

Equalities & Cohesion Policy



The Downley School

Approved by: FGB

Date: February 2022

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by: February 2023

Mission Statement/Principles

The philosophy of our school talks of valuing the individuality of all our pupils. We are committed to giving all our pupils every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. Within this ethos of achievement, we do not tolerate bullying and harassment of any kind. We actively tackle discrimination against those with a disability (disabilism), racial discrimination including discrimination based on religion or belief / non belief, sexual (orientation) harassment and discrimination, gender re-assignment, pregnancy or maternity, breastfeeding discrimination and promote equal opportunities and good relations between and amongst all. We aim to ensure that the school promotes the individuality of all our pupils, irrespective of ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, religion, belief / non belief or background. We are committed to ensuring that positive action is taken where necessary to redress the balance of inequality that may exist. Based on this our schools admissions policy is equally open to pupils of all groups.

Within the context of the school, we aim to positively transform individual and shared circumstances, perceptions, attitudes and relations. We aim to reflect the diversity of our local community and society and ensure that the education we offer reduces the chances of social divisions and parallel lives by recognising, celebrating and valuing different backgrounds, lifestyles and identities.

We uphold fundamental British values and will endeavour to ensure that all children learn these as part of a broad and diverse curriculum. Through our work on preventing radicalisation and extremism (both violent and non-violent) we will engage with our school community to enhance community cohesion. Our Safeguarding Policy reflects our commitment to ensuring our school is a safe place for all.

We believe that these commitments are as important in the context of a school with limited ethnic diversity as well as in a school with a diverse population whatever that diversity may be.

Our School

The Downley School is situated in a residential, rural area. The school has just over 420 pupils on roll. The ethnic composition of the school is in line with national figures for pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The largest group is "White British" with "Indian" and "Pakistani" pupils making up the next largest groups. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is in line with the national average. Baseline assessment tests indicate that the profile of attainment on entry is above the national average.

Legislative Context

Equality is not about benefiting some people at the expense of others - equality benefits everyone. In an effort to ensure that marginalised groups are given equal opportunity this policy will prioritise the following groups.

- Disabled persons - We follow the social model of disability which means that we understand that the barriers to disabled persons securing equality are due to the physical environment and people's attitudes. Disabled people include those with physical and sensory impairment (difficulties), learning disabilities, mental illness, long term illness all of which are substantial.
- Regarding age our focus is on older persons (over 60) and younger people.

- Regarding race equality we accept the definition of a racist incident based on recommendation 12 of the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry: 'A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.
- With regard to sexual orientation The Downley School refers to the LGB i.e. lesbians, gay and bisexual community as well as transgender people.
- With regard to religion The Downley School actively supports the rights of all to practice their belief /non beliefs equally.

Development of the Policy

The Governing Board and School leaders based on the recommendations from Bucks County Council have developed the Policy. There is a whole school commitment to the Policy, which is ensured by the Headteacher, and the Policy will be shared with all parents.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that:

- The school complies with all equalities legislation relevant to the school community;
- The school's Equalities and Cohesion objective is maintained, updated regularly and published on the school's website
- That procedures and strategies related to the Policy are implemented;
- The named Equality Governor will monitor, on behalf of the governing body, all discriminatory / prejudiced based incidents and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to all said incidents.

Positive Action

The Governing Body recognises that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the school. The Governing Body will therefore consider measures of positive action, which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups.

The Governing Body will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but it will take positive action which enables members of those groups to compete on an equal basis. Positive action measures may include:

- encouraging applications from specific groups which are under-represented in the school
- encouraging people with disabilities to apply for posts
- advertisements which encourage applications from individuals of a particular sexual orientation, or religion or belief, but make it clear that selection will be on merit
- flexible working – promoting the use of job shares and flexible working where operational factors make this possible
- language/literacy training
- supporting training measure for under-represented groups
- assistance with applications for candidates with language problems

- provision of childcare facilities or support with the costs of childcare facilities for staff
- exploring the possibility of career breaks for women to assist with family commitments
- commitments to interviewing disabled people who meet the basic criteria for the post
- encouraging staff to become representatives of trade unions/associations

Harassment and grievance procedures

Harassment has the effect of destroying dignity and undermining the confidence of employees. It can take many forms including physical contact, bullying, threatening or ignoring someone. It can be a series of offensive remarks or a single incident. It can be behaviour that staff find offensive even if not directed at them or harassment because of perception or association.

The Governing Body is committed to the principles of dignity at work for its entire staff in the school. This includes the right to be treated with respect by all managers and colleagues. The Governing Body will consider any acts of harassment including those on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, as totally unacceptable and outside the ethos and culture of the school. Any such act by a member of staff against any adult or child will be treated as a disciplinary offence, and action taken accordingly.

