



Black History Month at Highlands School

The theme for Black History Month UK 2025 is *Standing Firm in Power and Pride*. It honours the strength, resilience, and achievements of the Black community both in the UK and around the world.

The theme shines a light on the contributions of leaders, activists, and pioneers, while also looking ahead to ongoing empowerment and unity.

This year's theme

“Standing Firm in Power and Pride”



Key terms

As part of Black History Month, students have been exploring key terms that deepen their understanding of Black heritage, identity, and culture. Learning these terms helps us to appreciate the struggles, achievements, and lasting impact of Black communities throughout history.

This year's theme, *Standing Firm in Power and Pride*, highlights the importance of knowing and embracing these words - as they empower us to celebrate resilience, strength, and unity within our shared history.

Activist

Someone who works to make change happen, especially about unfair rules or treatment.

Social justice

Making sure all people are treated fairly and have equal rights.

African diaspora

People of African descent living outside Africa.

Curation / Curate

Choosing and arranging art works or events for people to see.

Dystopia / Dystopian

A story about a society that is unfair, dangerous, or very unhappy.

Marginalised

People or groups that are treated as less important.



Power

Power represents influence, leadership, and the ability to create positive change. It honours those who have led political, civil rights, and social movements, as well as individuals who have broken barriers in business, education, and the arts.

Their legacies remind us that true power is not defined by titles, but by collective strength, courage, and unity in building a fairer future for all.

Claudia Jones

Journalist, activist, and political leader, Claudia Jones founded the *West Indian Gazette* and tirelessly advocated for racial equality and social justice in Britain. She was also instrumental in establishing the Notting Hill Carnival as a vibrant celebration of Black culture.



Paul Stephenson

A prominent civil rights leader and activist, is best known for leading the Bristol Bus Boycott in 1963, protesting the refusal to employ Black and Asian bus drivers. Having personally experienced racism - including being turned away from a pub simply because of his skin colour - Paul was driven to fight for change. His determination and leadership helped pave the way for the Race Relations Act of 1965, which made racial discrimination in public places unlawful and strengthened employment rights for Black workers. He continued his lifelong commitment to equality by working with the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination and other groups to promote justice and fairness across Britain.



Together, Claudia Jones and Paul Stephenson exemplify the impact of standing up against injustice. Through journalism, organising, and direct action, they showed that protest is not just about challenging the status quo - it is about empowering communities, shaping society, and leaving a lasting legacy for future generation.



Pride

Pride is about celebrating cultural identity and heritage. It's seen in music, art, stories, and traditions that have been passed down through generations. Pride is about knowing where you come from, embracing your history, and moving into the future without compromise or apology. It's a powerful declaration of beauty, resilience, and the global contributions of Black culture.

Lubaina Himid

Lubaina Himid is a British artist who celebrates Black culture and tells stories about race and history. She helped change the art world by showing the work of Black artists and curating important exhibitions. In 2017, she became the oldest artist to win the Turner Prize.



Between the Two My Heart is Balanced



Speed Up the Pace of Change

One of Lubaina Himid's striking paintings, *Between the Two My Heart is Balanced*, shows two Black women sitting on a boat, tearing up newspapers and throwing them into the sea. The newspapers represent the stories that have been told about history - stories that have often left Black people out. By tearing them up, Himid powerfully suggests that Black women have the ability to reshape those narratives and ensure their voices are heard and remembered.

Another impactful work, *Speed Up the Pace of Change*, is bold and direct, resembling a protest sign. Through this piece, Himid calls attention to the slow progress toward fairness and equality, urging us all to take action and help drive change more quickly. Together, these works demonstrate how Himid uses art not only to create beauty but also to challenge, inspire, and encourage people to see the world through a more inclusive lens.



Pride

Pride is a celebration of identity, history, and strength. It shines through in the creativity, achievements, and traditions that have shaped generations. To have pride is to honour your roots, recognise the struggles and triumphs of those who came before, and stand tall in your truth. It's a reminder that Black culture continues to influence and inspire the world - a lasting symbol of resilience, unity, and empowerment.



Noughts and Crosses is part of our English curriculum here at Highlands.

Malorie Blackman

Malorie Blackman is one of Britain's most celebrated authors. Her novel *Noughts & Crosses*, published in 2001, flips the usual racial hierarchy in dystopian fiction, putting Black characters in positions of power.

It gave young readers, especially Black children, the chance to see themselves as strong, complex protagonists. Blackman's work challenges ideas of race, identity, and unfair systems, showing that resistance, love, and hope can coexist in the fight for justice.



