



St. Michael at Bowes C.E. Junior School Equality Policy

Vision: An inclusive Christian community building on firm foundations for successful lives.

- We believe that every child should have a happy, safe, secure and disciplined environment in order that all children may thrive and reach their full potential.
- We are committed towards an environment that reflects our Christian values and provides equal opportunities for all members of the school community.
- We strive for continual progress and development with the purpose of improving standards, raising attainment and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning

Purpose of the Policy:

On the 1st October 2010, the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.

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 or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity.

The Act introduced requires all schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties.

Public Sector Equality Duty requires us a school to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

The Two “specific duties” requires us to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

We recognise that these duties reflect 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.

Our Equality Policy aims to demonstrate our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Introduction:

St. Michael at Bowes is a Church of England Junior school, reflecting Christian values. It is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are considered of equal worth.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the School Community - pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and all visitors to our school.

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.

The overall objective of the school's Equality Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties.

This involves:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

Through the Equality Policy, the school seeks to ensure that no member of the school community, or any other person, through their contact with the school, receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified.

This covers race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities or socioeconomic background.

Our approach to promoting Equality is based on the following principles:

- All learners are of equal value. Whatever their ability, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.

We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which children and adults within our school setting 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 our school.

- We foster positive attitudes and relationships.
We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- 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.
- We observe good equalities practice for our staff.
We strive to 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

- We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect all pupils to make good progress and achieve to their highest potential
- 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 ensures that these children are more likely to achieve high standards and improve their life chances.

Equality Statement:

Our Equality Statement is based on the principles above and aims to ensure that:

'All pupils and members of staff at our School are provided with opportunities to fulfil their potential whatever their sex, race, colour ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief.'

We are totally committed to ensuring that equality is a fundamental part of our drive to improve and that all members of the St. Michael at Bowes C.E. Junior School should expect to fulfil their full potential.

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 process, the school prospectus, school web site and where appropriate within our school policies.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation:

At all times we strive to take into account equality issues in relation to:

- Admissions and exclusions.
- The way we provide education for our pupils.

- The way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.

We are aware of the reasonable adjustment duty and work towards enhancing access and participation for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and in ensuring that these pupils are not being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

The Governors ensure that all appointment panels give careful consideration to this policy so that no one is discriminated against regarding 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 implementation of a creative curriculum and by creating a learning environment which promotes respect for all.

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance:

The School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy and Anti-Bullying policies take account of the duties under the Equality Act. We monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action, when required, to address concerns. The school aims to actively challenge all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

We treat all bullying incidents seriously and provide a report to the Governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of these incidents and how we have dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action, when required, to reduce incidents

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups:

We are aware of the needs of our school population and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.

We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who are 'vulnerable' through our pupil admissions meetings.

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 acquiring age-appropriate language, literacy and mathematical skills.

We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils and where, it is deemed necessary, we provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving.

We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

We have an Accessibility Plan designed to:

- Increase the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment.
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

What we are doing to foster good relations:

We aim to prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes 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 our Personal Social and Health Education 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 include the contribution of different cultures to world history and that promote positive images of people

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, whole school events and a whole array of curriculum enrichment activities throughout the year.

Where appropriate we include equality matters in our newsletters to parents and carers

Other ways we address equality issues:

- We maintain records of all training relating to equalities (training logs).
- We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed.
- We have a rolling programme for reviewing all of our school policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and well being of our pupils. The implications for equalities of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced.

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole school community we:

- Review relevant feedback from parent questionnaires, parents' evenings, Governors' meetings and parent-consultation meetings.
- Analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events.
- Review feedback and responses from the children and groups of children, from the Rights Respecting School Council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school.
- Analyse issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual

Educational Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support:

- Ensure that we minute responses and feedback at Governing Body meetings and address actions from the Governing body's working groups.

Equality Objectives:

The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities and are the outcomes of careful review and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we achieve improved outcomes for the different groups.

Our Equality Objectives are:

- To increase the percentage of pupils progress making at least in line with National expectations in English and Mathematics, ensuring that the vast majority of pupils (irrespective of their background) achieve challenging targets.
- To ensure that vulnerable groups of pupils achieve challenging targets and the gaps in attainment / achievement for these pupils are reduced.
- To continue to narrow the gap in attainment and achievement between boys and girls.
- To raise the standards of attainment and accelerate the achievement of pupils identified as having SEND.

Our Learning and Achievement Plan demonstrates how we will achieve our objectives.

Monitoring and Reviewing Objectives:

We review and update our equality objectives every year and report annually to the Governing Body on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, pupils, governors, parents and carers as appropriate throughout the year.

Roles and Responsibilities:

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act.

Governing Body:

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures are implemented. The effectiveness of the policy, in securing achievement of the equality objectives, will be implemented on an annual basis.

School Leadership Team:

The Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Day to day implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support.
- Taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

Teaching and Support Staff:

All teaching and support staff are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom and across the school.
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination.
- Deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur.
- Plan and deliver a curriculum and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give 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.

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure. We will review the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year.

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 relating to all staff:

We are 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, receives appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Disseminating the Policy:

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Information is available on the school website and as a paper copy available from the main school office.

We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on Behaviour and Discipline, Anti-bullying and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Policy Review:

This Policy will be monitored on a regular basis by the Headteacher and the Leadership Team of the School. The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body, regarding the effectiveness of the policy, on a termly basis via the Governing Body Report.