

MEREWORTH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



EQUALITY POLICY

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Person with Responsibility	Amanda Lavelle Head Teacher
Review Date	Term 3 2017
Governing Body	School Effectiveness Committee
Chair of Governors <i>Signature and Date</i>	
Governor with responsibility for Inclusion / Equality <i>Signature and Date</i>	
Head Teacher <i>Signature and Date</i>	

Whole School Equality Policy

1) Objectives of this Policy

This policy outlines how Mereworth School creates equal opportunities for all and values all members of the school equally. We believe the Equality Act 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 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.

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools, to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and outlines two specific duties:

The Public Sector Equality Duty or 'General Duty'

This requires all public organisations including schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relationships between different groups

The Two Specific Duties

This requires all public organisations including schools to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by 6th April 2012
- Publish Equality Objectives at least every four years which are specific and measurable by 6th April 2012

2) Our approach to equality is based on the following key principles:

All learners are of equal value. Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious beliefs or affiliations and whatever their sexual orientation, all learners are of equal value.

We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit our school.

We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.

We foster a shared sense of belonging and cohesion. We want all members of our school community to feel a strong sense of belonging within the school and the wider community. We want them to feel respected and that they are able to participate fully in school life.

We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development.

We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect all pupils to make progress and support them in being the best they can be.

We work to raise standards for all pupils, with a focus on those considered most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

3) What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for our pupils to facilities and services.
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled pupils being placed at a disadvantage compared with their non-disabled peers.
- The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- We 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 take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day-to-day life of the school. We make a record of each specific equality consideration and this is available for review if required.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through assemblies, the curriculum (including PSHE lessons), our school values and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
- We adhere strictly to our school's Anti-Bullying Policy when dealing with issues of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, relating to gender, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously, in terms of identifying, assessing, recording and dealing with incidents.

4) What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements, as well as provide specific support for vulnerable groups.
- We work in partnership with parents and carers to identify children who have a disability through our admissions procedure.
- We collect data and monitor the progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils, then use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example EAL pupils, low attendance pupils, FSM pupils and LAC.
- We are aware that legislation relates mainly to current, but also to future pupils – we will, for example, be sufficiently prepared for a Visually or Hearing Impaired child should they join our school.
- We avoid language that runs a risk of placing a ceiling on pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as 'less able'.
- We use a range of teaching strategies to ensure we meet the needs of all pupils.
- We provide support for pupils at risk of underachieving.
- We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.
- We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

5) What we are doing to foster positive attitudes and relationships

- We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse and society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our learners.
- We actively teach about differences and diversity and the impact of stereotyping prejudice and discrimination through PSHE, assemblies and the wider curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect a diverse society, in terms of race, gender, sexuality and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour (for example through our 'Values Based Education').
- We provide pupils with opportunities to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a wide range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.

6) The School's Single Equality Scheme (SES)

Our SES identifies objectives relating specifically to our school's priorities. These priorities are the outcome of careful review and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

7) Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to our school to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Headteacher and Leadership Team

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. S/he will have informed and expert knowledge of the Equality Act.

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's values
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find academic learning difficult
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work

Key contacts

Staff responsible for equalities.....Faye Booth.....
Lead governor.....Jane Carnegie.....

8) Equal Opportunities for Staff

- 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 are in compliance with the law.
- We are also concerned wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.
- As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

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

9) Disseminating this Policy

This policy, along with the Single Equality Scheme (SES), is available:

- on the school website
- on 'teachers' shared work'
- as paper copies in the office
- in the staff handbook
- as part of induction for new staff and visitors (such as students)

We ensure that the whole school community knows about this policy through training days, staff meetings, assemblies, school newsletters and the school website.

10) Links with other school policies and practices

This Policy links with a number of other school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Single Equality Scheme
- Behaviour & Exclusions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- SEN Policy