



EQUALITY POLICY

2024-2027



Grace Mary Primary School Equality Statement

Grace Mary Primary School wants to be recognised as a school at the heart of the community, providing an inclusive, safe, caring and stimulating environment in which to learn.

At Grace Mary we celebrate our diverse cohort of children. We are the only primary school in Sandwell to have a d/Deaf provision and one of only two primary schools to provide specialist support to children with identified Social/Emotional/Mental Health needs.

At Grace Mary we celebrate our diverse cohort of children. We are one of a few primary school in Sandwell to have an ASD provision

Equality Statement

Grace Mary Primary School provides education for all children, acknowledging that the society within which we live is enriched by diversity. We strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school reflects the diversity of ALL members of the school community, where everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect and fairness. Children are provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Grace Mary Primary, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Legal Duties

As a school we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The General Equality Duty sets out the equality matters that the school needs to consider when making decisions that affect pupils or staff with protected characteristics. This duty has three elements. In carrying out their functions public bodies are required to have 'due regard', when making decisions and developing policies, to the need to:

1. eliminate discrimination,
2. advance equality of opportunity
3. foster good relations

We understand the principal of the act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity. Protected characteristics make up the part of a person's identity that makes them who they are, such aspects or characteristics are protected from discrimination. Everyone in Britain is protected from unlawful behavior by the Act.

A protected characteristic under the Act covers the groups listed below:

- ● age (for employees not for service provision)
- ● disability
- ● race
- ● sex (including issues of transgender)
- ● gender reassignment
- ● maternity and pregnancy
- ● religion and belief
- ● sexual orientation
- ● Marriage and Civil Partnership (for employees)

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.

To meet our general duties, listed above, the law requires us to carry out some specific duties to demonstrate how we meet the general duties. These are to:

- Publish Equality Information – to demonstrate compliance with the general duty across its functions (We will not publish any information that can specifically identify any individual)
- Prepare and publish equality objectives which we will review on an annual basis
- Consult all our stakeholders in the development of our equality objectives and report on progress against our objectives on an annual basis

In order to do this effectively we will collect data related to the protected characteristics above and analyse this data to determine our focus for our equality objectives. The data will be assessed across our core provisions as a school, but we will also analyse available data relating to the context of our local community, including hate crime data and demographic information. In relation to school provision we will pay particular attention to the following functions:

- Admissions
- Attendance
- Attainment
- Exclusions
- Prejudice related incidents
- Curriculum
- Complaints/compliments

Our objectives will detail how we will ensure equality is applied to the services listed above however where we find evidence that other functions have a significant impact on any particular group we will include work in this area.

We also recognise that our work on equality is central to the successful promotion of fundamental British Values, especially in relation to the values of respect and tolerance and the rule of law. We will therefore ensure that our curriculum helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. We will work proactively to address all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including derogatory and discriminatory language. We will mainly do this through the delivery of our statutory RSE / PSHE Curriculum. We will also utilise all other subject areas to foster positive relations and to ensure that we consciously cultivate opportunities to challenge stereotypes and support positive identity development for all our pupils.

In endeavouring to fulfill our legal obligations we will:

- Recognise and respect diversity
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging
- Observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development
- Aim to reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers
- Consult and involve widely
- Regularly review our processes.

Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents

This school is opposed to all forms of prejudice and we recognise that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice related discrimination may fair less well in the education system. We provide both our pupils and staff with an awareness of the impact of prejudice in order to prevent any incidents. If incidents still occur, we address them immediately and may seek support from the Local Authority or other external specialists.

Responsibility

We believe that promoting Equality is the whole school's responsibility

Governing Body

Involving and engaging the whole school community in identifying and understanding equality barriers and in the setting of objectives to address these. Monitoring progress towards achieving equality objectives. Publishing data and publishing equality objectives. Ensuring that the school fulfils its legal responsibilities.

Head Teacher

As above including: Promoting key messages to staff, parents and pupils about equality and what is expected of them and can be expected from the school in carrying out its day to day duties. Ensuring that all of the school community receives adequate training to meet the need of delivering equality, including pupil awareness. Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record report, and respond appropriately to prejudice related incidents

Senior Management Team

To support the Head Teacher as above Ensure fair treatment and access to services and opportunities. Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record, report and respond appropriately to prejudice related incidents.

Teaching Staff

Help in delivering the right outcomes for pupils. Uphold the commitment made to pupils and parents/carers on how they can be expected to be treated. Design and deliver an inclusive curriculum. Ensure that you are aware of your responsibility to record, report and respond appropriately to prejudice related incidents.

Non-Teaching Staff

Support the school and the governing body in delivering a fair and equitable service to all stakeholders. Uphold the commitment made by the head teacher/principal on how pupils and parents/carers can be expected to be treated. Support colleagues within the school community. Ensure that you are aware of your responsibility to record, report and respond appropriately to prejudice related incidents.

