

St Michael's CE Primary School



Single Equality Policy Autumn 2022

At St Michael's CE Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all, regardless of social or economic disadvantage, disability, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, family make-up, belief (religious or non-religious), or any other individual special need.

Introduction

St Michael's is an inclusive school where all members of our community are valued equally. We value good manners, kindness, forgiveness, integrity and respect. Our school motto 'Seek Joy in Service' encourages us to contribute to the wider community with self-confidence and charisma, tempered with humility and a caring heart. We believe that:

- Every child is unique and should be given every opportunity to achieve their best.
- Diversity should be valued.
- Discrimination of any kind should be tackled.
- Equality should be promoted and any barriers to this removed.
- Good relationships, mutual respect and positive attitudes between all members of the community should be fostered.
- Disadvantage and underachievement of any individual or group should be tackled.

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.

Aims and objectives

- To comply with the legislation of the Equality Act 2010.
- To continue to maintain the school's position as a provider of the highest quality education and, as a good employer, provide development opportunities for all staff.
- To ensure that equality remains high on the school's strategic agenda.
- To maintain good management practice and to have a proactive agenda to prevent any sort of discrimination.
- To ensure that all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every pupil.
- To ensure that pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals.
- To ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the school's equal opportunities policy are dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure. All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously, as such behaviour is unacceptable.

VA Church of England School

As a VA school, St Michael's has certain exceptions to the general code as applied to most schools in England and Wales. These are:

- The Admissions Code permits the school to give priority to members of the Church of England provided that the school continues to be oversubscribed. However, the Admissions Code will not allow us to refuse to accept pupils of another or no religion if we are not oversubscribed.
- When organising visits to Church of England sites, the school is not acting unlawfully if it does not organise similar visits for children of other faiths.
- The Equality Act does not permit us to offer less favourable treatment to a pupil who no longer belongs to the Church of England. This is also true if the pupil's parents no longer belong to the church.
- In recruitment, we may give preference to persons who give, or are willing to give, religious education in accordance with the tenets of the Church of England.
- In considering dismissals, the governing body may have regard to any conduct that is incompatible with the precepts, or with the upholding of the tenets, of the Church of England.

Our approach to equality is based on the following:

1. 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 affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand and promote the idea 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.
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships within the school and wider community.
4. We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
5. 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.
6. We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
7. We work hard to raise standards for all pupils, especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

Purpose of the policy

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);

- Gender
- Disability
- Race / Ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Age
- Marriage / civil partnership

The Equality Act (2010) introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required 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.

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Development of the policy

This policy was developed in consultation with pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers. It is part of our commitment to promoting equalities and providing an inclusive school.

When developing the policy, we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the most recent OFSTED framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

Links to other policies and documentation

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, please also refer to our Accessibility Plan, the school prospectus, school web site and newsletters.

There are also references in the pupil premium, behaviour, admissions, SEN and anti-bullying policies as well as minutes of Governors' meetings.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and we comply with this in our recruitment procedures.

Eliminating 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 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 children being placed at a disadvantage compared to 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. * (See section: VA Church of England School)
- 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. Wherever possible, we will consult those affected.
- We actively promote equality through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions love and respect for all.
- Our admissions arrangements, set by the School Governors, are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, family make-up, pregnancy or maternity. (For admission arrangements relating to religion, please see section: VA Church of England School)

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

The school Policy on Behaviour takes full account of the duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-based bullying

The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around race and culture
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes
- prejudices around home circumstances

We keep a record of all prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action where necessary to reduce incidents.

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.
- We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and mathematical skills.

Tracking pupil progress

We aim to ensure that all barriers to learning are removed for all our pupils, especially those with protected characteristics. To achieve this, we hold regular pupil progress meetings and:

- Track the progress of pupils by analysing data including vulnerable groups.
- Carry out termly assessments of all our pupils in Mathematics, Reading Comprehension and Writing.
- Set targets for Mathematics, Reading Comprehension and Writing.
- Put interventions in place for underachieving children and review these regularly.
- Ensure that we are closing the gap between these children and the rest of the school, and the national community.

We are aware that the legislation relates to current and future pupils and therefore use - and continually review - the range of teaching strategies, to ensure that we meet the needs of all pupils.

Curriculum

We seek to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in which the basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught progressively and systematically. Furthermore, the school's aim is to provide for all our pupils according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin. The curriculum avoids stereotypes and provides good role models for all pupils. The content for the curriculum has never been within discrimination law and the Act explicitly excludes it. However, the delivery of the curriculum is explicitly included. Therefore, we seek to ensure that the curriculum is not delivered in a discriminatory way. For example:

- Children from all ethnic backgrounds are called upon to express their views in class discussions.
- Girls and boys have equal access to all areas of the curriculum, including sport.

When curriculum policies are reviewed, due regard is given to equal opportunity implications.

Positive Action

Under the Act, the school can now lawfully make New Positive Action provisions to allow us to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics.

Fostering good relations

- Through our curriculum we prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils.
- We promote our school values of love, respect and integrity and use them to challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE and across the curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- Through our RE lessons we provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own and others' culture.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences e.g. a philosophical approach to RE teaching.
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through assemblies, visitors and whole school events.

Specific Duties

In order that the school fulfils its obligations under the Act it will update the published policy and information annually and publish equality objectives at least once every four years. The objectives will be measurable and focus on real improvements and positive outcomes.

Equality Objective for the school year 2022 - 2024

- 1) With the increasing number of children attending St Michael's with a wide range of additional needs there is a need to ensure they are included in the curriculum – where can they see themselves and set aspirations.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors 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 role of the Governing Body is:

- To ensure that this policy is implemented and that it is reviewed every year.
- To promote a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the school's ethos and values.

Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's Equalities work.

The role of the Head Teacher and Leadership Team is:

- To implement this policy with support from the governing body.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and that all staff apply it in all situations.
- To ensure that all appointment panels apply the procedures and principles in this policy, so that everyone is treated equally and fairly.
- To ensure that all members of the school community, especially those with protected characteristics, play a full part in all aspects of school life.
- To ensure that all complaints about unlawful discrimination are investigated and resolved appropriately.

The role of all staff is:

- To always act and behave in a way that is consistent with the aims and objectives of the policy.
- To regularly review policies to take account of equal opportunities implications.

All members of the school community are responsible for promoting the school's equality policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

Recruitment and employment of staff

- The governing body will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.
- Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.
- The governing body will consider any possible indirect discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the governing body considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so.

- The governing body will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations and will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.
- The governing body will ensure that appropriate training is provided on equal opportunities to all staff likely to be involved in recruitment.
- All staff will assist the governing body and the whole school to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.
- All staff should be aware that they can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the governing body for any act of unlawful discrimination.
- If any member of staff considers that they have experienced unlawful discrimination, they may use the school's grievance procedure to make a complaint. The governing body will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds.
- Staff will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring and reviewing the policy

We review the information about equalities in the policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate. Our review involves pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers.

Disseminating the policy

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives and Accessibility Plan are available:

- on the school website
- as paper copies in the school office
- as part of induction for new staff

Signed: *Juliette Doggett*

Chair of Governors

Signed: *Juliette Doggett*

Governor with responsibility for Inclusion or Equality

Signed: *Jade Bacon*

Headteacher

Date: Autumn 2022