

Equality Diversity Policy

Christ the King RC Primary School



Background

This policy is written in light of the 2010 Equality Act. However, as Christ the King RC Primary School is a Voluntary Aided school with a registered, religious character there are some general exceptions to the Act which are followed by our school. These are identified in Appendix 2.

Aims and Values

Christ the King RC Primary School is a welcoming school where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils to maximise their potential regardless of age, sex, race, colour, religion or disability. We endeavour to promote positive relationships with parents, governors and members of the wider community.

At Christ the King RC Primary School we aim to promote equality and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

We aim to:

- Provide a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and achieve;
- Provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- Prepare children for life in a diverse society in which children are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
- Include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- Provide positive non-stereotyping information about different groups of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age;
- Plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity;
- Actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage;
- Make inclusion a thread which runs through all our activities.

To achieve these aims we will:

- Involve stakeholders in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures;
- Publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community;
- Collect and analyse data to ensure all groups are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage;
- Use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for all, respond to pupils' diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning;
- Ensure that the wider school curriculum makes explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity;
- Have high expectations of behaviour which demonstrates respect to others.

Leadership, Management and Governance

Christ the King RC Primary School is committed to:

- Being proactive in promoting good relationships and equality of opportunity across all aspects of school life and the wider community;
- Encouraging, supporting and enabling all pupils and staff to reach their potential and make a positive contribution;
- Working in partnership with families, the local authority (LA) and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and tackle discrimination ensuring that our Equality and Diversity Policy is followed.

Responsibilities

Governing Body

- Ensure that the school complies with equality legislation;
- Meet requirements to publish equality schemes;
- Ensure that the school's policy and its procedures and strategies are carried out and monitored with appropriate impact assessments informing future plans;
- Scrutinise the recording and reporting procedures at least annually;
- Follow the LA's admissions policy, which is fair and equitable in its treatment of all groups;
- Monitor attendance and take appropriate action where necessary;
- Have equal opportunities in staff recruitment and professional development and membership of the Governing Body;
- Provide information in appropriate, accessible formats;
- Be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy;
- Be pro-active in recruiting high-quality applicants from under-represented groups.

Headteacher

- Implement the policy and its strategies and procedures;
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate and relevant continuous professional development;
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice;
- Deal with any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with LA guidance;
- Ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality and diversity policy;
- Produce a report on progress for governors annually.

Staff

- Be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of harassment and bullying;
- Deal effectively with all incidents from overt name-calling to the more subtle forms of victimisation caused by perceived differences;
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture;

- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, religion, age and sexual orientation;
- Promote an inclusive curriculum and whole school ethos which reflects our diverse society;
- Keep up to date with equality legislation, development and issues by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

Breaches of the Policy

All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to the Governing Body and LA as required.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- Each pupil's progress is monitored and tracked. The resulting data is analysed in respect of gender, race, ability or additional needs, looked-after status. The performance of all children will be monitored through the analysis of school, local and national data, staff Records of Concern, reporting of racism, teacher's performance, SATs data, QCA assessment.
- In addition to monitoring, to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the school meets its duty to positively promote diversity. (Eg. lesson observations record evidence of differentiation and texts are reviewed to ensure appropriateness and inclusivity.)
- The data collected is used to inform further school planning, target-setting and decision-making.
- Racist incidents will be recorded and reported in line with the LA procedures.

Ongoing Strategies

- Clear statements on the unacceptability of: name calling, bullying, harassment, abuse.
- Activities of a non stereotypical nature (home corner/role play, apparatus).
- Time and space for talk (Circle Time, Learning Mentor).
- Opportunities for individuals to discuss about how they are feeling.
- Encourage the sharing of experiences (cultural and others).
- Review/update resources so that the message given should represent the children.
- Role play experiences to include addressing age, disability, race and gender.
- Provide a differentiated curriculum — by developing classroom approaches which allow individual differences but which do not make distinctions which have negative effects on children learning and developing.
- Provide an equal entitlement curriculum which aims to offer the same coherent and balanced curriculum and learning experiences to all learners.
- Awareness of peer pressure.
- A positive position taken by all school personnel on bilingualism and culture by the use of more community languages or display in school, visitors to school.

Staff on playground duty to look for vulnerable groups or individuals, assertive pupils, physical contact, tight huddles of groups.

- Children will be encouraged to think about the exclusion of others and the effect it has.
- Introduction of appropriate role models in school.
- Use positive praise system for behaviour management.
- Involvement of children in decision making.
- Monitoring groups within the classroom.
- Use assembly times to reinforce equal opportunity issues.
- Use of books, stories to reinforce positive attitudes.
- Clear definitive and understanding of the term 'bullying'.

Appendix 1 Legal and Local Framework

The legal and local framework for this policy is:

- Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended in 2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended in 2005)
- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Duty to Promote Community Cohesion, Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Salford Diversity and Equality Policy and Comprehensive Equality Scheme

Appendix 2 General Exceptions to the 2010 Act: Catholic Schools

The general exceptions to the Act as laid down for schools with a religious character or a registered religious ethos can be identified thus;

Acts of Worship

The Act contains a general exception to the religion or belief provisions which allows all schools to have acts of worship or other forms of collective religious observance. The daily act of collective worship is not covered by the religion or belief provisions, which means that schools are acting lawfully where provision of an equivalent act of worship for other faiths is not undertaken.

