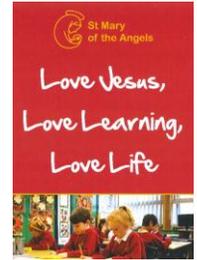


# **ST MARY OF THE ANGELS SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY**

## **2023-2024**



### **OVERVIEW**

The Single Equality Act which came into place Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 brought together the duties that are already set out in our Race, Disability and Gender policies into one single Equality Duty. This policy is written to bring together and harmonise those three policies. The Single Equality Act combines the existing three duties into one new Equality Duty that covers all seven of the equality strands: age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. In this school we will ensure that at every level, in all our work and throughout all aspects of the school community and its life, all will be treated equally.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To ensure that all learners have equal access to a rich, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
2. To advance equality of opportunity by ensuring that teaching, learning and curriculum promote equality, celebrate diversity and promote community cohesion by fostering good relations.
3. To eliminate any discrimination, harassment and victimization. To ensure that no-one is unfairly or illegally disadvantaged as a consequence of their age, disability, gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, disability or religious beliefs.
4. To recognize, celebrate diversity within our community whilst promoting community cohesion.
5. To ensure that those with management responsibility and individual members of staff, accept responsibility for planning teaching, learning and curriculum apply this policy to all we do.
6. To ensure that learners and parents are fully involved in the provision made by the school and to increase transparency.
7. To ensure that within the school budget, adequate funding is provided to underpin this policy and that intervention, positive action and preventative action is funded where needed.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Monitoring, evaluation and review carried out by the Leadership Team will ensure that procedures and practices within the school reflect the objectives of this policy.
2. Parents and governors will be involved and consulted about the provision being offered by the school.
3. Teachers will ensure that their planning, teaching and learning takes account of this policy and they will see that the equity duty underpins all their work.
4. The diversity within our school and the wider community will be viewed positively by all and this diversity will be recognized as a positive, rich resource for teaching, learning and the curriculum.
5. INSET opportunities will be provided for staff, to raise awareness of their Equality Duty and provide them with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to meet the requirements of this policy.
6. Active contributions will be sought of parents and others to enrich teaching, learning and the curriculum.
7. The positive achievements of all pupils will be celebrated and recognized.

### **OUTCOMES**

This policy will play an important part in the educational development of individual pupils. It will ensure that all pupils are treated equally and as favourably as others. The school will make all the reasonable adjustments necessary to promote equal opportunity and equal treatment of all members of the school community. We are committed to meeting the individual needs of each child and we will take full account their age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation in accordance with the requirements of The Single Equality Act 2010.

## **STRATEGY FOR ENSURING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The school is determined to uphold and promote the 9 protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act. (the last two are grouped together in our list.) Each characteristic is outlined below, with actions from school to show compliance and a proactive attitude.

### **1. Age**

- Books and resources in school such as Oxford Reading Tree, and library books, show many positive images of older people.
- Grandparents are often in school – such as a grandparents’ coffee afternoon (where pupils waited on the visitors) and grandparents ‘stay and play’ in FS2.
- We aim to value & respect the roles of older people in our community.
- People are employed regardless of age. We have a number of staff and volunteers working in school beyond retirement age who provide great role models for pupils.
- We aim to employ on aptitude, never on age. Governors here are in their 30s to 70s – giving us a range of knowledge and experience, which enhances our decision making process.
- Similarly children from the youngest age in school are given responsibilities such as register monitors; and we have the highest expectations of everyone, in work and behaviour, regardless of age.

### **2. Disability**

- The school building had a proactive attitude to disability, with disabled parking spaces; full DDA compliance in building design; audio loops and dimmable lights; touchscreens and ICT aids for learners; and so on.  
Our proactive training programme means all staff are safe handling trained; many have had training from the school health service on asthma, diabetes and speech & language difficulties. The epilepsy nurse provided key staff with training; and many are full first aid trained or paediatric trained.
- One of our staff INSET days in 2020-21 was a whole staff Mental Health First Aid training day, which has really impacted positively on adults and children in our community. We were able to put this into practice when COVID restrictions were in places, and people were affected by the situation. Telephone calls to parents and families with issues were frequent; and pupils accessed additional ELSA time in school.
- We are fully prepared for disabled students, with amendments to toilets and showers; flexible classroom spaces and doors; plenty of aids available such as coloured overlays, pastel paper, writing slopes, gripper pencils; classroom & dining chairs suitable for wheelchair users; and a walker available. We work with paediatrics, OT nurses, visual impairment service and others to support our pupils with severe disabilities.
- If pupils have operations etc, we work with the Education Access Officer, Michaela Bridge, to ensure that appropriate tutoring is available for their continuing education. Occupational therapy support is available for targeted pupils again, during 2023-24 and is ongoing, in liaison with health services where needed.
- Books and resources in school such as Oxford Reading Tree, and library books, show many positive images of people with disabilities.
- We seek support from the government agency “Access to Work” to support stakeholders where relevant.