Parents/Carers

Take an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these. Take an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment given to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.

Pupils

Supporting the school to achieve the commitment made to tackling inequality. Uphold the commitment made by the head teacher on how pupils and parents/carers, staff and the wider school community can be expected to be treated.

Local Community Members

Take an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these Take an active role in

supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment made to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.

We will ensure that the whole school community is aware of the Single Equality Policy and our published equality information and equality objectives by publishing them on the school's website.

Preventing and Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents

We define prejudice-based incidents/bullying in the following way:

Prejudice-related incidents/bullying – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, or because they have a learning or physical disability. It may include misogyny or misandry and be sexist in nature. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

At Grace Mary Primary School we encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice, and we celebrate diversity. This school is opposed to all forms of prejudice, and we recognise that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice-related discrimination may fair less well in the education system. We recognise that prejudice-based bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse and is therefore a safeguarding concern, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023. We adopt a contextual safeguarding, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse. We are committed to working with families and outside agencies to proactively prevent incidents and to create an environment in which all members of our school community feel welcomed, accepted, and safe. We believe every member of our community should be treated with respect and should not be subjected to prejudice or discrimination in any form. This includes staff, parents/carers, governors/trustees, and visitors to our school.

We provide both our pupils and staff with an awareness of the impact of prejudice to prevent any incidents. We will endeavour to proactively tackle all forms of prejudice by ensuring our curriculum is representative of all sections of society and the contributions made by people with different characteristics are consciously embedded across all subjects. In doing so, we will challenge stereotypes and work towards inclusivity and identity-safe classrooms where everyone feels validated, accepted, safe and a sense of belonging.

If incidents still occur, we will address them immediately ensuring that appropriate levels of support are provided to those affected; that we thoroughly investigate all reports/allegations; and that we will apply appropriate sanctions and address offending behaviours through a programme of education. All adults in our school community are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct. Any allegations made against staff will be investigated in line with our policies and procedures relating to staff conduct and behaviour. Any staff member/parent/carer, governor or visitor to the school, who is

subjected to prejudice- based abuse can also expect to have their complaint thoroughly investigated and will be supported in accordance with their wishes.

We review our practice following each incident including what more we might do to prevent further incidents. We recognise that we must not become complacent and will regularly evaluate satisfaction levels in respect of how we have responded to any reports or concerns raised.

Pupils, Including Bystanders/Witnesses

We talk about trusted adults regularly in school to remind our pupils of who they can report concerns to. The definitions of victim, perpetrator and bystander are clarified to all pupils regularly to develop a shared understanding.

- We emphasise the importance of all pupils (whether a victim or a bystander) reporting concerns of bullying or bullying behaviour to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a teaching assistant, the head teacher, a lunchtime supervisor, or a member of the office team.
- The member of staff will listen to the pupil and make an initial note of their concerns, they will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported.
- The member of staff will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant members of staff will be alerted.
- The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.
- Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

We understand that some pupils may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place. Our school has worry boxes, located in each class where the pupil can put their name/a brief note about their concerns (either written or drawn). These worry boxes are introduced to the pupils at the start of the year and pupils are reminded of them regularly. The Family Support Worker will check the boxes daily and take any necessary action.

Parents/Carers

We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carers to hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying.

We ask that parents/carers report their concerns directly to the school rather than discussing them with other members of the school community, either in person or online.

The following steps will be taken to investigate:

- Initially, we ask parents/carers to contact school (in person/via telephone call/via email) to explain their concerns.
- The office/class staff will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss these in detail.
- The Head Teacher will inform an appropriate member of staff and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead if the allegation is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.
- Following an allegation, the class teacher will make a formal record of this on the school's recording system (CPOMs).
- An investigation into the allegation will be carried out and appropriate follow-up actions identified and taken.

Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of bullying and relational conflict and will respond to reports promptly. Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

School Staff

Our staff work closely with our pupils and therefore may notice a change in a pupil's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a pupil or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or are concerned that a pupil is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, following the procedures outlined above in the 'Parents/Carers' section.

Complaints

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website, and by request from the school office.

Monitor and Review

Every three years, we will review our objectives in relation to any changes in our school profile. Our objectives will sit in our overall school improvement plan and therefore will be reviewed as part of this process.

Summary

In fulfilling our legal obligations we aim to:

- foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging
- advance equality of opportunity by ensuring that teaching, learning and the curriculum promotes equality and celebrates diversity
- ensure that all learners have equal access to a rich, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development
- remove or minimise existing inequalities and barriers
- ensure that pupils, parents and other stakeholders are consulted and involved widely in advancing the provision made by the school
- promote community cohesion by fostering good relations
- ensure that within the school budget, adequate funding is provided to underpin this policy and that intervention, positive and preventative action is funded appropriately.

We believe that promoting equality is the responsibility of everyone in the school community.

Clare Sturmeay April 2024
Headteacher