



**St. Mary's & St. Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School**

## **EQUALITIES POLICY**

### **School Mission Statement**

At St Mary's and St Benedict's Catholic Primary School we are a precious people on a learning journey. We offer a broad, balanced curriculum with the emphasis on love, learning and strength in our Catholic Faith.

Every individual is entitled to make the maximum progress in, and derive the greatest possible benefit from educational experiences, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, social and cultural background, religion, disability or any minority interest.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The policy outlines the commitment of the staff, pupils and governors of St Mary's and St Benedict's school to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community. For our school this means not simply treating everybody the same but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of pupils in school, whilst celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all members of the school community. These include:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Parents/carers
- The governing body
- Multi-agency staff linked to the school
- Visitors to school
- Students on placement

We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

At St Mary's and St Benedict's school, equality is a key principle for treating all people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential -

irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

Awareness and commitment are key factors in the recognition and understanding of how established attitudes and practice may result in discrimination, and all staff should recognise their role in the positive promotion of this equal opportunities policy.

The Education Reform Act 1988 states all pupils are entitled to a curriculum that:

‘Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society’, and ‘prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life’.

‘The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, reflecting the variability in the quality of teaching, but gaps in pupils' performance are being reduced. Discrimination is extremely rare and when encountered is dealt with well’-Ofsted report 2011

### Aims

Aims are in place to ensure St Mary's & St Benedict's is a safe and welcoming place, where individuals can develop a positive self-image.

1. For adults and children to be respected and show respect regardless of race, colour, religion, gender, ability.
2. To develop a curriculum and educational perspective which positively influences attitudes, expectations and aspirations of learners a curriculum which values and affirms the cultural social, religious, and personal experiences of all children and adults in school.
3. Discrimination needs to be challenged on the grounds of fairness and justice, and to promote respect and co-operation crucial to effective education. In order to combat disadvantage and inequality, it is often necessary to take positive action to redress the balance and/or counteract missed experiences.

### Ethos and Atmosphere

At St Mary's and St Benedict's school, the leadership of the school community will demonstrate mutual respect between all members of the school community

- There is an *openness* of atmosphere which welcomes everyone to the school
- All within the school community will challenge any type of discriminatory and/or bullying behaviour, eg through unwanted attentions (verbal or physical) and unwelcome or offensive remarks or suggestions
- All pupils are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect

- The displays around the school are of a high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality of opportunity and are frequently monitored
- Provision is made to cater for the spiritual needs of all the children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and externally based activities

## **POLICY INTO PRACTICE**

### Equal Opportunities in the curriculum

At St Mary's and St Benedict's school, we aim to ensure that:

- Pupils will have opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality.
- Steps are taken to ensure that all pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum by taking into account their cultural, backgrounds, linguistic needs and learning styles
- Everyone planning for the curriculum should ensure that it provides equality of opportunity in respect of sex, race, physical and mental handicap, culture.
- The hidden curriculum's significance is enormous. Actions, attitudes and structures convey powerful messages that may undermine positive equal opportunities strategies.
- 'The images young people form of themselves are influenced from the earliest years by the models presented by other people, in and out of the schools, by the nature of the curriculum they are offered and by range of choices available'

(Curr.Matseb 10 p4 HMI 1988)

### Planning for equal opportunities:

The following consideration must be made:

1. That books, worksheets, displays reinforce good practice in equal opportunities and eliminate negative images.
2. That positive role models are presented to pupils in the selection of visitors to school.
3. To reduce as far as possible physical barriers that may discourage handicapped learners from certain areas of the leaning environment and the curriculum.
4. That multi-race issues are addressed regularly and with emphasis because of the absence of experience in the local environment.
5. To follow the set procedures for racial and sexual harassment experience by pupils or staff (see Racial Harassment policy).

6. To ensure that the allocation of tasks and responsibilities within the class reflects good equal opportunities.

7. For extra curricular activities to be accessible to all pupils.

### Cross-curricular Planning

Equal opportunity pervades all areas of school life it is not confined to curriculum areas. It therefore is a cross-curricular element. The following must be considered to ensure curriculum areas reflect the same values.

1. That the presentation of the curriculum does not promote stereo-typed learning experiences.
2. Through the different areas of the curriculum acknowledge the contribution to human progress and achievements in art, science and sports of both sexes, the disabled and a wide range of cultures.
3. Through the different areas of the curriculum and sometimes in isolation raise pupils' awareness of the issue of equal opportunities and encourage them to reflect on their own experiences and attitudes.
4. Display work should depict, encourage and promote a positive image of both sexes, disabled and range of cultures.

