

Equal Opportunities Policy



Introduction

At Bridgewater our policies are regularly reviewed. This reflects current practice within school and all related government guidance and statutory requirements.

1. Mission statement

Bridgewater Primary School is a wonderfully unique school. At Bridgewater we have a shared vision to create a school where children are equipped, inspired, celebrated, valued and empowered. Our welcoming, positive and caring ethos defines our school and is commented on by children, staff, parents and visitors. We aim to provide every child in our care with the most unique educational experience, developing their skills, knowledge, understanding and talents, and instilling within our children the core values of respect, tolerance, happiness and a lifelong love of learning.

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

2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

As well as the specific actions set below, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day-to-day practice in the following ways.

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:

- Use pupil progress 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 challenges racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;

- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage classroom and staff room discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

Admissions and exclusions

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

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

3. Equal Opportunities for Staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at Bridgewater Primary School.

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. However we are committed to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

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 allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or 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.
- Positive action to support applicants from underrepresented groups.

4. Equality and the law

Public Sector Equality Duty

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably on the basis of a 'protected characteristic.'

The protected characteristics are:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Age
- Marriage & civil partnership

A person's age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment, and in regard to the provision for goods and services. It does not however apply to pupils, and so the school is free to arrange pupils in classes based on their age group with materials appropriate to them.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty, which applies to public bodies, school including both Local Authority maintained and Academies. The school must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the act
- Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relationships across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Having due regard in this context means that when significant decisions are being taken, thought must be given to the equality implications.

4a. Race Equality

The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

4b. Disability

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Strategy.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities.

Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is "clinically well-recognised", although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal duties

The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

4c. Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male pupils and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

4d. Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for pupils and treatment of pupils.

4e. Community cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

5. Consultation and involvement

It is a requirement that the development of this policy 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 surveys or through staff meetings / INSET;
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school (PASS);
- 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 policy 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 the protected characteristics.
- The governing body is committed to ensuring that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of the protected characteristics.
- 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 socioeconomic background, race, gender or disability.
- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform is applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion affects the school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

The role of the Head Teacher

- It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's Equal Opportunities Policy and s/he is supported by the governing body in doing so.
- It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the EO Policy, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- 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 and homophobic incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching

- All staff ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy and objectives.
- All staff strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff 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.

7. Tackling discrimination

Harassment or victimisation on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy 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.

Staff and governors should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage.

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 is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person"

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably, than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a prohibited act") in connection with the Act. E.g. making an allegation of discrimination.

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.
- Online abuse

8. Review of progress and impact

Our Governing Body has agreed the objectives. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality objectives annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on a four-year cycle.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

9. Publishing the objectives and demonstrating compliance

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to prepare and publish objectives, we will.

- Publish our information and objectives on the school website;
- Raise awareness of the objectives through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available.

Date: November 2019

Review: Autumn 2022

Appendix A

ENSURING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

The school will ensure that:

- o Pupil achievement is monitored by race, gender and disability and any trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action to narrow the gap are addressed;
- o All staff are aware of the school's Equal Opportunity's Policy;
- o The talents of disabled pupils are recognised and represented in Gifted and Talented programmes, and representation on the programmes fully reflects the school population in terms of race and gender;
- o There is an inclusive approach to ensuring all pupils are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the School Council by election or co-option); class assemblies; fund raising etc;
- o Disabled children can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits and journeys; lunchtime activities; PE and dance and assemblies;
- o Extended school activities such as breakfast and after-school clubs take into account pupil needs and access issues and pupils attending reflect the diversity of the school population in terms of race, gender, disability and socio-economic status;
- o Staff, pupils, parents and carers will continue to be involved in the future development of the EO Policy through input and feedback from surveys, staff meetings, school council meetings, parents evenings etc.

The school provides:

- o Extra and additional support for pupils who are under-achieving, in order to make progress in their learning and their personal well being, e.g. ensuring that children with visual impairment have accessible texts; that children with hearing impairment have an enhanced acoustic classroom environment;
- o Additional support for parents of under-achieving children (e.g. reporting progress; discussing needs);
- o Additional support for disabled parents/carers and staff to help them to play a full part in the life of the school (e.g. providing a sign interpreter for a deaf parent; ensuring that meetings are held in the most accessible parts of the school to support wheelchair users).

PROMOTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND MEETING NEEDS

The school:

- o Promotes positive images which reflect the diversity of the school and community in terms of race, gender and disability, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials and in classroom/corridor display.
- o Actively seeks to recruit disabled people and people from underrepresented groups to the school and support them in their work and career development, and try to reflect the diversity of the school community in its workforce;
- o Actively seeks to recruit disabled people and people from underrepresented groups to the governing body and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can fully participate and contribute;
- o Provides reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools and communities;
- o Provides extended services, with opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups;
- o Supports disabled pupils in the period of transition between primary and secondary school to ease the stress of moving and increase familiarity with new surroundings;
- o Helps children and young people to understand others and value diversity;
- o Promotes shared values, awareness of human rights and how to apply and defend them;
- o Develops skills of participation and responsible action – for example through the new ‘Identity and Diversity: living together in the UK’ strand of citizenship education.

ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The school:

- o Develops and adapt its procedures on anti-bullying to include equality perspectives;
- o Supports staff to challenge and address any bullying and harassment that is based on a person’s race, gender or ethnicity;
- o Keeps a record and report how these incidents are dealt with to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis;
- o Reviews its approach to race, gender and disability bullying and harassment whenever it reviews its policy on behaviour.

MONITORING IMPACT

- o The school collects and analyses evidence and data on children's achievement, attendance and participation by race, gender and disability, and uses this to inform strategies to raise achievement;
- o The governing body reports annually to parents on the effectiveness and success of its EO Policy and will place on our website.