The school has procedures to resolve grievances and for the handling of complaints of harassment and bullying at work. The Governing Body is committed to investigate any such complaint. These procedures will be followed carefully and promptly in response to any such complaint. The first point of contact for any such complaint should be **Chair of Governors**. In addition, staff have the right to approach their professional association or trade union representative for support.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Along with the Governing body, providing leadership and vision in respect of equality and diversity; • Overseeing the implementation of the Equalities and Cohesion Policy ;
- Co-ordinating the activities related to equality and diversity;
- Ensuring that all who enter the school are aware of, and comply with, the Equalities and Cohesion Policy
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support;
- Taking appropriate action in response to racist incidents, discrimination against persons with a disability and sexual harassment or discrimination against any persons because of their age, sexuality or religion, gender, belief / non-belief.
- Supporting parents to become involved in their children's education.
- Considering and overcoming barriers to parents' involvement (i.e. work commitments, non-resident parents, and lone parents).

All Staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;

- Not discriminating on grounds of race, disability, or other equality characteristics;
- Keeping up to date with equalities legislation by attending training events organised by the school or Local Authority.

All Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Their children's education;
- Being aware of, and complying with, the Equalities and Cohesion Policy
- Positively influencing their children's expectations about education as well as their attitudes and behaviour towards other pupils, staff and senior management including the Governors
- Understanding the ethos of the school and becoming involved in school life (i.e. open days, extended services, parents' councils, informal discussions with staff, parent evenings)

All Pupils are responsible for:

- Being aware of and complying with the Equalities and Cohesion Policy;
- Not discriminating on grounds of race sexual orientation, religion, belief or non-belief, gender; or other equality characteristics;
- Reporting any racist incident or act of discrimination in which they were directly or indirectly involved either in or out of school;
- Understanding, valuing and celebrating diversity;
- Challenging stereotypes, and prejudices.
- Treating others as their equals.

Eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and celebrating diversity

I. Learning and Teaching

- The Downley School aims 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:
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect diversity within society in terms of age, race, gender, ability, faith, ethnicity, social condition, cultural background and sexual orientation, without stereotyping;
- Develop learning materials and activities that emphasise benefits of having diverse communities, neighbourhoods, schools and groups.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour;
- Strengthen individual and collective skills to deal with change across time and space
- Provide opportunities for pupils to identify shared interests among members of different social groups and categories.
- Use a range of sensitive teaching strategies when teaching about different cultural traditions;
- Develop pupils awareness so that they can detect bias and challenge discrimination;
- Ensure that the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum cover issues of equalities, diversity, human rights and inclusion;

- Promote and celebrate the contribution of different ethnic groups to the subject matter in all subject departments, where appropriate.
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Provide educational visits and extra-curricular activities that reflect all pupil groupings;
- Take account of the performance of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets.
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of pupils
- Increase achievement of all pupils in English, Maths, Science and ICT across all stages.
- Reduce direct, indirect and institutional discrimination.
- Reduce group segregation, disproportion and under/over representation.
- Foster social bonding (intra-group relations) and social bridging (inter-group relations) among pupils, workers, staff, parents, carers and families.
- Emphasise interconnectedness and interdependence of society members at local, regional, national and global levels.
- Facilitate balance between leadership and teamwork among pupils, staff, teachers and governors
- Challenge negative stereotypes and prejudices about leadership/membership to certain groups in relation to specific persons and groups.
- Challenge assumptions and expectations about specific lifestyles or identities of certain persons and groups.

II. Personal development and pastoral guidance

- Pastoral staff takes account of disability needs, gender, religious and ethnic differences and the experience and needs of particular groups such as Gypsy Roma and Traveller, refugee and asylum seeker pupils.
- All pupils are encouraged to consider the full range of career opportunities available to them with no discriminatory boundaries placed on them due to their disability, gender or race as well as their sexual orientation or religion/ belief or non-belief.
- Remove unlawful distinctions, exclusions, restrictions or preferences that have the purpose or effect of limiting equal access to goods, facilities and services.
- All pupils/staff/parents/carers are given support, as appropriate, when they experience discrimination. We also recognise that the perpetrators of discrimination are themselves sometimes victims of their personal circumstances and therefore where appropriate remedial work is done to ensure that the actions do not occur again.
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils can see themselves reflected in the school community.
- All pupils develop communication, delegation, motivation and supervision skills, particularly those who come from vulnerable, excluded or deprived backgrounds.

III. Curriculum

- Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes towards equality and diversity.
- Pupils will have opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality.
- All steps are taken to ensure that all pupils have access to mainstream curriculum by taking into account the cultural and lifestyle backgrounds of all pupils, their linguistic needs and their learning styles.
- Provide reasonable means for children, young people their friends and families to have meaningful and continuous interaction with people from different backgrounds, lifestyles and identities.

