



'Growing, loving and learning in the arms of Mary'

Equality & Diversity Policy

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St Mary's RC Primary is a welcoming and caring school. We respect and value each and every individual associated with the school. Together, we seek to work, learn and play to achieve our full potential. By implication, therefore, we have a commitment to social inclusion and equality of opportunity for all. We aim to provide an environment which is free from bullying, harassment and prejudice.

Legal context

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty. This brought together previous gender, race, and disability duties and extended the protection to nine 'protected characteristics':

- Age
- Race
- Sex
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

Public bodies must have "due regard" to these characteristics in three key areas:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

Our understanding of equality of opportunity:

We understand equality of opportunity to exist when:

it is understood that everyone is unique and everyone has different needs

equality of access exists for all

individual choices are widened

everyone feels happy, safe and secure in an environment which does not disadvantage or discriminate against anyone

stereotypes are challenged to ensure everyone has an equal chance to develop as they wish

individual and community needs are responded to for the benefit of everyone

adequate resources exist to meet everyone's needs.

Aims and objectives

As a result of this policy we will:

- ensure that all members of the school community feel safe and secure
- ensure that equality of access exists for everyone
- promote equality of opportunity regardless of the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexuality, gender reassignment, civil partnership and marriage, and pregnancy and maternity
- actively develop the self-esteem and self-respect of all members of the school community
- ensure that educational provision is relevant to our increasingly diverse society
- ensure that the curriculum actively promotes equality of opportunity
- actively challenge all forms of bullying, harassment, prejudice and stereotyping
- actively engage the support and commitment of the whole school community in achieving the above aims.

Relevant legislation and best practice advice We are aware of our responsibilities in relation to:

- 1970 Equal Pay Act
- 1975 Sex Discrimination Act
- 1976 Race Relations Act
- 1988 Education Reform Act
- 1995 Disability Discrimination Act
- 1998 Human Rights Act
- 1999 Macpherson Report into the Stephen Lawrence Murder Inquiry

- 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act
- 2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act
- 2002 Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality
- 2006 Equality Act
- 2006 Sexual Orientation Regulations
- 2006 and 2007 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations and Amendments
- 2010 Equality Act

Guidelines, Disability

Pupils with disabilities/learning difficulties/special needs will:

- have complete access to all the facilities and resources available within the school
- receive additional support to ensure that they fulfil their potential
- be integrated with, and educated alongside, other pupils
- have access to the same broad, balanced and relevant curriculum as other pupils
- be involved in the decisions being made about their care and education.

As a school, we:

- are committed to early identification of emotional and behavioural difficulties before such difficulties lead to underachievement, disaffection and exclusion
- are committed to early intervention, target-setting and regular monitoring of pupils with disabilities/learning difficulties/special needs
- will give additional support and encouragement to gifted and talented pupils to ensure they fulfil their potential
- will work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that pupils with disabilities/learning difficulties/special needs benefit fully from their time spent in school
- will ensure that staff take part regularly in training about disability/learning difficulties/special needs
- will make use, where appropriate, of local authority support services to ensure that pupils with disabilities/learning difficulties/special needs fulfil their potential.

Guidelines, Gender

No matter their gender, all pupils will:

- have access to the same broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- be expected to do as well as they possibly can
- be expected to behave as well as they possibly can
- be expected to work together in a constructive and positive manner
- be discouraged from using sexist language.

As a school, we will:

- ensure that neither gender dominates any area of the school, the curriculum or the extra-curricular activities to the detriment of the other
- ensure that all resources portray both genders in a positive and non-stereotypical way
- continue to monitor achievement by gender. If differences based on gender are identified, appropriate action will be taken to redress the imbalance.

Guidelines, Race

- The curriculum will reflect the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of society locally, regionally and nationally
- Pupils will have opportunities to study issues to do with intolerance, prejudice, racism, racial discrimination and religious prejudice
- Resources will portray members of local and regional cultural and ethnic groups in ways which are positive and non-stereotypical
- Community languages other than English will be valued and promoted
- All pupils will be able to dress and worship in ways which do not conflict with the cultural or religious conventions of the home
- The dietary needs of all pupils will be met
- Achievement, attendance and exclusions will be monitored by ethnicity. If differences based on ethnicity are identified, appropriate action will be taken to redress the imbalance

- Members of all cultural and ethnic groups will be welcomed and valued by the school community
- All racist incidents will be dealt with in an effective and consistent manner

Guidelines, Religion and Belief

- The National Curriculum in general, and RE in particular, will be used to value and celebrate diversity based on religion and belief
- All pupils will be given opportunities to meet their religious needs, especially at the time of important festivals
- The dietary needs of all pupils will be met
- Pupils will be discouraged from using offensive language based on religion or belief.
- Resources will reflect people subscribing to a variety of religions and beliefs

Guidelines, Age and Sexuality

- All pupils will be expected to do as well as they possibly can
- All pupils will be expected to behave as well as they possibly can
- All pupils will be encouraged to make equal use of all the resources and facilities in the school
- Resources will reflect the variety of families that exist in Britain today
- Resources will show people of all ages engaged in non-stereotypical roles and activities
- Pupils will be discouraged from using offensive language about age and sexuality.
- People will be welcomed and valued
- Appropriate use will be made of local authority support services to ensure that all pupils fulfil their potential.

