

The Oak Tree Equalities Policy

December 2020



Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for our federation brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects, which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our schools' physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our schools embrace the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Existing Equalities Policies and Plans

- Special Education Needs Report for individual schools
- Anti-Bullying Policy November 2020 – Jan 2021
- Accessibility Plan March 2019 – March 2022
- Accessibility Strategies for Disabled Pupils including the Emotionally and Physically Vulnerable (Accessibility Action Plan) March 2019 - March 2022
- Equalities Objectives December 2020 December 2024

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes.

Issues relating to adults within the school community can be embraced under these themes and reflected in the action plan.

Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
 - Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better

- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere.
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities.
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

Our vision statement about Equality

Firle CEP and Laughton CP Schools seek to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

Our duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all. They are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- The engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- Preparation for entry to the school
- School policies
- Breaks and lunchtimes
- The provision of school meals
- Interaction with peers
- Opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- Test arrangements
- Behaviour management approach and sanctions
- Exclusion procedures
- School clubs, activities and school trips
- The school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- Preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
- Learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- Classroom organisation
 - Timetabling
- Grouping of pupils
- Homework

- Access to school facilities
- Activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school or visiting theatre groups etc • school sports
- Employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Head teacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- support the Head teacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 3 years

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy
- with the Head teacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the FIP

Our pupils/students will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy as appropriate
- be encouraged to support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy

How we conducted (will conduct) equality impact assessment

As a school we carry out rigorous ongoing monitoring and analysis of all pupils and their progress which is reported termly and annually so the Head teacher, SLT, subject leaders and class teachers can use the information to ensure the appropriate progress is made by all pupils regardless of race, disability, socio-economic background, belief or gender.

Through analysis by the Head teacher, SLT, SENCO and Subject leaders we are aware of any groups or individuals who are not making at least expected progress. Evidence of this process can be found on the school tracking system, teacher's assessment records and on the Federation Improvement Plan.

Our pupils/students

- School Council meetings – fortnightly
- Pupil Voice Questionnaires
- PSHE – Circle Time

Our Staff

- Senior Leadership Team meetings - weekly
- Teaching Assistant meetings – fortnightly (includes MDSAs)
- Staff Business Briefings - weekly
- Staff Meetings – weekly

Our School Governors

- Full Governing Body meetings
- School Visits by Equalities Governor to monitor implementation of Equalities Policy

Parents/Carers

- Parent Questionnaire
- Newsletters
- School Website
- Parent Forum Meetings

Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups

- Letters with return slip so we can monitor who has had info/been consulted and follow up texts and telephone calls
- EAL – interpreter support
- Low literacy level support for parents/carers
- Termly discussion between Head teacher and SENCO tracking vulnerable groups in literacy and maths
- Prevent training and awareness

Our Partners in the Community

- SENCO to liaise as appropriate with SEND partners and agencies
- Class Teachers to monitor and alert SLT and SENCO as appropriate if additional support is required (e.g. to complete homework and attend Parent Consultation evenings if low levels of literacy or EAL are an identified need)

Ongoing

- Pupil & parent/carer questionnaires
- In school consultation with all pupils and staff via our usual forums
- Newsletters/letters to parents/carers
- Head teacher report to Governors and consultation regarding Equalities Policy Development
- Consultation with partnership schools
- Discussion with parents/carers
- Multi-agency meetings

How we developed our Policy

We have used data and other information about our school to better understand the community and its needs. This information will help to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our pupils/students and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this.

Ofsted inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism (reported to ESCC), homophobia, faith, disability and gender. We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through pupil/learner voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously.

The Local Authority provides us with a range of services which support the equality agenda and helps us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action. We have established good links with our local and our wider community, so we are aware of equality issues outside school and can address them within school. By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

Commissioned services (buying in services)

Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We work closely with the local authority on procurement – buying in services - to ensure that equality issues are

given full regard. When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures.

We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Our staff team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community. We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development.

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism.

We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour. We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns in conjunction with ESCC which collects evidence of racially motivated incidents each term, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms

of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities. We subscribe to the anti-bullying service at the Local Authority and draw in external support if required.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy was published in December 2020 and will be reviewed annually.

It will be actively promoted and disseminated through our school website, newsletters, the School Council, Staff Meetings and school Governors.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups. We will monitor the impact of new policies and the impact of our Equality Objectives.

Equality Objectives

How we chose our equality objectives

Our equality objective-setting process has involved gathering evidence as follows:

- From the monitoring and analysis of pupil progress in the identified groups
- Pupil Results – SEND/EAL/FSM / Gifted and Talented data, Vulnerable pupils data, Parent/Pupil Surveys, School Council meetings, CPD minutes.

The evidence was analysed in order to choose objectives for our Equalities Action Plan:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

These objectives will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These will be reviewed every 4 years.

This policy will be monitored and the outcomes reported to Governors annually.