

Community Academies Trust

Primary School Policy

Equality and Community Cohesion Policy

This policy was drafted by Director of Education. It was presented in draft version to the full staff compliment for discussion and revision. The final version was presented to Governors for consideration, approval and adoption.

1 Introduction

This Equality Policy sets out the school's approach to promoting community cohesion, equality and diversity. It covers disability, gender and race/ethnicity, in response to the statutory duties on schools to publish disability and gender equality schemes, and compliments our race equality policy.

This Equality Policy statement sets out:-

- Our school's context;
- Aims and values;
- Our overall approach to promoting equality: community cohesion, recognising and celebrating diversity and tackling discrimination;
- Specific reference to community cohesion, race equality, disability equality, gender equality;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Monitoring, reviewing and assessing impact.

2 The school context – what sort of School are we?

Our pupils come from a very wide range of backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from ethnic backgrounds, those who speak English as an additional language and those with different religious beliefs is low.

The school has developed international links and is keen to further them whenever possible. The school is developing national links.

Overall, pupils are sociable when they come to school. Most are well motivated; they work hard and make the most of their educational experiences. Most parents value the educational provision, are supportive and eager to work in close partnership with the school. A growing number of parents give their time each week to help in many subject areas on a regular basis.

The school takes pride in meeting the individual needs of all pupils. For some pupils who start school below average nationally, attainment at the end of primary school is consistently above the local and national averages in English and Maths.

Our 'Creative Curriculum', international links, 'environment awards' and involvement in sporting activity is a strength of our school. The school is developing a wide portfolio of extra-curricular activities.

Many families have a computer and online connectivity at home.

The local community is used to broaden and enrich the quality of education.

An energetic and dedicated PTA supports the life of the school, raising funds each year to enrich educational provision and for families to enjoy themselves.

Members of the local community are present in school for a number of projects, including Polesworth Abbey, Community Police and local road safety officers.

The school is involved with many of the villages events, such as 'Baby Jesus (Polesworth Abbey), annual Carnivals. In addition the school hosts local fencing, karate club and Governors patch meetings.

The school hall is hired for community use. The Library and hall is also used for parent drop-in and family learning sessions.

3 Equality – Aims and Values

At the Primary School we aim to provide equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards

Our Equality policy is based on our four key values of CONTRIBUTION, CONSIDERTION, ASPIRATION and CREATIVENESS and our mission statement reflects this.

We want all our children to:-

- Experience a broad and balanced curriculum
- Develop lively enquiring minds and a love of learning
- Have high self-esteem
- Work with independence and become responsible for their own learning
- Value and care for others
- Be successful
- Have their achievements celebrated
- Feel safe
- Become good citizens
- Become proud and positive contributors to the local, national and international community
- Care for the environment
- Be self-disciplined and courteous and CONSIDERATE

We want all staff to: -

- Continue raising standards of teaching and learning
- Develop professionally
- Feel valued and supported
- Be successful
- Have job satisfaction
- Enjoy a healthy work-life balance

We want all parents and carers to: -

- Feel welcomed in school
- Work in partnership with teachers
- Be well informed by clear communications

We want governors to: -

- Work as friends and partners of the school
- Know the school and staff well
- Offer constructive advice and be supportive
- Promote the school in the wider community

We want the wider community to: -

- Develop good relations with our school
- Broaden our horizons

We aim to encourage a love of learning and thereby make every day a rewarding experience for children and staff.

We aim to help children: -

- to develop lively, enquiring minds with the ability to question and argue rationally;
- to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding;
- to learn how to be a learner;
- to use language and numbers with confidence and enthusiasm;

- to develop respect for religious and moral values and tolerance towards ways of life which differ from their own;
- to understand the world in which they live and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations;
- to respect and care for other people and the environment;
- to grow in aesthetic awareness and make best use of opportunities for their creativity and imagination;
- to develop agility and physical co-ordination and the ability to express themselves through movement;
- to develop habits of self-discipline, acceptable behaviour, courtesy and good manners.

We guide each child towards maximising their potential: -

- through the provision of high quality education and resources;
- through encouragement and high expectation;
- by developing self-esteem and fostering self-confidence;
- by providing a happy and safe environment in which s/he may work confidently;
- by ensuring progression through the setting of appropriate goals;
- by preparing him/her for future education and a fulfilling life.