Malorie Blackman's work has inspired generations of young readers. Through her thought-provoking stories, she explores themes of identity, empathy, and equality.

In 2013, she was named the UK's Children's Laureate for her exceptional contribution to literature.





Courage in silence, legacy in action

Service and Sacrifice is about recognising the bravery and dedication of Black men and women who have served their country, often without the recognition they deserve. This includes soldiers, healthcare workers, and those in other forms of national service.

These individuals have faced challenges, discrimination, and danger, yet they continued to give their all to protect, heal, and support others. Their courage often went unseen, but the impact of their work is still felt today.

By remembering their contributions, we honour a legacy of service, resilience, and quiet strength. They remind us that true courage isn't always loud - it can be shown in everyday acts of dedication that make a real difference in people's lives

Kofoworola Abeni Pratt

Kofoworola Pratt was the first Black nurse in the NHS and a trailblazer in nursing in both the UK and Nigeria.

She became Chief Nursing Officer for Nigeria, was vice-president of the International Council of Nurses, and received the *Florence Nightingale Medal* for her outstanding contributions.



Lilian Bader

Lilian Bader was one of the first Black women to serve in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) during World War II.

She trained as an instrument repairer, earned a promotion, and after the war became a teacher, inspiring future generations.





Future in focus

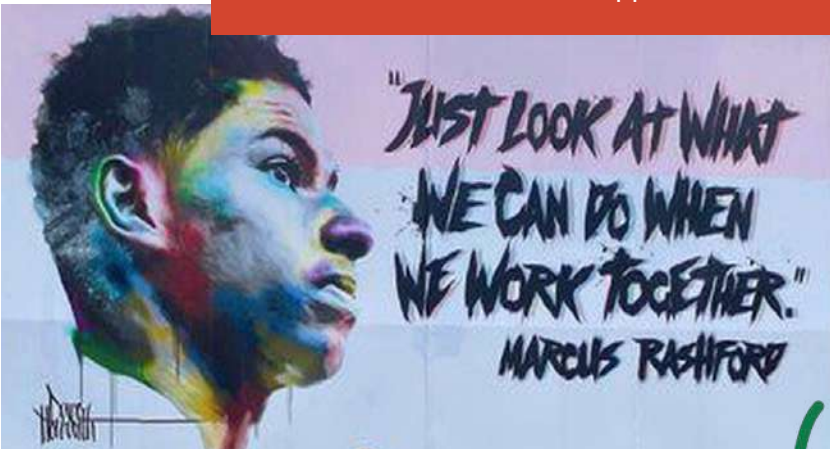
The present is powerful, the future is ours

Today's changemakers are shaping the Britain of tomorrow. Through creativity, courage, and determination, they are building a fairer, stronger, and more inclusive society.

Marcus Rashford

Marcus Rashford is not just a football star - he uses his fame to fight child food poverty in the UK.

By speaking up and campaigning, he has helped change government policies and support communities in need.



John Boyega

John Boyega's powerful speech at a 2020 Black Lives Matter protest showed the importance of courage and using your voice for justice.

His stand reminds us that today's actions shape tomorrow's Britain.

This year is a call to action. Together, with determination, aspiration, respect, and equality, we can honour the past, celebrate the present, and build a more inclusive future.



Celebrating Black History Month at Highlands

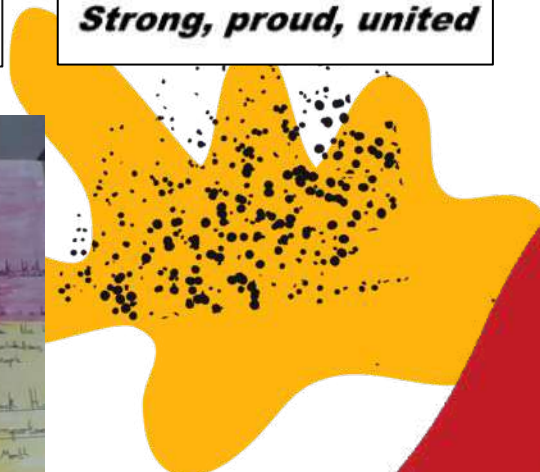
Pin and poster design competition

We're inviting all students to take part in our Black History Month 2025 Pin and Poster Design Competition, inspired by this year's theme - *Standing Strong in Power and Pride*.

The winning design will be transformed into a real commemorative pin that students, parents and carers can purchase as a lasting keepsake to celebrate students' creativity and mark 2025 with pride.

Here are just a few of the fantastic entries we've received so far - and we're looking forward to seeing even more over the half-term break!

