



St Mary's RC Primary School, Richmond Equality Scheme

Three year period covered by this scheme:
2012- 2015

Introduction

The second Vatican Council clearly reiterated what is now fundamental to Catholic belief and teaching - namely the basic equality between all human beings:

"All human beings are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's image; they have the same nature and origin and, being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same divine calling and destiny.... forms of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design."

(Guadium et Spes 29)

The sentiments expressed in the above statement should be evident in everything we undertake in St. Mary's RC Primary School.

1.1 Purpose of the Equality Scheme

This equality scheme is the school's response to the specific and general duties in the current equality legislation. It is an attempt to capture how the school is systematically establishing and implementing good practice in equality and diversity across all areas of school life. This includes a response to all aspects of social identity and diversity as set out in the North Yorkshire County Council's Equality Policy Statement:

"we oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether because of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex or gender reassignment, marital status, family status, sexuality, religion or beliefs, disability, age or any other condition or requirement which places a person at a disadvantage and cannot be justified".

This Equality Scheme sets out how the school will:

- eliminate discrimination;
- eliminate harassment related to any aspect of social identity or diversity;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote positive attitudes to all aspects of social identity and diversity;
- encourage participation by disabled people and people representing different aspects of social identity in public life;
- take steps to take account of difference even where that involves treating some people more favourably than others.

This document provides, therefore, a scheme which embraces for our school a Race Equality Scheme, a Gender Equality Scheme, a Disability Equality Scheme and the school's Equality Policy. It is reviewed every three years and reported on annually.

An action plan accompanies this Equality Scheme which is renewed annually. In line with this Equality Scheme, the action plan sets out the equality and diversity objectives for the school which have been identified as a result of the school's equality impact assessment in line with this equality scheme and facilitated by the **Inclusion Quality Mark** audit tool.

This action plan embraces the Accessibility Plan for the school as it sets out how the school will increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the Disability Discrimination Act:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

This action plan is available on the school website. It is available in different formats and in different languages on request to the school office.

1.2 Equality Legislation

This equality scheme responds to the current equalities legislation:

- Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976/2000
statutory positive duty to promote racial equality, promote good race relations and eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 (and Regulations 1999), Gender Equality Duty 2007
statutory positive duty to promote gender equality and eliminate unlawful gender discrimination;
- Employment Equality (religion or belief) (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003 extended to education, Equality Act (Part 2) 2007
The Act sets out that it is unlawful for schools to discriminate against a person:
 - a) in the terms on which it offers to admit him/her as a pupil;
 - b) by refusing to accept an application to admit him/her as a pupil, or
 - c) where he/she is a pupil of the establishment:
 - i) in the way in which it affords him/her access to any benefit, facility or service,
 - ii) by refusing him/her access to a benefit, facility or service,
 - iii) by excluding him/her from the establishment,
 - iv) by subjecting him/her to any other detriment.(There are specific exemptions for faith schools.)
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995/2005
statutory positive duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: pupils, staff, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to, and eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, duty to promote community cohesion.

By ‘community cohesion’ the school is endorsing and adopting the definition provided by Alan Johnson, 2006, as:
”working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.”

2 What kind of a school are we?

2.1 School Vision and Values

The school’s vision and values statement reflects the school’s ambitions for all its pupils. It refers to the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement for developing an inclusive curriculum: setting suitable learning challenges; responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs; overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The school statement also embraces the North Yorkshire Inclusion statement which emphasises that individuals and groups of learners who may be vulnerable to exclusion, marginalisation and underachievement are identified and receive targeted provision to ensure their presence, participation and achievement. The school is committed to achieving the **Inclusion Quality Mark** and is aspiring to achieve progressively higher levels of this award.

2.2 School Context

The nature of the school population and context to inform action planning for the equality scheme:

- Factors of the geographical location of the school;
- The training available to staff on equality issues;
- The turnover of pupils and staff;
- The population of disabled pupils and staff at the school (using the breadth of the DDA definition of disability:
”A disabled person (child or adult) is someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”);
- The nature of the school intake in the future (bearing in mind the anticipatory requirement of the DDA).
- Examples of reasonable adjustments the school makes as a matter of course;
- The nature of the school and site regarding access;
- The ways in which information is currently provided for disabled pupils;
- The ethnic composition of pupils and staff;
- Racist incidents at the school and in the local area;
- Languages spoken at the school;
- Recruitment, development and retention of staff against social identity factors such as disability, gender, sexual orientation, faith, age, ethnicity.
- Outcomes for pupils analysed against social identity issues, ie gender, ethnicity, disability, faith background, and aspects of vulnerability identified by the school including:
 - analysis of end of key stage results;
 - achievements on extra-curricular activities;
 - attendance data;

- exclusion data;
- participation on school trips;
- participation in extended school activities;
- Every Child Matters outcomes based on qualitative evidence such as pupil voice surveys, parental feedback, staff health and wellbeing information.

