

Birchanger CofE (VC) Primary School

Equalities Policy and Objectives

This policy should be read alongside the DfE document 'The Equality Act 2010 and Schools' May 2014 which gives further guidance on specific issues.

Legislative Background

The Equality Act 2010 replaced nine major Acts of Parliament and almost a hundred sets of regulations which had been introduced over several decades. It provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by getting rid of anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time, and it extends protection against discrimination in certain areas.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and Academies, and extends to certain protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Act identified eight Protected Characteristics. It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their:

- sex
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity

Principles

The policy outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors to promote equality. This involves tackling the barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes so that there is equality of access and the diversity within the school community is celebrated and valued.

We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. At Birchanger CofE (VC) Primary School, equality is a key principle for treating all people the same irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs/faith tradition, sexual orientation, age or any other of the protected characteristics (Single Equalities Act 2010).

Consultation and involvement

The development of this policy and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, pupils and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the policy:

- Feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, parent forum meetings
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / INSET;
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons, pupil perception interviews
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation:

- Providing updates on equalities legislation and the school's responsibilities in this regard;
- Working closely with the governor responsible for this area who is Andy Kay
- Supporting positively the evaluation activities that monitor the impact and success of the policy on pupils from different groups, e.g SEN, Children in Care, Minority Ethnic including Traveller and EAL pupils and Free School Meals, in the following recommended areas:
 - Pupils' progress and attainment
 - Learning and teaching
 - Behaviour discipline and exclusions
 - Attendance
 - Admissions
 - Incidents of prejudice related bullying and all forms of bullying
 - Parental involvement
 - Participation in extra-curricular and extended school activities
 - Staff recruitment and retention
 - Visits and visitors

Policy Commitments

Promoting Equality: Curriculum

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed. To achieve this we will ensure:

- Curriculum planning reflects a commitment to equality;
- The curriculum prepares pupils for life in a diverse society and uses opportunities to reflect the background and experience of pupils and families in the school;
- There will be opportunities in the curriculum to explore concepts and issues related to identity and equality;
- The promotion of attitudes and values that celebrate and respect diversity and challenge discriminatory behaviour and language wherever it occurs;
- The use of images and materials which positively reflect a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles.

Promoting Equality: Achievement

There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, social background and sexual orientation. To secure the best possible outcomes we recognise that:

- Adults in the school will be expected to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity;
- It is important to identify the particular needs of individuals and groups within the school and to use targeted interventions to narrow gaps in achievement;
- A range of teaching methods are used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils.
- All pupils are actively encouraged to engage fully in their own learning.

Promoting Equality: The ethos and culture of the school

Our Christian Values: Learn to Love, Love to Learn - Love, Care, Courage and Truth

Our school rules: Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Healthy.

- At Birchanger CofE (VC) Primary School, we are aware that those involved in the leadership of the school community are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community;
- We strive to achieve a feeling of openness and tolerance which welcomes everyone to the school;
- The children are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect;
- The displays around the school reflect diversity across all aspects of equality and are frequently monitored;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure access for pupils, staff and visitors (including parents) with disabilities (this not only includes physical access, but takes account wider access to school information and activities);
- Provision is made to cater for the cultural, moral and spiritual needs of all children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and off-site activities;
- Pupils' views are actively encouraged and respected. Pupils are given an effective voice for example, through advocacy, the School Council, pupil perception surveys and there are regular opportunities to engage with pupils about their learning and the life of the school;
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils feel welcomed and included.

Promoting Equality: Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

- All posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants;
- Those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do avoid discrimination to ensure equality of opportunity.
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds;

- Equalities policy and practice is covered in all staff inductions;
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and the impact of policies are kept under regular review.

Promoting Equality: Countering and Challenging Harassment and Bullying

- The school counters and challenges all types of discriminatory behaviour and this is made clear to staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- The school has a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with prejudice related bullying incidents and incidents are recorded and monitored;
- The school reports to Governors, parents and LA on an annual basis the number of prejudice related incidents recorded in the school.

