlights why engaging with empire matters across the curriculum—from History to English, Geography, Citizenship/PSHE and beyond—and frames the day with our key research findings.

11:20-12:15 **Workshop 1: Positioning & Practice – Parallel sessions**

Workshop A) Who am I in this space? Approaching themes of Empire, migration and belonging with awareness and sensitivity – Zaiba Patel, Researcher and Doctoral Student, Empire, Migration and Belonging Research Project

In this session, we will think about how to navigate the themes of empire, migration and belonging with awareness and sensitivity, paying attention to both our own positionality and to the ways students make meaning from these histories.

Workshop B) Representation in the Classroom: From text selection to classroom practice (language, race and representation) – Adrian Fernandes, Researcher and Doctoral Student, University of Oxford

In this session, we will consider the language and terminology that we use in the classroom, with a particular focus upon race. We will also cover the importance of representation in the text selections that we make.

12:15-12:35 **Workshop 1 – Plenary**

12:30-13:15 **Lunch**



13:15–14:00 Keynote: Interdisciplinarity in practice – How different subjects (History, English, Geography, RE, PSHE) can approach empire, migration, and belonging in complementary ways
Rachel Lewin, Headteacher, Scilly Isles

An exploration of approaches to interdisciplinary thinking that can be taken by any teacher at any level. A staffroom conversation with a colleague from another department, co-planning a scheme of work across two subjects, whole school curriculum design: any of these can help to deepen students' understanding of the substantive concepts of empire, migration and belonging.

14:00–15:00 Workshop Strand 2: Knowledge & Community – Parallel sessions

Workshop C) Community partnerships: how to co-create curriculum with local groups, including oral histories and student voice – Holly Cooper, Researcher and Doctoral Student, Faculty of History, University of Oxford

In this session, we will consider how community partnerships can enrich the teaching of these histories and look at practical strategies for co-creating curriculum with local groups and students, drawing on a practical toolkit.

Workshop D) Whose Knowledge Counts? Bringing critical archives into classroom enquiry – Steve Puttick, Associate Professor of Teacher Education, University of Oxford

In this session, we will explore how critical archival research can unsettle dominant narratives and open up new possibilities for classroom enquiry, raising questions about whose knowledge counts.

15:00–15:30 Closing plenary

- Sharing and reflections
- TRACTION
- Commitments to action: what participants will take back to their schools

