

**St Michael's CE Primary School  
Sydenham**



## **Equality Policy**

Agreed by the Governing Body on: *May 2017*

Signed (Chair): *Beryl Fielder*

Review Date: *Summer 2020*

# Equal Opportunities Policy

## Introduction

At St Michael's our school life is founded on our Christian ethos in which we believe that every person is uniquely and lovingly created by God and is made in the image and likeness of God. We therefore expect that everyone, the staff, children and the wider community, will be treated and treat others with respect.

We welcome our general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations, and our specific duties to publish information every year about our schools' population; to explain how we have due regard for equality; and to publish equality objectives which show how we plan to tackle particular inequalities, and reduce or remove them.

We welcome the emphasis in the Ofsted inspection framework on the importance of narrowing gaps in achievement, which affect, amongst others:

- Pupils from certain cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Pupils who belong to low-income households and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
- Pupils who are disabled.
- Pupils who have special educational needs.
- Boys in certain subjects, and girls in certain subjects.

## Aims and objectives

Our school is committed to equality both as an employer and a service-provider:

- We make every effort to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
- We make every effort to ensure that our school is a safe, secure and stimulating place for everyone.
- We recognise that people have different needs, and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same.
- We recognise that for some pupils extra support is needed to help them to achieve and be successful.
- We make every effort to ensure that a diverse group of people (adults and children) are consulted and have a voice to express their opinion.
- We make every effort to ensure that no-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age; any disability they may have; their ethnicity, colour or national origin; their gender; their gender identity or reassignment; their marital or civil partnership status; being pregnant or having recently had a baby; their religion or beliefs; their sexual identity and orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to publish information that demonstrates that we have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

## **Racial equality and cultural diversity**

In our school we:

- Promote equality of opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture or religion and promote good relations between people of different racial, cultural and religious groups and communities;
- Will strive to eliminate all forms of racism which seek to disadvantage persons on the grounds of colour, culture or ethnic origin.
- Will not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour such as name calling, stereotyping of all ethnic groups, insulting remarks, offensive graffiti, undue pressure on individuals and bullying. It will not use literature that is racially biased and dependent on stereotypes, nor will it allow the distribution of racist literature or pamphlets or permit the wearing of racially offensive symbols.
- Will take immediate and positive action against any racist offences whoever may be the perpetrator according to the school policies and procedures. Those responsible will be made aware of the school's opposition to racism and reasons will be given.
- Will endeavour to develop our curriculum to include content that is relevant to the ethnicity and culture of our families and supports all pupils to understand, respect and value difference and diversity.

## **Disability equality**

- The Equality Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' For example, it will include people who have hearing or sight impairments, a significant mobility difficulty; and mental health conditions or learning difficulties as well as long-term health conditions such as epilepsy or diabetes. To ensure we are including all children who have additional needs we would include children who have had an illness lasting longer than 12 months, which is limiting their ability to access the curriculum.
- We are committed to address individual support as required to children at St Michael's with disabilities. All reasonable steps are taken to remove barriers to access and to ensure that these children are not disadvantaged compared with non-disabled children.
- The school is committed to monitor the school for accessibility for all and where necessary make modifications as are reasonably possible which would allow disabled children and adults full access to the school premises and to all areas of learning.
- Teaching staff modify teaching and learning and review the curriculum regularly to ensure all pupils have equal access to learning. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, ensure access, modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities if children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

- To ensure there is equal access to out of school activities, including educational visits.
- The school's aim is to ensure the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities and to provide signing or translation when needed.

## **Gender equality**

The Equality Act (2006) amended the requirements of the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). It added to the duty to eliminate sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, the duty to promote gender equality. However we recognise that there is still widespread discrimination and persistent gender inequality. Both sexes suffer from the stereotyping of their roles and needs and such stereotyping has to be understood, challenged and overcome.

In accordance with our school's mission statement and values, we welcome the statutory Gender Equality Duty. In compliance with the General Duty, St Michael's CE School has due regard for the need to, and works to:

- Eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination
- Eliminate sexual harassment
- Promote gender equality

By unlawful sexual discrimination, we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could be done directly but that it could also occur indirectly. Indirect discrimination means that a particular policy or practice may impact more negatively on one gender than on the other, or may favour one gender to the disadvantage of the other.

