

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

### Purpose

This policy defines Inspire Education Group's (IEG) commitment to creating a community where belonging is felt by every student and colleague. Beyond our legal duty under the Equality Act 2010, we are united by shared values that celebrate diversity and nurture genuine connection across our organisation. While led by our EDI Strategic Lead and Committee, upholding an environment free from discrimination is a collective responsibility. We review this commitment annually, ensuring our culture evolves alongside our people and our principles.

### Scope

This policy outlines our collective responsibility to champion shared values by rigorously challenging inequality, prejudice, and harassment in all forms. Through continuous training and inclusive representation, we ensure that every student, colleague, and stakeholder experiences equitable access and opportunity. This policy applies to all employees, governors, students, visitors, contractors, and volunteers across the Group.

### The Policy Statement

IEG is committed to its [Public Sector Equality Duty \(Equality Act 2010\)](#) and the [Worker Protection Act 2023](#), surpassing statutory obligations to lead in equity and inclusion. We foster a culture of belonging by proactively challenging direct and indirect discrimination, including aligning with the UK Government's [Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#) and guidance from [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). In accordance with the Worker Protection Act, we take all reasonable steps to protect our workforce from harassment by any party, including third parties, while preparing for the evolving legislative landscape of the Employment Rights Bill.

Our curriculum and organisational life further reinforce Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural (SMSC) development and Fundamental British Values, empowering a diverse community where every individual can thrive. We are dedicated to the [SEND and Alternative Provision reforms](#), ensuring tailored support and inclusive practices remove barriers for learners with additional needs. By combining these standards with a commitment to a secure, thriving workforce, IEG ensures that equity of opportunity is embedded in both our professional environment and our educational delivery.

### Responsibilities

For IEG to fully meet its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty, each member of the Group must take responsibility for following and supporting this policy.

**Policy Name:** EDI001 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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The policy applies to all IEG stakeholders, including students, governors, employees, agents, employers, contractors, volunteers and visitors. Furthermore, all members of the IEG community are expected to follow the commitment to promoting EDI across the Group.

To realise our commitment to EDI, those in different roles across the Group must understand their function in its success.

### **Related Documentation**

HR002 - Code of Conduct and Ethics  
HR013 - Dignity At Work – Policy & Procedure  
HR008 - Grievance Policy and Procedure  
HR004 - Disciplinary Policy and Procedure  
CQ002 - Assessment Policy  
CQ001 - Appeals Policy  
HR001 - Disclosure of Public Interest (Whistleblowing) Policy  
EDI002 - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy  
HR017 - Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy  
STU003 - Fitness to Study Policy  
STU004 - Student Positive Behaviour Policy  
STU005 - Bullying and Harassment Policy  
STU008 - Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy  
STU009 - Dealing with Disclosure of Unspent Convictions Policy

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

### **Our Vision, Mission & Values**

Vision: "To be an exceptional learning organisation, empowering your future"

Mission: "To transform lives through inspirational education and training"

Values:

- Innovative – We are enterprising, responsive and adaptable
- Nurturing – We are supportive, caring and friendly
- Sustainable – We deliver strong finances that support reinvestment and environmental gains
- Passionate – We are ambitious, inspirational and aspirational
- Inclusive – We provide opportunities for all, respecting and celebrating the diverse communities we serve
- Respectful – We promote high standards through a culture of challenge, support and professionalism
- Excellent – We always deliver the very best that we can

### **Commitment Statement**

"IEG is dedicated to building a truly inclusive organisation where belonging is at the heart of everything we do. We champion equality, diversity, and inclusion to forge a culture where every student and colleague is empowered by shared values and genuine connection. Our commitment is to go beyond legislation, acting as a leader that transforms lives through education. By dismantling barriers and celebrating our diverse community, we ensure that IEG remains the first-choice provider for all, regardless of identity or background.

### **Our Pledge**

- **Equality for All:** Champion a culture where everyone feels empowered to succeed and reach their full potential, regardless of background
- **Celebrating Diversity:** Embrace a vibrant tapestry of cultures, beliefs and religions, recognising the immense value each individual brings to our organisation
- **Strength in Difference:** See diversity as a powerful asset, fostering an environment where all voices are heard and valued
- **EDI Champions:** Empower our EDI Committee and Special Interest Groups to shine a spotlight on the importance and benefits of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- **External Recognition:** Actively pursue external recognition for our commitment and EDI work, solidifying our reputation as an inclusive and welcoming space for all staff and students
- **Anti-Racist Practices:** Implement robust anti-racist practices across all aspects of our operations, promoting a culture of fairness and respect
- **Zero Tolerance for Discrimination:** Address any incidents of offensive or inappropriate behaviour swiftly and decisively, upholding our high standards

