

Rotherhithe Primary School

Equalities Policy



Core Values:

Courageous

Caring

Ambitious

Resilient

Empathetic



Lisa Christiansen – Updated October 2016

Equalities Policy

Introduction

Rotherhithe Primary School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth. The school has a strong heritage of promoting equality and celebrating diversity.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

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.

Key Principles

Our approach to equality is based on the following principles:

- 1. All learners are of equal value.**
- 2. We recognize, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.**
- 3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.**
- 3. We actively seek to raise awareness and reduce discrimination.**
- 4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.**
- 5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff.**
- 6. We have the highest expectations of all our children.**
- 7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.**

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). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils and staff or treat them less favourably because of their age, sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership. This act makes it 'unlawful to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to: admissions, the way it provides education for children, in the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment'.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties

The Public Sector Equality Duty or “general duty”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- ✓ Foster good relations between different groups

Two “specific duties”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

1. Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
2. Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable

This policy is the formal voice of the school’s staff and Governors in pronouncing our continuing commitment to equality by eliminating discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations within the school community. By promoting equality for all, whether children, staff, adult, families, visitor or Governors within Rotherhithe Primary School, we are committed to recognising and tackling barriers that may lead to unequal outcomes for individuals or groups of children/adults, so that everyone can have equal access and so that diversity is celebrated throughout our school. This policy also voices our commitment to prevent and challenge discrimination, harassment and victimisation in school life.

Development of the policy

The original policy was developed by the Inclusion Leader in consultation with pupils on the school council, staff, governors and parents and carers. It is part of our commitment to promoting equality and reducing discrimination.

When developing the policy we took account of the DFE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and now the Ofsted inspection framework 2016, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups.

We note that within this framework OFSTED requires us to promote the British Values; ‘an acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs’. These values support our continuing promotion of cultural equality and diversity.

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, we strive to ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our school development plan, self- evaluation review, school web site and newsletters.

There are also references in the behaviour, admissions, toileting and anti-bullying policies as well as minutes of meetings involving governors, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team and school council.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers. We comply with this regulation through our recruitment process, Disciplinary Procedure, Grievance policy and Competency Framework.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Admissions and Exclusions

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Our **admissions arrangements are fair and transparent**, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or age.

Parents, Staff and Recruitment

- ✓ The Head Teacher 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. All appointment panels have at least one member that is 'safer recruitment' trained.
- ✓ We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are **consulted** and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- ✓ 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 today life of the school and take it to the appropriate working party.

Disabilities

The Equality Act permits '**more favourable**' treatment of disabled people than non-disabled people.

- ✓ We are aware of the **Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils** – designed to **enhance access participation** to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- ✓ We undertake reasonable adjustments to ensure access for adults, children, staff and visitors, including improvements to the physical environment, access to the curriculum, and access to information.

- ✓ We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions meetings.

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

- ✓ The school Policy on Behaviour – Rewards, Sanctions and Exclusions - takes full account of the duties under the Equality Act.
- ✓ 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.

Prejudice and Bullying

- ✓ The school challenges 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, religion or belief, prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes. The school explains why it is unacceptable to children and adults alike.
- ✓ The school has a policy for responding to bullying behaviour, including prejudice-related incidents, which involves responding to both victim and perpetrator.
- ✓ We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents

The curriculum

Although the content of the school curriculum is explicitly excluded from the Equalities Act, the delivery of the curriculum is included. We ensure that:

- ✓ The curriculum prepares children for life in a diverse world and uses the children's own background and experiences where appropriate.
- ✓ The curriculum offers opportunities for children to explore identity and equality at their stage of understanding and development.
- ✓ We actively promote **equality and diversity through the curriculum** and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.
- ✓ The curriculum promotes behaviour and values that celebrate and respect diversity, but also challenges discriminatory language and actions.

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

Promoting Equality in Achievement:

We want all our children to achieve at the highest possible level. To do this, the school will:

- ✓ Have consistently high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, ability/disability, religious belief, faith tradition/culture, sexual orientation, etc.