Promoting Equality: Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

Birchanger CofE (VC) Primary School aims to work in partnership with parents/carers. We:

- Take action to ensure all parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the life of the school;
- Maintain good channels of communication,(e.g. through parent forums, parent surveys) to ensure parents' views are captured to inform practice;
- Encourage members of the local community to join in school activities and celebrations;
- Ensure that the parents/carers of newly arrived pupils e.g. EAL, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller or pupils with disabilities are made to feel welcome.

Responsibility for the Policy

In our school, all members of the school community have a responsibility for promoting equalities.

The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring that:

- The school complies with all equalities legislation relevant to the school community;
- The school's equalities policy is maintained and updated regularly; and that equality objectives are monitored;
- The actions, procedures and strategies related to the policy are implemented;
- The designated Equalities Governor will have an overview, on behalf of the governing body, on all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to these incidents.

The Headteacher has responsibility for:

- In partnership with the Governing body, providing leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- Overseeing the implementation of the equality policy and objectives;

- Co-ordinating the activities related to equality and evaluating impact;
- Ensuring that all who enter the school are aware of, and comply with, the equalities policy;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support;
- Taking appropriate action in response to any prejudice-related incidents.

All school staff have responsibility for:

- The implementation of the school's equalities policy and schemes;
- Dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- Ensuring they do not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity and culture, disability, sexual orientation or other groups vulnerable to discrimination.
- Keeping up to date with equalities legislation.

Review of progress and impact

The Plan has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Policy annually and review the entire plan and accompanying objectives at least every four years.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

Birchanger Primary School Equalities Objectives 2016 - 2020

Equality Objective No. 1: Improve attendance – analysing reasons for absence where patterns affect particular groups of children		
<i>Actions</i>	<i>Measured by</i>	<i>Intended Outcomes</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly: Monitor attendance at individual, cohort, group and individual level and discuss all figures and compare with national data. • Speak to relevant parents/children and provide support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly checking of attendance figures and analysis. • Daily attendance log for identified pupils • Staff observation 	<p>Overall percentage absence rate at least in line with national average.</p> <p>No group of pupils has significantly lower absence.</p> <p>Where absence is higher there are justifiable reasons.</p>
Equality Objective No. 2: Reduce any significant variation in attainment and progress of children in the key groups		
<i>Actions</i>	<i>Measured by</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Termly pupil progress discussion (teacher, LSA, Sendco, Headteacher) and review of cohort data, with reference to individuals and groups of pupils.	Termly analysis of attainment tracking.	Significant variations in attainment highlighted and interventions actioned.
Equality Objective No. 3: Improve the access of all groups of children to wider opportunities and enrichment		
<i>Actions</i>	<i>Measured by</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor participation of different groups of children in wider opportunities, extra-curricular and enrichment activities.eg clubs, sport events, class and school responsibilities • Review provision and selection and encourage children to get involved in activities new to them. • Review the daily practices in school such as break/lunch intervention groups to ensure all children have equal access to wider opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of which children get involved in which activities. • Monitoring club attendance. 	Evidence of children getting involved in activities new to them and/or getting involved in more activities.

Check list for school staff and governors

- Is information collected on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions, staff training? Is this information used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides?
- How has your Equality Plan been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents and pupils?
- Is pupil achievement analysed by race, disability and gender? Are there trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action, and has action been taken to address these?
- Does the curriculum include opportunities to understand the issues related to race, disability and gender?
- Are all pupils encouraged to participate in school life? Are pupils who make a positive contribution reflective of the school's diversity e.g. through class assemblies / school council?
- Is bullying and harassment of pupils and staff monitored by race, disability and gender, and is this information used to make a difference to the experience of other pupils? Are racist incidents reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis?
- Are visual displays reflective of the diversity of your school community? How are minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models promoted positively in lessons, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies?
- Does the school take part in annual events such as Black History Month, Deaf Awareness Week and One World Week to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender?
- Is the school environment as accessible as possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school? Are open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend held in an accessible part of the school, and are issues such as language barriers considered?
- Are the accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff considered in the publishing and sending out of information, in terms of race, disability and gender?
- Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters who are disabled?