

Equality Policy - updated September 2022

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School 'We Grow and Learn with Jesus'

Introduction

At St Anthony's we will ensure that every pupil irrespective of race, gender, religion and belief or sexual orientation is able to achieve high standards and that strategies are in place to tackle under-achievement. We will ensure that the school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair, effective and equitable. We welcome our duties under the Equalities Act 2010 which 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 will involve pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and all other stakeholders in the development of our Scheme.

We believe that:

- all people are of equal worth in the eyes of God
- it is wrong to make judgements about any person on the basis of colour of skin, country of origin, language, ethnic grouping, sex, disability or age.
- all people are entitled to equal opportunities to develop to their full potential
- the Catholic faith should be used as a significant factor in the admissions policy for the school and in the selection of staff. However, it is unacceptable to use faith as a basis for any other judgements about individuals
- all the children, staff and parents of the school are entitled to the same opportunities regardless of faith (except in the case of school admissions or staff selection).

Objectives

We will encourage the whole school community to demonstrate these beliefs through their actions.

We will try to reflect these beliefs overtly in the organisation, management, resources and curriculum of the school.

Implementation

All staff and governors will support this scheme by:

- questioning any decision thought to have been based on the colour of skin, country of origin, language, ethnic grouping, sex, disability or age.
- questioning any decisions based on grounds of faith, unless relating to the school admissions policy, or agreed staff selection criterion
- encouraging children to take advantage of equal opportunities to develop to their own full potential where possible
- presenting other cultures, languages, nationalities and faiths positively in all areas of the curriculum and school community where they arise

- reminding children that our school community is not typical of society at large and that co-operation with the wider community is part of their Christian commitment
- presenting cultural, national and linguistic diversity as things to be celebrated as part of the richness of God's creation
- using examples from the Gospels to illustrate the spiritual basis of the beliefs underlying the equal opportunities policy, where possible
- presenting knowledge of other languages as a positive achievement
- taking care to pronounce and spell all names correctly
- ensuring that children understand that language offensive to minority groups is unacceptable
- considering the provision of facilities for people with disabilities
- expecting the same behaviour from boys and girls in similar situations and operating discipline systems in the school equally for girls and boys
- ensuring that neither sex gains an unfair proportion of access to any of the school resources
- reviewing it regularly and referencing it in the school prospectus (available to anyone when requested).

Grievance and Discipline

Any complaints by staff of discrimination in contravention of this policy will be pursued through the normal grievance procedure.

The staff disciplinary procedure may be used in the case of behaviour by staff in contravention of this policy (See Grievance Policy).

Admission and Exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors. Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy.

Pupils' Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

In the school we will:

- enable our pupils and staff increasingly to develop a critical awareness of diversity and equality
- enable our pupils and staff to have the confidence and skills to challenge instances of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination
- equip our pupils and staff to understand that reason, logic and sensitivity have to underpin ways and means of resolving arguments and conflicts
- ensure a willingness by pupils and staff to learn from different cultures, backgrounds, faiths and beliefs
- recognise the importance of language to a person's sense of identity and belonging and consider pupils' language abilities as a teaching and learning resource and a strength
- ensure that pupils have the opportunity to receive the support and guidance they need on an individual basis and take account of the personal and cultural needs specific to that individual
- ensure that pupils have the skills to communicate effectively (including the ability to listen and discuss) and to defend their own opinions.

Indicators for Success

In implementing our Equality Scheme (and related policies), the following indicators will be used as success criteria.

- **High levels of achievement.** All pupils achieve their full potential and the performance and progress of pupils from all racial groups is broadly similar.
- **Higher attainment.** The school's profile of attainment rises and any attainment gaps between ethnic groups are reduced.
- **A diverse curriculum.** Challenging racism and celebrating diversity and racial equality is addressed across all areas of the curriculum. The experiences and expertise of pupils, parents, staff and members of the local community from different racial groups are utilised in delivering the curriculum.
- **Active parental involvement.** Attendance at parents' evenings is high across all racial groups. Parents from all racial groups contribute to consultations and participate in activities and events organised for parents.
- **A diverse governing body.** The governing body is representative of the ethnic and cultural groupings from which the children are drawn.
- **An effective governing body.** All members of the governing body are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to their duties under the Equality Act. Governors plan an active role in decision making on equality matters.
- **Effective response to incidents.** Incidents are dealt with promptly. Strategies are employed to reduce racism and racial harassment and evaluations show that these are effective. Feedback from pupils, parents and staff victims show high levels of satisfaction with the way in which victims are supported and incidents handled and resolved.
- **A diverse workforce.** The ethnic profile of non-teaching and support staff reflect the different ethnic and cultural grouping from which the children are drawn.
- **A successful workforce.** All staff feel valued and able to contribute fully to all aspects of the school's work.
- **Successful partnerships.** Successful partnerships with a wide variety of local organisations. Partnership organisations play an active and valuable role within the school.
- **Pupil and parent satisfaction.** High and equal levels of satisfaction with the school's overall performance from parents and pupils from all groups.
- **Trust.** A high level of trust and confidence from all parents, pupils and staff and a rich and diverse sense of community within the school.
- **Respect.** The school is respected for its commitment and effectiveness in the race equality field.