**Policy Name:** EDI001 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy – Appendix 1 - Responsibilities

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- **Restorative Education:** Where appropriate, utilise restorative practices to educate and empower individuals who fall short of expectations, fostering understanding and promoting positive change, business support, marketing and all other areas of the business

## **How will we achieve this**

Inspire Education Group's [Be Bold, Be Brave, Be Exceptional Strategy](#) and accompanying [enabling strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) set out our plans to achieve our commitments to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, led by our Committee and Special Interest Groups. This is reflected throughout our policies and procedures, as set out below.

## **Compliance with Legal Responsibilities**

IEG operates under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance opportunity, and nurture good relations. We protect all nine characteristics: age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership.

We hold a zero-tolerance approach to:

- Direct & Indirect Discrimination (including by association or perception)
- Harassment & Victimisation
- Discrimination arising from disability and failure to make Reasonable Adjustments

## **Nurturing Connection Beyond Compliance**

Our commitment to belonging extends to all who face barriers to education. We proactively forge connections with underrepresented groups to ensure education transforms lives, specifically supporting:

- Care-experienced learners and those with caring responsibilities
- Individuals facing socio-economic disadvantage or low-income barriers
- Speakers of English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Ex-offenders and those without formal qualifications
- Individuals with emotional, behavioural, or mental health challenges

## **Accountability & Transparency**

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, IEG ensures progress through:

- Annual Transparency: Publishing compliance and diversity data annually
- Measurable Objectives: Setting specific EDI targets every four years to drive our strategy forward and ensure our values are translated into action

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To realise our commitment to EDI, those in different roles across the Group must understand their function in its success.

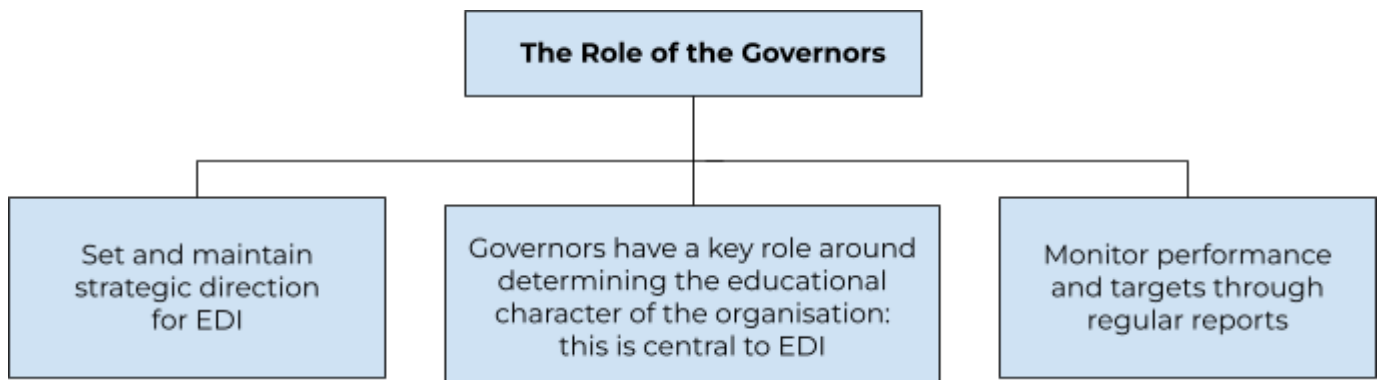
## **EDI Strategic Lead**

The EDI Strategic Lead (Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience) will:

- Maintain overall responsibility for the policy implementation, ensuring that necessary actions and staff training are executed to advance and embed equality across the Group
- Oversee the setting, implementation, and monitoring of equality objectives, impact measures, and action plans detailed within the Group's strategy
- Ensure that EDI is mainstreamed into all activities, including overseeing the equality impact assessment process for new policies, procedures, and services

## **Governors**

The governing body carries the ultimate responsibility, under the law, to ensure that IEG meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. In particular, governors at IEG will:



