

Hambleton Primary School



Single Equality Statement (Statutory Policy)

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Overview of the legal requirements

For further information about our Single Equality Statement Policy, please contact the administration officer, who will pass on your request to the appropriate person.

A: Background

1. Introduction

We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential regardless of background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises, understands and respects difference within a culture of cooperation.

We recognise our responsibilities in the employment of staff in the school. In accordance with those responsibilities, we wish to ensure the fair and equal treatment of all our staff, all those who are applicants to work in the school and those individuals who undertake work on school premises. This Policy sets out the principles under which we will operate to meet these aims.

We appreciate that a community and a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work or learn in or use the services of our school.

We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together: our pupils, staff, governors and parents.

This Policy provides a framework for our school to promote equality, inclusion and good community relations and to tackle prejudice and unlawful discrimination and their causes in a structured and proactive manner. The overriding principle that will be adhered to by all governors and staff and that we will seek to ensure all pupils adhere to is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect whatever their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation.

This Policy is based on the core principles that its effectiveness will be determined by:

- The active involvement of key stakeholders in developing and refining the Policy and in its review and implementation;
- Proactive leadership;
- Prioritising activities that produce targeted outcomes;
- The removal of barriers to progress.

We have incorporated within this Policy our policies for race, gender and disability equality as well as our specific equality policies regarding the employment of staff, so as to create a coherent framework for promoting equality and diversity within our school. We have identified, and continue to review, a set of priorities to promote equality, inclusion and community cohesion

The principal purpose of this Policy is to improve outcomes for all our children and staff. By seeking to promote equality and focussing on the identified priorities, we are striving to create a community committed to excellence.

Statement of intent regarding employment of staff

We are committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the school. This employment aspect forms part of our overall Equality Policy. We recognise the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce. We will operate at all times within the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation and will promote equality in staffing decisions. All decisions, including advertising of vacancies, shortlisting, selection, induction, appraisal, training, development, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and fair assessment of the school's requirements. The only personal characteristics which will be taken into account will be those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of individuals or groups.

All staff have a right to challenge any decision or action which they believe to be in breach of these principles. Any member of staff who deliberately and knowingly contravenes the policy will be liable to formal disciplinary action.

Legal context

Our legal obligations regarding equality divide into two sorts: general duties to promote certain aspects of equality and more specific duties which are aspects of these general duties. We are also subject to legal obligations not to discriminate in certain identified ways.

General promotional duties

Like all schools, we have a legal duty to promote:

- race equality;
- disability equality
- gender equality;
- community cohesion.

Each of these general promotional duties includes certain more specific duties, such as the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, the duty to promote equality of opportunity, the duty to eliminate harassment and to promote positive attitudes.

Duties not to discriminate

Like all schools, we must ensure that we do not discriminate unlawfully on grounds of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;

- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Although there is no legal obligation to promote equality of treatment in these areas, we must avoid unlawful discrimination on these grounds and this Policy includes our policies and priorities for action in this regard. We acknowledge these areas of regulation and confirm our commitment to enforce these statutory requirements in the school.

School and local context

School context

The school is set in a rural community and serves the village of Hambledon and the neighbouring villages of Denmead and Clanfield.

- The school is quite small compared to other primary schools nationally.(source: Raise online data for 2013).
- We have a lower than average proportion of children who are eligible for FSM (source: Raise online data for 2013).
- We have a lower than average proportion of children with SEN including those with statements of SEN (source: Raise online data for 2013).

Local context

Initial results of the Hampshire 2011 census shows that:

- The population of Hampshire has grown by 115,550 people in the 10 years since the 2001 census, to a total population of 1,759,800.
- There has been a rise in households from 672,640 in 2001 to a total of 729,100 in 2011.
- The population of Hampshire has shown signs of ageing between the 2001 and 2011 censuses made evident by an increase in the percentages of individuals occupying the oldest ages, alongside a reduction in the number of children.
- The old age dependency ratio for Hampshire has increased between the censuses showing a higher burden placed on the working age population by those aged 65 and over.

