



# St John with St Michael/ CE Primary School

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## Equalities Policy

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### **1. Introduction**

Our school mission statement is at the heart of everything we say, do and aspire to. It states:

*We at St John with St Michael CE Primary School aim to promote the physical, mental, moral and spiritual development of the children in the light of the Christian Gospel.*

We place Christ firmly at the foundation of the entire learning process. Underpinning this is the recognition that each person is unique and should be valued and respected. St John with St Michael CE is a very happy school where all members of the community feel secure and are cared for as they work and learn together. All our children are valued for their achievement of personal potential, whatever their levels of individual attainment are. This gives children the confidence to take risks, make mistakes and take their learning forward.

At St John with St Michael CE we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At St John with St Michael CE we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

This policy outlines the commitment of the governors and staff of the school to eliminating all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation; promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

For our school this means, not simply treating everybody the same but, understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of pupils in school, celebrating and valuing the equal opportunity achievements and strengths of all members of the school community.

This policy applies to the whole school community. It has been drawn up as a result of the outcomes of a transparent process and through consultation.

This policy will be reviewed and updated by the governing body annually.

## 2. The Context of the School

St John with St Michael's CE primary is a Church of England Primary School with close links with both the local parish church and the local Methodist church. The school is situated in the semi rural town of Whitworth.

Whitworth is set in a long narrow valley which presents transportation problems and means that the town lacks a heart or centre. This can lead to a lack of community spirit or sense of belonging.

The school was initially formed as a result of the amalgamation between St John's CE Primary and St Michael's CE School. The present school was formed in 1993 when Leavengreave County Primary amalgamated with St John with St Michael's CE Primary. This means that in many ways the local area still view the school as a County Primary - with less than 5% of children coming from church attending families.

The demographic background of pupils is very mixed with intake from private housing as well as a local council estate.

- 21% of children come from wards with an employment deprivation index score in the E band and 100% with an employment deprivation of D or less.
- All children come from wards with a Health and Deprivation band of D or E.
- The average multiple deprivation index for the school is D.
- 34% of children are currently on the free school meals register.

The local area lacks a multiethnic mix and the schools population reflects this.

We have a relatively stable staff profile and the school is supported by a team of governors, representing parents, the church and the local community. The pupil population is relatively stable but local demographics as well, as local falling roles, creates variety in cohort sizes (5 in Year 3, 13 in Year 2) which impacts on comparison of statistical data year on year. The high levels of both SEN pupils also impacts on this data.

Assessment on entry to Nursery demonstrates that many children start their education with below average skills. This is particularly noticeable in the areas of Speaking and Listening and Personal and Emotional skills and is measured using the Development Matters profile.

The school is distinctive in a number of ways:

- We pride ourselves upon our strong Christian ethos which underpins all that we do.
- We aim to produce a high quality, broad and balanced curriculum which capitalises on the rural setting and other learning opportunities in the local area as well as broadening children's minds beyond their local setting.
- The school places a high level of importance on developing the basic skills for all children whilst aiming to make all learning enjoyable and accessible for all.
- We aim to be fully inclusive, focussing on the needs of each individual pupil and responding to a variety of special needs as well as able learners. This is fuelled by a belief that each child is a unique part of God's creation and is of infinite and equal value.
- The school places a high emphasis on promoting the spiritual well-being of its community through daily active collective worship.

- The school models positive values and attitudes between pupils, staff, parents, governors and the wider community.
- The school has extended provision and meets the core offer. We also offer a broad range of extracurricular activities to enrich the pupils' experience.
- The school has excellent links with other local agencies including other primary schools, high schools, Social Care team, health professionals, sports partnerships and other local clusters.
- We promote multi-cultural awareness through close links with St Peter's CE Primary in Burnley. This is a Church of England Primary school with a high proportion of muslim children.
- We encourage a positive attitude to a healthy lifestyle (National Healthy Schools Status and Lancashire Healthy Schools Status). We promote ecological and environmental awareness and are working towards Eco-schools status.

### **3. Equality in practice**

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. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

At this school, equality is a key principle for treating all people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential - irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs or other beliefs, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

The management team put a great deal of emphasis on setting school policies and a school ethos which will teach children the skills to deal with arguments and issues considering a range of viewpoints. The school systems are also underlined by a philosophy of forgiveness and a fresh start. The school places a high level of importance in developing basic skills in the core subjects for all children, whilst trying to make all learning enjoyable, exciting and accessible for all.

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. The achievement of pupils will be monitored – where appropriate – in light of the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010. We will use the analysis of this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

#### **a. Teaching and learning**

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;

- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures; (this will include visits to and from St Peter's CE Primary in Burnley where pupils have contrasting religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds)
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

#### **b. Admissions and exclusions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

#### **c. Equal Opportunities for Staff**

We are committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation. We aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and establish a governing body that is representative of all sections of the community in order to respect and respond to the diverse needs of our population.

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 those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process.

