



## **Equality Policy**

Approved by Full Governors 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010

## **Introduction**

The Equality Policy sets out Bushfield School's approach to promoting equality and diversity. The Policy responds to the statutory duties relating to disability, gender and race equality which require the publication of disability, gender equality schemes and a race equality policy.

This Policy sets out:

- background information about the area and the school;
- the school's overall approach to promoting equality, recognising and celebrating diversity and tackling discrimination;
- specific sections on race equality, disability equality, and gender equality; and
- action plans incorporating overall equality targets across the three areas, including targets relating specifically to each of the three areas.

## **The Legislation**

A wide range of equality legislation is in place which places duties on public bodies, including schools, to promote equality and tackle discrimination. Race equality duties result from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Schools are required to produce Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. This results from specific duties schools must follow outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 respectively and the accompanying regulations.

There is a range of other equality legislation which places duties upon the schools to which they must adhere but there is, as yet, no specific requirement to publish schemes or policies in these areas.

Any requirements resulting from the duty to promote community cohesion as described in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 will also be incorporated into the plan.

The Equality policy sets out how the school intends to meet its statutory duties and follow best practice. It is effectively a strategy and action plan which summarises the school's approach to equality across the whole school community.

## **Bushfield School Context 2010**

Bushfield School is a successful and high attaining school which has demonstrated steadily rising standards for a number of years. It operates in a culture where expectations are high, where learning is exciting and children's individuality is valued.

Bushfield School is within Wolverton which is listed 37/111 on the MK index of multiple deprivation with 11% of houses deemed overcrowded.

- 22% Free School Meals
- 27% of children and two members of staff speak English as an additional language
- 35% indicate they are from a minority ethnic background.
- 24% of children are on our SEN register, none of whom are registered disabled
- We have one looked after child, no children with disabilities, refugees, travellers or asylum seekers

## **Equality – aims and values**

The purpose of our Equality Policy is about providing equality and excellence for all in pursuit of the schools' overall vision and values, in order to promote the highest possible standards. The principles of this policy apply to all members of the school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

## **Our approach to promoting equality**

The overall objective of the school's Equality Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality objectives to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

We are committed to equality principles, and work consistently to ensure that all pupils and staff are encouraged to achieve their full potential; a culture of respect for others is engendered and differences between people are recognised and celebrated. The school endeavours to create a community where children are well prepared for life in a diverse, pluralist society.

The school aims to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents or carers or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, social class, where the person lives or spent convictions.

One of the aims of this policy is to provide equal opportunities for development in all children, giving consideration gender, race and ability:

### **Gender:**

- the same expectations must be placed on children of similar ability, regardless of gender.
- praise must be distributed equally for all tasks and achievements
- opportunity for practical work should be equally distributed between boys and girls
- teachers should answer questions from all and choose a proportionate number of boys and girls to answer questions
- the use of names in examples should be balanced, use mixed gender groups

### **Race:**

- the teacher should ensure that names from different ethnic groups are used in examples and resource materials
- the teacher should ensure that it is the child's skills that are being assessed and not language skills, although this should not conflict with statutory requirements for the use of language in a particular subject
- the same expectations must be placed on children of similar ability regardless of race
- teachers should answer questions from all and ask children from all ethnic groups to answer questions
- examples from other cultures should be included in the scheme of work and given equal status

(see also Detailed Race Equality Policy)

## **Ability**

- every child should experience a broad and balanced curriculum, regardless of ability
- activities must be set at an appropriate level for each child
- a range of resources needs to be available in the classroom for children to use
- a range of methods of recording should be used to enable children with special needs to record their work
- the use of group work and classroom assistants may be necessary for children to achieve success with some activities

(see also Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan)

## **Leadership, Management and Governance**

The governing body is committed to meeting its duties under equality legislation and aims to follow the good practice set out in the statutory codes of practice and guidance which support the legislation. While the governing body has overall responsibility to ensure that equality is promoted throughout the organisation, it is the responsibility of all staff, including those helping on a voluntary basis, to promote equality.

The governing body recognises that all staff need to be aware of, and understand, their responsibilities regarding equality legislation and guidance. The governing body recognises that discrimination may occur on more than one ground at the same time and that equality of opportunity cannot be achieved by always treating all people alike. The governing body acknowledges that it has a key leadership role in promoting equality and community cohesion and recognises the need to work with school staff and partner organisations, including the local authority.

## **Policy planning, implementation and review**

The governing body endeavours to ensure that all relevant policies reflect the school's commitment to the principles of equality and that this commitment is reflected clearly in all its work.

All staff are encouraged to contribute to the formulation, development and review of policy documents. The school ensures the involvement of governors and, where appropriate, takes steps to enable the contribution of pupils and their parents/carers and other relevant parties. All policies, functions and strategies are regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting equality.

