



# St Francis Catholic Primary School

## Equality and Diversity Policy

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis unless circumstances require policy update in the interim.

Approved by:

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Reviewed on:

Reviewed on:

Reviewed on:

Reviewed on:

*These Guidelines are adopted subject to the over-riding requirements of relevant legislation, of the school and to the legal responsibilities and powers of the Governing Body as employer, admissions authority and owner of the school.*

## School Mission Statement

### **'I am a sign of God's love'**

At St. Francis we love, learn and grow in the footsteps of Jesus and are active signs of God's love through praying, respecting and serving others.

## Introduction

St Francis Catholic Primary School is a welcoming and caring Catholic school situated in Walsall in, a predominantly white British area with high levels of deprivation. Our whole school ethos is based on valuing and respecting every individual. We aim to promote Christian values based on the teachings of Christ and to bring all within the community closer to God through the daily practice of these values in all school activities. Our school is inclusive; we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and we are committed to ensuring all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

This policy is available on the school website.

## Purpose of this policy

Our school ethos is underpinned by Christian values. We consequently aim to create a school community where the life and dignity of the human person is sacrosanct. Equal Opportunities is about celebrating the uniqueness of all within the school and the wider community and believing that everyone is created in the image and likeness of God, thereby ensuring that everybody has the same chance to develop themselves to their full potential. Equal opportunities are entrenched in everything we do and should be addressed and embraced by everyone.

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity.

Age, marriage and civil partnership are also "protected characteristics" but are not part of the school provisions related to pupils.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties.

### **The Public Sector Equality Duty or "general duty"**

This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
3. Foster good relations between different groups

### **Two "specific duties"**

This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

1. Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by April 6th 2012
2. Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable by April 6th 2012

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance.

It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

### What are our aims?

Our approach to equality is based on 7 key principles:

- 1. All learners are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- 2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages, which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
- 3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- 4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
- 5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.
- 6. We have the highest expectations of all our children.** We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
- 7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

### What are we doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.

We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

The Head Teacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment, which champions respect for all.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent.

#### Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

The school policies on Pupil Discipline & Anti-Bullying and Attendance & Punctuality take full account of the new duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

#### Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying

The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to

inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs,
- prejudices around race, religion or beliefs,
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation.

We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously.

### **What are we doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups?**

We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills. We also ensure children from all groups are challenged to reach higher levels.

We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions meetings and home or virtual home visits.

We collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.

We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils.

We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support.

### **What are we doing to foster good relations?**

We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils.

We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through RSE and Catholic Social Teaching across the curriculum.

We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity, disability and avoiding stereotyping.

We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.

We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.

We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and that promote positive images of people.

We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and sympathise with different experiences.

We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors and whole school events.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

### **Governing body**

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment.

### **Head Teacher and Leadership team**

The Head Teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The senior leadership team has day-to-day responsibility for co-coordinating implementation of this policy and for monitoring outcomes.

### **Teaching and Support Staff**

All teaching and support staff will:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom,
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination,
- Deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur,
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability,
- Maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils,
- Support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may find aspects of academic learning difficult (sometimes temporary),
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff during training days when necessary. This is reviewed annually and introduced to staff at the start of the year.

### **Visitors**

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers, are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information to enable them to do this. Information will be placed on the school website.

## **Equal opportunities for staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community. As an employer, we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

## **Monitoring and reviewing the policy**

We review the information about equalities in the policy every three years and make adjustments as appropriate.

## **Relevant legislation**

In drawing up this policy, consideration has been given to the following Acts of Parliament and documents:

- 1975 Sex Discrimination Act
- 1976 Race Relations Act
- 1985 Swann Report into the Education of Minority Ethnic Children
- 1988 Education Reform Act
- 1995 Disability Discrimination Act
- 1998 Human Rights Act
- 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act
- 2000 Learning for All, published by the Commission for Racial Equality
- 2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act
- 2001 Special Needs Code of Practice
- 2002 Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality
- 2003 Employment Equality (Religion, Belief and Sexual Orientation) Regulations
- 2005 Disability Discrimination Act
- 2006 Equality Act
- 2006 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations
- 2008 QCA Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage
- 2010 Equality Act
- Guidance on Social Inclusion (e.g. Circular 10/99 on pupil attendance, behaviour, exclusion and reintegration).

#### **Guidelines: Disability**

Pupils with disabilities/learning difficulties/special needs will:

- have the opportunity to access all the facilities and the resources available within the school
- have a fully integrated education alongside other pupils
- be given, if necessary, additional support to ensure that they fulfil their potential
- be provided with an education appropriate to their age, aptitude and ability
- have access to the same broad, balanced and relevant curriculum as other pupils

As a school, we will ensure that:

- detailed records are kept of the academic progress being made by pupils with disabilities/ special needs/learning difficulties
- staff work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that pupils with disabilities/special needs/learning difficulties benefit fully from their time spent in school
- resources are targeted and utilised to ensure pupils with disabilities/special needs/learning difficulties fulfil their potential
- early intervention, target setting and regular monitoring of pupils with disabilities/special needs/learning difficulties is routine practice
- appropriate use is made of local authority support services to ensure that pupils with disabilities/special needs/learning difficulties fulfil their potential
- the early identification of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties takes place. Moreover, we will take appropriate action to try to ensure such difficulties do not lead to underachievement, dissatisfaction and/or exclusion.

