

ST MARY OF THE ANGELS SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY 2021-22

OVERVIEW

The Single Equality Act which came into place Oct 1st 2010 brought together the duties that are already set out in our Race, Disability and Gender policies into one single Equality Duty. This policy is written to bring together and harmonise those three policies. The Single Equality Act combines the existing three duties into one new Equality Duty that covers all seven of the equality strands: age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. In this school we will ensure that at every level, in all our work and throughout all aspects of the school community and its life, all will be treated equally.

OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that all learners have equal access to a rich, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
2. To advance equality of opportunity by ensuring that teaching, learning and curriculum promote equality, celebrate diversity and promote community cohesion by fostering good relations.
3. To eliminate any discrimination, harassment and victimization. To ensure that no-one is unfairly or illegally disadvantaged as a consequence of their age, disability, gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, disability or religious beliefs.
4. To recognize, celebrate diversity within our community whilst promoting community cohesion.
5. To ensure that those with management responsibility and individual members of staff, accept responsibility for planning teaching, learning and curriculum apply this policy to all we do.
6. To ensure that learners and parents are fully involved in the provision made by the school and to increase transparency.
7. To ensure that within the school budget, adequate funding is provided to underpin this policy and that intervention, positive action and preventative action is funded where needed.

STRATEGIES

1. Monitoring, evaluation and review carried out by the Leadership Team will ensure that procedures and practices within the school reflect the objectives of this policy.
2. Parents and governors will be involved and consulted about the provision being offered by the school.
3. Teachers will ensure that their planning, teaching and learning takes account of this policy and they will see that the equity duty underpins all their work.
4. The diversity within our school and the wider community will be viewed positively by all and this diversity will be recognized as a positive, rich resource for teaching, learning and the curriculum.
5. INSET opportunities will be provided for staff, to raise awareness of their Equality Duty and provide them with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to meet the requirements of this policy.
6. Active contributions will be sought of parents and others to enrich teaching, learning and the curriculum.
7. The positive achievements of all pupils will be celebrated and recognized.

OUTCOMES

This policy will play an important part in the educational development of individual pupils. It will ensure that all pupils are treated equally and as favourably as others. The school will make all the reasonable adjustments necessary to promote equal opportunity and equal treatment of all members of the school community. We are committed to meeting the individual needs of each child and we will take full account their age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation in accordance with the requirements of The Single Equality Act 2010.

Revised and adopted by the Governing Body ... autumn 2021 – review autumn 2022

Update 2020-21

1. The curriculum has been updated this year, with, again, a commitment to a broad, balanced, rich curriculum; and more coherence to cater for all ability types (sensory room, forest schools etc)
2. Links with countries abroad have been strengthened in the past few years (eg Tanzanian and Spanish exchanges) – in the case of the Spanish exchange, we have worked on an e-learning internet safety scheme, in both schools, which is published on our website. The face to face exchange is on current hold due to BREXIT and COVID; we will revisit this if funds and strategy allows.
3. New legislation being followed, on Diocesan advice, eg, to prevent discrimination on sexual orientation. New Diocesan scheme in place, 'Journey of Love' for Sex and Relationships Education.

4. All Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements still being followed; new literature purchases this year have presented positive stereotypes; success in gender varied sport eg a female pupil was Cheshire tennis champion; and continued study of multi-faith topics, as part of our RE enrichment.
5. The headteacher is trained on discrimination issues around; race/ethnic origin; religion; gender identity; sexual orientation; disability; and other characteristics. This was jointly hosted by Cheshire Police and the CWAC Safeguarding Team, and the Proud Trust. Outcomes were fed back and implemented in school.
6. The school website has been updated for parents in 2020-21 with information/direct web links about; 'Prevent'; female genital mutilation; forced marriages; gender issues; child sexual exploitation; and other equality related issues. Parents received a text asking them to read this carefully.

