

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2019

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OWNER	C&S Committee

We have set the following equality objectives for 2019. These are based on objectives in the School's wider improvement plan.

OBJECTIVE 1. All pupils' outcomes are demonstratively improving in EYFS, literacy, mathematics and SEND, where key issues are identified for further improvement.

OBJECTIVE 2. Provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEN includes an individualised curriculum with identified next steps and time-targeted interventions so that these pupils make consistently good progress.

OBJECTIVE 3. Pupil Premium children are making better than expected progress in reading, writing and maths and staff know how funding is being used to support them in their learning and emotional needs.

OBJECTIVE 4. The most able pupils are given learning that excites, inspires and challenges them to think more deeply about their learning, and are making better than expected in-year progress.

SINGLE EQUALITIES STATEMENT 2019

Legal framework

St Mary's Catholic Primary recognises that it has responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender identity and, as relevant, pregnancy and maternity status, and in relation to employment, age and marriage/civil partnership.

The School acknowledges that these responsibilities and aspirations are in line with international Human Rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Terminology

This statement is based upon the following references and definitions:

- **Direct discrimination** - occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic, then they treat, or would treat, other people.
- **Indirect discrimination** - occurs where a "provision, criteria or practice" is applied which has the effect of putting people who have a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.
- **Harassment** - "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. In schools this applies only to harassment because of sex, race, disability and pregnancy and maternity. It does not apply to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. This does not mean that such behaviour would be

permissible; it would remain unlawful discrimination notwithstanding that this legal definition does not apply.

- **Victimisation** - is where a person is treated less favourably because of something done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act e.g. because the person has brought a claim under the Act.
- The term ethnicity is used in preference to race or racial group, on the grounds that it better reflects the intentions and concerns of race relations legislation.
- Where appropriate to religious affiliation and identity.
- Where appropriate to sexual identity and to challenging homophobia.
- The promotion of community cohesion is integrated into the statement, particularly, but not only, in the third of the nine principles.
- The phrasing at certain points reflects the specific duties required by the Equality Act 2010, in particular the duties to:
 - Engage with interested groups and individuals (Principle 6).
 - Publish equality information (principle 8).
 - Formulate and publish equality objectives (principle 9).

Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations and intentions cited above, the School is guided by nine principles, listed below.

- **PRINCIPLE 1: ALL LEARNERS ARE OF EQUAL VALUE**
- **PRINCIPLE 2: WE RECOGNISE AND RESPECT DIFFERENCE**
- **PRINCIPLE 3: WE FOSTER POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND RELATIONSHIPS, AND A SHARED SENSE OF COHESION AND BELONGING**
- **PRINCIPLE 4: WE OBSERVE GOOD EQUALITIES PRACTICE IN STAFF RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT**
- **PRINCIPLE 5: WE AIM TO REDUCE AND REMOVE INEQUALITIES AND BARRIERS THAT ALREADY EXIST**
- **PRINCIPLE 6: WE CONSULT AND INVOLVE WIDELY**
- **PRINCIPLE 7: SOCIETY AS A WHOLE SHOULD BENEFIT**
- **PRINCIPLE 8: WE BASE OUR PRACTICES ON SOUND EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION**
- **PRINCIPLE 9: OBJECTIVES**

These principles seek to recognise and protect the rights and status of all individuals by reducing and removing barriers.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the School complies with legislation, and that this statement and its related procedures and action plans are known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

A member of the governing body is nominated as the Equality link governor to monitor the implementation of this statement and its related procedures.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the statement; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

All staff are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles listed below.
- Support pupils for whom English is not their first language.
- Keep up-to-date with Equalities legislation relevant to their work.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion. All staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, as individuals and as groups or teams.

Our ethos

We ensure the relevant principles above apply to the full range of the School's policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- Each curriculum subject or area to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the relevant principles.
- Pupils' progress, attainment and achievement.
- Pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being.
- Teaching styles and strategies.
- Admissions and attendance.
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development.
- Care, guidance and support.
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions.
- The provision of foodstuffs and drink relevant to religious beliefs.
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians.
- Working with the wider community.

We respect the religious affiliations and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Addressing discrimination

The School is opposed to all forms of prejudice and discrimination which stand in the way of fulfilling our legal duties. We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our School and how they are addressed.

