

Equality & Diversity Policy: Pupils

Acomb First School



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Equality & Diversity Policy: Pupils

At Acomb First School, we are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all, regardless of class, disability, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, family make-up, belief (religious or non-religious), or any other individual special need.

Introduction

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive School, where we celebrate diversity and difference, and acknowledge the richness that this brings to our school community. We aim to provide opportunities for all children to access a broad, balanced and creative curriculum, regardless of any protected characteristics (as listed below).

This policy is an umbrella policy, which is inseparably linked to every other School and individual school policy, including on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), equal opportunities, safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour, curriculum, teaching and learning, continued professional development, anti-bullying and individual school accessibility plans.

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.

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 approach to equality is based on the following 6 key principles:

1. All learners are of equal value, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, faith, origin, disability or sexual orientation.
2. We recognise, respect and value difference, and understand and promote the idea that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages people may face. 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 different groups and communities.
4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our school communities to feel a sense of belonging within their school and wider community, to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
5. We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect that all pupils will make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
6. 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 will help to close gaps and raise standards across the whole School.

Aims and objectives

The Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 were 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
- pregnancy/maternity
- age
- marriage/civil partnership

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

1. The Public-Sector Equality Duty or 'general duty' requires all public organisations, including schools, to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
 - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
 - Foster good relations between different groups
2. The two 'specific duties' require all public organisations, including schools, to:
 - Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
 - Publish specific and measurable equality objectives at least every 4 years

This policy describes how the School is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance, including guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Appendix 1 is a checklist of key equality considerations.

Development of the policy

When developing the policy, we took into account the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the OFSTED inspection framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We 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.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

When making a decision or taking an action, we assess whether it may have implications for people with protected characteristics

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, 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 support given will depend on the level of need

We 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

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 schools in our School. We make a record of each specific equality consideration and this is available for review if required

We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all

Our admissions arrangements, set by the Local Authorities we work in, are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their protected characteristics

Behaviour, exclusion and attendance

The School policy on behaviour takes full account of the Equality Act duties. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustments, as appropriate according to individual circumstances. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and act promptly to address concerns.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-based bullying

The School challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, including:

- Prejudices around disability and/or special educational needs
- Prejudices around race and culture, for example anti-Semitism and islamophobia, prejudices against the traveller community, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- Prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes
- Prejudices around home circumstances

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to our governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our schools and how we dealt with them. We review this data regularly and take action to reduce incidents.

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

We know the needs of our school population very well, collect and analyse data to inform our planning, and identify targets to achieve improvements

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 literacy and numeracy skills

We collect and analyse data on our school population:

- by gender and ethnicity
- on the percentage of our pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability, and by their principal need or disability
- by year group – in terms of ethnicity, gender and proficiency in English
- on inequalities of outcome and participation, specifically in relation to ethnicity, gender, disability and proficiency in English
- on the attendance and exclusions of different groups

We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupil's achievement, or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able". Instead, we refer to age-related expectations and the following bands: beginning, working within, secure and mastery.

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

In addition to avoiding or minimising 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 ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation.

Our school has an accessibility plan, designed to increase the extent to which pupils with disability can participate in the curriculum, improve the physical environment and the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Positive action

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by groups of pupils with protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the School's equality objectives.

What are we doing to foster good relations?

- Through our curriculum, 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 all our pupils
- We promote our School values, which are: whole community collaboration, trust and fairness, commitment and hard work, empathy towards others and a care for the wider community, excellence and enjoyment and teamwork.
- We promote British values, which include: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of all, regardless of their faith and beliefs
- We teach about difference and diversity, and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through SMSC, citizenship, and across the curriculum

- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of our school communities and wider population, 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 e.g. through Black History Month and International Week
- 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, newsletters, assemblies, visitors, whole school events

Other ways we address equality issues

- We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed
- We have a rolling programme for reviewing all of our policies for equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure they are free from discrimination
- The equality implications of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced

To ensure that the work we are doing on equality meets the needs of the whole School community, we review all relevant feedback from our pupils, parents, staff and governors e.g. from the school councils, SMSC lessons and school worry boxes; the annual parent questionnaires, parents' evenings, parent-school forums, focus meetings; staff surveys, meetings and training events; governors meetings; and analysis of issues raised in Annual Reviews or progress reviews on Individual Education Plans, Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support.

Publishing our equality objectives

The equality objectives which we identify represent our School's priorities and are the outcome of a 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 of pupils in our schools. We produce equality data analysis, which informs our discussions about the equality objectives.

Our school accessibility plan shows our objectives for improving the physical environment and access to information to allow full participation in all aspects of school life by all.

We review and update our equality objectives annually and report to our governors on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult pupils, parents, staff and governors.

We expect all members of our school communities and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equality and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

Our governors

Our governors are responsible for ensuring that our school complies with equality legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. Our governing body keeps aspects of their school's commitment to the Equality Duty under regular review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment.

Our leaders

Our leaders are responsible for implementing this policy at School level; 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.

A senior member of staff who has good knowledge of the Equality Act has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes.

Our teaching and support staff

All teaching and support staff:

- 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 their school's principles, for example by 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
- Keep up-to-date with equality legislation relevant to their work

We provide training and guidance on equality matters for all new staff as part of the induction procedure.

Disseminating the policy

This policy, along with the individual school accessibility plans, are available on our websites, staff drive and as part of induction for new staff. We also ensure that the whole School community knows about this policy, our equality objectives and data through the school newsletters, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications. We also publish other relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs and disabilities on our websites.

Complaints

Complaints about the operation of this policy will be dealt with in line with the School's complaints procedure.

Appendix 1

Checklist for staff and governors to make sure that:

- The School collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to pupils and staff e.g. pupil achievement, attendance and exclusions
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides
- This policy and individual school accessibility plans have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of pupils, parents, staff, governors and other stakeholders
- The School publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the equality duties
- The School analyses pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when trends or patterns indicate a need
- The School sets its equality objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of this policy and monitoring outcomes
- The School ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of this policy
- The School ensures that visitors understand and follow the key requirements of this policy
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference
- We promote our School values, which are: whole community collaboration, trust and fairness, commitment and hard work, empathy towards others and a care for the wider community, excellence and enjoyment and teamwork, in assemblies and lessons, through modelling appropriate behaviour, and in our newsletters
- We promote British values, which include: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different beliefs and faiths
- All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution e.g. through class assemblies and the school council
- The School monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and acts if there is a cause for concern
- Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of our school communities
- The School takes part in annual events such as: Black History Month, International Week and Remembrance Day, etc., to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender
- The School environment is accessible to all
- The accessibility needs of parents/carers, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information
- Our governors are representative of the communities they serve
- Procedures for the appointment of governors are open to candidates who are disabled