Guidelines, Gender Reassignment, Civil Partnership and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity

- In relation to the three protected characteristics above, parents, carers, visitors, members of staff and all others associated with the school can rest assured that discrimination will not occur, and that people's rights as defined in legislation relating to the characteristics will be respected
- Pupils will be discouraged from using offensive language about gender reassignment, civil partnership and marriage, and pregnancy and maternity
- people will be welcomed and valued no matter their personal circumstances, their marital status, whether in a civil partnership or not, whether pregnant or on maternity leave, or whether undertaking, or having undertaken, gender reassignment
- Appropriate use will be made of suitable external support services, including those in the local authority, to ensure that equality of opportunity exists in relation to gender reassignment, civil partnership and marriage, and pregnancy and maternity.

Appendix 1

Glossary of commonly used terms relating to equality and diversity

Bullying:

Bullying can be defined in many ways such as:

- Doing things with the deliberate aim to hurt
- Occasions when individuals feel that they have been victimised
- Repetitive acts of abuse
- Deliberately hurtful behaviour
- Deliberately hurting or frightening someone by what is said or done

The abuse of power by an individual or group in relation to another individual or group is the intentional abuse of power by an individual or group with the intent and motivation to cause distress to another individual or group. Such abuse of power may be physical, verbal, sexual or psychological in nature

Discrimination

Treating an individual or group less well than another individual or group is treated. Such differential treatment accords advantages to some and disadvantages to others. Although it is possible to engage in positive discrimination - presently unlawful except in a few specific situations in the UK - most people define discrimination as unfair treatment leading to disadvantage. Present legislation renders discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, marital status, race, religion and belief, and sexuality unlawful. Also, present legislation reminds us that discrimination can be either direct (overt, or intentional) or indirect (covert, or unintentional). Whether direct or indirect, discrimination on the above grounds is unlawful.

Harassment

Any behaviour or action directed at an individual that is found to be offensive to the recipient and might threaten an employee's job security or create an intimidating environment. Inappropriate words or actions which humiliate, ridicule, embarrass, intimidate, frighten, distress or otherwise undermine. Harassment can be on the grounds of a person's age, disability, gender, nationality, race, religion or belief, sexuality or any other personal characteristic.

Institutional racism is

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin

It can be detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

Minority Ethnic Group

Everyone belongs to an ethnic group and, for historical reasons, the UK contains many such groups. A minority ethnic group is usually defined as a group which differs from the majority in a given nation state. Difference may be based on physical characteristics (e.g. skin colour), culture, religion and/or language. Many minority ethnic groups experience disadvantage and/or discrimination.

Prejudice

Prejudice can be defined in many ways such as:

- An unfavourable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought or reason.
- Any preconceived opinion or feeling, either favourable or unfavourable.
- Unreasonable feelings, opinions or attitudes, especially of a hostile nature, directed against individuals or groups deemed in some shape or form to be different.

Prejudice may assume a variety of characteristics such as a tendency to judge a whole group on the basis of visible difference or on the basis of assumed characteristics. Prejudice is usually based on inadequate information. In other words, attitudes or opinions which are prejudiced are usually based on lies, half-truths, legends or myths.

Racism

Racism can be defined in many ways such as:

- Prejudice plus power
- Prejudice plus power plus action

- Belief in the superiority of the ethnic group to which you belong and, through either numerical superiority or control of the decision-making institutions, possessing the means to realise that belief

- Treating someone less well than others because of the ethnic or racial group to which they belong

Racism exists when political, economic and social institutions are dominated by a particular ethnic group and that ethnic group uses its control of the institutions to discriminate against members of other ethnic groups.

Racist Incident

A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

Scapegoats

People who bear the blame for things they are not responsible for.

Sexism

The belief that males and females are better equipped to fulfil different roles in society, perhaps because of their inherited characteristics or their physical and/or biological differences. Prejudice or discrimination against people, especially girls and women, because of their sex.

Stereotypes

A standardised, fixed image or conception of people which is applied to all people in that category. The vast majority of stereotypes perceive the groups concerned in a negative or patronising manner. All stereotypes negate individuality and deny us the opportunity to engage with people as fully rounded, complex beings. Stereotypes deny us the opportunity to engage with reality.