Breaches of the principles outlined in this statement will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other School policies are, as determined by the Headteacher and governing body. All such incidents must be referred to the Headteacher who will assess, record and deal with the incident appropriately.

How we address equality in practice

Treating people equally (Principle 1) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities aim not to discriminate, but take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of prejudice that people may face, relative to:

- Whether or not they are disabled.
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status.
- Whatever their sex (gender).
- Whatever their gender identity.

- Whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background.
- Whatever their sexual orientation.
- And, as relevant, pregnancy and maternity status, and in relation to employment, age and marriage/civil partnership.

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- Positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people.
- Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents.
- Mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual, homophobic, and gender identity-based harassment.

In addition to avoiding or minimising the possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist. We will:

- Ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees; for example, in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:
- Engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. As appropriate, we consult and involve groups and individuals.
- Ensure that our policies and activities benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of all groups and individuals. The School will recognise and act on all opportunities to promote community cohesion.

Exceptions for schools with a religious character

The Equality Act provides that for schools with a religious character it will not be unlawful discrimination to do certain things permitted by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA).

Employment This means that for Catholic schools, in common with other voluntary aided schools, preference may be given in connection with the appointment, remuneration or promotion of teachers, to those whose religious beliefs or religious practice is in accordance with the tenets of the school's religion or religious denomination, or who give or are willing to give religious education in accordance with the tenets of the faith. Conduct that is incompatible with the precepts of the Church, or which fails to uphold its tenets, may be taken into consideration in determining whether the teacher's employment should be terminated. This exception all applies to support staff where preference may be given to those whose religious beliefs or religious practice is in accordance with the tenets of the school's religion or religious denomination.

The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales has set out its requirement for Catholic schools as follows:

"The preservation and development of the quality and distinctive nature of Catholic schools depends on the faith, practice and commitment of the teachers in the schools, working with their governing bodies".

The Bishops' Memorandum refers to the employment of Catholic teachers as a high priority, whilst at the same time recognising the contribution of teachers of other Christian Churches, other faiths and other teachers.

The Memorandum also requires that for the most senior roles i.e. the posts of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head or Co-ordinator of Religious Education the post must be filled by a baptised and practising Catholic. For other leadership posts that directly affect the Catholic mission of the school, they should, wherever possible, be staffed by skilled practitioners who are committed Catholics.

Admissions. Priority may be given on the basis of faith criteria in cases of where schools are oversubscribed in accordance with admissions law and the provisions of the School Admissions Code.

Curriculum. The delivery, but not the content, of the curriculum is covered by the Act.

DfE guidance highlights the relationship between protection because of sexual orientation and protection of religious freedom. It states that many people's views on sexual orientation/sexual activity are grounded in religious belief. It refers to concerns of schools with a religious character that they may be prevented from teaching in line with their religious ethos. It also refers to teachers having expressed concerns that they may be subject to legal action if they do not voice positive views on same sex relationships, whether or not this view accords with their faith. The guidance also refers to concerns that such schools may teach and act in ways unacceptable to lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils and parents when same sex relationships are discussed because there are no express provisions to prevent this occurring.

DfE guidance makes clear that, like all schools, schools with a religious character have a responsibility to the welfare of children in their care and to adhere to curriculum guidance. **It says that, provided their beliefs are explained in an appropriate way in an educational context that takes existing guidance on the delivery of Sex and Relationship education (SRE) and Religious Education into account, then schools should not be acting unlawfully.**

Further that it would not be unlawful for a teacher in any school to express personal views on sexual orientation provided that it is done in an appropriate manner and context. The guidance notes the influential role of a teacher and that their actions and responsibilities extend beyond the requirements of the equality legislation and that expressing personal views should not extend to allowing unlawful discrimination.

Monitoring and evaluation

We revisit our equalities action plan annually within the framework of the overall School Improvement Plan and processes of self-evaluation. We maintain and publish at least annually, quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality.

We formulate and publish at least every four years, specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (Principle 8), and the engagements in which we have been involved (Principle 7).

We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them. This is reviewed annually by the Curriculum and Staffing Committee and reported on the School website. The objectives which we identify take account of national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this statement. This is published on the School website.

In particular, we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

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