

Equality Policy

Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for St Mary the Virgin CE Primary School brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects, **such as age**, which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations between groups.

It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

Our school within the wider context

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, disability and social deprivation.

Our school is a small village primary school, with a low percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. For the past three years the school has had a higher percentage of girls than boys. The school has 6.7% of pupils from minority ethnic group, compared with the national average of 26.7%. There are no pupils whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is slightly higher than the national.

The staff at the school is predominately female and from white/British backgrounds.

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes¹.

Issues relating to adults within the school community can be embraced under these themes and reflected in the action plan.

Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared Humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

We do this within our school vision of promoting academic excellence and endeavouring to widen the horizons of everyone in our school community by nurturing a love of learning, whilst developing Christian values and a respect for others and their beliefs.

Our vision statement about Equality

St Mary the Virgin CE Primary School seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

Our duties

¹ <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

They are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child².

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- the engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- preparation for entry to the school
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the provision of school meals
- interaction with peers
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- exam arrangements
- behaviour management approach and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school or Theatre in Education (TIE).
- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

² <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/Childrens-rights/>

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- support the headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 4 years

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP

Our pupils/students will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy

How we developed our Policy - Participation and Involvement

The development of this policy has involved the whole of our school community. We've involved and listened to what they have to say, including people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities, taking account of all the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010

- Our pupils/students

Pupils views were gained through questionnaires and the school council.

- Our staff

The views of staff were gained through questionnaires and consultation on the policy and action plan.

- Our school governors

Governors were consulted on the policy and action plan.

- Parents/carers

Parents were asked for their views via newsletters.

- Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups

Those from potentially vulnerable groups are given opportunities to come and talk to staff, for example through structured conversations held with parents of pupils with Special Educational Needs.

- Our partners in the community

St Mary the Virgin Church has been involved and dialogues will develop with our new partners; community groups, local businesses and health centre.

- Ongoing:

Dialogue will continue with members of the school community through staff meetings and the school council and parents and carers will be engaged through the website and newsletter

How we developed our Policy - Using information

We have used data and other information about our school, and Equality Impact assessments (EQIAs) as a common sense measure to determine the effects of a policy, practice or project on different groups. EQIAs help us to analyse whether what we are planning potentially has a differential impact on one or more particular group (either positively or negatively). They help us to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that the positive duties are promoted. They help to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our pupils/students and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

Recent EQIAs carried out highlight:

Have you carried out EQIAs? What did they tell you?

We are in the process of carrying out Equality Impact assessments.

What did the engagement with staff, governors, parents/carers, students, vulnerable groups, community groups tell you?

In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this.

What data have you considered to help analyse the effects of your policies on protected groups? e.g. RAISE online data, incident reporting data. What does it tell you?

OfSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, faith, disability and gender.

The school carries out regular self assessment.

We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through pupil/learner voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously.

How can your pupils/students, staff and parents make less formal contributions to your thinking. Have you undertaken any surveys of pupils', parents' or staff opinions – what did these tell you?

The Local Authority provides us with a range of services which support the equality agenda and helps us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action.

How does your school make use of East Sussex organisations and services across the Children's Trust? How does your school link with the Behaviour & Attendance Service, health partners, Under 19s Substance Misuse service (U19s SMS), District or Borough Councils, , Sussex Police, Children's Centres, the Traveller Education and English as an Additional Language Service (TEALS) and East Sussex Equality and Participation team?

We have established good links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

Can you list some of your local partners across the various protected characteristics e.g. local church or faith group? Can you briefly describe their contribution?

We have good relationships with the village church, we are looking at ways of working together more closely **as well as our new partners; community groups, local businesses and health centre. They are able to contribute to a broad based and equal curriculum.**

Commissioned services (buying in services)

Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We work closely with the local authority on procurement – buying in services - to ensure that equality issues are given full regard. When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made³ or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

There are some specific exceptions to the religion or belief provisions of the Equality Act for employment by schools designated as having a religious character.

See Department of Education website for further guidance on this:

³ Unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Our staff team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community.
We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development.

We will ensure that training needs are reviewed and up to date training provided in line with performance management and the School Improvement Plan.

