

## Changes to this policy March 2016

Notable changes to guidance are the introduction of direct and indirect discrimination, and the inclusion of the concept of association (being associated with someone who has a protected characteristic). Age, and Marriage and Civil Partnership have also been added to the list of protected characteristics.

Please see below for reference to the particular paragraphs where changes have been made.

1.1 This Equality Policy for St John's Meads CE 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 **directly or indirectly** discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community.

### 9. Our Staff

9.1 We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on **association with or the perception of** 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

### 11 Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

11.1 This policy **reviewed in March 2016 and January 2018**. It will be actively promoted and disseminated.

### Appendix A Equality Act 2010

Harmonises and streamlines existing equality legislation into one Single Act.

The Act protects pupils from discrimination (direct and indirect) and harassment **based on the perception of having, or being associated with someone who has** 'protected characteristics':

- Disability.
- **Age**
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

## 1. Why we have developed this Equality Policy

1.1 This Equality Policy for St John's Meads CE 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 directly or indirectly discriminate against or to devalue 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.

- Policies include Spiritual Moral Social Cultural; Community Cohesion; PSHEe; Pupil discipline and Anti Bullying; Accessibility plan: SEND.

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

1.3 The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies 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 aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

## 2. Our school within the wider context

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

2.2 St John's Meads Primary School works with and employs a wide age range. Only a small percentage of the ethnicity of the school is culturally diverse. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is wide-ranging but average overall. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils are above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. A significant number of pupils enter or leave the school at times other than the normal point of entry. Most later entrants join the school between Years 3 to 6.

## 3. 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, sexual orientation, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

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3.1 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 outcomes<sup>1</sup>.

3.2 Issues relating to adults within the school community can be embraced under these themes and reflected in the action plan.

#### **4. Our approach**

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

#### **4.2 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
- 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. We link with schools and charities in the local area to support children, teachers and those in need where appropriate. We have global links to a Chilwa School in Malawi (see Community Cohesion policy and action plan)

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.

4.3 St John's Meads CE Primary School seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

4.4 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 participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

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needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

4.5 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.

### **5. Our duties**

5.1 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<sup>2</sup>. We have due regard to the need to ensure that persons with a protected characteristic are not disproportionately, negatively impacted as a result of our decision or policy making. We positively foster good relations between different groups of pupils and the wider school community.

5.2 We will consider whether to provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled children's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment, particularly where the child is not provided for under an SEN statement, or where the statement does not provide the auxiliary aid or service.

5.3 We are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>3</sup>.

**5.4 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.**

**5.5 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

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<sup>2</sup> See *Appendix A* for further information about legislation

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/Childrens-rights/>

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- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school or Theatre in Education (TIE).
- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare

### **6. The roles and responsibilities within our school community**

#### **6.1 Our Headteacher will:**

- ensure that 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 Board 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

#### **6.2 Our governing board 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 annually and the objectives every 4 years.

#### **6.3 Our Senior Leadership Team will:**

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this 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 SIP.

#### **6.4 Our pupils/students will:**

- be involved in the development of the 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.

## 6.5 Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media 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.

## 6.6 Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements.

## 6.7 Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

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

## 7. How we developed our Policy - Participation and Involvement

7.1 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 discussion with school council  
As part of the PSHEe curriculum  
Pupil Questionnaires
- **Our staff**  
Whole school staff meetings  
Senior management meetings  
Well Being Project
- **Our school governors**  
PSHEe working party involving representation from the governing body
- **Parents/carers**  
Parent forum  
Parent/carers questionnaires

- **Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups**  
Minority groups have representation on our parent forum and this enables viewpoints and opinions to be raised.  
Informal coffee mornings with the Acting/ Executive Headteacher give opportunities for the above groups to raise issues and concerns.  
Parent/ carer questionnaires
- **Our partners in the community**  
Parent Information Contact known to parents and assesses what provision families needs as they arrive at the school. Needs addressed through more dyslexia-friendly newsletters and 'jargon busting' clear, concise information being given

### 7.2 Ongoing

7.3 We use a common sense measure of determining whether a policy, practice or project will impact on all groups equally or whether it potentially may have a differential impact on one or more particular group (either positively or negatively). It helps us to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that positive duties are promoted equally. It is a way 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.

7.4 In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this.

7.5 OfSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, disability and gender.

7.6 We also complete a Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) which means we are constantly monitoring the make-up and needs of our staff and pupils/students – and assessing how well we are meeting those needs.

7.7 We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through pupil/learner voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously. These are achieved through pupil questionnaire comments and evaluations.

### 7.8 How we developed our Policy - Using information

7.9 We have used data and other information about our school, and Equality Impact assessments (EQIAs) as a common sense measure to determine the effects of a policy, practice or project on different groups. EQIAs help 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.

7.10 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. Members of the SMT regular attend meetings to keep informed and link with local agencies in the area.

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7.11 In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this.

7.12 OfSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, faith, disability and gender.

7.13 We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through pupil/learner voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously.

7.14 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.

7.15 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.

7.16 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. We link with schools and charities in the local area to support children, teachers and those in need where appropriate. We have a global link to Chilwa 2 School in Malawi (see Community Cohesion policy and action plan)

### **8. Commissioned services (buying in services)**

8.1 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.

### **10. Our Staff**

9.1 We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on association with or the perception of 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.

9.2 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

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enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made<sup>4</sup> or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

9.3 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.

9.4 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.

9.5 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.

### **11. Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying**

10.1 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 will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

10.2 We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

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

10.4 We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will 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 and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

- We are opposed to all forms of racial prejudice, harassment and discrimination.
- Racist language and behaviour is not accepted and will be challenged.
- All incidents are dealt with in line with the LEA guidelines.
- Whilst we recognise the issues are complex and sometimes difficult to grapple with, we cannot ignore them, the distress of the victim will be taken seriously and we will deal with racism promptly, consistently and openly.

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

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- We will foster an open and supportive climate that will help pupils and adults express issues of racial concern. Preventing and responding to racist incidents is the responsibility of all members of the school community.
- Increasing our awareness and understanding of racist incidents will develop our confidence and ability to recognise, report and respond to racist incidents and ensure the following procedures are carried out for all incidents:
  1. Follow-up and investigate thoroughly.
  2. Record and report incident using own school recording procedures (e.g. bullying/incident logbook) and complete the East Sussex's *'Racist Incident Report Form'* and send to the *Racist Incident Caseworker*
  3. Initially assure victim you intend to support them and keep them safe
  4. Inform parents/carers of the pupils involved in the reported incident.
  5. Ensure the senior management team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it.

### 11 Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

11.1 This policy reviewed in March 2016 and January 2018. It will be actively promoted and disseminated. This policy will be reviewed in January 2019 by the Governing Board.

11.2 The policy will be promoted and disseminated via newsletters, Parentmail, school website and the School Council.

11.3 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.

11.4 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.

### 12 Equality Objectives

12.1 Using the views of pupils, parents, staff and community and analysis of the information as outlined above we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These will be reviewed and published every 4 years. The Equality Objectives are available from the school office

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### Action Plan

Action Plan 2018-2019 to be reviewed and completed by January 2019)  
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