Please also refer to our SEN Policy.

#### **Guidelines: Gender**

- Registers will not separate boys from girls because pupils will be listed alphabetically.
- All pupils will have equal access to all curricular opportunities and activities.

- We expect boys and girls to perform equally well in all subjects and activities, and we will monitor pupil achievement and participation to ensure that there are no significant gaps between boys and girls.
- All pupils will be expected to work together in a constructive and positive manner.
- Staff will ensure that boys/girls, do not dominate such things as the playground, toys and equipment in and outside of the school building.
- New resources will be vetted to ensure that they show girls, boys, women and men involved in a diverse range of non-stereotypical roles and activities, thereby challenging stereotyped ideas about what females and males can and should do.
- When appropriate, stories and poems which challenge gender stereotypes will be read in class and during acts of collective worship.
- Pupils will be discouraged from using sexist language and commended when they challenge such language.
- We expect the same standards of respect politeness from everyone in our school community.

#### **Guidelines: Race**

- When appropriate, the curriculum will celebrate cultural diversity and promote racial harmony.
- When appropriate, pupils will have opportunities to discuss bullying and prejudice, and things that people share in common as well as things that make us different and special.
- Every year, lessons and activities will be arranged linked to other faiths reflecting our diverse society.
- Resources will portray members of different cultural and ethnic groups in ways which are positive and non-stereotypical.
- Accurate information will be kept about the ethnic origin, first language and religion of all pupils.
- The dietary needs of all pupils will be met.
- Members of all cultural and ethnic groups will be welcomed and valued.
- Racist incidents will be dealt with in an effective and consistent manner and in accordance with LA procedures.
- Staff will be encouraged to take part in training to deepen and broaden their understanding of issues to do with race equality.

Please also refer to our RE and Anti-bullying policies.

#### **Guidelines: Age, Belief, Religion, Sexuality**

- All pupils will be expected to work together in a constructive and positive manner.
- Pupils will be discouraged from using ageist and homophobic language, and language that makes fun of people because of their religion or beliefs. Pupils will be commended when they challenge such language and will be reminded of the negative effects of stereotyping based on age, belief, religion or sexuality.
- Appropriate use will be made of local authority support services to ensure that all pupils fulfil their potential.
- Lessons will be used to value and celebrate diversity.
- Pupils will have the opportunity to learn about the harmful effects of prejudice in all its forms.
- New resources will portray people of all ages, beliefs and religions in ways which are positive and non-stereotypical.
- People will be welcomed and valued no matter their age, belief, religion, or sexuality.
- All incidents of bullying and harassment, including bullying and harassment based on age, belief, religion or sexuality, will be dealt with in an effective and consistent manner.
- As a school we are committed to the early identification of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and we will take appropriate actions to try to ensure such difficulties do not lead to underachievement, dissatisfaction and/or exclusion.

All pupils, irrespective of age, belief, religion or sexuality:

- will have access to the same broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- will have access to all the facilities and the resources available within the school
- will be involved in decisions made about their care and education

- will have opportunities to learn how people have challenged, or can challenge, discrimination and stereotyping based on age, belief, religion or sexuality.

Please also refer to our RE and Anti-bullying policies.

#### **Guidelines: Gender reassignment, Civil partnership and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity**

- In relation to the three protected characteristics above, parents, carers, visitors, members of staff and all others associated with the school can rest assured that discrimination will not occur, and that people's rights as defined in legislation relating to the characteristics will be respected.
- Pupils will be discouraged from using offensive language about gender reassignment, civil partnership and marriage, and pregnancy and maternity.
- All people will be welcomed and valued no matter their personal circumstances, their marital status, whether in a civil partnership or not, whether pregnant or on maternity leave, or whether undertaking, or having undertaken, gender reassignment.

Please also refer to the CES Guidelines on appointment of senior staff.

#### **Guidelines: Socio-economic background**

The school already engages in various practices designed to ensure that pupils from disadvantaged financial circumstances do not miss out on activities, events, trips or visits undertaken by pupils from more secure financial backgrounds, and such practices will be persisted with in the interests of equality, diversity and community cohesion. More specifically:

- The school will raise the aspirations of all pupils, including those from the most disadvantaged financial circumstances.
- The school will do all it possibly can to help pupils from disadvantaged financial circumstances fulfil their potential.
- Where appropriate and financially viable, the school will subsidise trips, residential visits, visits to museums and/or concerts and/or pantomimes, etc. to ensure that pupils from disadvantaged financial backgrounds do not miss out on social, cultural and educational experiences which are part of every pupil's entitlement to the same broad and balanced curriculum.

#### **Incident Logging**

We have a transparent approach to recording incidents in school; this is by the use of Cpoms: a secure electronic log of events and actions. If parents are not happy that incidents have been adequately dealt with, they may take their concerns further through the complaints policy. This is available on the school website.

This policy will be available:

- On the school website
- Paper copy on request