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

All incidents of bullying will be dealt with in line with the school's anti-bullying policy.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy was published on **14th February 2014 and is an update of the March 2012 policy**. It will be actively promoted and disseminated through the school newsletters and website.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

All partners will be kept up to date via newsletters and school council meetings.

Equality Objectives

Using the views of pupils, parents, staff and community and analysis of the information as outlined above we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These will be reviewed every 4 years. See Section 3.

Signed

Head

Date: January 2014

Review Date January 2018

Governor

Section 3

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES: 2011 - 2014

| Link to Public Sector Equality Duty | Protected characteristic | Aim: | Objective: | Target group(s): e.g. whole school, girls, boys, SEN, staff etc | Action: | Who's responsible ? | Dates from and to: | Milestone/progress: |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All aims of duty | All protected characteristics | To increase pupil, staff and governors awareness of legal and human rights and the responsibilities that underpin society | For pupils to understand they have rights, how they can exercise their rights and understand how rights link to responsibilities including bullying and cyber bullying | All pupils and staff | To register schools and progress towards the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Award ⁴ To continue PSHE programme including: race, faith, bullying, cultural festivals, grandparents tea party. | Senior Leadership Team and Governors All staff | April 2012 - Sept 2013 ongoing | Register, train staff and inform Governors by July 2012 In SOWs for PSHE |
| All aims of duty | All protected characteristics | To increase the participation of pupils/students from minority, marginalised or vulnerable backgrounds in school life | Increase the diversity of pupils/students involved in the decision-making processes of the school | Minority, marginalised and vulnerable pupils/students | Identify which groups are under-represented in the School Council and/or pupil voice processes within the school Set up group of pupils/students to develop actions which better involve the target group | Deputy Headteacher | April 2012 – July 2013 | Identify under – represented groups by July 2012 |
| Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation Equality of opportunity | All | To ensure that policy and practice relating to the recruitment, retention and training is inclusive of the diverse needs of | Improved data collection and analysis on staffing issues Staff reporting improved sense of inclusion | Applicants and all school staff including volunteers | Undertake equality impact assessment on policies and practices relating to recruitment and staffing and ensure alignment with local authority guidance Improved data collection and monitoring of equality | SLT | April - July 2012 | Meeting held with Personnel and twilight session for staff on importance of equality monitoring booked |

⁴ <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/>

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | applicants and staff | | | information relating to staff | | | |
| Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation | Sexual Orientation/Race/Gender identity/Disability/Religion or belief | To prevent and respond to all hate incidents and prejudiced based bullying | Students feel safer as reported in safer schools survey as feel incidents will be dealt with. Increased staff confidence Accurate reporting rates. | Whole school and specifically BME /LBGTU/SEND pupils/students or those from a Faith background | To review and update existing policies and practice relating to bullying (Opportunity to carry out EQIA). Access staff training. Ensure continuing professional development for staff to develop skills in identifying and challenging homophobia and transphobia Promotion of hate incident recording to students. | SLT | September 2012 – December 2012 | Staff Attended Anti-bullying training |
| Advance equality of opportunity | Disability/ All | To increase social and emotional skills for pupils/students with BESD (Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties) | Improved ability by pupils/students to handle difficult situations and a reduction in classroom disruption | Pupils/students with BESD | Train staff to deliver small group work sessions to support targeted pupils/students in developing social and emotional skills | SEAL (Social and emotional aspects of learning) co-ordinator (AS) | September 2012 – December 2012 | |
| Advance equality of opportunity | Disability | To better understand the needs of disabled parents/carers within our school community | Improved access and communication with disabled parents/carers | Disabled parents/carers | Gather and record information relating to disabled parents | SLT or Parent Liaison Officer | September 2012 – December 2012 | |

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| Advance equality of opportunity | Other | To improve the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals To develop the link with a school in Malawi: sharing curriculum and diversity understanding. | Improved attainment To raise awareness of other cultures and diversity. | Children eligible for free school meals Whole School | Collate and analyse data relating to attainment by target group Work with Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES) to identify strategies to improve attainment of this group. Involve parents, pupils and staff with school in Malawi. Two way staff exchange visits | SLT Staff and parents. | Mar 2012– Jan 2013 Ongoing | Reviewed RAISE online data and equality data report Reviewed “Narrowing the Gap” with regard to achievement Exchanges taken place and continuing communication. |
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For Further information and guidance please see czone.

