

Birches Primary School



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Date ratified by Board of Governors: Term 1 2018

BIRCHES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Education Authority – Southern Region

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Date Ratified by BOG: 20 November, 2018

Review Date: 2021/2022



Introduction

Birches Primary School is committed to valuing diversity by providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families. We also value our staff and are committed to exemplary employment practice.

Birches Primary School seeks to ensure that no member of the school community, or any person through their contact with the school, will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of perceived or real difference (protected characteristics). These include: race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities or socio-economic background.

In this we include all members of the extended school community- pupils, staff, Governors, Parents/Carers and others from our local community. Partners, contractors and other visitors to the school are also expected to adhere to this policy.

1. Legal Framework

In putting together this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, we are responding to the introduction of the Equality Act 2010. This replaces all previous policies and legislation relating to Race Equality, Gender Equality and Disability Equality.

This policy has been devised to enable Birches Primary School to meet its general duties/responsibilities in:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct
- Advancing equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not

We do this by:

- Providing a secure environment in which all of our children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued
- Including and valuing the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity
- Providing positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and people with disabilities
- Reviewing our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity
- Making inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of Birches Primary School

2. Aim

Equality and Diversity is about making a difference to the lives of the people we serve, treating all people with dignity and respect, and recognising the value of each individual. We are committed to ensuring that our services meet the varied and individual needs of children and young people in our school, that our employment practices are fair and promote equality and we respect the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures, locally and nationally.

We aim to prepare children and young people for living within a diverse society with increasing global connections and controversial issues.

We work hard to build strong and trusting relationships with our pupils and their families in order to harness their engagement and enjoyment in all aspects of school life. We recognise that pupils and family members may experience a range of different needs during different times in their lives and we endeavour to meet these needs by working in close partnership with relevant agencies.

3. Our Ethos

Birches Primary School is a welcoming and caring community of children, Parents/Carers, staff and governors. Together we continually strive to provide a happy and supportive environment in which the unique potential in every child is realised. Our vision of 'Shaping Tomorrow Today' encourages all of our pupils to pursue excellence in all that they do. We support this excellence agenda with a comprehensive curriculum that will enable every child to share the responsibility for becoming independent and confident learners and achievers in a continually changing world.

3.1 School Aims

Birches Primary School believes in promoting the personal, social, spiritual and academic goals desirable for all children. We wish to promote in all our pupils such values as will make them caring, responsible citizens. We believe in the dignity and worth of each individual and in the development of the whole person.

To realise the ideal the following aims have been agreed by the staff:

- to help pupils develop the knowledge, skills and practical abilities they will need throughout their lives, at work and play, in a fast changing world.
- to help pupils develop lively, enquiring minds and an enthusiasm for learning.
- to help pupils develop the ability to persevere and have pride in their work as they strive to achieve their highest possible standards.
- to help pupils develop a sense of self respect, self-confidence and self-reliance and an awareness of and a sensitivity to the needs of others.
- to help pupils develop qualities of feeling and imagination and an appreciation of the world around them.
- to help pupils develop a reasoned set of personal attitudes, values and beliefs based on the Christian faith, to be aware of society and their place in it and a respect for the beliefs and opinions of others in our community.
- to make local and global connections with others for educational and charitable endeavours using partnership schemes and the internet.

To develop in each child the following skills:

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using ICT
- Thinking skills
- Managing information, problem solving and decision-making
- Being creative, working with others and self-management.

To foster the following attitudes and values:

- Personal responsibility
- Self-confidence
- Tolerance and respect for others
- Commitment, determination and resourcefulness
- Community spirit
- Integrity
- Independence
- Openness to new ideas.

4. Guiding Principles

All learners are of equal value

All learners and potential learners are of equal value and benefit equally from school policies, practices and programmes, whatever their ability, ethnicity or national identity, religious background, gender or cultural identity.

Relevant differences are recognised

Treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Policies, practices and programmes do not discriminate, but may be differentiated to take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- Disability – so that reasonable adjustments are made
- Ethnicity – so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- Gender – so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- Religion, belief or faith background
- Sexual identity

We foster positive attitudes, relationships and a shared sense of belonging

Policies and programmes promote:

- Positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people
- Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- Mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

Staff recruitment, retention and development

Steps are taken to positively promote equality, especially where there is evidence of inequality and to ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees in recruitment, professional development and promotion:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin
- Whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respects for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity leave

Reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist

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

- Disabled and non-disabled people
- People of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Girls and boys, women and men

Policy development involves widespread consultation and involvement

People affected by this policy or programme are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. Such consultation is both direct and through representative organisations, and is based on principles of transparency and accountability.

Society as a whole benefit

Policies and programmes benefit society as a whole, locally, nationally and internationally, by fostering greater cohesion and greater participation in public life for:

- Disabled people as well as non-disabled
- People from a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Both women and men, boys and girls
- Members of alternative lifestyle communities

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference. These objectives are regularly reviewed to ensure future progress.

5. Implementation

5.1 Admissions

- Birches Primary School welcomes applications from the whole community
- We base our admissions policy on a fair
- We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our school, on the basis of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children other than dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, political activities, socio-economic background, living situation, being a member of the travelling community or an asylum seeker or having spent convictions
- We subscribe to the EA Equal Opportunities Policy

- We discourage discriminatory behaviour by staff or parents/carers and will take appropriate action
- Displaying of openly racist insignia, distribution of racist material, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on or around the school premises and will be dealt with in the strongest manner
- We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our school because of any disability
- We have ensured that specific activities are developed for children (in conjunction with parents/carers) with disabilities so they can participate successfully in the activities offered by Birches Primary School and in the curriculum offered
- We promote our school widely in the local community and within the Education Authority as a whole
- We try to reflect the diversity of members of our society in all our publicity and promotional materials
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether written or spoken

5.2 School Curriculum

The curriculum offered at Birches Primary School encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves.

