



Policy Title:	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Level:	Trust
Date of Approval:	June 2023
Approved by:	Trust Board
Date of next review:	December 2023
Applies to:	All school & Trust settings



## Introduction

The Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust is committed to promoting equality and preventing discrimination at all levels, both as an employer and in our education provision. Our schools are inclusive and welcoming, with a focus on the wellbeing and progress of every child and acknowledgement that 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 of different groups of pupils.

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.

## Purpose of the policy

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 and 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:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups
- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable

This policy describes how BBCET schools are meeting these statutory duties in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the schools comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to school staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

## EDI Principles

We actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our school curriculums and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

We do not discriminate against our pupils or staff by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

We actively promote respect and kindness within our community, celebrating differences and striving to create an inclusive environment for all who study and work here.

We also seek to eliminate all types of discrimination and harassment so that everyone within our Trust can achieve their full potential.



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

We take account of equality issues in the way we provide education to pupils, and in the way we provide access to facilities and services. Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we consider issues of equality in relation to admissions and exclusions of pupils. We give consideration to 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.

Our Headteachers ensure that all staff 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 ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are involved in the design of new policies, and are consulted in the review of existing ones. We take seriously the need to consider the EDI implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure, and whenever we make significant decisions about the day today life of the Trust and our schools.

## **Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance**

Our school behaviour policies take full account of the 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.

The Trust's schools challenge 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 belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes.

The Trust and our schools treat all bullying incidents equally seriously. Our schools keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to their governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents and how these were dealt with. This data is reviewed and actions are taken to reduce the risk of future incidents.

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

We know the needs of our school populations well. We collect and analyse data, monitoring progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils, in order to inform our planning and identify targets to support improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slower progress in acquiring appropriate literacy and numeracy skills. Working in partnership with parents and carers, we identify children who have a disability through our pupil admission procedures.

Our schools collect, analyse and publish data:

- On the school population by gender and ethnicity
- On the % of pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principle need or disability
- By year group – in terms of ethnicity, gender and proficiency in English;
- On inequalities of outcome and participation, related to ethnicity, gender and disability and proficiency in English

Our schools also collect, analyse and use EDI data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.

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We analyse standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage:

- White British FSM and non FSM
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- White Non British
- EAL
- All SEN
- SEN School Action and SEN statement
- SEN Statement
- Traveller/Gypsy Roma
- Looked After Children
- Gifted and Talented
- Refugee

Our staff avoid language that risks limiting any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able". We use a range of teaching strategies that ensure we meet the needs of all pupils, and we provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving.

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

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys

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

## **Positive Action**

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

## **What our schools are 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 promote 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 PSHE and citizenship and 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 and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote an 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 promote positive images of people.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors and whole school events.

# Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust



## **Other ways we address equality issues**

- We maintain records of all training relating to the Equality Act.
- Our monitoring records include evaluations of aspects of Equality Act.
- We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed.
- We have a rolling programme for reviewing our policies in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, considering their impact on the progress, safety and wellbeing of our pupils.
- We consider the EDI implications of new policies and practices before they are introduced.

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on EDI meets the needs of our school communities we ensure our schools:

- Review relevant feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, focus meetings and Governors meetings;
- Secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events;
- Review feedback and responses from the school council and PSHE lessons;
- Analyse issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on individual education plans/ personalised provision maps, mentoring and support;
- Ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Local Governing Committees.

## **Publishing Equality Objectives (see individual school Equality Action Plan/ School Development Plans)**

The objectives which we identify represent our schools' priorities and are the outcome of a careful review and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we achieve improved outcomes for the different groups. We produce equality data analysis which informs our discussions about the equality objectives.

Our schools pay due regard to the setting of equality objectives via their school development plans.

## **Monitoring and reviewing objectives**

Schools review and update equality objectives and report progress towards these to their Local Governing Committees. Our schools involve and consult staff, pupils and governors, as well as parents and carers.

We publish an evaluation of the success in meeting these objectives on school websites.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect all members of our school communities and their visitors to support our commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information where necessary to enable them to do this.

### ***Local Governing Committee***

The Local Governing Committee (LGC) is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

Every LGC 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. Governors annually review their school's Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's EDI activity, taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys)

# Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust



## ***Headteachers and Leadership teams***

Headteachers are 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. A senior member of school staff must have day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the 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 (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult;
- keep up-to-date with EDI legislation relevant to their work.

The Trust and school leaders will provide EDI training and guidance for all staff new to the Trust/school as part of the induction procedure. Training will cover the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act. All staff will be reminded of the Equality Act at the start of a school year.

All visitors to our schools, including parents and carers, are expected to support our commitment to EDI and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information where necessary to enable them to do this.

## **Equal Opportunities for staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. We are committed to the implementation of EDI 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 ensure wherever possible that the staffing of our schools 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, diversity and inclusion 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 EDI information annually and make adjustments as appropriate. Our review involves pupils, staff and governors as well as parents and carers.



## APPENDIX

### Checklist for school staff and governors

- The school collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training.
- This information is used to inform policies, plans, strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities that the school provides.
- The Equality Policy and Plan and Objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, governors, pupils and other stakeholders.
- The school publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties.
- The school analyses pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when trends or patterns indicate an issue.
- The school sets equality objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives.
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes.
- The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy.
- The school ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy.
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference.
- All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and the school council.
- The school monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern.
- Visual displays reflect the diversity of the school community.
- Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and class assemblies.
- The school takes part in events such as awareness of issues around race, disability and gender.
- The school environment is increasingly as accessible as possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school.
- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school and issues such as language barriers are considered.
- The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information.
- The Local Governing Committee is representative of the community it serves.
- Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to all candidates and voters including those with disabilities.