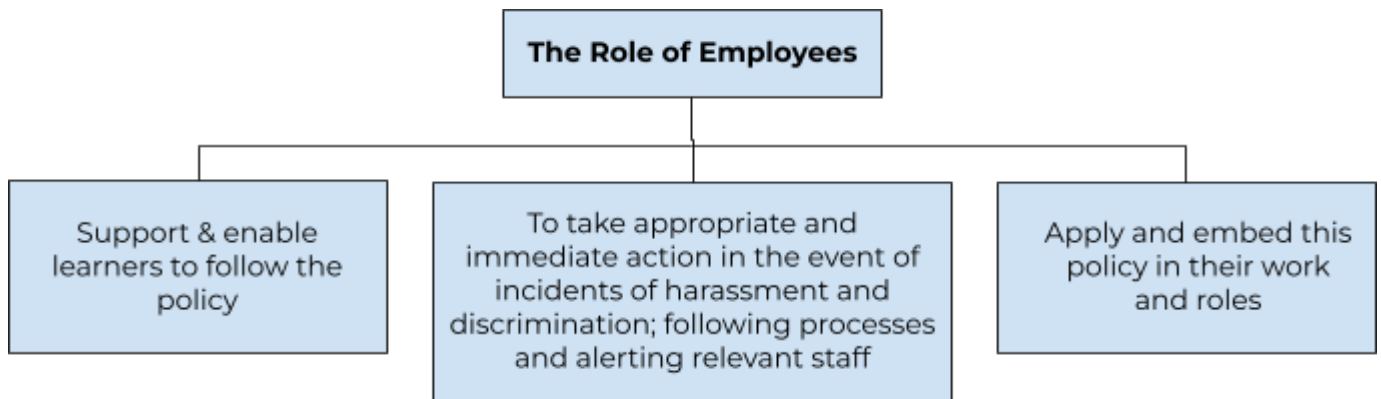
In addition to carrying the ultimate responsibility, under the law, for meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, Governors will:

- Review and Approve the Equality Objectives prepared and published at least every four years, ensuring these objectives are specific, measurable, and actively further one or more of the aims of the general Equality Duty
- Scrutinise the Annual EDI Report and subsequent data analysis on the attendance, retention, and achievement rates across different groups, holding the EDI Committee and senior leaders accountable for eliminating identified gaps
- Ensure the IEG's EDI Policy and Strategy fully align and link to the IEG's strategic values and objectives



## Employees

Each IEG employee is responsible for supporting this policy and the law. Every role in the Group has an EDI component, and employees will:



## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Code of Practice**

### **EDI for Teaching & Learning**

The Inspire Education Group (IEG) is committed to inclusive learning and embedding EDI in all aspects of the curriculum. In doing so, we recognise that all students are individuals with individual learning styles and support needs. It will therefore provide a diverse range of learning opportunities to facilitate access and achievement for the whole community. This includes actively identifying and monitoring achievement, attendance and retention for students and apprentices, identifying barriers to learning and using adaptive teaching and support to empower all students to succeed. Our Teaching & Learning Strategy sets out our approach to fulfilling these commitments.

### **EDI for Employees**

IEG is committed to equitable treatment across all stages of employment—from recruitment and promotion to career management—using objective criteria to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed. We proactively seek a workforce that reflects the diverse communities we serve, utilising inclusive recruitment strategies to reach all regional populations. By prioritising wellbeing and dignity, we cultivate a culture of belonging and respect, ensuring a working environment free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

### **EDI for Continuous Professional Development**

All IEG employees have equal access to training and development opportunities throughout the induction process and in Continuous Professional Development programmes, which support good practice in embedding EDI objectives. All staff are required to undertake mandatory training in EDI.

### **EDI for Recruitment and Selection of Staff**

Group staff will not discriminate unfairly and illegally, directly or indirectly, in making selection decisions. As such:

- All staff involved in the selection and interview process will have been trained or briefed on recruitment and selection procedures and the Equality Act 2010
- All applications will be assessed according to clear, pre-stated criteria, which will be both objective and job-related
- Any applicant who is classified as having a disability will be given the opportunity to discuss ways of overcoming any problems of access or any other issues relating to their disability. Any reasonable adjustments for staff will be considered and implemented where practicable
- Any applicant who is classified as having a disability and meets the essential criteria for the post will be guaranteed an interview

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- Candidates will only be asked health-related questions during the interview process when this is necessary to support the candidate through that process or if it refers to specific requirements of the post (e.g. heavy lifting)

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Corporate monitoring of the policy will be the responsibility of the EDI Committee and Board. Faculties and departments are responsible for the local monitoring and implementation of the policy through procedures and practices, reporting to the EDI Committee as required. This will include:

- The Annual EDI Report, which includes progress against the Equality Objectives and statistical information on learners and the workforce in line with the protected characteristics
- Self-assessment at the curriculum, faculty and group level
- Student and Staff Surveys
- Data analysis
- Monitoring of formal complaints
- Reporting to governors
- Collecting and disseminating examples of good practice
- Quality Improvement Strategy
- EDI Committee
- Reviews of Teaching & Learning

## Protected Characteristics

Inspire Education Group (IEG) commits that it will not discriminate against anyone for any reason connected to the 'protected characteristics' under the act. In addition, IEG has a wider commitment to ensure equality of opportunity for all, and therefore also includes commitments for all people regardless of their socio-economic status. A brief description of each characteristic is set out below.