ACTION PLAN 2021-22

1. Curriculum materials are now in place, following our earlier equality training, which mean that pupils at KS1 and 2 will be addressing issues such as single sex families, looked after children and disability, using video experiences from individual children. Espresso, for example, has materials which we used last year. **ACTION;** Renew/revisit/embed the SWGFL materials during e safety week, Feb 2022.
2. Staff have received materials from various sources, in order to be able to respond to any questions and misconceptions around gender and sexuality issues. **ACTION;** (a) Any staff concerns to be directed to Mr Hughes, recorded via CPOMS, in order to build up an incident log. Look for patterns in 2021-22. (b) Barnardos will train all staff on equality issues during 2021-22 (c) new teaching books for EYFS/KS1 by Todd Parr, eg "The families book" and "It's good to be different", facilitating discussions around all these issues. We also have a new suite of 'Books for discussion' as part of the Diocesan RSE scheme being implemented, for use in every class.
3. The website has been updated again for families with the latest NSPCC information around child protection and related issues; and new posters are now on our boards for Childline, with the phone number. Childline were due to visit in 2020-21, they will return when COVID rules are permitting. **ACTION;** Updated website with Childline information, and website access, 2021-22.
4. All our COVID policies will be developed with reference to the Equality Act eg, pupils with SEND have had extra transition back to school, will continue to be monitored, with returns to the LA etc. Following easing of parking restrictions, disabled parents and children can always access our facilities and so on. **ACTION** Keep updating any COVID response policies on the website for scrutiny of stakeholders.

STRATEGY FOR ENSURING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The school is determined to uphold and promote the 9 protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act. (the last two are grouped together in our list.)

Each characteristic is outlined below, with actions from school to show compliance and a proactive attitude.

1, Age

*Books in school such as Oxford Reading Tree, and library books, show many positive images of older people. Grandparents are often in school – such as a grandparents' coffee afternoon (where pupils waited on the visitors) and grandparents 'stay and play' in FS2. We aim to value & respect the roles of older people in our community. *People are employed regardless of age. For example, our caretaker is past normal retirement age; and is a great role model for pupils. We aim to employ on aptitude, never on age. Governors here are in their 30s to 70s – giving us a range of knowledge and experience, which enhances our decision making process. *Similarly children from the youngest age in school are given responsibilities such as register monitors; and we have the highest expectations of everyone, in work and behaviour, regardless of age.

2. Disability.

The school building had a proactive attitude to disability, with disabled parking spaces; full DDA compliance in building design; audio loops and dimmable lights; touchscreens and ICT aids for learners; and so on. Our proactive training programme means all staff are safe handling trained; many have had training from the school health service on asthma, diabetes and speech & language difficulties. The epilepsy nurse provided key staff with training; and many are full first aid trained or paediatric trained. One of our staff INSET days in 2020-21 was a whole staff Mental Health First Aid training day, which has really impacted positively on adults and children in our community. We were able to put this into practice when COVID restrictions were in place, and people were affected by the situation. Telephone calls to parents and families with issues were frequent; and pupils accessed additional ELSA time in school. We are fully prepared for disabled students, with amendments to toilets and showers; flexible classroom spaces and doors; plenty of aids available such as coloured overlays, pastel paper, writing slopes, gripper pencils; classroom & dining chairs suitable for wheelchair users; and a walker available. We work with paediatrics, OT nurses, visual impairment service and others to support our pupils with severe disabilities. If pupils have operations etc, we work with the Education Access Officer, Michaela Bridge, to ensure that appropriate tutoring is available for their continuing education. Occupational therapy support is available for targeted pupils again, during 2021-22 and is ongoing.

3. Gender reassignment

At this time, we do not have parents nor pupils with gender reassignment; but the school fully understands that a proactive approach is needed by the whole community on this issue. We want visitors to feel welcome and not facing any kind of discrimination, whether overt or unintended. Adults and children dealing with gender reassignment can face significant issues in their lives; and we believe that the school community needs to be prepared. Visitor toilets were converted to non gender specific in early 2019, for example. In order to understand the potential needs of those with gender reassignment, our headteacher attended a course organised by Cheshire Police and Cheshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership about Hate Crimes. This included an EWO giving a case study on this issue in a Cheshire School. This was fed back to staff in school, as well as to a governors' meeting. The day also included workshops from the Proud Trust (LGBT+ youth organisation) who explained lots of the issues facing young people with LGBT issues and transgender/other gender issues. See Action plan, point 2 above for detail on our next moves. KS2 have also accessed an Espresso module on 'Families' addressing these issues, and facilitating discussion. Workshops in Y5 and 6 from NSPCC also covered this issue. In the **safeguarding area for parents**, on our website, there is a full page on support for gender reassignment and sexual orientation – with website links (Proud Trust, NSPCC etc)

4. Marriage and civil partnership

Children's resources have already been mentioned above and are in use (reading books, posters etc) to provide positive images of different types of marriage and civil partnerships. This is further explored through online resources (Espresso etc) so that discussion can take place in classes, in a positive way. Through our Mission Statement, we welcome all people in our Christian ethos and will not judge or discriminate against anyone, according to gender or lifestyle. This is evident in our employment practice which follows the Law in full; and in our non discriminatory Admission policy, which again follows the Law in full. We have single sex parents who have stated in review that the school supports single sex families well.

