



# ST THOMAS A BECKET R C PRIMARY SCHOOL

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

DATE OF LAST REVIEW: **DECEMBER 2018**

AGREED BY GOVERNORS: **DECEMBER 2018**

SHARED WITH ALL STAFF: **DECEMBER 2018**

FREQUENCY OF REVIEW: **ANNUALLY**

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: **DECEMBER 2019**

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

St Thomas a Becket School is a primary school of the Roman Catholic diocese of Southwark.

The aim of the school is to offer excellence of education in accordance with the teaching of the Church and to value and develop each child's potential in a community in which every member is fully respected.

We try to ensure that this is done by:

- praying together
- valuing the experiences of each member of the community
- being a caring, forgiving community
- living and working and playing together
- by encouraging the children to achieve the best of their ability

Our Mission Statement emphasises our shared humanity and our school's aim of fostering community and belonging. At St Thomas a Becket, all children are considered special and unique. We seek to develop all children's full potential. Our Mission Statement is central to our aim of promoting equality for all.

St Thomas a Becket seeks to foster a warm, welcoming and respectful environment, which allows us to question and challenge discrimination and inequalities, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

### We recognise that...

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 create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We, therefore, cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same. We believe we all have equal rights, but may have different needs.

## **Introduction and context**

This Equality Policy for St Thomas a Becket Catholic Primary School brings together all policies including policies related to 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 discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are 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, health and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At St Thomas a Becket, all our policies reflect our Mission Statement. As a Catholic School, we value the individuality of all of our children. Our commitment is to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards which we do by taking account of pupils' varied experiences and needs. Our curriculum is broad and balanced, and we have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of every child matter. This policy is intended to help to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all children, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

### **This policy accords with legislation:**

- Equality Act 2010
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Acts 2002 and 2005;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard for the need to:

- foster good relations between groups and to promote community cohesion
- advance equality of opportunity and
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;

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.

### Our school within the wider context

As a school, we are committed to having knowledge of our school community and frequently analyse data which provides evidence of the backgrounds of the members of our school community and the attainment and wellbeing of our pupils and groups of pupils. We use this data to plan improvements that will benefit the whole school community.

Data sources for the school include school census, attendance, attainment, Analyse School performance , audits, surveys, bullying data; these can be found in the school's Self-Evaluation documents

### Overall aims of our Equality Policy

We aim to build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities. We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and seek to involve the whole school community in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

## Aims and objectives

- We promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school, whilst recognising that doing this may entail treating some pupils differently.
- We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff, pupil or parent, on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age (for adults, not pupils), disability, gender or background.
- We seek to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups.
- We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.
- We challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.
- We value each pupil's worth, we celebrate the individuality and cultural diversity of the community centred on our school, and we show respect for all minority groups.
- We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are caused by poor self-image and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes, and respect for all.

## Disability access aims

We aim to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;

- improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils;
- ensure access for parents, staff and visitors with disabilities.

### Our approach

The school takes a whole school approach to equalities and community cohesion. We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

We actively seek out opportunities in and outside of the curriculum to embrace the following key concepts:

- our shared humanity,
- valuing difference and diversity,
- interdependence, interaction and influence,
- social cohesion within our school and within our local community,
- excellence,
- personal and cultural identity,
- fairness and social justice.

At St Thomas a Becket, we appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better. It is important to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere. At various stages of a child's journey through the school, there will be opportunities to explore and value the spiritual complexity of our personal, spiritual and cultural identities. Through our social justice work, the children's understanding of the inequality that exists in society will be developed with the

aim of exploring ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society.

### Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. Achievement is recognised and valued in all its forms. Regular monitoring takes place to analyse the children's performance with regard to the protected characteristics outlined above. Where disparities in performance are identified between protected and non-protected groups, measures will be taken through targeted provision, resources and support.

All staff are responsible for ensuring an inclusive environment where all children are valued. Positive steps are taken to ensure that pupils who may otherwise be marginalised are included.

The new curriculum which came into being in September 2014 is planned to be appropriate and accessible to all children based on their stage of learning. Embedded within the curriculum will be the principles of equality and positive attitudes to diversity. All areas of the curriculum aim to contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. Differentiation ensures that all children, regardless of their learning needs, are able to access the curriculum.

