

## Single Equalities Policy

### **Introduction**

This equalities policy is an attempt to amalgamate all the equalities legislation into one single equality policy for St Thomas C of E Primary School.

### **Statement/Principles**

The policy outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors to promote equality. This involves tackling the barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes so that there is equality of access and the diversity within the school community is celebrated and valued.

We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. At St Thomas', equality is a key principle for treating all people the same irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs/faith tradition, sexual orientation, age or any other of the protected characteristics (Single Equalities Act 2010).

This policy has been drawn up as a result of discussion within a working party and has been shared with the whole school community.

### **Legal framework**

1. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual identity.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. 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.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The staff member responsible for co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation is Mr Ian Moss (Headteacher). He will be responsible for:

- Providing updates on equalities legislation and the school's responsibilities in this regard;
- Working closely with the governing body.

Supporting positively the evaluation activities that monitor the impact and success of the policy on pupils from different groups, e.g SEN, Children in Care, Minority Ethnic including EAL pupils and Free School Meals, in the following recommended areas:

- Pupils' progress and attainment
- Learning and teaching
- Behaviour discipline and exclusions
- Attendance
- Admissions
- Incidents of prejudice related bullying and all forms of bullying
- Parental involvement
- Participation in extra-curricular and extended school activities
- Staff recruitment and retention

- Visits and visitors

## **Guiding principles**

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

### **Principle 1: Everyone is of equal value.**

We see all learners and potential learners, their parents and carers and staff as of equal value regardless of:

- + sex
- + race
- + disability
- + religion or belief
- + sexual orientation
- + pregnancy
- + marital status/civil partnership
- + gender reassignment
- + age

### **Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.**

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- + disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- + race and ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- + gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- + religion, belief or faith background
- + sexual identity.

### **Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.**

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- + positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- + positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture,
- + religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- + mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

## **Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development**

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development. We do not discriminate against staff because of their:

- + sex
- + race
- + disability
- + religion or belief
- + sexual orientation,
- + pregnancy
- + marital status/civil partnership
- + gender reassignment
- + age

## **Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist**

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 between:

- + disabled and non-disabled people
- + people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- + girls and boys, women and men.

## **Principle 6: We consult and involve widely**

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to 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 aim to consult and involve:

- + disabled people as well as non-disabled
- + people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- + both women and men, and girls and boys.

## **Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit**

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- + disabled people as well as non-disabled
- + people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- + both women and men, girls and boys

## **Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence**

We will maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- ✚ disability
- ✚ ethnicity, religion and culture
- ✚ gender.

## **Principle 9: Objectives**

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement in which we have been involved (principle 7), in relation to:

- ✚ sex
- ✚ race
- ✚ disability
- ✚ religion or belief
- ✚ sexual orientation,
- ✚ pregnancy
- ✚ marital status/civil partnership
- ✚ gender reassignment
- ✚ age

Every three years, accordingly, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

## **Policy Commitments**

### **Promoting Equality: Curriculum**

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed. To achieve this we will ensure:

- ❖ Curriculum planning reflects a commitment to equality;
- ❖ The curriculum prepares pupils for life in a diverse society and uses opportunities to reflect the background and experience of pupils and families in the school;
- ❖ There are opportunities in the curriculum to explore concepts and issues related to identity and equality;
- ❖ The promotion of attitudes and values that celebrate and respect diversity and challenge discriminatory behaviour and language wherever it occurs;
- ❖ The use of images and materials which positively reflect a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles.

### **Promoting Equality: Achievement**

There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, social background and sexual orientation. To secure the best possible outcomes we recognise that:

- ❖ Adults in the school will be expected to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity;
- ❖ It is important to identify the particular needs of individuals and groups within the school and to use targeted interventions to narrow gaps in achievement;
- ❖ A range of teaching methods is used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils.
- ❖ All pupils are actively encouraged to engage fully pupils in their own learning.

### **Promoting Equality: The ethos and culture of the school**

- ❖ At St Thomas', we are aware that those involved in the leadership of the school community are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community;
- ❖ We strive to achieve a feeling of openness and tolerance which welcomes everyone to the school;
- ❖ The children are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect;
- ❖ The displays around the school reflect diversity across all aspects of equality and are frequently monitored;
- ❖ Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure access for pupils, staff and visitors (including parents) with disabilities (this not only includes physical access, but takes account wider access to school information and activities);
- ❖ Provision is made to cater for the cultural, moral and spiritual needs of all children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and off-site activities;
- ❖ Pupils' views are actively encouraged and respected. Pupils are given an effective voice for example, through advocacy, the School Council, pupil perception surveys and there are regular opportunities to engage with pupils about their learning and the life of the school;
- ❖ Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils feel welcomed and included.

We ensure the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

## **Promoting Equality: Staff Recruitment and Professional Development**

- ❖ All posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants;
- ❖ All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do avoid discrimination to ensure equality of opportunity.
- ❖ Steps are taken to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels of the school;
- ❖ Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds;
- ❖ Equalities policy and practice is covered in all staff inductions;
- ❖ All supply staff and contractors are made aware of the equalities policy and practice;
- ❖ Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and the impact of policies are kept under regular review

## **Promoting Equality: Countering and Challenging Harassment and Bullying**

- ❖ The school counters and challenges all types of discriminatory behaviour and this is made clear to staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- ❖ The school has a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with prejudice related bullying incidents and has a nominated member of staff responsible for recording and monitoring incidents;
- ❖ The school reports to Governors, parents and LA on an annual basis the number of prejudice related incidents recorded in the school.

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

## **Promoting Equality: Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community**

St Thomas' aims to work in partnership with parents/carers. We:

- ❖ Take action to ensure all parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the life of the school;
- ❖ Maintain good channels of communication to ensure parents' views are captured to inform practice;
- ❖ Encourage members of the local community to join in school activities and celebrations;
- ❖ Ensure that the parents/carers of newly arrived pupils e.g. EAL or pupils with disabilities are made to feel welcome.

## **Responsibility for the Policy**

In our school, all members of the school community have a responsibility for promoting equalities.

**The Governing Body** has responsibility for ensuring that:

- The school complies with all equalities legislation relevant to the school community;
- The school's equalities policy is maintained and updated regularly; and that equality schemes are easily identifiable (these may be included within the School Development Plan, the school's Accessibility Plan or may be stand alone documents);
- The actions, procedures and strategies related to the policy are implemented;
- The designated Equalities Governor will have an overview, on behalf of the governing body, on all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to these incidents.

**The Headteacher and Senior Leadership team** has responsibility for:

- In partnership with the Governing body, providing leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- Overseeing the implementation of the equality policy and schemes;
- Co-ordinating the activities related to equality and evaluating impact;
- Ensuring that all who enter the school are aware of, and comply with, the equalities policy;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support;
- Taking appropriate action in response to any prejudice-related incidents.

**All school staff** have responsibility for:

- The implementation of the school's equalities policy and schemes;
- Dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- Ensuring they do not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity and culture, disability, sexual orientation or other groups vulnerable to discrimination.
- Keeping up to date with equalities legislation.

### **Information and resources**

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

### **Religious observance**

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

### **Staff development and training**

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

**Breaches of the policy**

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the headteacher and governing body.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

**Measuring the Impact of this Policy**

The equalities policy and all other relevant policies will be evaluated and monitored for their equality impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school. This will be communicated with staff, parents, carers and governors by the Head Teacher.

This policy will be reviewed annually.