Equality Policy

"I am the vine, and you are the branches. If any remain in me and I remain in them, they produce much fruit."

John 15:5

Learning, growing and caring as part of God's family.

Jesus (the gardener) nourishes and tends us as we learn and grow, so that we can all flourish. As a vine, we are one, but all unique and special to Him. We care for each other, as God cares for us.

Purpose and Commitment

At Scotforth St Paul's CofE Primary and Nursery School, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all members of our school community.

Our Christian vision underpins our commitment to being an inclusive school in which every person is valued, treated with dignity and given the opportunity to flourish. We recognise that equality does not necessarily mean treating everyone in exactly the same way. It means recognising and responding to different needs, removing barriers and taking appropriate action so that everyone can participate fully in school life.

We seek to create a culture in which difference and diversity are understood, respected and celebrated, and where discrimination, harassment, victimisation, prejudice and inequality are challenged.

This policy sets out how the school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Legislation and the Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect people from discrimination.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the school must have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
3. foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Advancing equality of opportunity includes:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people because of a protected characteristic;
- taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who share a protected characteristic; and
- encouraging participation where it is disproportionately low.

Fostering good relations includes tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between different groups.

The school will consider equality implications when developing policies, making significant decisions and reviewing its provision. Equality considerations will form part of decision-making rather than being considered retrospectively.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The provisions of the Equality Act relating specifically to pupils in schools do not apply to age or marriage and civil partnership. However, the school's wider responsibilities as an employer and public body extend beyond its duties in relation to pupils.

We recognise that people may experience inequality or disadvantage for a range of reasons and that individual circumstances can intersect. Our commitment to inclusion therefore extends beyond minimum legal requirements.

Our Approach to Equality

Equality and inclusion are embedded throughout school life rather than being treated as a separate area of provision.

We aim to:

- ensure that all pupils have access to high-quality education and the wider opportunities provided by the school;
- maintain high expectations for all pupils while recognising individual needs and circumstances;
- identify and remove barriers to learning, participation and achievement;
- ensure that the curriculum reflects and celebrates diversity and challenges stereotypes and prejudice;

- use language, resources and images that promote positive and respectful representations of different people and communities;
- promote pupils' understanding of equality, diversity, respect and the protected characteristics in an age-appropriate way;
- ensure that educational visits, clubs, activities, responsibilities and other opportunities are accessible as widely as possible;
- listen to pupils and families and take account of their experiences when evaluating our provision; and
- promote positive relationships within the school and wider community.

Curriculum and Teaching

Our curriculum plays an important role in promoting equality and fostering good relations.

We will provide opportunities for pupils to encounter a diverse range of people, cultures, beliefs, experiences and perspectives across the curriculum. Resources will be selected carefully to avoid stereotyping and to enable pupils to see themselves and others represented positively.

Teaching will challenge prejudice and discriminatory attitudes and help pupils develop respect for people whose lives, experiences or beliefs may differ from their own.

Teaching about equality and the protected characteristics will be appropriate to pupils' age and stage of development and will be considered alongside the school's statutory curriculum responsibilities and Christian ethos.

Teachers will consider the needs of individual pupils when planning and delivering learning and will make appropriate adaptations to enable pupils to access the curriculum and participate successfully.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The school is committed to ensuring that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with pupils who are not disabled.

We recognise that the duty to make reasonable adjustments is **anticipatory**. We will therefore consider in advance the barriers that disabled pupils may experience and the reasonable steps that can be taken to remove or reduce those barriers.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered according to individual circumstances and may include changes to:

- school policies, procedures and routines;
- teaching and learning arrangements;
- communication and the presentation of information;
- access to activities, visits and wider opportunities; and
- the provision of appropriate auxiliary aids or services.

We will work with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals when identifying appropriate adjustments.

Physical accessibility is considered through the school's Accessibility Plan, which should be read alongside this policy.

Preventing and Responding to Discrimination

All members of our school community are expected to treat others with dignity and respect.

