

ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
A MEMBER OF THE ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

September 2024

'Learn, love and respect through Jesus'

***This policy should be read in conjunction
with our other policies (particularly Accessibility; Gifted and Talented Children; Racial
Equality; Special Educational Needs)***

1 Introduction (From Diocese Model Equal Opportunities Statement)

1.1 Christ is the foundation of everything we do and the Gospels provide us with our influence and inspiration. We are therefore committed to promoting:

· **the uniqueness of the individual**

We believe that every person is a unique individual, created in God's image and loved by Him. We are therefore committed to treat every person with equality of esteem and the respect and dignity due to a child of God.

· **the search for excellence**

We are called to seek perfection in all aspects of our lives. We celebrate the enrichment of the total community which flows from diversity of age, gender, racial and social origins, abilities, culture and religion. We are therefore committed to ensure that all are to be given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.

· **the education of the whole person**

We offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on Gospel values and working in harmony. Through this and a variety of educational experiences and interactions we aim to prepare young people for a life working with others in communities which maybe diverse socially, culturally and religiously. We recognise that it is also important to help pupils to understand their own ethnic identity and cultural heritage as well as helping them to understand that of others irrespective of whether the school serves or is located in an ethnically diverse community.

· **the education of all**

We have the duty to care for all, with preferential consideration for the poor, and to ensure that we provide for those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged.

· **moral principles**

Our belief in the Gospel message commits us to be in the forefront of the movement for social and racial justice and harmony. We believe this is fundamental to the common good. We aim to prepare our young people to serve as witnesses to these moral and spiritual values in the wider world. Consequently, we will strive to ensure that:

- any person recruited to the service of the school, whether as a member of staff or a volunteer, is made fully aware of our aims and objectives and required to support them;
- children who are admitted to the school and their families are fully aware of our aims and objectives and undertake to support them;

· all of our structures and policies are evaluated and kept under constant review in order to see that no individual is subject in any way to unlawful discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, and to ensure that all are enabled to reach their full potential.

Finally, we acknowledge that minority groups have often suffered disadvantage due to prejudice or ignorance. We recognise that it is all too easy for the structures of institutions to result in “inequality by default”. We therefore commit ourselves to take positive steps to examine our policies and practice and to change them where necessary.

1.2 This policy accords with legislation:

- Equality Act 2012
- Equality Policy statement 2016 – school document
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Acts 2002 and 2005;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- SEN Disability Act (2001).

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 We seek to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.

2.4 We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups.

2.5 We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.

2.6 We challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.

2.7 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.

2.8 We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are caused by 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.

3 Racial equality

3.1 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.

3.2 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 (see policies for Racial Equality and for Behaviour and Discipline).

- 3.3 We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. Thus, for example, we will immediately remove any offensive graffiti that we may find in school. 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.
- 3.4 Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So, for example, in the curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children learn the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

4 Disability non-discrimination

- 4.1 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. The school fully meets the requirements of the amended Disability Discrimination Act that came into effect in 2005. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled children.
- 4.2 The school is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled children full access to all areas of learning.
- 4.3 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.

5 Gender equality

- 5.1 We recognise that nationally, the achievement of boys is falling behind that of girls. We are committed to seeing all individuals and groups of pupils making the best progress possible in our school.
- 5.2 We have put in place a number of measures to raise the achievement of the boys. These include:
- dealing with negative aspects of boys' behaviour, including bullying and name-calling;
 - removing gender bias from our resources;
 - making sure that our displays reflect boys and men as effective learners and achievers;
 - encouraging boys to read fiction.
- 5.3 To make our teaching more accessible to boys, we:
- begin a lesson by stating the learning outcomes, and giving the 'big picture';
 - employ a variety of activities, and include a kinaesthetic element;
 - provide challenge, competition and short-term goals;
 - give regular positive feedback and rewards;
 - set writing tasks that are cross-curricular, that have been modelled first, and for which there are frames and scaffolds available.
- 5.4 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. Social class, ethnic origin and local context are all strongly linked to performance. We also seek to ensure that policies

designed to improve the boys' attainment do not do so at the expense of achievement by the girls.

6 The role of Governors

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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. To do this, we monitor:
- admissions;
 - attainment;
 - exclusions;
 - rewards and sanctions;
 - parents' and pupils' questionnaires.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 The Governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or disability a child may have. (See Admissions Policy).
- 6.5 The Governing Body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their sex, religion, disability or ethnicity. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally.

7 The role of the Head Teacher

- 7.1 It is the Head Teacher's role to implement the school's policy on equal opportunities, and s/he is supported by the governing body in so doing.
- 7.2 It is the Head Teacher'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.
- 7.3 The Head Teacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against.
- 7.4 The Head Teacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and in providing opportunities for training.
- 7.5 The Head Teacher 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.
- 7.6 The Head Teacher views all incidents of unfair treatment in accordance with our Racial Equality Policy, and deals with them appropriately.

8 The role of the class teacher

- 8.1 Class teachers recognise their own prejudices, but do their best to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. We do not knowingly discriminate against any child.
- 8.2 When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups.
- 8.3 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, the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia, and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.
- 8.4 All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any incidents in the school log book and draw them to the immediate attention of the Head Teacher.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The governors will therefore:
 - monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it with 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 Head Teacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
 - take into serious consideration any complaints from parents/carers, 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.

This policy was reviewed by staff and ratified by the Full LGB at its meeting on 8th October 2024