- Alongside this, the child dependency ratio has declined, showing the effects of a smaller percentage of the population being in the youngest age groups and thus a reduced number of children per working adult.
- The working age population in Hampshire has declined over the period 2001 to 2011 in the majority of districts although there are exceptions to this trend, most notably in Portsmouth and Southampton where there has been an increase in the population of people of working age.
- The average household size in Hampshire declined from 2.39 in 2001 to 2.37 in 2011.
- The main declared religious affiliations are Christian (59.7%), Muslim (1.4%), Hindu (0.7%), Jewish (0.1%), Buddhist (0.6%) and Sikh (0.4%).

B: Developing and refining the Policy

2. Involvement of staff, pupils, parents and others

We recognise that people with personal experience of issues relating to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, language and religion or belief are best placed to assist us in developing and refining this Policy. We will therefore strive to involve such people in that process on an ongoing basis.

Due to the small size and the nature of the school community, this approach can (where appropriate) be focussed on individual people whose circumstances are known to us, but there are limits on our ability to obtain input from a fully diverse range of people.

We have processes in place to promote the participation of pupils in decision-making and in making a positive contribution to school life. This takes a variety of forms including school council and pupil questionnaires. We will ensure that equality and inclusion are integral aspects of these processes so that pupils from all backgrounds are involved in informing our practice.

Staff are involved through the weekly staff meetings and discussion at Inset Days. Evaluation of pupil progress by staff also engages them in identifying any issues relating to equality concerns, and this feeds into the School Improvement Plan.

Parents and the wider community are also involved in informing the continual development of this Policy. One means of achieving this is through representation on our governing body. We also consult with parents through questionnaires. Parents have good access to class teachers and governors as a further way of raising any concerns or passing on any ideas.

3. Data gathering

We will collect a broad range of qualitative and quantitative data to monitor our policies and practice and to demonstrate our progress in promoting equality, inclusion and community cohesion.

As regards pupils, we currently collect quantitative information regarding race, gender, disability, linguistic diversity, SEN and vulnerable children. In addition, information regarding religious affiliation may be provided voluntarily. As regards qualitative information, we track pupil achievement and progress by reference to these same criteria. We collect data regarding any complaints or incidents of bullying and any use of grievance or disciplinary procedures by reference to race, gender and disability, by the use of pupil questionnaires. Any incidents of racial bullying are formally reported.

As regards staff, we do not currently gather any data which is disaggregated according to race, gender, disability or any other protected characteristic. We will monitor whether it may be appropriate to begin to do so, but given the small numbers of staff employed at our school, it may be that any data would be statistically uninformative.

As regards other members of the wider community, we do not currently collect data by reference to race, gender, disability or any other individual characteristics. The use of our services by the wider community is often informal and the scale of such use is small.

This data demonstrates that the school is reflective of its local context: the incidence of minority characteristics regarding race, disability, religious belief, linguistic ability and social deprivation is small. The sample size is also small, which makes extrapolating from the available data potentially misleading.

We will review whether our data collection is sufficiently disaggregated by reference to race, gender, disability and other relevant characteristics as part of the process of review of this Policy.

We will ensure that we continue to monitor and evaluate this data and we will use it to promote equality by the Head Teacher analysing the data (and reporting to governors if appropriate) and addressing any issues which arise with the relevant member of the management team or staff as appropriate. The size of the school and wider community is sufficiently small that individual cases which require action can be addressed individually without the need first to identify trends from data.

4. Specific equality areas

This section of the Policy identifies what we have already achieved in relation to specific aspects of equality and the further action which we intend to take.

Employment procedures

Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for members of staff in the school to apply. In most cases vacancies will be advertised externally unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.

All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- i. a detailed role profile will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties of the post

- ii. an objective and sufficiently detailed person specification will be defined from the role profile
- iii. from these documents a list of objectively assessed selection criteria will be drawn up
- iv. role profiles, person specifications and selection criteria will be available to all candidates
- v. shortlisting will be carried out against the selection criteria and a written record retained of the assessment of each candidate
- vi. all interview panel members must be trained in selection techniques
- vii. at least one person on each panel will be trained in equality and the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation
- viii. selection decisions will be made against the agreed criteria and no other criteria will be used
- ix. a written record of the selection decision relating to the agreed criteria will be retained
- x. reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment and selection process where necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled to compete for appointments in the school

Race equality

The promotion of race equality is a matter which, in our school context, requires very careful handling in order to avoid tokenism and stereotyping. We seek to achieve this by raising children's understanding of issues of race equality through RRR, PSHE, P4C, Circle Time and elsewhere within the curriculum and extra-curricular activities as the context permits. The emphasis is on promoting children's awareness and understanding rather than the collation and monitoring of data, as we generate a statistically insignificant amount of such data.