Equality and diversity is embedded as far as possible in all areas of the curriculum and pupils are given opportunities to explore prejudice and discrimination (in PDMU lessons and our Shared Education Programme), and to positively explore difference in relation to race/ethnicity, religion/belief, gender or disability.

We can do this by:

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves through the PDMU curriculum and Shared Education Programme
- Ensuring children have equal access to learning
- Recognising the different learning styles of the children, making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities
- Regularly reviewing the teaching within each subject areas as well as the resources that are available to support this so that both the diversity of the school, local community and wider society as a whole are represented in this
- Avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual images
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance

- Helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable
- Ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities
- Ensuring that 'Newcomer' or children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning
- Data is collected with regard to attainment and achievement of all pupils in order to inform the planning and provision of support to individuals and groups of pupils e.g. PTE, PTM, CAT, BST, Suffolk Reading Test.
- We recognise the specific assessment needs of pupils with additional needs such as EAL/Newcomer, SEN etc.

5.3 Valuing Diversity in Families

- We accept diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families
- We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life to 'Daily News', 'Circle Time' or 'Show and Tell' type activities
- We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of Birches Primary School and contribute fully
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop plans to ensure their full inclusion

5.4 Food and Dietary Needs

- We work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met as far as reasonably possible
- We help children to learn about a range of food, and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect differences among them

5.5 Events

- Events are arranged to ensure that all families may become involved in the life of the school if they wish
- Information about events and meetings is communicated in a variety of ways e.g. electronically via our school app, school website or text alert, written and verbal, to ensure that all parents/carers have information about, and access to, the meetings/events

5.6 Employment

- Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria
- Applicants are welcome from all backgrounds and posts are open to all
- The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by Access NI – this ensures a fair selection process
- All job descriptions include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their specifications
- EA assists the school in monitoring the application and appointments process to ensure that it is fair and accessible

5.7 Staff Training

All staff at Birches Primary School will have their professional development needs met in relation to this policy where practical, possible and financially viable. This includes staff across all sections (teaching, support staff, clerical, etc) and such support should be detailed in our School Development Plan. New and temporary staff will be made aware of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

All those who are associated with Birches Primary School have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

School Governors

- Provide leadership and drive for the development and regular review of the school policies
- Ensure the accountability of the school principal and senior leadership for the communication and implementation of school policies
- Highlight good practice and promote it throughout the school and wider community
- Provide appropriate role models for staff, pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders
- Ensure a consistent response to incidents e.g. bullying cases/racist incidents
- Making sure the school complies with all current equality legislation
- Making sure this policy and procedures are followed

School Principal

- Initiate and oversee the development and regular review of equality policies and procedures
- Consult pupils, staff and stakeholders in the development and review of the policies
- Ensure the effective communication of the policies to all pupils, staff and stakeholders
- Ensure that staff are trained to carry out these policies
- Oversee the effective implementation of the policies
- Provide appropriate role models for all staff and pupils
- Provide opportunities for sharing good practice
- Take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination and ensure a consistent response to incidents e.g. bullying cases or other incidents
- Ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties effectively

Staff

- Proactively following this policy and any associated guidelines
- Providing role models for pupils through their own actions
- Dealing with racist, sexist and homophobic incidents, and recognising and tackling other forms of bias and stereotyping
- Promoting equality and good community relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic circumstances
- Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and participate in training and learning opportunities offered to them.

Pupils

- Treating other kindly and fairly without prejudice, discrimination or harassment. Fulfilling our school vision statement of 'Shaping Tomorrow Today'
- Attending and engaging in their own learning as well as helping other pupils to learn
- Telling staff about any prejudice related incidents that occur

Parents/Carers/Guardians

- Supporting our school in its implementation of this policy
- Following the school policy through their own behaviour
- Telling staff about any prejudice related incidents that occur

Visitors and Contractors

- Knowing and following our policy

Overseeing the Policy

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school lies with the head of the Safeguarding team: Mrs Watson and the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection: Mrs Quin (2018-2022)

Responsibilities include:

- Co-ordinating and monitoring work on equality issues
- Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and other incidents)
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups of pupil (e.g. Black and minority ethnic pupils, including pupils from the Travelling Community)

7. Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same manner that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the school principal and the Board of Governors. Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be advised to follow the School Complaints Procedure.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of the monitoring and evaluation procedures, we will monitor:

- The attainment of pupils with protected characteristics and those from vulnerable groups and address any issues of differential progress and achievement
- The teaching and learning to ensure all pupils' needs are met irrespective of their background
- The curriculum and teaching resources to ensure that pupils' experiences are broadened and they are prepared for life in a diverse society
- School staff and Governors will present positive role models and reflect the diversity in wider society
- Incidents of racist or homophobic behaviour and the way the school handles and reports them
- The way in which the school is sensitive to, and meets the needs of all stakeholders, paying particular regard to cultural, religious, historical, ethnic and /or linguistic heritages
- The way in which the school uses the diversity within its local and wider communities to enrich learning experiences for pupils

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years in light of experiences and best practice. This mechanism recognises that changes to legislation might require a review of the policy before the three years stipulated.

In considering the effectiveness of this policy consultation will be undertaken of this policy with staff, Governors, pupils and parents/carers to assist in the review process.

9. Publication and Dissemination

We are committed to sharing information about our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy as broadly as appropriate. To this end, we will publish the policy on our school website for all stakeholders to have direct access to the policy.