As further equality requirements come into force policies, functions and strategies will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in fulfilling the requirements of new legislation. Outcomes of monitoring and assessment will be reported to the governing body and other key partners.

## **Staffing: Recruitment and staff development**

The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and in line with statutory duties and local authority guidance. The school via the LA routinely monitors all recruitment activity and staff in post by the statutory equality indicators of gender, ethnic background and disability and fulfils its responsibility to provide the data to the local authority annually. Steps are taken to ensure that everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this policy.

The school ensures that staff and governors are able to access the appropriate levels of support and training necessary to ensure that they are aware of contemporary equality practices and procedures. Staff receive appropriate training to enable them to deal effectively with bullying and discriminatory incidents.

### **Personal development and pastoral care**

The pastoral support system takes account of disability, gender, religious and ethnic differences, and the experiences and particular needs of people living in a diverse society. The school provides appropriate support for EAL pupils and celebrates their home and community languages.

Support is given to victims and perpetrators of harassment and unacceptable behaviour. External agencies are involved, where appropriate. Monitoring data, including that relating to disability, ethnicity, gender and SEN is used to monitor the attainment, progress and the well-being of pupils, and, where appropriate, targets are set to address any identified inconsistencies.

### **Learning and Teaching**

All pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum in accordance with DCSF guidelines. We ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel safe, included and their contributions are valued. Teaching styles include collaborative learning so that pupils appreciate the value of working together.

All pupils are encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem solving tasks. Pupil grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under review. We encourage pupils to become independent and to take appropriate responsibility for their own learning.

Staff challenge stereotypes and foster pupils' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities. Resources and displays reflect the experience and backgrounds of the range of people living in the UK. They celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes in all curriculum areas. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school.

### **School Curriculum**

Curriculum planning takes account of the needs of all pupils and considers them in relation to the various equality strands. The school monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds. The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of, boys and girls; pupils who are disabled; pupils learning English as an additional language; pupils from minority groups; pupils who are gifted and talented; pupils with special educational needs; pupils who are looked after by the local authority and pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. The curriculum encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes. Extra-curricular activities and special events cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils. The school gives due regard to parental preferences and concerns.

## **Admissions attendance, behaviour, discipline and exclusion**

The admissions process is monitored by the LA using a range of equality indicators to ensure that it is administered fairly and equitably to all pupils. Comprehensive information about pupils, including ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs and diet is included in the admission form.

Our behaviour policy is fair and applied to all. However, it is recognised that social/cultural background and other personal factors may affect behaviour. The school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

Exclusions and attendance are monitored and effective action is taken in order to reduce gaps between different groups of pupils. Absence is monitored and followed up by senior staff and our Learning Mentors and Educational Welfare Officer. Those involved in this work are aware of and sensitive to community issues.

Pupils, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment.

They know that any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any group is always unacceptable. Appropriate provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance for pupils and staff.

## **Attainment, progress and assessment**

Staff have high expectations of all pupils and they continually challenge them to reach higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement. The monitoring and analysing of pupil performance by disability, special educational needs, gender, ethnicity and other social/cultural indicators enables the identification of groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. The school ensures that action is taken to counteract this.

Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupil progress. The school ensures, where possible, that assessment is free of gender, racial, cultural and social bias. Self-assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress giving all pupils full opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do and, therefore, to benefit from the process.

## **Partnership with parents and the community**

The school endeavours to provide information material for parents in accessible, user-friendly language and formats and the school will endeavour to provide information in community languages, and alternative formats when requested.

Progress reports to parents are provided in a range of formats when requested, in order to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue. All parents are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the school. Information and meetings for parents are made accessible for all. When appropriate, the school will take steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under-represented groups of parents and sections of the community.

The school's premises and facilities are available for use by all groups within the community, in line with the Lettings Policy. The school endeavours to address accessibility difficulties (via the DDA group).

## **Future Priorities**

We acknowledge that there is always more that can be done to promote equality. We will use the Equality Policy to help move its work forward through robust School self evaluation that informs our priorities. The school recognises that it has finite resources and will be unable to achieve all the desired changes at once. The duties under the various acts are proportionate in that the weight given to equality should be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. In practice, this means that the school will need to continue to give greatest consideration and resources to those areas it assesses as having the greatest need. Improving pupil achievement where differential has been found to exist and promoting an inclusive environment are areas where particular attention, therefore, might be focused.

## ***Other Policies linked to this document are:***

- *Racial Equality Policy*
- *Disability Equality Scheme 2010 - 2012*
- *Disability Access Plan*
- *SEN Policy*
- *VA&T Policy*

Date Approved: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