We ensure that the issue of race equality is appropriately reflected in all relevant policies, which are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on race, colour, or ethnic or national origin.

We will seek to promote race equality by identifying opportunities within the curriculum for increasing children's awareness and understanding of differences between communities.

Community cohesion

As a central part of a community with a strong identity, we actively seek to promote community cohesion through a range of activities. These include extra-curricular activities in which members of the community participate, maintaining links with the Parish Council and Parochial Church Council and, through an active parents' association, engaging in a wide range of social and fund-raising events. We hold a number of church services to which all are invited. We contribute regularly to the parish magazine and maintain a website. Where appropriate, we seek to engage members of the community in the teaching and learning. We are part of a group of local schools which liaise and co-operate in the provision of extended services.

At a wider level, we arrange school trips and residential courses which seek to enhance the children's understanding of people and communities from different backgrounds.

We will seek further to enhance community cohesion by:

- (1) the measures identified above in relation to race equality;
- (2) identifying projects for improving our use of the school grounds and the wider local environment as part of our teaching and learning;
- (3) continuing our participation in events such as the Children in Need appeal

Disability Equality

We have sought to promote disability equality by adjustments to our premises including improvements to lavatories. We have improved the signage around the school and ensure that any new development takes into account the needs of the disabled. We have, when appropriate, prepared personalised emergency evacuation plans and ensured that all risk assessments are carried out with regard to the disabled. Class and residential visits are planned with reference to the needs of the disabled as appropriate.

We will wherever possible make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment, including terms and conditions of employment, to help overcome practical difficulties created by applicants or members of staff who have a disability.

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination against people with disabilities, based on assumptions about their ability or otherwise to carry out the duties of a post in the school. Where someone who has a disability is appointed to a post in the school, reasonable provision will be made for adjustments to the working conditions or working environment where this is practicable.

We will promote disability equality by:

- (1) investigating the benefits of specific disability awareness presentations and holding such presentations if considered beneficial;
- (2) investigating the benefits of using differently coloured paper and screen backgrounds.

Gender Equality

We continually seek to promote gender equality through the curriculum. In particular, PSHE offer opportunities for discussion about gender issues which can address both equality of opportunity and the avoidance of unlawful discrimination.

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on gender.

We will promote gender equality by:

- (1) focussing on targets within the School Improvement Plan addressing any gaps based on gender and background;
- (2) review whether gender equality issues are being adequately and regularly addressed within the curriculum.

Other equality areas

There are some exemptions from aspects of the equality legislation regarding the employment of staff in situations where the essential nature of the job in question requires a person with particular characteristics. We will not normally seek to apply these exemptions.

We will give sympathetic consideration to requests for time off or for religious observance from staff who are active members of particular religions or beliefs, although such time off will be unpaid and will be considered only subject to the operational requirements of the school.

We have addressed differences of religious belief in accordance with the relevant legal requirements regarding acts of worship and participation in other activities where this is a relevant consideration.

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on age.

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination as a result of a person proposing to undergo, undergoing, or having undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex.

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of whether someone is or is not married or in a civil partnership.

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination against a woman because of her pregnancy or maternity leave.

We are opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on perceived or actual sexual orientation.

The elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of age, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation has not otherwise required any specific action on our part to date. We use PSHE to embed a culture of understanding of and respect for difference.

We will continue to monitor the need to develop appropriate strategies regarding all these issues should the need arise.

Harassment or bullying

We are opposed to any unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. We are also opposed to any act of victimisation, harassment or bullying against any member of staff either by an employee or third party based on assumptions about their status in the above categories or any other grounds. Such action will be investigated in accordance with the school's grievance procedure and may lead to formal disciplinary action.