2.3 Responsibilities

The Governing Body and School Leadership Team will:

- be proactive in promoting equality and tackling discrimination in all areas;
- maintain an overview of the Equalities Scheme which will be a regular agenda item at governor meetings and ensure that all staff, parents and pupils adhere to it;
- work in partnership with others to tackle discrimination, and establish, promote and disseminate good practice in equalities;
- encourage, support and enable all pupils and staff to reach their full potential.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ensuring that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation (see para. 1.2);
- ensuring, with assistance from the Headteacher, that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented;
- electing a nominated governor with responsibility for Equalities who, with the Headteacher, will report to the full governing body.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- co-ordinating all equality work within the school;
- ensuring that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented on a day to day basis;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy and that they are given appropriate training and support to enable them to fulfil these responsibilities;
- initiating disciplinary action against staff or pupils who discriminate;
- dealing with reported incidents of racism, harassment or other forms of discrimination.

People with specific responsibilities (named):

- The SENCo, Mrs J Povey is the person responsible for maintaining and sharing with all the staff those vulnerable pupils and how their needs will be met;
- The Head Teacher, Miss J Collins is the person responsible for ensuring the specific needs of staff members are addressed;
- The Head Teacher, Miss J Collins is the person responsible for gathering and analysing the information on outcomes of vulnerable pupils and staff (see para. 2.2).
- The Head Teacher, Miss J Collins is the person responsible for monitoring the response to reported incidents of a discriminatory nature;
- The SENCo, Mrs J Povey is the person responsible for co-ordinating the Inclusion Quality Mark equality impact assessment.

All staff should:

- know how to deal with incidents of concern, and how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- know procedures for reporting incidents of racism, harassment or other forms of discrimination;

- not discriminate on racial, disability or other grounds;
- keep themselves up to date with relevant legislation and attend training and information events organised by the school or LA;
- ensure that pupils from all groups are included in all activities and have full access to the curriculum;
- promote equality and diversity through teaching and through relations with pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community.

All pupils will:

- learn about and understand the school's Equality Scheme and be expected to behave in accordance with it;
- experience a curriculum and environment which is respectful of diversity and difference and prepares them well for life in a diverse society;
- understand the importance of reporting discriminatory bullying and racially motivated incidents;
- ensure the peer support programme within the school promotes understanding and supports pupils who are experiencing discrimination;
- monitor progress through the school council.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for complying with the school's Equality Scheme – non-compliance will be dealt with by the Headteacher.

3.1 Involvement Processes

Policies are vital to identify and consolidate thinking regarding appropriate provision for pupils, however, they are often viewed as an end, when they should be seen as a process - always evolving in response to changes and evidence from impact assessments. When developing this Equality Scheme, the school is clear that this is a process which must be informed by the involvement of all participants such as pupils, parents, school staff, governors and external agencies. This will ensure that the school gleans insights into the barriers faced by people from different social identity backgrounds and learns the best ways to overcome such barriers. This Scheme will be informed, therefore, by:

- the views and aspirations of pupils themselves from different social identity backgrounds;
- the views and aspirations of parents of pupils from different social identity backgrounds;
- the views and aspirations of staff from different social identity backgrounds;
- the views and aspirations of members of the community and other agencies, including voluntary organisations, representing different social identity backgrounds;
- the priorities in the North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan.

3.2 Mechanisms for involvement

At this school the following mechanisms will ensure the views of **pupils** inform the Equality Scheme and action plan:

- School council;
- Twice yearly focus groups of pupils representing different social identity backgrounds, ie, gender forum, disability forum;
- Individual interviews with pupils involved in incidents of a discriminatory nature;
- Individual interviews with pupils experiencing reasonable adjustments;

At this school the following mechanisms will ensure the views of **staff** inform the Equality Scheme and action plan:

- Regular meetings with union representatives;
- Regular staff meetings with specific agenda items;
- Individual discussions with staff as a part of performance management.

At this school the following mechanisms will ensure the views of **parents and the community** inform the Equality Scheme and action plan:

- Text to be inserted into communication with parents: *“your support for your child’s education is crucial to their progress. Please tell us if there is any adjustments we need to make to help you support your child, for example: letters in large font; letters in different languages; wheelchair access; explaining things over the phone; a discussion with a school colleague of the same gender.”*
- Feedback through the Governing Body meetings;
- Feedback through the PTA meetings;
- Feedback from adults using the school beyond the school day;

The school’s action plan will focus on developing the involvement of pupils, staff and parents from different social identity backgrounds over the three years of this Scheme. We will consider varying the times, methods and the venues for this involvement to ensure the best possible attendance and ensure views can be heard. This way the school will learn what works and the involvement of pupils staff and parents will improve and deepen over time.

4 Making it happen

4.1 Implementation of Policy

This scheme is supported by an action plan, the progress of which is monitored and evaluated by the Governing Body.

The action plan that identifies the equality objectives for the school arising from this scheme and the impact assessment through the Inclusion Quality Mark has:

- clear allocation of responsibility;
- clear allocation of resources, human and financial;
- clear timescales;
- expected outcomes and performance criteria;
- specified dates for review;

The effectiveness of this Scheme will be evaluated and reflected in:

- the School Self-evaluation Form;
- the level achieved in the Inclusion Quality Mark;
- discussions with the School Improvement Partner.

4.2 Publication

This Equality Scheme will be published and available to anyone requesting a copy. Copies will be available in school and it will be referenced in school newsletters and in the school’s prospectus.

4.3 Reporting

This Scheme will be reported on annually. Progress against the action plan will be evaluated and the impact of the action and activities assessed. This report will be made available as a separate document.

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please ask us.

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