Our vision for the Primary School aims to provide an environment where: -

- children are happy and highly motivated;
- the quality of teaching and learning enables each child to achieve their best;
- staff are motivated and keen to develop their skills for the sake of the children and their own professional development;
- parents are proud to send their children and enjoy working in partnership with the school.

These aims are designed to ensure that the school meets the needs of all, taking account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, disability, ability, sexual orientation, age and social circumstances. We strive to include and engage all pupils and to prepare them for full participation in a diverse society. The school will take steps to: -

- promote equality of opportunity and access
- promote racial equality and good race relations
- oppose all forms of prejudice and negative discrimination
- ensure pupils with a disability have access to the school buildings and to the curriculum.

4 Our approach to promoting equality

The overall objective of the schools Equality Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity, and promote 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, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, socio-economic background.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community- pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.

5 A cohesive community

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

The term 'community' has a number of dimensions from a school's perspective: -

- The school community- the pupils it serves, their families and the school's staff;
- The community within which the school is located - the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area;
- The community of Britain - all schools are by definition part of this community;
- The global community - formed by EU and international links.

In addition, schools themselves create communities, for example the networks formed by schools in the same cluster or specific projects.

In order to achieve a cohesive community, we endeavour to: -

- Promote understanding and engagement between communities
- Encourage all children and families to feel part of the wider community
- Understand the needs and hopes of all our communities
- Eliminate discrimination
- Increase life opportunities for all
- Ensure teaching and the curriculum explores and addresses issues of diversity.

All schools, whatever the mix of pupils they serve, are responsible for equipping those pupils to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds. However schools that are driven by divisions are less likely to perform well. For some schools with diverse pupil populations, existing activities and work aimed at supporting pupils from different ethnic or socio economic backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other, will already be contributing towards community cohesion. For other schools where the pupil population is less diverse or predominantly of one faith, socioeconomic or ethnic group more will need to be done to provide opportunities for interaction between pupils from different backgrounds.

Just as each school is different, each school's contribution to community cohesion will be different and will need to develop by reflecting:

- The nature of the school's population- whether it serves pupils drawn predominantly from one or a small number of faiths, ethnic or socio-economic groups or from a broader cross-section of the population, or whether it selects by ability from across a wider area.
- The location of the school- for instance whether it serves a rural or urban area and the level of ethnic, faith and socio-economic diversity in that area.

In the light of the new duty we need to consider how different aspects of our work already support integration and community harmony; to take stock of what has worked well so far. We also need to consider where there may be scope to improve their existing work through a more explicit focus on the impact of their activities on community cohesion.

Broadly, schools' contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum- to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

- Equity and excellence - to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.
- Engagement and ethos - to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally.

We need to consider what activities already take place within the school and what might be arranged in cooperation with other schools. In addition, schools will want to consider the duty to promote well-being as some of the work and activities that support community cohesion can also contribute towards outcomes of 'making a positive contribution', 'enjoy and achieve' and 'achieving economic well-being'.

An effective school will have a high standard of teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity will be integrated across the curriculum.

For Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum we need to ensure:

- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in citizenship classes for pupils to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means to live together in the UK.
- A programme of curriculum based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.
- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- An effective voice and involvement of pupils in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.

6 Race equality

The school is fully committed to meeting its obligations under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and this is reflected in the policy statements above. To meet the specific duties of the RRAA 2000 we will:

- ensure that all pupils and staff are encouraged and able to achieve the best of which they are capable
- respect and value differences between people
- prepare pupils for life in a diverse society
- make the school a place where everyone, taking account of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, feels welcomed and valued
- promote good relations between different racial and cultural groups within the school and within the wider community
- ensure that an inclusive ethos is established and maintained
- acknowledge the existence of racism and take steps to prevent it
- oppose all forms of racism, racial prejudice and racial harassment
- be proactive in tackling and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

7 Disability equality

The aim of our school is to ensure that wherever possible disabled people have the same opportunities as non-disabled people in their access to education and to prevent any form of unlawful discrimination on the grounds of disability.

Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that statutory duties are met:

- not to treat disabled pupils and prospective pupils less favourably than other non-disabled pupils
- to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage

In addition, steps will be taken to ensure that employees and those working with Warwickshire Local Authority:

- support the governing body in meeting their duties
- do not act in such a way that renders the governing body liable to a claim of discrimination

Staff and those working with Warwickshire Local Authority are made aware of the basic requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Code of Practice for schools.

