



ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Our school is a place of learning
A place of love

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RACIAL EQUALITY POLICY

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with national legislation and the equal opportunity policies of the LA.

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous legislation such as the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It provides a single legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The teaching of the Church on Equality

The social teaching of the Church has consistently promoted equality of treatment for all people as an application of the principles of natural justice. The principle of equal treatment is now encoded in European law.

The Gospel imperative to love our neighbour entails not only that we should help those in need, but also address the causes of destitution and poverty. The deepening of spiritual life must go hand in hand with practical concern for our neighbour, and thus with social action'. All members of the Church must '...play an active part in striving to build a just and compassionate social order.' 'The Church has the right and duty to advocate a social order in which the human dignity of all is fostered, and to protest when in any way it is threatened.'
(Cardinal Hume)

All people have basic human rights. At the centre of these is the right to life itself. All human rights derive from the nature of the human person made in the image of God. The Gospel leaves us in no doubt that all men and women are equal in the sight of God and should be accorded equally the respect and dignity due the children of God.

This is the guiding principle for our relations with all other people, regardless of whether or not they are members of the Church. The Church is, in both historical and in theological terms, a catholic or universal church for all human kind. Diversity in age, gender, race, ability, social background or cultural identity should be regarded as enriching the whole community of the Church.

Introduction

As part of the school's mission statement, "A place of learning, a place of love" it is our duty to love and value every child. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children 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.

Aims and objectives

- We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff or pupil or parent, on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.
- We promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some pupils differently.
- 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 can stem from 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.

Racial equality

In our school we will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups.

It is the right of all pupils to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will deal with it in accordance with school procedures.

We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of diverse cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. As part of our RE scheme the children find out about other world faiths and religious festivals.

We endeavour to ensure that the resources we use in school present positive multi-ethnic images and monitor this regularly.

Disability non-discrimination

Some children in our school have disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of these children, as we are to meeting the needs of all within the school. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled children.

The school is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled children full access to all areas of learning. Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, or modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities where children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

Gender equality

We are committed to seeing all individuals and groups of pupils making the best progress possible in our school. We realise that although gender is one of the key factors affecting educational performance, it affects different sub-groups of boys and girls in different ways.

The role of governors

In this policy statement the governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally. The governing body collects, analyses and evaluates a range of school data. We check that all pupils are making the best possible progress, and that no group of pupils is underachieving. The governing body seeks to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their sex, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion has a bearing on school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively, and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

The role of the headteacher

It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's policy on equal opportunities, and she is supported by the governing body in so doing. It is the headteacher's role to make sure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against. Staff are expected to uphold the Catholic ethos and respect Catholic doctrine and moral teaching. As a Catholic school, practising Catholics will be preferred for leadership posts.

The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and in providing opportunities for training. The headteacher promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in the assembly, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the school.

The role of the class teacher

When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups. We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics include examples of the significant contributions women have made in this country's history. In geography teachers will counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia, and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world. All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any incidents in the school Racist and Behaviour Log, and draw them to the attention of the headteacher.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The governors will therefore:

- monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- require the headteacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents, staff or pupils regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the school's behaviour policy, and the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if it is considered necessary.

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