- ✓ Expect all adults within school to provide positive role models to children in all issues relating to equality of opportunity.
- ✓ Identify the particular strengths and needs of individuals and groups of children and use targeted interventions to promote good learning and progress and to narrow gaps in achievement.
- ✓ Use a range of teaching styles to ensure that effective learning takes place for all children.
- ✓ Encourage children and parents to engage fully in the learning process, making it a strong partnership.

Data Analysis

- ✓ 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 number skills.
- ✓ We collect, analyse and publish data: on the school population by gender and ethnicity; on the percentages of pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability; by ethnicity, gender, Free School Meals.
- ✓ We analyse the standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage and plan appropriate responses to the outcomes of this data.
- ✓ We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.
- ✓ We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving.

Positive Action

- ✓ We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.
- ✓ We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able".
- ✓ We use a range of teaching strategies with the aim of ensuring that we meet the needs of all pupils.
- ✓ We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.
- ✓ We are also implementing an Accessibility Plan designed to: increase the extent to which pupils with disability can participate in the curriculum; improve the physical environment and; improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

What we are doing to foster good relations

Promoting Equality: The school's culture and ethos

There are long traditions of creativity and diversity at Rotherhithe Primary School, which we proudly continue to promote. To continue to do this, the school will:

- ✓ We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- ✓ Expect all staff, partners and visitors to demonstrate mutual respect amongst all members of the school family, maintaining the open and friendly welcome to all.
- ✓ Likewise, children are encouraged to greet each other, staff and visitors with the same friendly and respectful welcome.
- ✓ Displays and resources reflect the diversity of the school family.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for encouraging the children's spiritual, moral and cultural development within school, through visits and visitors to school.
- ✓ Consult the children and consider their views through School Council meetings, surveys, PSCHE sessions, circle-times, Assemblies and discussions with groups/individuals.
- ✓ We teach the children about British Values which extend to everyone; democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.
- ✓ We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through philosophy for children, PSCHE and citizenship 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, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- ✓ We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.

Other ways we address equality issues

- ✓ We maintain records of all training relating to Equality issues.
- ✓ Our monitoring records include evaluations of aspects of Equalities
- ✓ We have a rolling programme for reviewing all our school policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and well-being of our pupils.
- ✓ The implications for equalities of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced.

Publishing Equality Objectives

The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also consider national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we achieve improved outcomes for the different groups. We produce Equality data Analysis which inform our discussions about the Equality Objectives.

Our Equality Objectives for 2016-2019 are set out in Appendix 1.

Monitoring and reviewing objectives

We review and update our equality objectives every three years and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them. We will involve and consult staff, pupils, governors and parents and carers.

We publish an evaluation of the success in meeting these objectives for parents and carers, on the school website.

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 governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and objectives are implemented. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

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 annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's Equalities Work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys)

Head Teacher and Leadership team

The Head Teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Leadership team in collaboration with the Inclusion Leader has responsibility for co-coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. They should have informed knowledge of the Equality Act.

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- ✓ promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- ✓ challenge prejudice and discrimination
- ✓ deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- ✓ plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- ✓ maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils

- ✓ support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- ✓ keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide guidance on Equalities for all staff.

Visitors/parents

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in school newsletters to enable them to do this.

Equal Opportunities for staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. 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 staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community. As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff; receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Monitoring and Reviewing the policy

This policy and all other policies, plans and documents related to the equalities agenda will be regularly monitored and evaluated by the school, to assess the impact on children and adults within the school community. The results of the on-going monitoring and evaluation will directly feed in to the school's development plans.

Disseminating the policy

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives and data is available

- on the school website
- on the staff shared areas
- as paper copies in the school office
- as part of induction for new staff
- a periodic reminder regarding the availability of the Equalities Policy will be added to the school's newsletter

We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.