The following pages identify how these principles and beliefs are implemented in specific areas of focus

Race Equality

This section of the plan reflects the general and specific duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amended) Act 2000.

Values and Aims

These values and aims are all driven by the ethos of our school, which promotes inclusion for all.

- We respect and value the linguistic, cultural and religious diversity of the community we serve.
- We are committed to raising the attainment of all our pupils with due regard to their individual, social and personal circumstances.
- We believe in actively promoting equality of opportunity in every aspect of the life of all pupils, parents and staff.
- We are committed to challenging racial discrimination and harassment, ensuring race equality, promoting good race relations and preparing all pupils for life in a culturally diverse society.

Teaching and Learning

The school will ensure that:

- teaching methods and styles take full account of the needs of pupils' background experiences
- access to optional subjects and out of school hours learning activities is fair and equitable across all ethnic groups
- teaching methods encourage positive attitudes to difference, cultural diversity and race equality
- diverse learning styles are catered for
- the skills to learn in a range of different styles and contexts are developed and encouraged
- the diversity of cultures and backgrounds represented in the school is seen as a positive resource for teaching and learning
- all staff receive training on strategies for helping bilingual and multilingual pupils to improve their English
- teaching methods used are accessible to individuals and groups (monitored by ethnicity and background)
- all pupils are fully aware that staff have very high expectations of them and are continually challenged to reach higher standards
- a positive ethos of mutual respect and trust is fostered amongst pupils and staff, in which all members of the school community feel valued and safe
- classrooms and other common spaces in the school, where work is displayed, present positive and challenging images that are non stereotypical and reflect the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural society and world
- learning is a collaborative and co-operative enterprise.

The Curriculum

All teachers will ensure that curriculum content and resources and classroom environments present and value Britain as a culturally diverse society and develop pupils understanding of the wider world. In presenting this diversity, all staff and volunteers will take care not to present different cultures in stereotyped ways.

All teachers will develop the dimension of cultural diversity as appropriate to their subject and care responsibilities. Collectively the school curriculum will:

- support the development of personal, social and cultural identities in all pupils
- teach pupils respect and value for diversity
- teach pupils the nature of cultural diversity in Britain and globally
- teach pupils the nature of inequality as it affects various groups, within the context of the rights and responsibilities of being a member of society
- ensure we uphold British values.

Monitoring Pupil Achievement

We will collect group and individual data on attainment by ethnicity, based on the national population census ethnic categories, as used in Hertfordshire (see appendix 1). We will analyse and assess this data in order to measure the school's performance, our effectiveness and to examine trends in progress and development. The results of such analyses will be used to plan positive changes, to address the challenges they present and to maintain and develop our successes.

Staff Recruitment and Retention

The school recognises the value of diversity in the school staff and governing body and will ensure that our recruitment policy, within a Catholic School context

- does not discriminate against minority ethnic groups, age, gender, sex or disability
- takes appropriate action to seek staff and governors from a diversity of backgrounds.

Attendance

The school recognises the right of pupils to take time off for religious/cultural observance and action is taken to minimise any disruption to the education of pupils who are absent for religious/cultural observance.

Parents and the Wider Community

Active steps will be taken to involve ethnic minority parents, for example:

- the use of translations especially for key documents (e.g. Home School Agreements), statements of special educational needs and newsletters and for basic labelling across the school buildings
- the use of interpreters at parents consultation evenings, reviews, preparation for transition, school reports and for phone calls to parents
- active recruitment of such parents as classroom helpers, mentors and school governors.

The school seeks actively to work in partnership with local community organisations and where possible access the expertise, skills, knowledge and experiences of people from local minority ethnic communities.

We recognise the challenge of expanding pupils' contacts and insights into cultural diversity. As such we actively seek to involve representatives of minority ethnic communities and diverse cultures and faiths in the school and across the curriculum. A number of existing school policies underpin this aim, namely:

- behaviour
- anti-racism

- anti-bullying
- disability equality scheme.

