



St Patrick's RC Primary School

Equality Policy (Public Sector Equality Duty)

Mission Statement

St. Patrick's is a Catholic school
with Christ as our vision.

In our school,
we foster an atmosphere
of love and respect
for God and each other.

We value and appreciate each member of our
school community as unique.

We value different identities in order
that each person may live life in all its fullness.

We aim to deliver a curriculum which meets the needs of all our children and is rooted in the
Gospel stories.

We value the faith, culture and traditions
of every child and we encourage partnership between
parents, school, parish and local community

St Patrick's RC Primary School

Equality Policy – Meeting Our Public Sector Equality Duty

Introduction

St Patrick's RC Primary School is an inclusive school where we believe that all members of our community are of equal worth. We demonstrate our commitment to this by prioritising the well-being and progress of every child in our school and by striving to ensure that all members of our community are treated with fairness and equality.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups represented in the school.

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles:

1. All learners are of equal value. Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
2. We recognise, respect and value people of different identities and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development
6. We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential

7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

Purpose of the policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils, staff, parents and carers or treat them less favourably because of their gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief, gender reassignment or sexual orientation. Pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership are also “protected characteristics”, which are covered by this policy, but not as part of the school provisions related to pupils.

All of our policies and procedures are based on the guidance of the Catholic Education Service (CES).

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties:

The Public Sector Equality Duty or ‘general duty’

This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation**
- 2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups**
- 3. Foster good relations between different groups**

Two ‘specific duties’

This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- **Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by April 6th 2012**
- **Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable by April 6th 2012**

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Development of the policy

When developing the policy, we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the OFSTED inspection framework 2012, which places a strong focus on improving the

learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards. We also note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

Links to other policies and documentation

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our school development plan, self evaluation review, the school web site and newsletters.

Our responsibilities under the Equality Act also inform policy and practice with regards to the school's key policies such as teaching and learning, behaviour and discipline, admissions, DSEN and anti-bullying as well as the business of the Governing Body, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team and School Council.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the way we comply with this is found in our recruitment policy.

General Duty

1. Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions, the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils, which is designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- The Head teacher and Chair of Governors ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day to day life of the school.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which encourages respect for all.
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief. In principal, this also includes sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy

or maternity, however in regards to pupils of primary school age, these will rarely apply. Wherever these protected characteristics do apply either in regards to new pupils or their parents / carers, the school will not treat their applications for a place in the school less favourably.

- The school policies on behaviour and exclusions take full account of the new duties under the Equality Act.
- We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.
- The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:
- There is guidance for all staff on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously.
- We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and when appropriate we provide a report to the Governing Body about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them.

2. Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups

- We know the needs of our pupils very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.
- We work in partnership with parents and carers and other professionals, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions procedures.
- We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in reaching age related expectations in Literacy and Numeracy.
- We collect, analyse and publish data on the school population by gender and ethnicity, EAL, on the % of pupils identified as having a special educational need and / or disability and by year group.
- We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups and work with the local authority attendance officer to reduce persistent absences.
- We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as 'less able'.

- We use a range of teaching strategies that ensure we meet the needs of all pupils. We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving.
- We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.
- The Governing Body reviews the Accessibility Plan annually and makes reasonable adjustments to increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum, to improve the physical environment and to improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils and other users of the school premises.

3. Fostering good relations

- We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils.
- We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE and citizenship and across the curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We acknowledge the contribution of different cultures to world history.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors and whole school events e.g. Black History Month
- We include equalities matters on our website and in our newsletters to parents and carers

Other ways in which we address equality issues:

- We maintain records of any training relating to the equalities agenda.
- We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed.

- We have a rolling programme for reviewing all of our school policies and assess their impact on achieving equality for all our school community.
- We review relevant feedback from the parent questionnaires and consultations, parents-teacher meetings and other formal / informal feedback from parents and carers
- We analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events.
- We review feedback and responses from the School Council, PSHE lessons and whole school surveys on pupils' attitudes.
- We respond to issues raised in Annual Reviews, Individual Education Plans and pupil progress meetings as well as issues raised by teachers and support staff.
- We gather feedback from Parent Governors, other members of the Governing Body and from the Governing Body's committees.
- We give due regard to equality issues when deciding our objectives for the School Development Plan.

Our 'specific duties'

1. Publishing information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by April 6th 2012
We meet this duty by publishing this document on the school website and by providing links to DfE sites where our attainment data is available.
2. Publishing Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities and are the outcome of a review of and analysis of data and other evidence. These objectives may be part of our School Development Plan or may be additional to it.

Our Equality Objectives are:

- To increase participation by Muslim pupils who attend Mosque after school in extracurricular activities by providing additional lunchtime clubs.
- To increase levels of activity for girls by providing a lunchtime dance club.
- To increase the levels of participation in sport for children who are traditionally less inclined to take part through our involvement in the Hathershaw Sports Cluster.
- To raise levels of attendance of all vulnerable groups to ensure equity and fairness in access and engagement.

These objectives will be reviewed at the end of the academic year.

In addition the school has an accessibility plan which looks at equality of opportunity for pupils with disabilities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

- The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the Governing Body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.
- Every Governing Body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's equalities work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys).

Head teacher and leadership team

- The Head teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; 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.
- The Head teacher has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes.

Teaching and support staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Plan and deliver lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that
- Promote positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- Maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- Support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

The school will provide training and guidance on equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year. Attendance at training will be recorded and all new and existing staff members will receive copies of the school's Equality Duty policy.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy.

Equal opportunities for staff

The school is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. All staff

appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability, and in compliance with the law. We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development in line with the school's improvement priorities and performance management policy.

Monitoring and reviewing the policy

We review the information about equalities in this policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate.

Sharing the policy

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives is available on the school website. Reference to the policy is made in the staff handbook, as part of the induction for new staff and when appropriate to parents in the school newsletter. We ensure that the whole school community knows about the policy, objectives and data through the school website and by providing a copy of the policy outside the school office.

The governing body reviews this policy every four years. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.