There are many opportunities within the school curriculum for raising awareness of equality issues; these may occur through the RE and SMCS curriculum specifically or, more generally, threaded through the wider curriculum in terms of the content taught and the classroom practice of providing equal opportunities to learn.

To ensure the quality of teaching and learning, we will:

- ④ use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- ④ monitor achievement data by the protected characteristics (where possible) and action any gaps (broadly, we follow the teaching and learning cycle as outlined in the new SEN Code of Practice of Assess, Plan, Do and Review);
- ④ take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- ④ ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- ④ use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of the protected characteristics, without stereotyping;
- ④ promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- ④ provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own identity and culture and celebrate the diversity within our school community, the local context and wider;
- ④ seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their child's education;
- ④ encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning, including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

### Pastoral support and guidance

Our pastoral support takes account of pupils' differences. We expect staff and all education partners to demonstrate their commitment to equality, including disability, gender and race equality. Victims of harassment and bullying are given appropriate support, using external agencies where appropriate. Perpetrators of bullying are dealt with in line with the school's anti-bullying and behaviour

policies and are provided with relevant support to consider and modify their behaviour

### **Behaviour and attendance**

The school expects high standards of behaviour from all pupils, appropriate to their development level. Our procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all. All staff are expected to operate consistent systems of rewards and discipline. Clear procedures are in place so that all forms of bullying and harassment, including racism and harassment related to disability, sexism and homophobia, are dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently, again in line with our anti-bullying policy and the local authority's policies for dealing with racist, homophobic and disablist incidents. All forms of harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with following the school's policies. Staff are trained to deal effectively with bullying and prejudice related incidents and harassment and are offered support in handling such matters. Adults in the school are role models and take care to lead through example, demonstrating high expectations to all pupils. We monitor exclusion by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Action is taken if there is any disparity between different groups of pupils. The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent the exclusion of a pupil for a reason related to any disability they may have.

All stakeholders in the school community are aware of the policies and procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that language or behaviour that is racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist or potentially damaging to any minority group is always unacceptable.

Information and advice on attendance and exclusion is available for parents on the school website. Families are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to their child's attendance and absence is always followed in sensitive

ways to take account of specific matters such as a child's disability or cultural or religious background. Attendance is monitored by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Action is taken to address any disparity between groups. The school will fully support children with long-term medical needs who have erratic attendance, for example, because they are in and out of hospital.

### **Admissions**

Steps are taken to ensure our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, are in keeping with the Equality Act 2010 and so do not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics. The school will not discriminate against a disabled pupil in the arrangements it makes for determining admission. We will admit children with already identified special educational needs. Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC plans) will always be admitted unless, through the statutory assessment process, it is demonstrated that the pupil's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children. Comprehensive information about the child's ethnicity, first language, religion etc is gathered as part of the admissions process.

The criteria for admissions can be found in the school's Admission Policy. We review our admissions criteria regularly to ensure we do not inadvertently exclude people with a particular characteristic.

### **Recruitment**

In recruiting staff, the school adheres to fair and equitable selection processes which are in line with the local authority's guidelines. Everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of the Equality Policy. All staff and visitors are expected to support the ethos of the school, promoting equality and challenging bias and stereotyping wherever they observe it.

## Disability

In relation to pupils with a disability, we make reasonable adjustment to ensure full inclusion in the life of the school. This may include the premises and their accessibility, resources and staff training to address the particular need. We regularly invite speakers from the organisation Just Different to talk about disability and often address the issue of bullying of children with special needs and disability in Anti-Bullying Week.

## Linguistic diversity

We welcome the diversity of languages in our school and we give them all status and value. We look for opportunities to use our languages to enrich the curricular experience of all our pupils. Staff and visitors provide a range of role models and the school strives to reflect the diversity of the local and wider community. One example of this is International Week where speakers from a range of cultural backgrounds are invited into classes to present workshops and talks to stimulate the children's growing understanding of our global connections. We encourage children to use their home languages in a range of contexts in school.

## Leadership and management

The senior leadership team will ensure that staff training continually highlights equality issues. Equality is incorporated in the induction programme for new staff. All staff, including non-teaching and part-time staff, are recognised and valued. They are given status and support and encouraged to share their knowledge.

Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to the Equality Policy. Resources and displays in the school reflect the experience and backgrounds of

pupils, promote diversity and challenge stereotypes. They are reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school.

The headteacher will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and will report to the school's governing body annually. It is the governing body that is liable for any breaches of the Equality Act.