### Teaching and Learning

Most opportunities will be cross curricular. Concepts of equality will be developed from the early years. e.g. variety of roles to experience in role play situations.

Specific gender direction e.g. boys to sewing, girls to carrying - 'being strong'!

Specific tasks may be related to P.S.E. and R.E. which will be designed to address a particular issue.

### Possible situations

The following is a list of possible racist/sexist situations which may occur. The list is not exhaustive and as with any discipline issue the teacher must make an appropriate judgement. The vital point is that such incidents are not ignored and that pupils gradually come to realise the consistency of our efforts in this area and that behaviour is modified.

1) Offensive language/comments/jokes/gestures:

2) Expressing prejudices.

3) Written graffiti/materials of an offensive manner.

### Resources

It is required that each curriculum co-ordinator when selecting resources for their curriculum area considers their contribution to the equal opportunities policy. In addition each individual staff member must be aware of the content of resources they use and ensure it is in line with good equal opportunities policy.

### Specific Resources in School

R.E - a resource box containing books, artefacts, posters for Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity.

Music - the untuned percussion boxes contain instruments from India-bells, Tabla drum, Africa-cabasa, Agoga bells. Latin American

P.S.H.E. Badger boxes of books

### Language

We recognise that it is important at St Mary's and St Benedict's that all members of the school community use appropriate language which: .

- Does not transmit or confirm stereotypes
- Does not offend
- Creates and enhances positive images of particular groups identified at the beginning of this document
- Creates the conditions for all people to develop their self esteem
- Uses accurate language in referring to particular groups or individuals and challenges in instances where this is not the case

### Provision for Bi-lingual Pupils

We undertake to make appropriate provision for all EAL/bi-lingual children/groups to ensure access to the whole curriculum. These groups may include:

- Pupils for whom English is an additional language
- Pupils who are new to the United Kingdom
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children
- Advanced bi-lingual learners
- Use first language effectively for learning

### Parents

We encourage parental involvement in school life wherever possible. In Equal Opportunities parents are aware of the school policy and are encouraged to promote good practice outside school.

### Pupils Progress

It is necessary for internal assessment materials and records to be free of bias and imbalance in respect of sex, race and ability.

### Monitoring and Review

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupils' progress, as they move through the school. As part of this process, we regularly monitor the performance of different groups, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress. We use this information to adjust future teaching and learning plans, as necessary.

Resources are available to support groups of pupils where the information suggests that progress is not as good as it should be. The governing body receives regular updates on pupil performance information.

School performance information is compared to national data and local authority data, to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress when compared to all schools, and to schools in similar circumstances.

As well as monitoring pupil performance information, we also regularly monitor a range of other information. This relates to:

- Attendance
- Exclusions and truancy
- Racism, disability, sexism, homophobia and all forms of bullying
- Parental involvement
- Participation in Extended Learning Opportunities

Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in pupil performance and provide specific support as required, including pastoral support. This allows us to take appropriate action to meet the needs of specific groups in order to make necessary improvements.

St Mary's and St Benedict's school is also committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation. We aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and establish a governing body that is representative of all sections of the community in order to respect and respond to the diverse needs of our population.

Due regard is given to the promotion of equality in the School Improvement Plan. The person responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the policy and action plan is the Headteacher.

Their role is to:

- Lead discussions, organise training, update staff in staff meetings, support discussions

- Work with the governing body on matters relating to equality
- Support evaluation activities that moderate the impact and success of this policy

### Developing Best Practice

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, teaching and learning will:

- Provide equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- Use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping
- Use materials to promote a positive image of and attitude towards disability and disabled people
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and religions and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
- Use a range of sensitive teaching strategies when teaching about different cultural and religious traditions
- Develop pupils' advocacy skills so that they can detect bias, challenge discrimination, leading to justice and equality
- Ensure that the whole curriculum covers issues of equality and diversity;
- Provide educational visits and extended learning opportunities that involve all pupil groups
- Take account of the performance of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets

### Learning Environment

- There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.
- All pupils are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others. Parents are also encouraged to view their own children's achievements in this light.
- Adults in the school will provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity
- The school should place a very high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability. We will meet all pupils' learning needs including the more able by carefully assessed and administered programmes of work
- The school must provide an environment in which all pupils have equal access to all facilities and resources
- All pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in their own learning
- A range of teaching methods are to be used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils
- Consideration will be given to the physical learning environment – both internal and external, including displays and signage

## Staff recruitment

-All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process

-Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and impact