

EQUALITY POLICY

Last reviewed: September 2015

Date for next review: September 2018



Ashton Hayes Primary School

Church Road, Ashton Hayes, Chester, Cheshire CH3 8AB



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Section 1

Introduction

It is recommended that schools develop a document that sets out how they comply with equality legislation. Although, there is no longer a legal obligation to produce a “Scheme”, schools are still required to publish information showing how they are meeting the Equality duty and publish their equality objectives. In this way, they are encouraged to *make transparent* their actions and plans in relation to equality.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide a practical tool which will support schools in amalgamating their individual policies and schemes relating to equality into a single coherent and meaningful Equality Policy and set of objectives which can be published to fulfil the Equality Act specific duties.

The Equality Policy could be cross-referenced within the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and specific actions may also be included in a range of other documents.

2.1 Background and legislative drivers

Over recent years, schools have (in line with other institutions and public bodies) been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their communities, and recognising their role in promoting an understanding of equality for different groups of people. Much of this work is in response to legislation that places an increased duty on schools and other settings, but it also sits within the specific context of a school’s role in providing learning and opportunities for all - it is about fairness, rights and justice.

Equality legislation exists to protect people but also to try and advance equality. In Gateshead we know that some groups do less well than their peers in terms of progress, achievement and later life chances. This picture is reflected nationally. The recognition of diversity and promotion of inclusive and equality practices will help to overcome this disparity.

The new Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to protected characteristics:

- Age (for staff only)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools and Academies.

This combined **Equality Duty** came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to **have due regard to the need to:**

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as outlined above – for instance,

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action which may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep it under review on a continuing basis.
- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the duty has to be carried out rigorously and must lead to positive change

Having due regard to the need to **advance equality of opportunity** involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristic
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics: and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

2.2 Specific Duties

The Act also introduced specific duties, which are designed to help public authorities to meet their obligations under the Public sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED is

set out on the face of the Act, while the specific duties are set out in secondary legislation.

The Specific Duties require schools to:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish equality objectives every four years (one or more as is proportionate to the organisation)

All information must be published in a way that is accessible to the public.

What information to publish or what or how many objectives to set has not been prescribed and will be proportionate to the size of the school; the extent to which its functions affect equality; and the evidence that such objectives are needed. A starting point will be to look at what information you are already publishing and consider whether this gives an accurate picture of progress on equality issues affecting your staff and pupils. Looking at your data and knowing your school community will help you set specific and measurable objectives.

Schools will have to publish their equality information and objectives by 6 April 2012, and then will need to update the information at least annually and to publish objectives at least once every four years¹.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Government Equalities Office have produced a number of guides to help public bodies including schools to understand their duties in relation to the Act and they can be downloaded from their websites.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-education-providers-schools/>

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance/specific-duties>

¹ Equality data about employees will not need to be published where a public authority has fewer than 150 employees, which means that for the great majority of schools, only pupil-related data will need to be published

Section 2

Ashton Hayes Primary School

September 2015

Equality Policy

Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for **Ashton Hayes Primary School** brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for **Race, Gender and Disability**. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects, which have the potential to discriminate against any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, governors, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our policies and practices have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations between groups.

It explains how we listen to and involve pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

Our school within the wider context

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, disability and social deprivation.

We currently have 125 pupils

55 Girls 70 Boys

3% of our pupils have free school meals

8% of our pupils have Special Educational Needs

>1% of our pupils have an ethnic minority background

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes².

Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared Humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

Our vision statement about Equality

Ashton Hayes Primary School seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to

² <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

participation, access and learning. We are committed to creating inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

Our duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.³

They are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- The engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- Preparation for entry to the school
- School policies
- Breaks and lunchtimes
- The provision of school meals
- Interaction with peers
- Opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- Exam arrangements
- Behaviour management approach and sanctions
- Exclusion procedures
- School clubs, activities and school trips
- The school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- Preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
- Learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- Classroom organisation
- Timetabling
- Grouping of pupils
- Homework
- Access to school facilities
- Activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school or school visits

³ See *Appendix A* for further information about legislation

⁴ <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/Childrens-rights/>

- School sports
- Employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Headteacher will:

- Ensure that governors, staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- Oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- Ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- Develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- Monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- Ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our governing body will:

- Designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- Ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- Support the headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- Engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- Evaluate and review the policy/objectives every 4 years

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- Have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing the Equality Policy
- Provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy
- With the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- Assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SSDP

Our pupils/students will:

- Be involved in the development of the Equality Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- Be expected to act in accordance with the policy
- Be encouraged to actively support the policy

Our parents/carers will:

- Have access to the policy through a range of different formats appropriate to their requirements
- Be encouraged to actively support the policy

- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy
- Be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child

Our school staff will:

- Be involved in the development of the Equality Policy
- Be fully aware of the policy and how it relates to them
- Understand that this is a whole school issue and support the policy
- Identify any queries or training requirements

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Equality Policy
- Be encouraged to support the policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy

How we developed our Policy - Participation and Involvement

The development of this policy has involved the whole of our school community. We've involved and listened to what they have to say, including people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities, taking account of all the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010

- Our pupils/students
Through our PSHE curriculum, assemblies, school council.
Specific curriculum events- eg show racism the red card, the blind society, Paralympics assembly/visitor
- Our staff
Staff meetings, discussions, inclusion award
- Our school governors
Termly and committee meetings
- Parents/carers
·Website and newsletters

How we developed our Policy - Using information

We have used data and other information about our school, and Equality analysis as a measure to determine the effects of a policy, practice or project on different groups. This approach helps us to analyse whether what we are planning potentially has a differential impact on one or more particular group (either positively or negatively). They help us to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that the positive duties are promoted. They help to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our pupils/students and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

The Local Authority provides us with a range of services which support the equality agenda and helps us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action. Eg Education Welfare Service, Health partners, Police, Barnardos, Show Racism the Red Card.

We have established good links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

Commissioned services (buying in services)

Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We work closely with the local authority on procurement – buying in services - to ensure that equality issues are given full regard. When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation, which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job

offer has been made⁵ or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

There are some specific exceptions to the religion or belief provisions of the Equality Act for employment by schools designated as having a religious character.

See Department of Education website for further guidance on this:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/policiesandprocedures/equalityanddiversity/a0064570/the-equality-act-2010>

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment. We have disabled access- disabled parking bay, disabled toilet and signing in table. We offer a hearing loop. We are fully aware of the dietary requirements of ethnic groups and make equality provision for all of our pupils.

Our staff team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community. We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development.

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions

⁵ Unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties.

and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

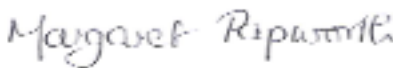
Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy, which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

Confirmation the *Equality Policy* in respect of Ashton Hayes Primary School has been discussed and adopted by the Governing Body

Signed by:

Chair of Governors:  Date: September 2015

Headteacher:  Date: September 2015

To be reviewed: September 2018

Appendix A Key legislation

Equality Act 2010

Equality Act 2010

Harmonises and streamlines existing equality legislation into one Single Act.

The Act protects pupils from discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics':

- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

This relates to:

- prospective pupils
- pupils at the school
- in some limited circumstances, former pupils

The Act also contains positive action provisions which enable schools to take proportionate action to address disadvantage faced by particular pupils. Such action could include targeted provision, resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged pupil group.

The Public Sector Equality Duty commenced in April 2011.

There are exceptions to enable single-sex schools to admit only pupils of one sex and for schools with a religious character to enable them to have admissions criteria which give preference to members of their own religion.

For more information:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/>

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/inclusionandlearnersupport/inclusion/equalityanddiversity/a0064570/the-equality-act-2010>

Accessibility planning

Accessibility planning is a statutory duty and can be incorporated into this policy. Schools must plan for:

- Increasing access for disabled children and young people to the school curriculum
- Improving access to the physical environment of schools, and
- Improving the delivery of written information to disabled children and young people

The first plans were required to be in place by April 2003. Therefore as schools come to review their accessibility plans they should consider building these actions into their Equality policy.

Community Cohesion – Education and Inspection Act 2006

General duty

- To promote community cohesion

Specific duties

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – helping children to learn to understand others, to value diversity while also promoting shared values
- Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level
- Engagement and extended services – to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations with different schools and communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Appendix B Process chart for the development and review of Equality Policy and action plan