Community Cohesion

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.

Gender Equality

This part of the scheme reflects The Gender Equality Duty 2006.

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

By unlawful sexual discrimination we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could be done directly but could also occur indirectly. Indirect discrimination means that a particular policy or practice may impact more negatively on one gender than on the other, or may favour one gender to the disadvantage of the other.

By sexual harassment we refer to behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. We see such behaviour as also damaging to the perpetrator (see our Anti-bullying policy).

We understand sex to refer to the biological differences between males and females and gender to refer to the wider social roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognise and overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.

We understand in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage. We are aware that this positive discrimination is necessary sometimes in order to provide equal opportunities.

Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender we will seek specialist advice.

Roles and responsibilities

All who work in the school have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination. Schools must not discriminate against children seeking admission or with regard to how pupils are treated on grounds of sex. This covers the

provision of teaching or allocating the pupil to certain classes, applying different standards of behaviour, dress and appearance, excluding pupils or subjecting them to detriment.

Our governors are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with all current equality legislation – ***the governing body must not discriminate in the employment of staff on grounds of gender and needs to ensure that the requirement to promote gender equality is clearly reflected in the school's appointment and employment processes, and in the aspects of staff pay that are dealt with by schools.***
- Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed
- staff recruitment promotes gender equality
- existing policies are assessed for ways in which they impact on gender equality.

The Headteacher works with the SMT to ensure that:

- the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents know about it
- incidents of sexual/gender bullying or harassment are dealt with according to our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies
- there is regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary
- all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination is taken
- curriculum planning, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities take account of the need to promote gender equality
- visitors to the school are aware of the Gender Equality policy.

All our staff are responsible for:

- dealing with sexist incidents, and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- taking training and learning opportunities
- preparing and/or delivering a curriculum, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management that take account of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote gender equality.

Religion and Belief Equality

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School recognises the need to consider the actions outlined by the Equality Act 2006 (Religion and Belief) and the Equality Act 2010 which requires us to assess the impact of our policies, functions and procedures have on promoting equality for people based on their religion, belief and non-belief.

We believe discrimination on grounds of religion or belief means treating a person less favourably than another person is or would be treated, because of their religion or belief, or the religion or belief they are perceived to have , their lack of religion or belief, or the religion or belief of someone else with whom they are associated.

Admissions

As a Catholic Voluntary Aided School our admissions policy reflects our mission to serve the Catholic Community. We will continue to publish oversubscription criteria that give priority to children who are members of or practise the Catholic faith. Parents of children who have not been admitted to our school because they are not members of or do not practise the catholic faith will not be able to claim that their child has been discriminated against on the grounds of religion or belief.

Once pupils have been admitted, we will not exclude them or subject them to any other detriment, on grounds of their religion or belief, or lack of it, or that of their parents, guardians, carers or associates.

Curriculum

St Anthony's will continue to deliver the broad based and inclusive curriculum to which all children are entitled without fear of challenge based on the religious views of particular parents, guardians or carers or children.

At St. Anthony's we will mark or celebrate events specific to our catholic faith and ethos. Parents, guardians or carers will not be able to claim that their children have been discriminated against simply because an equivalent celebration of events of significance to their particular religion is not arranged.

At St Anthony's we will still be able to organise trips to a local church and will not have to organise visits to accommodate children of other faiths within the school. We will also continue to provide collective worship.

Uniform

Our uniform policy takes account of pupils drawn from particular social, religious or racial groups and those with a disability or special educational needs. Our governing body is aware of its duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and under anti-discrimination legislation.

Sexual Orientation Equality

At St Anthony's we recognise the need to protect pupils and staff from unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation as required by the Equality Act 2010 (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007. We are committed to taking a pro-active approach to preventing all forms of homophobia within the school.

Regulations and guidelines make it unlawful on grounds of sexual orientation to:

- Decide not to employ someone
- Dismiss them or make them redundant
- Refuse to provide them with training
- Deny them promotion
- Give them adverse terms and conditions
- Withhold fair and accurate references (written and verbal).

At St Anthony's any homophobic bullying, language and stereotypes will be challenged, this takes into account the actions of adults or children. Our school will create and maintain an environment where inappropriate behaviour based on assumptions of sexual orientation is

actively discouraged. We believe all individuals working or studying at St Anthony's should feel valued and be free from discrimination and harassment.