By sexual harassment we refer to behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. We see such behaviour as also damaging to the perpetrator.

We understand 'sex' to refer to the biological differences between males and females and 'gender' to refer to the wider social roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognize and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.

We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage.

We will take steps to counteract the effects of any past discrimination in staff recruitment. Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender we will seek specialist advice.

We are working to develop our understanding of the major gender equality issues in our school's functions and services. In order to do this we:

- Collect and analyse school data and other gender equality relevant information, including data about our local area

- Review all our school policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality
- Ensure governors, staff, pupils, parents and others in our school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality
- Assess and address the causes of any gender pay gap

National statistics indicate that girls tend to outperform boys academically in school, in particular in literacy. Therefore, at St Michael's, we have put in place a number of measures to raise the achievement of the boys. These may include:

- ensuring that early literacy skills are promoted in all activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- ensuring that the starting points for writing activities capture the interests and imagination of boys and girls alike;
- removing gender bias from our resources and ensuring, for example, that fiction books capture boys' interest;
- employing a variety of activities, and include a kinaesthetic element;
- making sure that our school environment promotes positive male role models, in relation to learning and achievement;
- minimising male stereotyping;
- providing challenge, competition and short-term goals;
- valuing and celebrating academic achievement in ways which will motivate boys.

## **Religion and Belief**

As a church school we aim to provide a quality education based on Christian values preparing children to become good citizens of the world in which we live. At St Michael's we aim to teach our children the Christian values such as respect, love, hope, trust and compassion for one another. We live in a multicultural and multifaith society, so it is important that we teach our children about other faiths. The school has drawn up a balanced Religious Studies Scheme of Work, which teaches about the 5 major religions, alongside Christianity. We want to ensure that our children have an understanding of different faiths and are capable of making balanced judgements in the future. We also want them to see that similar values underpin different religions.

## **Sexual orientation and gender identity**

Research suggests that children with gender identity problems may present with separation anxiety, depression and emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as may experience considerable isolation owing to difficulties with their social interaction with their peers.

Our school recognises the need to protect students from unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity disorder as required by the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.

Therefore the school will not tolerate abusive comments which relate to people's sexual orientation or their gender. The school will deal with such incidents effectively, promptly and according to our behaviour and anti-bullying policy.

## **Anti-bullying and discrimination**

Bullying occurs when someone knowingly, and often repeatedly, commits an unwelcome act (either verbal or physical) towards an individual or group.

Harassment is a form of bullying where the intention of the unwelcome act is to cause insult or injury for specific reasons connected to the recipient's identity.

Please see the [anti-bullying policy](#) for detail regarding the procedures in place to deal with bullying and harassment.

## **The role of the class teacher**

Class teachers recognise the possibility of their own prejudices, but do their best to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. We do not knowingly discriminate against any child.

When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups, or of boys and girls. All staff ensure that the language they use does not reinforce stereotypes or prejudice.

We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics include examples of the significant contributions women have made in this country's history. In geography, the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia, and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.

All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any incidents in the school log book and draw them to the immediate attention of the headteacher.

## **The role of the Headteacher**

- To ensure that the school's policy on Equal Opportunities is implemented effectively;
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on Equal Opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations;
- To ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against;
- To promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum for pupils, and in providing opportunities for professional development for staff;
- To promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in school assemblies, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the school;
- To manage all incidents of unfair treatment, and any racist incidents, with due seriousness, in line with this policy and report it to governors.

## **The role of governors**

In this policy statement, the governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

The governing body collects, analyses and evaluates a range of school data. We check that all pupils are making the best possible progress and that no group of pupils is underachieving. To do this we monitor:

- admissions;
- attainment;
- exclusions;
- rewards and sanctions;
- parents' and pupils' questionnaires.

The governing body seeks to ensure that people from the 'protected groups' as defined by The Equality Act 2010 (see section 1.2 above) are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or minority group a child may come from.

The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their gender, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion has a bearing on school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively, and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

## **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The governors will therefore:

- monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it with the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process, so that no one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- require the headteacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents/carers, staff or pupils regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the school's Behaviour Policy, and the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years or sooner if it is considered necessary.