*Note:*

*Under the Equality Act 2010, in very limited circumstances, an employer can claim that a certain religious denomination or belief is considered to be a genuine occupational requirement of that role. As an aided school we rely on this for some roles in school, particularly those roles that provide spiritual leadership. However this does not apply for all staff in School.*

*In addition, there are also instances in which a job will qualify for a genuine occupational qualification on the grounds of gender.*

#### **d. Employer duties**

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- 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.

We will endeavour to ensure that when we buy services from another organisation to help us provide high quality education, that organisation will comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in any tendering process.

#### **4. Statutory requirements**

The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the “protected characteristics” that qualify for protection from discrimination as: -

- Age (relevant in considering our duties as an employer, but not in relation to pupils)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex; and
- Sexual orientation

The Act introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PESD), sometimes referred to as the general duty. The combined equality duty has 3 main elements and in carrying out our functions we will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation that are prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected

characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The specific duties, which will help us to fulfil our obligations under the general duty require us to:

- Publish information to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

In light of the specific duties the school will publish and review annually appropriate information. We will also prepare and publish equality objectives that will be outcome focused.

## **5. Consultation and involvement**

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, pupils and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, parent-school forum meetings or governors' parent-consultation meeting;
- Input from staff meetings / INSET;
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The role of governors**

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

### **The role of the headteacher (or senior leader responsible for Equalities)**

- The headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of this policy and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and report progress to the governing body.
- The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

#### **The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching**

- All staff will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Plan.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the headteacher.
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

#### **The role of the wider school community including parents, carers and visitors to the school**

- All members of the school community have a responsibility to treat each other and staff with respect, to feel valued, and to speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour.
- We will take steps to ensure all visitors to the school adhere to our commitment to equality.

### **7. Tackling discrimination**

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis.

#### **What is a discriminatory incident?**



Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as:  
'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

### **Types of discriminatory incident**

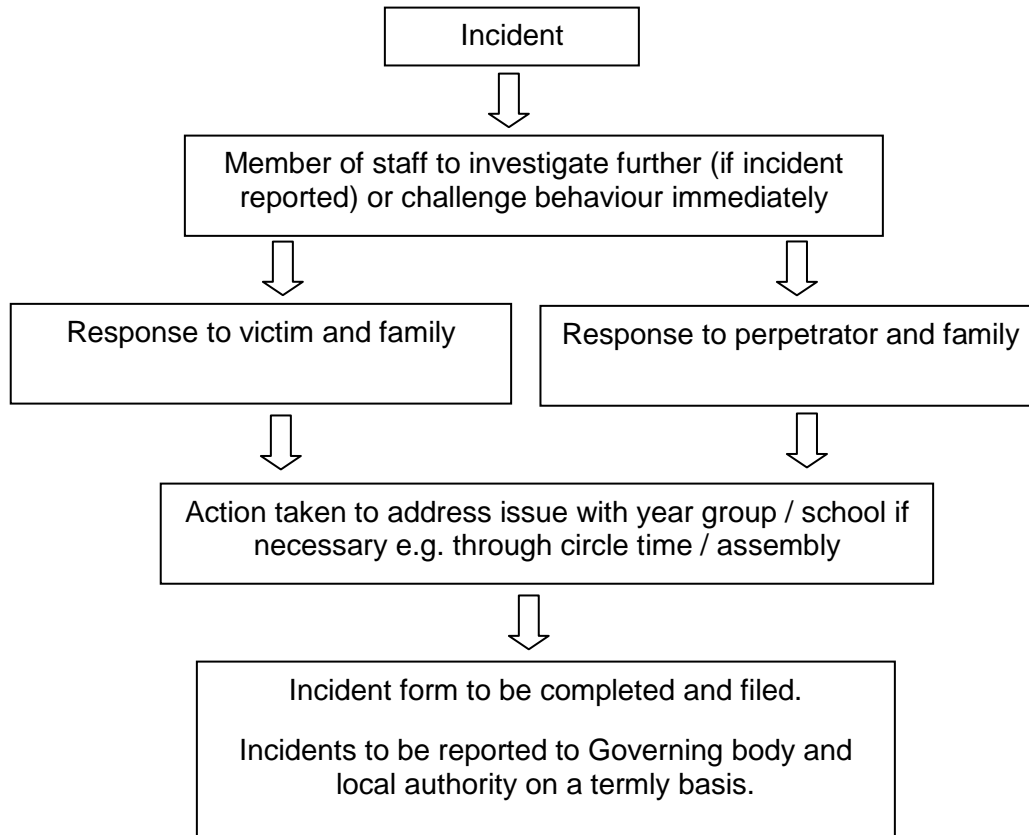
Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

### **Responding to and reporting incidents**

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

The procedure for responding and reporting is outlined overleaf:



## 8. Measuring the impact of the policy

This policy will be evaluated for its impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school.

In line with legislative requirements, we will review our published equalities information annually and evaluate the impact of actions taken against our published objectives. The objectives will be published at least once every four years.