Discriminatory behaviour, harassment, victimisation, prejudice-related language and bullying will be challenged and addressed. This includes behaviour related to a protected characteristic, whether or not the person targeted has that characteristic.

Staff will:

- model respectful and inclusive behaviour;
- challenge discriminatory or prejudicial language and behaviour;
- respond appropriately to incidents;
- record prejudice-related incidents on CPOMS, using the relevant categories where appropriate; and
- provide appropriate support to those affected.

Patterns or trends in prejudice-related incidents will be monitored so that appropriate action can be taken.

This section should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying procedures and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Inclusion and Participation

We aim to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in the academic, social, spiritual and wider life of the school.

We will consider whether particular groups experience barriers in relation to areas such as:

- attainment and progress;
- attendance;
- behaviour and suspensions;
- participation in clubs, visits and enrichment;
- leadership and pupil voice opportunities; and
- access to the curriculum and wider school life.

Where differences or potential inequalities are identified, we will consider the reasons for these and take proportionate action where appropriate.

We recognise and value the linguistic, cultural and religious diversity of our school community and will make appropriate provision to enable pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, to participate fully in school life.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with its duties under equality legislation and for holding school leaders to account for the implementation of this policy.

The governing body will:

- consider equality when making significant decisions;

- monitor the school's equality information and objectives;
- ensure that equality considerations are reflected in relevant policies and school improvement work; and
- challenge leaders where evidence indicates potential inequality or disadvantage.

The designated governor for equality is **Alison Alderson**.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy and will:

- promote an inclusive school culture;
- ensure that staff understand their responsibilities;
- ensure that discrimination and prejudice-related incidents are appropriately addressed;
- consider equality implications when developing policy and making decisions;
- oversee the monitoring of relevant equality information; and
- report to governors as appropriate.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality and inclusion through their professional practice;
- modelling respectful behaviour and language;
- challenging discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes;
- identifying and addressing barriers to pupils' participation and learning; and
- reporting concerns and incidents through the appropriate school procedures.

All members of the school community are expected to contribute to an environment in which people are treated with dignity and respect.

Equality Information and Monitoring

The school uses information that it already collects to understand the experiences and outcomes of different groups and to identify possible inequalities.

As appropriate, this may include information relating to:

- attainment and progress;
- attendance;
- behaviour and suspensions;
- SEND and disability;
- disadvantage;
- participation in wider school opportunities;
- prejudice-related and bullying incidents; and
- pupil and parent/carer voice.

Information will be considered proportionately and sensitively. Particular care will be taken where small numbers could lead to individuals being identified.

The purpose of monitoring is not simply to identify differences between groups. Where differences are identified, leaders will consider the possible reasons for them and whether further investigation or action is required.

The school will publish information demonstrating its compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty annually.

Equality Objectives

The school will publish one or more **specific and measurable equality objectives** which respond to relevant equality issues identified through its evidence and self-evaluation.

Equality objectives will be:

- agreed with the governing body;
- published separately from this policy;
- monitored for progress and impact; and
- reviewed and republished at least every four years.

Where appropriate, equality objectives will also be reflected in the School Development Plan.

Equality in Decision-Making

Equality considerations will be taken into account when significant decisions are made.

Depending on the nature of the decision, this may involve considering:

- who may be affected by the decision;
- whether any group may experience a particular disadvantage;
- whether reasonable adjustments are required;
- whether there are opportunities to advance equality of opportunity;
- how the decision may affect relationships between different groups; and
- what evidence or consultation is needed to understand its likely impact.

The level of consideration and any written record will be proportionate to the significance and potential equality impact of the decision.

Equality considerations will also be taken into account when the school commissions services or works with external providers.

Publication and Review

This policy will be published on the school website and made available in alternative formats where reasonably required.

It should be read alongside the school's published Equality Information and Equality Objectives, which provide current information about how the school is meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The governing body and Headteacher will keep the effectiveness of this policy under review.

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