

# COOMBE GIRL'S SCHOOL: 15/06/21

## Fostering Tolerance and Acceptance



BYB was approached by Coombe Girl's School in New Malden to work with their young people around youth voice and inclusion. The school had made a strong commitment to diversify the curriculum so that it covered more diverse literature with changes in place for the new year 7s. Taking into consideration that certain changes would not impact the older students and with some of the implemented changes still going on behind the scenes, the school wanted to ensure that all young people had a chance to speak up and feel listened to.

BYB practitioners were commissioned to begin cultivating a safe space for young people to explore topics and issues they are passionate about, develop listening and communications skills and improve peer relationships by increasing mutual understanding.

**“THANK YOU SO MUCH AGAIN FOR SUCH A WONDERFULLY POSITIVE MORNING. THE STUDENTS ARE STILL SO INSPIRED ABOUT IT ALL.”** Teacher

### OUR BYB APPROACH

Led by Spiral Skills, the BYB team delivered a half day workshop, building skills in effective communication, listening and speaking up. The team included two Advocacy Academy alumni who brought direct campaigning experience, highlighting the impact of youth voice and the importance of allyship. The workshop included an interactive mix of:

- Team building and problem solving exercises
- Communication games, involving body language and verbal and non-verbal communication
- Campaigning techniques, including the art of positive persuasion.

After each activity, the young people were given a chance to reflect on their learning and how it was useful. Putting their new skills into practice, each young person was then given the chance to work on a mini-presentation about something they're passionate about, sharing this with and receiving feedback from their peers and teachers.



Speeches included disability awareness, misogyny, racism and the lack of education around life skills. The BYB team supported to mitigate tension points and it was particularly empowering to see the young people themselves de-escalate situations by giving constructive feedback. In a short amount of time, young people were able to learn so much about each other just by taking the time to really listen. Their feedback included that whilst they had not been aware of certain issues before, they were now keen to learn more and lend their support to others.

**“I REALLY ENJOYED TODAY. WE DON'T ALWAYS GET THE CHANCE TO SPEAK ABOUT THE THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO US. THANK YOU! WE SHOULD HAVE MORE SPACES LIKE THIS.”** Student

The day culminated with young people brainstorming concrete actions for the new school year. Ideas included more spaces such as the one created by BYB on the day, a festive cultural day to celebrate different backgrounds and more opportunities for young people to speak in assemblies and make decisions. The teachers were delighted and are planning follow-up meetings after the summer break.

**“WE ARE DEFINITELY KEEN TO HAVE YOU BACK WITH US NEXT YEAR.”** Teacher