5. Pregnancy and maternity.

The school follows employment law in full. We have termly updates from our HR department and an annual training day for senior staff on current employment issues. This means we are proactive and informed in supporting employees on such issues as pregnancy and maternity rights; and any related health and safety issues. Two recent maternity cases have been managed carefully, in line with COVID guidance, with regular input from our HR provider to ensure equity and safety. In general, senior management believe in encouraging family friendly working. For instance we responded to staff requests to 'bank' PPA time fortnightly, so that staff can have a full day - and know when it will be in advance. As long as planning is done well, we are delighted to help. We appreciate family-school worklife

balance, with children. A full worklife/wellbeing survey of staff was completed anonymously, based on the DfE model; with actions responded to. This will be kept under review in 2022.

Parents have also been informed by text that we are a family friendly school; and so we will always find a discreet space for anyone entering these premises who needs to breastfeed a child.

6.Race

As with disability we have a proactive attitude to race equality. No discrimination is tolerated, in terms of employment law and practice, nor in admissions. We have children here from China; Asia and continental Europe. All are welcomed and integrated. Teachers from abroad came here regularly on placements, pre COVID, to share their experiences and speak in their native languages, as a role model for us all.

Pupils' development has been described as 'outstanding' by Ofsted and we are proud that children say that they suffer little discrimination based on race in this school. Ofsted say any signs of bullying are followed up and dealt with immediately.

Books and dictionaries are available in classes in different languages, Polish, Spanish etc, to both support English as an Additional Language (EAL) children's right to learn enrichment in their own language; but also to show English children the richness of other cultures & languages. Other books such as our reading schemes have positive role models too.

Pre COVID, a unique Spanish exchange for pupils was offered to every child in Y6, to enrich our Spanish language curriculum, with an online, e-safety project last year between us and our partner school in Pamplona. Children have visited their friends' homes, schools, learn together and visit cultural centres from 201. Even some of those who went on our first exchange in 2014 are still in touch, via Skype, correspondence and in particular on Xbox and Playstation. Families too have visited each other, including 3 families in summer 2019. Trips in 2020 onwards were sadly curtailed by COVID cancellations. We remain open to developing new opportunities in future.

7. Religion and belief.

As a faith school, we are very interested & focused on all faiths and values; and we have welcomed about 40% of children from other faiths or no faith. Our Admissions policy reflects our welcome to other children.

We have been proactive in building up resources in our library on other faiths, and welcomed, for example, author Anthony Lishak, who has written a book in our library about the impact the Holocaust had on his family. In our own faith, we worship, pray and celebrate together, following the values of Jesus Christ. We are part of a wider parish community and they are welcomed in for termly occasions etc. Our Diocesan S48 inspection in summer 2016 described our RE curriculum, values and the faith life of the school as 'outstanding'.

8 & 9.Discrimination by (a) sex and (b) sexual orientation.

Our recruitment policies follow the Law and there is no discrimination by sex nor sexual orientation. No questions are asked, nor are details solicited during application rounds. Governors and staff are picked on merit, and we have a good balance of both sexes.

Pupils are aware of homophobic bullying and the horrendous effect it has on others; most recently it was discussed during an assembly and workshops by the NSPCC, who we invited into school pre-COVID. Online work (espresso etc) and our SRE scheme for example address these issues. Evidence from parents' questionnaires and from pupil voice, as well as successive Ofsteds, would suggest that incidents of this type seem extremely rare; we will continue to monitor, and any homophobic incidents will be recorded on CPOMS. The headteacher had training on homophobic bullying by the Proud Trust, which was fed back to all staff; how to spot, signs, how to address it and suitable resources for schools. We will continue to seek training in this area in 2021-22, and staff & governors have had a safeguarding update of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021-22' in autumn term 2021, including issues such as sexual orientation, modern slavery, upskirting etc.