



# Equality Policy and Action Plan

## 1.Aims

At St. Bernadette's Catholic School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At St. Bernadette's we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act to make the law simpler and to remove inconsistencies. This makes the law easier for people to understand and comply with. The act also strengthened protection in some situations.

The act covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, so the act protects everyone against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Equality Act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person.

The act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace, when providing goods, facilities and services, when exercising public functions, in the disposal and management of

premises, in education and by associations. This policy and plan demonstrates how at St. Bernadette's we intend to comply with this Act.

## **2. Turning equality into policy and practice**

As well as the specific actions set out in 10 of this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

### **Teaching and learning**

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

### **Admissions and exclusions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors. The Admission's Policy is published on our website for each year of entry and has criteria for admission explained clearly. Any changes to the policy follow at least a 6 week period of consultation.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

## **3. Equal Opportunities for Staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at St. Bernadette's.

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

### **Employer duties**

As an employer we ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

### **4. Disability**

This section must be read in conjunction with the school's Inclusion Policy and Accessibility Plan.

### **5. Consultation and involvement**

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of all stakeholders. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, parent-school forum meetings or governors' parent-consultation meeting;
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / INSET;
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons and pupil questionnaires.
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

### **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

**The role of governors is to:**

- Set out its commitment to equal opportunities and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability.
- Seek to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.

- Welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- Ensure that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of the protected characteristics.
- Prioritise resources to this end.

**The role of the headteacher is to: (or senior leader responsible for Equalities)**

- To comply with the Equality Act and she is supported by the governing body in doing so.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Act and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- To ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- To promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- To treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

**The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching is to:**

- Ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the Equality Act.
- Strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- Challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the headteacher.
- Support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

**7. Tackling discrimination**

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis.

**8. What is a discriminatory incident?**

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical

abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as:  
'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

## **9. Types of discriminatory incident**

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

This applies to children and staff.

## **10. Review of progress and impact**

The Policy has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will agree at least three objectives that the school has agreed to pursue and these will be published within the School Development Plan. These will be reviewed and progress against our Equality objectives reported annually within the School Development Plan.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

## **11. Publishing the plan**

- In order to meet the statutory requirements we will:
- publish the school's Equality objectives on the school website;
- raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available.

## 12. ACTION PLAN Included in School Development Plan 2013-2016 as an addendum

Equality Strand	Action	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	Who is responsible for implementing?	What are the timeframes?	Early success indicators
All	Publish and promote the objectives on the website.	Discussions at Parent meetings and feedback via annual questionnaire.	Headteacher	Oct 2013	Parents know about the Equality Action Plan
Race Equality Duty	Identify, respond and report racist incidents as outlined in the Plan. Report the figures to the Governing body / Local Authority on a termly basis.	The Headteacher / Governing body will use the data to assess the impact of the school's response to incidents i.e. have whole school / year group approaches led to a decrease in incidents, can repeat perpetrators be identified, are pupils and parents satisfied with the response?	Headteacher / Governing body	Reporting: December, April, July	Teaching staff are aware of and respond to racist incidents  Consistent nil reporting is challenged by the Governing Body
Social Equality Duty	Develop more opportunities for 'free' clubs after school, particularly sporting clubs that lead to team representation.	Increased participation of FSM pupils in art/sport and enrichment opportunities.	School Business Manager/ Headteacher	Sept 2013-2014	Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium funding participating in enrichment opportunities
All	Analyse pupil performance by gender, ethnicity, EAL and FSM and if as a result of this analysis a group is not achieving as well actions are identified and implemented.	Curriculum Committee will review progress reports.	Senior Leadership Team	Termly reviews	Identified actions are seen to be in place. Progress differences reducing-'closing the gap'
Cultural	Support families from ethnic minority heritage with learning for their children by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular workshops for parents.</li> <li>• Family support from a Family worker.</li> <li>• Home learning information on the website.</li> <li>• Parent learning opportunities.</li> </ul>	Progress monitoring of School Development Plan governor visits, meetings with Parents.	Headteacher	Sept 3013	Parents more positive about helping their children.  Target families supported at home.

## 13. Check list for school staff and governors

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- Is information collected on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions, staff training? Is this information used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides?
- How has your Equality Plan been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents and pupils?
- Is pupil achievement analysed by race, disability and gender? Are there trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action, and has action been taken to address these?
- Does the curriculum include opportunities to understand the issues related to race, disability and gender?
- Are all pupils encouraged to participate in school life? Are pupils who make a positive contribution reflective of the school's diversity e.g. through class assemblies / school council?
- Is bullying and harassment of pupils and staff monitored by race, disability and gender, and is this information used to make a difference to the experience of other pupils? Are racist incidents reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis?
- Are visual displays reflective of the diversity of your school community? How are minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models promoted positively in lessons, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies?
- Does the school take part in annual events such as Black History Month, Deaf Awareness Week and One World Week to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender?
- Is the school environment as accessible as possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school? Are open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend held in an accessible part of the school, and are issues such as language barriers considered?
- Are the accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff considered in the publishing and sending out of information, in terms of race, disability and gender?
- Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters who are disabled?