The character and content of collective worship in a Voluntary Aided school continues to be determined by the Governing Body and for a VA school with a religious character such will be in accordance with the school's Trust Deed or in accordance with the beliefs of the religion or denomination specified for the school. For Catholic schools this means compliance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Schools are also free to celebrate religious festivals particular to their tradition and would not be discriminating against children of other faiths by, for example in a Catholic school, putting on a nativity play.

Employment

All of the current characteristics in Catholic schools are covered by the employment provisions of the Act. It provides that for schools with a religious character it will not be unlawful discrimination to do things permitted by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the 2006 Education and Inspections Act. The existing exemptions as they relate to schools with a religious character are therefore retained.

This means for Catholic schools that, in common with other Voluntary Aided schools with a religious character, they may give preference in connection with the appointment, remuneration or promotion of teachers at the school, to those whose religious beliefs or religious practice is in accordance with the tenets of their denomination, ie the Roman Catholic faith. This extends to the posts of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head or Co-ordinator of Religious Education which (cross reference the Bishops' memorandum on Appointment of Teachers to Catholic Schools) must be filled by baptised and practising Catholics^k. Likewise they may give similar preference to those who give or who are willing to give religious education at the school in accordance with the tenets of the Catholic Church¹.

Preference can be given to practising Catholics in non-teaching posts where there is a genuine occupation requirement.

¹ Section 60, School Standards and Framework Act 1998

³ Section 37, Education and Inspections Act 2006

⁴ Section 60, School Standards and Framework Act 1998

The conduct of a teacher which is incompatible with the precepts of the Church, or which fails to uphold its tenets, may be taken into consideration in determining whether the teacher's employment should be terminated. In addition, the Governing Body of a Voluntary Aided school, (like other schools with a religious character) has the power to dismiss a Religious Education teacher, without the consent of the Local Authority, on the grounds that s/he fails to give religious education efficiently and suitably.²[Legal Data:

¹ Section 60, School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Schools these are itemised here under the continued general exceptions to the Act. Examples from the sex discrimination legislation are where a job had to be held by a man and not a woman or vice versa to preserve decency or privacy, such as where the job involved visiting changing rooms while they are in use. Further exemptions relate to single sex sport.

Admissions

In Catholic Schools the Governing Body is the Admissions Authority for the school and makes decisions on admissions arrangements. It is their duty to ensure that such arrangements are compliant with the Admissions Codes and other relevant legislation. Further that:

- admissions criteria are clear, fair, objective and transparent
- arrangements are as simple as possible
- all parents' preferences are treated on an equal basis
- no discrimination is applied on the basis of race, sex (save in single sex schools), disability religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

However, in a Catholic school priority can be afforded to Baptised Catholic children where the school is oversubscribed and that action is in accordance with the school's published admissions policy. In addition, and for all schools, age is not a protected characteristic in relation to pupils so allowing schools to admit and organise pupils in age groups.

² Section 58, School Standards and Framework Act 1998]

For reference a genuine occupational requirement means that discrimination is permitted in cases where a person's sex, race or religion is a genuine occupational requirement for the job. For Catholic

Delivery of the Curriculum

The content of the curriculum has never been caught by discrimination law and the Act states that it is specifically excluded. The delivery of the curriculum is however explicitly included.

The DfE guidance highlights the relationship between protection because of sexual orientation and protection of religious freedom. It states that many people's views on sexual orientation/sexual activity are grounded in religious belief. It refers to concerns of schools with a religious character that they may be prevented from teaching in line with their religious ethos. It also refers to teachers having expressed concerns that they may be subject to legal action if they do not voice positive views on same sex relationships, whether or not this view accords with their faith. The guidance also refers to concerns that such schools may teach and act in ways unacceptable to lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils and parents when same sex relationships are discussed because there are no express provisions to prevent this occurring.

The guidance makes clear that, like all schools, those with a religious character have a responsibility to the welfare of children in their care and to adhere to curriculum guidance, it goes on to say that, provided their beliefs are explained in an appropriate way in an educational context that takes into account existing guidance on the delivery of Sex and Religious Education (SRE), then schools should not be acting unlawfully. Further that it would not be unlawful for a teacher in any school to express personal views on sexual orientation provided that it is done in an appropriate manner and context. The guidance however provides a note of caution about the influential role of a teacher and that their actions and responsibilities extend beyond the requirements of the equality legislation and that expressing personal views should not extend to allowing unlawful discrimination.

Gender Reassignment

In reality many of the protected characteristics within the 2010 Equality Act were already in place. However one that is new is the extension of the gender reassignment regulations to pupils. It may be that cases are relatively rare but to assist colleagues the CES has provided guidance on such which is provided as an Appendix to the Briefing Notes.

Appendix 3 Equality Act 2010: Guidance Note for Catholic Schools

The CES has updated their original guidance on the 2010 Equality Act to reflect the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) publication of Technical Guidance for Schools in England which deals with the Equality Act 2010 in the light of schools' legal obligations. CES updated guidance can be accessed here:

<http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/guidance-for-schools/item/1000069-equality>