- Provide opportunities to recognise similarities while appreciating, respecting and valuing differences across and between groups.
- Challenge perceptions among majority groups about special treatment of minority groups.
- Challenge cultural, geographical or generational boundaries of the “community”.
- Utilise food, arts, sports and PE as a means to foster participation, engagement, empowerment and consultation.
- Utilise case studies to emphasise successful relations among members of different groups, areas, neighbourhoods, nations and countries.
- Foster social bonding (intra-group relations) and social bridging (inter-group relations) among pupils, workers, staff, parents, carers and families.
- Facilitate meaningful and continuous interaction between people from all walks of life.
- Increase awareness about rights and responsibilities of pupils, their parents and carers as community members, regardless of migratory status and/or nationality.
- Remove barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement.
- Emphasise multiple dimensions of equality (opportunities, access, treatment, participation and outcome)

IV. Staff recruitment and professional development

- All posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants.
- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice throughout the recruitment and selection process.
- Steps are taken to encourage people from underrepresented groups to apply for positions at all levels of the school (give examples).
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds.
- Equalities policies and practices are covered in all staff induction (evidence – see staff induction pack).
- All supply staff are made aware of equalities policies and practices.
- Facilitate training for staff, teachers, governors and head teachers on community cohesion.
- Reduce direct, indirect and institutional discrimination about staff recruitment, training and retention.
- Workforce at all levels reflects local, regional and national diversity in terms of age, race, gender, ability, faith, ethnicity, social condition, cultural background and sexual orientation.

V. Partnerships with parents/carers and communities

- All parents/carers are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the school.
- As part of the schools commitment to equality and diversity, a group made up of members of the school community including pupils, staff, local community members, parents/carers, local faith groups and local disability groups has been developed to support the school with matters related to its equalities duties and the nature of the extended services that the school will offer.
- We will, as a school, establish and strengthen partnerships with other schools to share good practice, exchange information and foster multi-cultural, multi- geographical and multi-generational activities.
- Members of the local community regularly join in school activities e.g. school fair, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller month celebrations, Black history month celebrations, Eid celebrations, harvest festival etc.

- The school has a role to play in supporting new and settled communities.
- We plan to increase consultation and engagement of community members to monitor and evaluate efficiency and fairness of extended services.
- Establish links with community groups and organisations to increase range of activities and services they can offer.
- Establish links with community groups and organisations to share good practice and grassroots knowledge.
- Increase participation and empowerment of community members on all extended services.
- Emphasise equal contribution to society of members from different backgrounds with various lifestyles and identities.
- Improve perceptions about efficiency, efficacy and fairness of service provision at local level.
- Increase sense of responsibility and reciprocity between and within groups and persons.
- Promote understanding and recognition of overlapped and interconnected sources of identity for persons and groups.
- Increase awareness amongst pupils, parents, carers and families about social services at county, district, parish and neighbourhood level
- Involve community members in activities that reflect similarities across heterogeneous groups and differences within homogeneous groups.
- Foster positive relationships between and within groups of pupils, workers, staff, parents, carers and families.
- Facilitate meaningful and continuous interaction between and within members of different groups.
- Establish and strengthen effective approaches to monitor, evaluate, manage and prevent conflict.

Putting Policy into Practice

There is an Equality objectives action plan included as Appendix 1 to this Policy. This is to be reviewed annually.

8. Monitoring and Reviewing

We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies. When policies are reviewed in future, governors will endeavour to ensure that due regard is given to the promotion of all aspects of equality within each policy.

We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes for pupils, staff and parents from the equality strands referred to in this policy. We pay specific attention to the impact that our policies have on the attainment of pupils from different groups.

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, 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:

- Exclusions;
- Incidents of racism, disabilities, sexual harassment and all forms of bullying;
- Parental involvement.

Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in pupil performance. This allows us to take appropriate action to meet the needs of specific groups and to set targets in our strategic plan, in order to make the necessary improvements.

Impact Assessments and how this policy relates to other school policies

We ensure that the commitments embodied in our mission statement for equality apply to the full range of our policies and practices, especially those concerned with:

- Equal opportunities
- Pupils' progress attainment and assessment
- Behaviour discipline and exclusions
- Pupils' personal development and pastoral care
- Teaching and learning
- Induction
- Admissions and attendance
- The curriculum
- All subjects
- Teaching and learning
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Governor /staff training and professional development
- Partnerships with parents/carers and communities
- Visits and visitors

Each policy, and any other relevant policies as outlined in the specific duties placed upon us by the relevant legislation, will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school. As part of the action plan a timeline of high, medium and low priority policies for impact assessment will be drawn up.

Signed..... Chair of Governors.....
Date.....