Age Equality

This part of our Equality Scheme has been drawn up in compliance with the Employment Equality Act (Age) Regulations which came into effect on 1st October 2006.

Regulations and guidelines make it unlawful on grounds of age to:

- Decide not to employ someone
- Dismiss them or make them redundant
- Refuse to provide them with training
- Deny them promotion
- Give them adverse terms and conditions
- Withhold fair and accurate references (verbal or written)
- Retire an employee before the default retirement age of 67 without an objective justification

At St. Anthony's we are aware of Equality (age) Regulations which state:

- The upper age limits for unfair dismissal and redundancy has been removed, a national default retirement age of 67 has been introduced (making compulsory retirement below 67 unlawful). However Hertfordshire have decided not to have a retirement age.
- As a voluntary aided school we are entitled to go outside Hertfordshire County Council policy and select a retirement age. However at St Anthony's we have decided to choose not to have a default retirement age.
- All employees have the 'right to request' to work beyond 67, our governors have a 'duty to consider' requests from employees to work beyond 67.

Our governors are aware that employment decisions based on age are never justifiable because age is not a genuine employment criterion, age is a poor predictor of performance and it is misleading to equate physical and mental ability with age.

Disability Equality

St Anthony's School is committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its employees, pupils and any others involved in the school community who have any form of disability and will ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery.

This school does not tolerate harassment of disabled people and pupils who are carers of disabled parents.

At St Anthony's we implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

What do we understand by "disability"?

“Disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities” (DDA 1995 Part 1 para. 1.1.) This definition was amended and broadened in December 2005 under the 2005 Disability Amendment Act:

- People with cancer or surviving cancer are now included, as are people with HIV and Multiple Sclerosis from the point of diagnosis
- For a mental impairment the need for it to be clinically well recognised has been removed.

The Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommends that all pupils with SEN and those with long term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of the Act and for equality. This is in addition to all pupils with long-term impairments, which have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities.

We understand that disabled pupils may or may not have special educational needs.

Schools Strategic Priorities

This scheme supports the school’s strategic priorities, by seeking to ensure that all pupils – regardless of disability – are provided with full and equal opportunities to attain their maximum potential for learning, personal and spiritual growth.

This commitment is expressed in:

- the explicit ethos of the school in supporting the growth and development of the whole child
- focus of the school’s Governing body on all aspects of pupil, staff and parent inclusion
- personal lead from the Head Teacher in the development and implementation of the school’s Disability Equality Scheme
- the culture of the school which is characterised by inclusivity, consultation with parents and staff, a record of action and most importantly, systems for ensuring pupils have access to support and resolution of any personal concerns and issues.

The General Duty

We will actively seek to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons –This means not representing people in a demeaning way, and it also means not pretending they don’t exist and failing to represent them anywhere at all
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life - It is also important to respect the wishes of disabled children in an educational setting so that they do not feel pushed into activities they do not wish to take part in
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons’ disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

(DDA 2005 S.49A)

How we will meet the General Duty & Specific Duty

The disability equality scheme provides us with a framework for integrating disability equality into all aspects of school life and demonstrates how we are seeking to meet the specific duty to produce a Disability Equality Scheme for our school.

Actions may include some priorities to increase access to the curriculum, the physical environment and the provision of information.

Specific actions will depend on what the feedback from our community tells us, and may include strategies to promote accessibility and make the environment more disablement friendly.

We ensure that children with disabilities can participate in lunchtime activities, school plays or school trips and assess factors such as whether children are able to participate in all aspects of school life, socially and academically.

Disability in the Curriculum, including teaching and learning

We encourage children throughout the school to foster and develop positive attitudes towards people with any disability. This can be through PSHEE, Science, RE and PE lessons. We also investigate visiting speakers from appropriate charities who may give the children an insight into life for disabled people in Britain.

Reasonable Adjustments

Adjustments are made on the basis of individual need and the practicalities of the situation. Measurements of success are defined by the individual concerned. If the action is deemed unsuccessful, further adjustments are introduced.

Information, Performance and Evidence: Action planning

The school sets equality targets in the **annual SDP**. The impact of these targets are reviewed at the end of each academic year and new targets set. Data is analysed to ensure all our vulnerable children are receiving the support and care they require.

Publishing the plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme, we will:

- raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, staff meetings and other communications
- make sure hard copies are available.

In the implementation of this policy we will give due regard to the relevant sections of the following equalities legislation and advice-

Equalities Act 2010

Public Sector Equality Duty 2011

Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2012) *Equality and Human Rights Commission*

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 DfE

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions 2014 DfE