### What do we mean by protected characteristics?

The following definitions have been adapted from the Equality and Human Rights Commission ([www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)).

<b>Age</b>
The Act defines age by reference to a person's age group, and when it refers to people who share the protected characteristic of age, it means they are in the same age group.
<b>Disability</b>
A person is a disabled person (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.  There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment. What matters is the effect of the impairment, not the cause.
<b>Sex</b>
A person's sex refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or either boys or girls.
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>
Refers to discriminating against a person based on the gender with which they identify. References to transgender people under the act cover those who are proposing to undergo, or are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex, i.e. gender reassignment. There is no requirement that the process of gender reassignment include medical supervision. It is recognising that there may be a difference between physical sex and gender identity. This policy relates not only to the protected characteristic of gender reassignment but also to the wider community who identify as a gender different to their sex registered at birth. This can include those who identify as gender fluid, non-binary and transgender.



### **Care Experienced**

A care-experienced individual is anyone who, at any point in their life, has been in the care of someone other than their birth parents, including foster care, children's homes, kinship care, or being adopted after being in care, encompassing both current children in care and "care leavers" (those who have left care but are eligible for support). It's a broad term for people whose lives have involved the state, often due to family difficulties, and covers diverse experiences like fostering, residential settings, or kinship care.

Key Aspects of Care Experience:

- **Broad Scope:** Includes foster care, children's homes, kinship care (with relatives/friends), supported accommodation, and even secure units
- **Adoption:** Children adopted after being in care are considered care-experienced
- **Care Leavers:** Young people (often 16-25) who have left care and are entitled to council support, but the specifics of "care leaver" status vary by region (e.g., minimum time in care required)
- **"Looked-After" Children:** Those currently under the local authority's care

No Minimum Time: The experience can be for any length of time, even short periods.

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and start a family. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2002 that this right extends to transgender people who are now able to marry or enter civil partnerships in their acquired gender because of the Gender Recognition Act (2004).

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 means that gay men and lesbian women in the UK are now able to register civil partnerships. Couples who register a civil partnership have the same rights as heterosexual married couples in areas like tax, social security, inheritance and workplace benefits. Changes to the 1973 Matrimonial Causes Act in the form of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, which came into force on 29 March 2014, now enable same-sex couples to marry in civil ceremonies and for civil partners to convert their partnership into a marriage if they wish.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic in its own right (before the Equality Act 2010, pregnancy and maternity came under sex discrimination). Discrimination (i.e. less favourable treatment) because an employee is breastfeeding is a form of sex discrimination within the workplace.



### **Race**

Race means a person's:

- colour, and/or
- nationality (including citizenship), and/or
- ethnic or national origin

A racial group is composed of people who have or share a colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.

A person has the protected characteristic of race if they belong to a particular racial group, such as 'British people'. Racial groups can comprise two or more racial groups, such as 'British Asians'.

### **Religion and Beliefs**

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief.

A religion need not be mainstream or well-known to gain protection as a religion. It must, though, be identifiable and have a clear structure and belief system.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Sexual orientation means the attraction a person feels towards one sex or another (or both), which determines who they form intimate relationships with or are attracted to. Some people are attracted to those of the same sex (lesbian women and gay men). Some people are attracted to people of both male and female sexes (bisexual people) or all sexes (pansexual people). Some people are attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual people). Some people are not attracted to any sex (asexual people).

Everyone is protected from being treated less favourably because of sexual orientation, regardless of how they identify.

Sexual orientation discrimination also covers discrimination connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation.

### **Socio-economic Status**

Although not a protected characteristic under the act, the College commits not to discriminate against anyone due to their socio-economic background.

### **Young Carers**

A young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)). Many young people are sole carers for a person in their family, as well as undertaking a full-time group course.

**Ex-Offenders**

It is widely acknowledged that education plays a vital role in the prevention of crime and re-offending. IEG is keen to ensure that a criminal record is not a barrier to education.

## **EDI Policy Accompanying Guidance on Race Inclusion**

This guidance provides a framework for Inspire Education Group (IEG)'s commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for students, staff, and stakeholders across our diverse communities in Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. It supports our goal of ensuring every member of our community is treated with equality and respect.