Students can email their designs to Ms Maple at mapled@highlearn.uk or hand them in directly - the deadline for all entries is **Monday 3rd November**.





The Adinkra Storytelling Quilt

Throughout October, Ms Maple and Mrs Mehmet have been leading an inspiring creative project in the library as part of our Black History Month celebrations. Students have been exploring iconic African symbols and storytelling traditions from across West, North, East, and South Africa to design and create a quilted blanket representing Black heritage, identity, and pride.

Each square tells a unique story about the meaning behind each student's name - a reminder that every name holds power, meaning, and pride. Together, these stories are woven into a powerful piece of collective art.

The finished quilt - and a glimpse behind the scenes of this collaborative journey - will be revealed at our Black History Month showcase on 27th November.



Local Mayor Margaret Greer celebrates Black History Month with us at Highlands

This month, we held our Black History Month assemblies, reflecting on this year's theme, *Standing Firm in Power and Pride*. The theme celebrates the strength, resilience, and achievements of the Black community, while also recognising the contributions of leaders, activists, and pioneers, and looking ahead to continued empowerment and unity. We were honoured to welcome our local mayor, Margaret Greer, whose inspiring words uplifted everyone. She also moved us deeply by singing a powerful song, reminding us that each of us carries something strong within, capable of making a difference.





Celebrate Black History Month in London

This October, immerse yourself in a rich lineup of performances, fashion, and storytelling that celebrate Black culture, creativity, and heritage across London's leading theatres and venues.

Jaja's African Hair Braiding – Lyric Hammersmith 14+

Step into the bustling world of Jaja's salon, where life, love, and laughter unfold through vibrant stories of sisterhood, beauty, and resilience. Find out [more](#).

ZooNation: Ebony Scrooge – Sadler's Wells East

A reimagined classic told through exhilarating dance and music, this contemporary twist on A Christmas Carol brings an unforgettable energy to the stage. [Discover the show](#).

Africa – Blending West African Fashion with the Kimono

A stunning showcase of cultural fusion, this event explores how West African traditions meet Japanese design in a powerful celebration of style and identity. [Explore the exhibition](#)

Not Your Superwoman – Bush Theatre

Written by Emma Dennis-Edwards, this bold new play gives voice to the complexities of modern Black womanhood, unfiltered and unapologetic. [Book your tickets](#).



Write2Speak poetry and performance evening

As part of our Black History Month celebrations, students are working with Write2Speak, a professional poetry company, to explore the theme *Standing Strong in Power and Pride*. Over several weeks, students have created original spoken-word pieces celebrating Black voices, history, and identity.

Their work will culminate in a special performance evening on **Thursday 27th November**, where students will perform alongside Write2Speak in a relaxed and inspiring showcase.

This promises to be a powerful celebration of creativity and pride - tickets will be available to purchase soon via ParentPay.

STANDING IN POWER

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2025
HIGHLANDS SCHOOL x WRITE2SPEAK

Join us for a powerful celebration of heritage, creativity, and expression. Through spoken word, poetry, and discussion, students will explore identity, pride, and history — standing tall in the legacy of those who came before

- ★ Spoken Word Workshops
- 🎤 Student Performances
- 🖼️ Creative Reflections & Exhibitions

Facilitated by
WRITE 2 SPEAK

HIGHLANDS SCHOOL | OCTOBER 2025
Follow @Write2Speak | www.write2speak.com

STANDING IN POWER

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2025 – HIGHLANDS SCHOOL x WRITE2SPEAK

This BHM, we'll be working with Highlands School – celebrating heritage, creativity, and expression. Students will explore identity, pride, and what it means to stand in power, through spoken word, poetry, and discussion.

- ★ Spoken Word Workshops
- 🎤 Student Performances
- 🖼️ Creative Reflections & Exhibitions

FACILITATED BY
WRITE 2 SPEAK

📍 THROUGHOUT BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Celebrating Black British Figures

Students shine on camera

This October, students from across the school have been stepping in front of the camera for a special project celebrating **hidden Black British figures** who helped shape the nation. Filming a short, powerful statement for the upcoming video, themed “**Standing Firm in Power and Pride.**”

Behind the scenes, students worked with focus and creativity, researching remarkable individuals whose achievements often went unrecognised in history books. Many of these figures quietly contributed to Britain’s story, and the project gave students the opportunity to learn, reflect, and bring their stories to light.

The final edited video, highlighting students’ voices, inspiring figures, and powerful stories across our social media and in a powerful evening of Spoken word on Thursday 27th November. The video is a celebration of both the past and present, acknowledging the amazing work our students have done in honoring some amazing **Black British pioneers.**