### **3. Gender reassignment**

- At this time, we do not have parents nor pupils with gender reassignment; but the school fully understands that a proactive approach is needed by the whole community on this issue. We want visitors to feel welcome and not facing any kind of discrimination, whether overt or unintended. Adults and children dealing with gender reassignment can face significant issues in their lives; and we believe that the school community needs to be prepared. Visitor toilets were converted to non gender specific in early 2019, for example.
- **Senior Leaders have read the DfE consultation on draft guidance for schools in England regarding gender-questioning children published in December 2023**
- We promote positive gender imaging across school through our resources, aspirational initiatives, role allocation etc.
- In order to understand the potential needs of those with gender reassignment, staff attended a course organised by Cheshire Police and Cheshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership about Hate Crimes. This included an EWO giving a case study on this issue in a Cheshire School. This was fed back to staff, as well as governors.

#### **4. Marriage and civil partnership**

- Children's resources have already been mentioned above and are in use (reading books, posters etc) to provide positive images of different types of marriage and civil partnerships. This is further explored through online resources (BBC etc) so that discussion can take place in classes, in a positive way.
- Through our Mission Statement, we welcome all people in our Christian ethos and will not judge or discriminate against anyone, according to gender or lifestyle. This is evident in our employment practice which follows the Law in full; and in our non discriminatory Admission policy, which again follows the Law in full. We have single sex parents who have stated in review that the school supports single sex families well.

#### **5. Pregnancy and maternity.**

- The school follows employment law in full. We have termly updates from our HR department and an annual training day for senior staff on current employment issues. This means we are proactive and informed in supporting employees on such issues as pregnancy and maternity rights; and any related health and safety issues. Two recent maternity cases have been managed carefully, in line with COVID guidance, with regular input from our HR provider to ensure equity and safety.
- In general, senior management believe in encouraging family friendly working. We have a well-developed Wellbeing Policy, with all stakeholders' views included and reviewed. We appreciate family-school worklife balance and make adjustments in response to reasonable staff requests. A full worklife/wellbeing survey of staff is undertaken annually, completed anonymously, based on the DfE model; with actions responded to. **This was last carried out and reviewed in January 2024**
- Parents have also been informed by text that we are a family friendly school; and so we will always find a discreet space for anyone entering these premises who needs to breastfeed a child, for example.

#### **6. Race**

- As with disability we have a proactive attitude to race equality. No discrimination is tolerated, in terms of employment law and practice, nor in admissions.
- We have children at St Mary's from China; Asia and continental Europe. All are welcomed and fully integrated. Teachers from abroad came here regularly on placements, pre COVID, to share their experiences and speak in their native languages, as a role model for us all.
- Pupils' development has been described as 'outstanding' by Ofsted and we are proud that children say that they suffer little discrimination based on race in this school. Ofsted say any signs of bullying are followed up and dealt with immediately.
- Books and dictionaries are available in classes in different languages, Polish, Spanish etc, to both support English as an Additional Language (EAL) children's right to learn enrichment in their own language; but also to show English children the richness of other cultures & languages. Other books such as our reading schemes have positive role models too.
- Books and resources in school such as Reading Rhino, and library books, celebrate racial diversity.
- Pre COVID, a unique Spanish exchange for pupils was offered to every child in Y6, to enrich our Spanish language curriculum, with an online, e-safety project last year between us and a partner school in Pamplona. Children have visited their friends' homes, schools, learn together and visit cultural centres. Even some of those who went on our first exchange in 2014 are still in touch, via Skype, correspondence and in particular on Xbox and Playstation. Families too have visited each other, including 3 families in summer 2019 and many current pupils hosted a Spanish child in their house, with older siblings, sharing this story in Spanish lessons in 2022. We remain open to developing new opportunities in future.

#### **7. Religion and belief.**

- As a faith school, we are very interested & focused on all faiths and values; and we have welcomed about 40% of children from other faiths or no faith. Our Admissions policy reflects our welcome to other children.
- We have been proactive in building up resources in our library on other faiths, and welcomed, for example, author Anthony Lishak, who has written a book in our library about the impact the Holocaust had on his family.

- We provide comprehensive curriculum access to learning about other Faiths and Cultures, for example we hosted a trail around the hall learning about “Prayers Around the World”. Annually we dedicate curriculum time to a whole school focussed learning week on World Faiths. This was last held in October 2024. Displays around school support children’s exposure to, and recall of, this learning.
- In our own faith, we worship, pray and celebrate together, following the values of Jesus Christ. We are part of a wider parish community and they are welcomed in for termly occasions etc. Our Diocesan S48 inspection in May 2023 described our RE curriculum, values and the faith life of the school as ‘outstanding’.