### **Our Guiding Principles**

IEG is guided by a proactive approach to anti-racism, defined as the promotion and practice of racial equality. This commitment is demonstrated through:

- **Celebrating Diversity:** Empowering our diverse community as a core strength
- **The Unison Anti-Racism Charter:** Adhering to rigorous national standards for workplace equality
- **College of Sanctuary Status:** Providing a rigorous culture of welcome and safety for refugees and asylum seekers, explicitly rejecting **Xenophobia** in all forms
- **Continuous Improvement:** Actively identifying and addressing practices that may perpetuate racial inequality, supported by the Race, Religion and Culture Group

### **Key Definitions & Standards**

To ensure a consistent approach across all IEG campuses, we apply the following definitions when identifying, reporting, and challenging discrimination:

- **Racism:** IEG defines racism as a system of advantage based on race. It involves prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior. It can be manifested through individual prejudice or institutional power
- **Anti-Racism:** This is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organisational structures, policies, practices, and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably
- **Systemic (Institutional) Racism:** The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It is seen in processes, attitudes, and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, and thoughtlessness
- **Antisemitism (IHRA):** IEG adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition: *"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews."*

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*Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."*

- **Anti-Muslim Hostility (APPG):** IEG adopts the All-Party Parliamentary Group: "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness." We recognise this can include verbal abuse, physical attacks, and exclusion
- **Xenophobia:** Prejudice or hostility toward people from other countries. In the context of our College of Sanctuary status, this includes the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, and international students from discrimination based on their national origin or residency status
- **Microaggressions:** Everyday, subtle, intentional and unintentional interactions or behaviours that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalised groups. (e.g. commenting on a student's "perfect English" or asking "where are you really from?")
- **Intersectionality:** The recognition that individuals may experience multiple, overlapping forms of discrimination (e.g. a student experiencing both racism and ableism, or xenophobia and homophobia)

## **Guidance for Equal Recruitment and Experience**

To ensure our community is representative and equitable, the following practices are recommended:

- **Staff Recruitment:** Following Safer Recruitment and Selection procedures to welcome applicants from all racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds
- **Student Enrolment:** Ensuring an inclusive application process for all students
- **Data-Informed Action:** Monitoring ethnicity profiles to ensure parity in recruitment, retention, and attainment, as well as producing an ethnicity pay gap report in line with our Anti-Racism Charter commitments
- **Intersectionality:** Applying an intersectional lens to data analysis to support those who may face multiple disadvantages, such as vulnerable learner groups

## **Expected Standards of Conduct and Political Impartiality**

All members of the IEG community should model inclusive behaviours:

- **Staff** are expected to model tolerance and respond sensitively to diverse home backgrounds and cultural origins, as outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct and Ethics

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- **Students:** Should follow the Student Code of Conduct by remaining respectful and refraining from discriminatory attitudes, including offensive "banter" or microaggressions
- **Professional Modelling:** Staff must model inclusive behaviours and maintain strict political impartiality when discussing sensitive global conflicts. Guidance from the *Independent Review into Antisemitism (2026)* must be followed to ensure classrooms remain safe spaces for all

## **Addressing Racial Discrimination**

Discrimination is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. IEG provides the following framework for challenging such behaviour:

- **Restorative Practice:** For lower-severity incidents or microaggressions, restorative conversations are used to increase awareness and prevent future escalation
- **Disciplinary Procedures:** Serious incidents, such as premeditated hate speech or repeat offences, are handled as gross misconduct under the relevant disciplinary policies
- **Staff Support:** The Staff Harassment and Bullying Policy provides a framework for maintaining a respectful working and learning environment

## **Education and Awareness**

IEG supports its community through ongoing learning:

- **Curriculum:** Anti-racism and racial equality are embedded within the Personal Development programme, Apprenticeship Development programme and general curriculum
- **Resource Review:** Curriculum materials are regularly reviewed to ensure they are inclusive, representative and do not reinforce colonial or biased narratives
- **Training:** Specific anti-racism training is provided to staff to equip them with the tools to model and challenge behaviours

## **Putting Guidance into Practice**

The application of this guidance is overseen by the EDI Strategic Lead, in collaboration with the EDI Coordinator and the Race, Religion and Culture Special Interest Group. Progress is tracked via an action plan derived from ethnicity data analysis in Self-Assessment Reports (SAR). This ensures that the group remains focused on closing achievement and attendance gaps through targeted interventions.