



Rooted in the community – growing for the future

Equalities Policy

(this replaces the Single Equality Scheme)

Written August 2016

Adopted at PPP sub-committee of Governing Body on 14th December 2016 and reviewed 21st May 2017, then re-adopted at Resources sub-committee on 20th October 2020 as recorded in minutes and signed by the Chair of Governors, Antonia Nicholls:

Antonia Nicholls

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This policy is due for review by October 2024

All our policies should be read in conjunction with our Shire Oak Values and this Equalities Policy.

Shire Oak C of E Primary School Equalities Policy

1. Introduction

This policy replaces our Single Equality Statement prepared in 2011 following the 2010 Equalities Act. It explains how we meet our responsibilities under the relevant legislation and how we go further than this as we implement our vision and values. It takes account of our experience since then, and of the Department for Education's 2014 guidance. It has been informed by policies prepared by other schools.

This policy has links to several other important School policies and documents, such as: our Inclusion Policy which sets out how we support all our children to make the best possible progress including the arrangements for children with special educational needs and disabilities; and our Human Resources policy suite which sets out how we recruit, train, reward and support our staff.

2. Legislative context

Like other public bodies schools are required, by the general Public Sector Equality Duty, to have due regard to the need to

- eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Where schools are concerned, age is a relevant characteristic in considering their role as an employer but not in relation to pupils. The relevant, or protected, characteristics for pupils are: sex, race, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and pregnancy and maternity.

The Act also puts two specific duties on schools:

- to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
- to prepare and publish equality objectives.

3. Shire Oak's Context and Commitment

Shire Oak Primary School is situated at the heart of the Headingley community on a beautiful site tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the high street. We are committed to our values that:

- children at Shire Oak enjoy creative teaching and high quality learning;
- all our children are encouraged to fulfil their potential in a happy nurturing environment;
- we express our Christian values in a sensitive way while, at the same time, welcoming families of different faiths and beliefs;
- children at Shire Oak recognise their responsibilities towards each other, the local community and the wider world;

and they shape everything we do. We have a diverse school community. Pupils, parents/carers and staff at our school come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Children and families come from a number of different countries of origin and from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. This means we take equalities seriously. We attach high priority to meeting our statutory responsibilities but aim to do so in a way that reflects our values and to promote equality for children from different socio-economic backgrounds as well as those with legally protected characteristics.

4. What this means in practice

Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. We want to provide an environment which is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimization of any kind. In the ways that we interact with people with different characteristics we:

- ensure that Shire Oak School is accessible, open and welcoming to all pupils, parents and staff;
- treat all pupils, staff and people in our wider community with equal respect, recognizing their equal value;
- recognise, respect and celebrate diversity;
- promote positive attitudes toward individuals with different characteristics;
- promote good relations between pupils, staff and people in the wider community coming from different groups or having different characteristics;
- provide an environment in which all pupils have equal access to all facilities and resources;
- work to monitor and reduce inequalities that already exist, especially in relation to educational opportunities and attainment;
- ensure that our recruitment, management and development of staff is undertaken in a fair and equitable manner.

In developing all our policies and practices we take account of the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across groups.

5. Promoting Equality through the Curriculum

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to prepare them for life in a diverse society. To do this, teaching and learning will:

- use materials and language that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping;
- provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and religions and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour;
- develop pupils advocacy skills so that they can detect bias, challenge discrimination, leading to justice and equality;
- ensure that the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum cover issues of equalities, diversity, religion, human rights and inclusion;

We recognise that it is important that at our school that all members of the school community use appropriate language which does not transmit or confirm stereotypes, or offend, and which creates the conditions for all people to develop their self esteem.

In our extra-curricular provision we provide equal access to all activities from an early age with for example girls playing football, boys playing netball and mixed teams wherever possible. We take responsibility for making contributors to extra-curricular activities aware of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity (e.g. sports helpers, coach drivers) by providing them with written or oral guidelines drawn from this policy.

6. Provision for particular groups

Avoiding discrimination and valuing diversity provide the foundations of our approach to equalities but on their own are not enough. Some of our pupils have particular needs that must be addressed if they are to have equal chances. So we:

- place a high priority on provision for children with special educational needs and disability.
- respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
- make appropriate provision for all EAL/bilingual children/groups to ensure access to the whole curriculum.

More information on this is given in our Inclusion Policy

7. Prejudice, harassment and bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of promoting equality including: prejudices related to disability and special educational needs; prejudices related to

racism and xenophobia; prejudices relating to religious belief; and prejudices related to sexism and homophobia. The Staff Handbook has guidance on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the Governing Body and local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they were dealt with in line with existing and future legal requirements.

8. Employer duties

As an employer we avoid discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- complying with local authority arrangements for 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.

More details of how we do this can be found in our Human Resources (HR) Policy Suite and the Staff Handbook. School uses all the Leeds City Council HR policies, procedures and support systems and responds to all requests by them for monitoring purposes to make sure we fulfil our employer duties.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community but some people have specific roles in implementing this policy:

- The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with current legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- The lead Governor for SEND and Equalities has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff, governors and visitors are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination, and, with support from appropriate members of SLT for monitoring pupil progress, making decisions relating to intervention and additional support for pupils and regularly reporting on the relative achievements of different groups of children.
- All staff are expected to:
 - promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos throughout the school;
 - challenge and deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur;
 - use the curriculum to challenge bias and prejudice;
 - support pupils for whom English is an additional language;
 - keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work; and
 - ensure that pupils have the opportunity to have their voices heard with regards to equality issues.

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and parents and carers.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

Breaches of this policy are dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, by reporting to the Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will then inform the governing body of significant breaches at the next Full Governing Body meeting or earlier as appropriate.

We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes for pupils, staff and parents from the equality strands referred to in this policy. We pay specific reference to

the impact that our policies have on the attainment of pupils from different groups. We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupils' progress, as they move through the school. As part of this process, we regularly monitor the performance of individual pupils to ensure that everyone is making the best possible progress. We use this information to adjust future teaching and learning plans, as necessary. Interventions and resources are available to support groups or individual pupils where information suggests that progress is not as good as it should be. The governing body receives regular aggregated data on pupil performance. School performance information is compared to national data and Local Authority data, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, sex and socio-economic circumstances. We do this to ensure we are complying with our values and our approach to equality. Our small cohort numbers sometimes make these data hard to interpret for some groups but we use them to raise questions and prompt qualitative evaluation.

11. Publication of information on Public Sector Equality Duty

This policy plus our Inclusion Policy are published on our website and form the core of how we publish information on how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. These may be supplemented from time to time by other documents reflecting specific issues and actions.

12. Equality objectives

We integrate our consideration of equality objectives with our School Development Plan and related documents. In 2015-16 - when this policy was being prepared - the focus of our equality objectives was in the SEND area and so covered by our Accessibility Plan. In future years we will bring together all our equality objectives in a single document to include in the relevant section on our website.

13. Summary

Shire Oak School attaches high priority to equalities and to meeting our statutory duties. We aim to do so in a way that reflects our values and promotes equality for children from different economic backgrounds as well as those with legally protected characteristics.