#### **8 & 9. Discrimination by (a) sex and (b) sexual orientation.**

- Our recruitment policies follow the Law and there is no discrimination by sex nor sexual orientation. No questions are asked, nor are details solicited during application rounds. Governors and staff are picked on merit, and we have a good balance of both sexes.
- Pupils are aware of homophobic bullying and the horrendous effect it has on others; most recently it was discussed during an assembly and workshops by the NSPCC, who we visited school in December 2023 as part of our participation in the “Speak Out Stay Safe” programme. PSHE work and our SRE scheme for example address these issues. Evidence from parents’ questionnaires and from pupil voice, as well as successive Ofsted inspections, would suggest that incidents of this type seem extremely rare; we will continue to monitor, and any homophobic incidents will be recorded on CPOMS.
- Books and resources in school such as Books for Thinking, No Outsiders resources, and our RSE and PSHE provision all address matters of discrimination
- Staff & governors have had a safeguarding update of ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022-23’, including issues such as sexual orientation, modern slavery, harmful sexual behaviours etc.

#### **Update 2023-2024**

- The curriculum is reviewed annually, with a commitment to providing a broad, balanced, rich curriculum; and more coherence to cater for all ability types and learning needs, we continue to introduce new elements to our curriculum and out provision (sensory room, forest schools, sensory garden, sensory circuits, increased SENDco investment etc)
- New legislation being followed, on Diocesan advice, e.g., to prevent discrimination on sexual orientation. New Diocesan scheme in place, ‘Journey of Love’ for Sex and Relationships Education. Senior Leaders stay updated with latest government guidance and consultations, e.g. with gender-questioning children – Dec 2023.
- All Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements still being followed; new literature purchases this year have presented positive stereotypes; success in gender varied sport e.g., a female pupil was Cheshire tennis champion; continued study of multi-faith topics, etc. See our evidence files.
- The headteacher is trained on discrimination issues around; race/ethnic origin; religion; gender identity; sexual orientation; disability; and other characteristics. Training was jointly hosted by Cheshire Police and the CWAC Safeguarding Team, and the Proud Trust. Outcomes were fed back and implemented in school.
- The school website has been updated for parents in 2023 with information/direct web links to: ‘Prevent’; female genital mutilation; forced marriages; gender issues; child sexual exploitation; and other equality related issues. Parents received a text asking them to read this carefully.
- All our COVID policies (2020-2021) were developed with reference to the Equality Act e.g., pupils with SEND have had extra transition back to school, SEND children were monitored, with returns to the LA etc. We continue to follow national and local guidance on all COVID updates.

## Our Equality Objectives for 2023-2024

**These have been written and agreed between all stakeholders and are as follows:**

Equality Objective	Why we have chosen this objective	To achieve this objective we plan to	Progress we are making	
<b>1</b>	<p><b>To narrow the gap between vulnerable groups of pupils and other pupils in access to homework support, and in this way to reduce or remove inequalities in attainment, particularly inequalities relating to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post pandemic lockdown we noted that a number of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils did not engage with homework on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Post pandemic, we have noted that we have significant numbers of children whom we identify as ‘vulnerable’ but do not meet nationally set criteria for PP, FSM or Disadvantaged</li> </ul>	<p>Analyse data to see where attainment gaps exist Broadening our understanding of ‘vulnerable’ and realigning our measure of vulnerable pupils with a triangulation of criteria. Ensure that our homework offer is suited to all pupils Support parents and carers by sharing ideas and offering support with homework</p>	<p>DHT leading a review of vulnerable identification and provision Teachers extending use of google classroom facilities to ensure homework activities are accessible and pertinent for all.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>To increase awareness and understanding of race equality in all areas of our school life.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our children do not live in a racially diverse school or town community and therefore planned exposure to culture diversity is necessary to increase understanding and immersive learning.</li> </ul>	<p>To ensure staff are trained to use the No Outsiders Programme as part of our PSHE offer Review curriculum resources to ensure diverse content Review our British Values provision Gospel Assemblies to focus on race equality imagery World Faiths Week – Summer 2023 Seek to rebook staff training with Barnardo’s on equality issues.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>To promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent teaching and learning opportunities, strong pastoral provision and good links with families will enable our children to develop higher levels of resilience and achieve more of their God-given potential.</li> <li>• The wellbeing of our staff continues to be a priority, heightened by the challenges of the pandemic period.</li> </ul>	<p>Offer a wide range of learning opportunities that support and develop positive mental health. Continue to build good relationships with families and use signposting to agencies that can offer wider support. Continue to run parent learning events, e.g. Reading, Phonics, Maths etc Staff to continue to work on building relationships and engagement with parent/carers ELSA, TAF, Drop in sessions, events, etc Support with attendance and punctuality Review the website again in 2023 to ensure Childline, My Happy Mind resources etc are available for home access.</p>	

**Revised and adopted by the Governing Body: Spring 2024. To be reviewed: Autumn 2024**