5. Positive action

We recognise that avoiding unlawful discrimination may not be sufficient to ensure that equality exists within the school. We will therefore give consideration to measures of positive action, not amounting to positive discrimination, intended to enable those from disadvantaged groups to achieve equality of opportunity as regards employment at the school.

Such measures could include:

- encouraging applications from specific groups which are under-represented in the school;
- encouraging people with disabilities to apply for posts;
- flexible working - promoting the use of job shares and flexible working where operational factors make this possible;
- assistance with applications for candidates with language problems;
- exploring the possibility of career breaks for women to assist with family commitments;

6. Impact assessment

We will monitor the effects of this Policy and the implementation of the associated action plan by including a review of this Policy and its implications in the periodic review of all our other policies. We will look for ways of improving our practice and for ways of eliminating harassment and unlawful discrimination.

We will look for opportunities to involve people with knowledge or experience of equality issues in improving our policies and practice and identifying priorities for further action.

7. Working in partnership

We recognise that achieving equality, inclusion and good community relations involves working effectively and in partnership with others, including parents, community groups and local organisations.

We do this at present by means of our links and continuing dialogue with parents through meetings, the parents' association, regular newsletters and the website, with the wider community through our contributions to the parish magazine and our website and more generally through our governing body. In addition, we carry out targeted consultations in relation to particular issues as they arise.

A particular aspect of partnership with the wider community is participation in extra-curricular clubs and events linked with the village such as those run by the Hambledon Greening Committee, Hambledon Arts Society and Hambledon History Society. We believe this does much to strengthen community cohesion.

C: Implementing the Policy

8. Publishing the Policy

This Policy is a public document and should be readily available to any interested person. We will promote awareness of our Policy by making it available on our website, along with our other policies, making it available on request and including reference to it in our prospectus.

As part of the process of review, we will remind parents, staff, pupils and interested local groups about the Policy and invite comments and suggestions for its further development.

We will include awareness of and training in relation to the Policy as part of staff and governor induction programmes.

Anyone interested in contributing to the review and development of the Policy should contact the Administration Officer in the first instance.

9. Monitoring and evaluating the Policy and the Equality Action Plan

We will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Policy regularly. The findings of this evaluation will be used to inform the review and development of the Policy.

We will formally review and revise this Policy every three years to set new priorities and identify new areas for action. This process of review will seek to involve all interested parties: staff, parents, pupils, governors and members of the wider community and will seek to reflect the range of diversity of our school and wider community.

10. Links with other school policies

The School has a number of policies which have a bearing on equality issues and which should be read in conjunction with this overall Equality Policy, namely:

- Absence targets
- Admissions policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Behaviour management policy
- Collective worship policy
- Complaints procedure
- Grievances procedure
- Inclusion policy

- Performance management policy
- RE policy
- Relationships and sex education policy

11. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will:

- Monitor the implementation of our Single Equality Statement Policy to assess its impact on staff, learners and parents;
- Ensure that all governors are aware of their legal responsibilities under equality legislation;
- Receive and discuss equality reports on progress and performance;
- Monitor achievement of equality targets;
- Strive to achieve improved outcomes for people sharing characteristics of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief;

The head teacher will:

- Provide proactive leadership to create a community that recognises, understands and respects difference within a culture of cooperation;
- Ensure that staff, pupils, parents and other interested persons are aware of this Policy and their roles and responsibilities in implementing it;
- Monitor the implementation of the Policy to ensure effectiveness;
- Allocate appropriate responsibilities and provide suitable training and development for staff to implement this Policy.

The senior leadership team will:

- Drive forward the implementation of this Policy;
- Support staff to carry out their roles in implementing this Policy;
- Provide effective leadership on matters of equality, inclusion and community cohesion;
- Be alert for and respond appropriately to any incidents of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

All staff will:

- Recognise that they have a role and responsibility in their work to promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
- Challenge any inappropriate behaviour or language;
- Tackle stereotyping and bias;
- Be alert for and respond appropriately to any incidents of unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation and report these as appropriate;
- Identify any training or development they may require in order to carry out these responsibilities.

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- Recognise that they have a role and responsibility to themselves and others so that they understand and are able to promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
- Challenge any inappropriate behaviour or language;
- Tackle stereotyping and bias;
- Be alert for and respond appropriately to any incidents of unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation and report these as appropriate.