There will be occasions where the treatment of disabled children is different from non-disabled students. In such cases the school will be able to demonstrate that such treatment is justified. The reason for the different treatment will be both material to the circumstances of the particular case and substantial (e.g. health and safety reasons). The school will also demonstrate that all reasonable steps have been taken to avoid the disabled pupil being placed at a significant disadvantage.

Careful consideration will be given to how participation can be best facilitated. A number of factors may be part of this consideration, including:

- the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards
- the financial resources available
- the cost of taking a particular step
- the extent it is practicable to take a particular step
- health and safety requirements
- the interest of other pupils.

The consideration of these factors may lead to the adoption of certain reasonable adjustments rather than others.

We recognise that the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils is anticipatory. To meet this duty we will review policies, practices and procedures to ensure that we do not discriminate against disabled pupils. Examples of the specific measures we will be taking include:

- ensuring providers of facilities for school trips and extra curricular activities can accommodate disabled pupils before making bookings in advance
- reviewing staffing arrangements to ensure that the school is in a position to administer medication if required in exceptional circumstances
- ensuring there are special arrangements in place for disabled pupils who are taking examinations
- ensuring our policies and procedures for bullying cover issues of disability
- working closely with parents and disabled pupils to identify potential barriers to participation and devising reasonable adjustments to overcome them
- ensuring that staff are briefed on the Disability Code of Practice for schools issued by the Disability Rights Commission

We will also take reasonable steps to find out whether prospective or existing pupils have a disability. This will include:

- creating an ethos and culture which is open and welcoming so that parents and pupils feel comfortable about sharing information about the disability
- asking parents during the admissions process about the existence of any disability
- providing continuing opportunities to share information (e.g. when seeking permission to go on a school trip)

- monitoring levels of participation, achievement and behaviour that may indicate a disability that has not been identified and referring the matter to specialist agencies.

Our school believes that improving access to education and educational achievement by disabled pupils:

- ensures equality of opportunity
- encourages full participation in society
- improves the likelihood of independent living and economic self-sufficiency in the future.

We believe that disabled people should be valued for what they can do rather than labelled for what they cannot. Therefore:

- In liaison with Integrated Disability Services (IDS) we improve the accessibility of the physical environment within the resources available in response to needs arising.
- We identify and monitor the performance of different groups of pupils: boys/ girls, minority ethnic groups, SEN pupils, Looked After pupils, pupils with EAL, pupils with chronic medical conditions.
- Assessment procedures take into account the SEN Code of Practice (2001), the needs of EAL pupils and the needs of minority ethnic pupils.
- We have procedures for involving all parents and carers in their children's learning and we monitor this involvement and the outcomes.
- Educational inclusion is an integral part of the school development programmes, continuous professional development and governors meetings.

8 Gender equality

The school promotes equality of opportunity between males and females and endeavours to eliminate all unlawful sex discrimination and harassment. Conditions for learning (e.g. environmental, teaching and learning, resources, social and emotional aspects of learning) provide equal access and opportunities to both boys and girls.

9 Roles and responsibilities

All who work in the school have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

Our Governors are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with all current equality legislation
- Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Making sure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents know about it
- Making sure its procedures are followed
- Producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary
- Making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination

All our staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with racist, sexist and homophobic incidents, and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- Promoting equality and good community relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic circumstances

- Taking training and learning opportunities

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school is as follows:

- Co-ordinating and monitoring work on equality issues (Headteacher and SLT)
- Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment, including racist and homophobic incidents (Headteacher and SLT)
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups of pupils, e.g. Black and ethnic minority pupils, including Gypsies and Travellers (SENCO)
- Monitoring exclusions (Headteacher)

10 Engagements and ethos

School to school: We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We shall look either locally or further afield and the means of developing the relationship may be through exchange visits or more likely through the internet. Sharing facilities also provides a means for pupils to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama.

School to parents and the community: Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

- Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the pupils, ensuring that the pupil voice is heard and able to effect change
- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, curriculum evenings, parent and child courses and family liaison work
- Provision of extended services, and in particular bringing parents together from different backgrounds through parenting and family support and community use of facilities for activities that take place out of school hours, including adult and family learning, ICT and English for speakers of other languages classes

11 Monitoring, reviewing, assessing impact

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed by staff and governors to ensure that it is effective in tackling discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

