



# Sandiway Primary School

## Policy for Equality and Accessibility

November 2020

### Rationale

This policy and objectives replace all previous equality schemes, plans and policies agreed by the school.

The scheme includes statutory requirements for race, disability and gender equality schemes. It also covers other groups of children and adults who may be underrepresented or vulnerable.

The overriding purpose of this policy is to enable the school community to meet its stated aims and mission statement summarised as 'Learning together'. We will ensure that every individual in our school community is able to learn and work effectively, free from discrimination and unfair treatment. Staff and Local Academy Board (LAB) members understand fully that treating people with equality and fairness does not mean treating people the same. It does mean giving everyone equal opportunities to learn and develop in a safe and respectful way.

Some children and families will require additional support, encouragement and resources to thrive. We understand that for everyone to feel they 'belong' at Sandiway Primary School, individuals, especially children, need to see 'people like them' valued and represented in the curriculum and life of the school.

We are aware that some individuals may belong to groups, such as some religious affiliations, which will have beliefs and attitudes that can be considered contrary to the Equality Act and this policy. While respecting the right to individual and personal beliefs, views and attitudes expressed publicly that are contrary to the Equality Act 2010 and this policy will not go unchallenged in school. Adults working in school are free to think and believe as they choose; they are not entitled to express any belief however or behave in any capacity, in a manner which is discriminatory to any of the groups in this policy. This includes views expressed publicly through personal activities including social networking by people known to be part of our school community.

We understand that some issues pertaining to equality are considered 'sensitive'. When these are not shied away from, brushed under the carpet or ignored, children develop healthy and respectful attitudes towards the diverse range of humanity living in their community. Children from families with different lifestyle choices to the 'norm' feel they belong and so learn more effectively. Children considering their own choices as they grow and mature will do so more successfully and with happier outcomes for themselves, their families and their communities.

### Definitions

In this policy 'equality' refers to all areas covered by the equality Act 2010 (i) and other groups within our school (ii).

- i. Groups protected in law by the Equality Act 2010 from direct or indirect discrimination are: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief (including none), sex, sexual orientation. The equality of all the groups defined by the Equality Act comes within the remit of a community, state funded, primary school.

- ii. In addition, staff and governors at Sandiway Primary School include groups of children from the full range of families who live in our community. That is: children who have been adopted or living with foster parents; children being cared for by extended family including private fostering and special guardianship; children living in single parent families or with step parents; children in receipt of free school meals or living in a family experiencing significant economic disadvantage.

## **Equality Objectives**

In relation to Leadership and Management:

1. Leaders and managers will ensure that the school is well placed to promote and teach equality and diversity issues through the curriculum by:

- Providing high quality resources specifically for PHSE/SRE and for other curriculum reflecting and including different groups, e.g. families with same sex, disabled, ethnic and racial minority parents;
- Having well trained and equality-aware staff who understand their responsibilities to all children and families;
- Participating in national events such as Anti-Bullying Week, Black and LGBT+ History months and focussing attention on specific diversity concerns within our school community;
- Being proactive in seeking the views of children and families from all backgrounds;
- Encouraging people from diverse backgrounds to engage in the life of school, for example as parent/carer volunteers or as governors;
- Developing schemes of work and units of study that ensure different groups are represented and visible to all children.

2. Senior leaders and governors will ensure that our systems for recruiting staff actively encourage applications from colleagues in all those groups protected by the Equality Act. Recruitment procedures are administrated in line with the law.

3. Senior leaders and governors will undertake equality assessments of all new and existing policies and procedures as they are reviewed.

4. While this scheme is reviewed every three years, policies all contain a section on equal opportunities. Leaders ensure that the equality agenda is a day-to-day part of the ethos and culture at Sandiway Primary School.

In relation to Teaching, Learning and Assessment:

1. We will ensure that our curriculum, in and outside the classroom, including extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities actively promotes understanding between different groups of people.
2. In the curriculum explicitly taught and implicit (for example assemblies) we will challenge stereotypes:
  - We use the stories of individuals from history and current affairs as exemplars and role models from a wide range of communities and groups.
  - We use examples of all kinds of families in addition to a father, mother and children: foster carers; mixed race; different ethnic groups; same sex parents; single parents and step parents; disabled parents and children; adoptive parents; extended family acting as main carers.
  - Staff will avoid racial, disability or gender specific stereotypes. For example: 'dyslexics are good at art', 'Africans are all accomplished drummers and dancers', 'homosexuals enjoy musical theatre'.

- The groups in parts i and ii of this policy will be represented and visible in PHSE, SRE and other lessons and studies involving diversity.
  - The above groups will also be visible and represented through the curriculum not specifically pertaining to equality and diversity. For example, in mathematics problems, books in the library, artists, scientists and figures represented will include role models, individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds.
3. Teachers know and understand that for some vulnerable children the teacher may be the only adult providing feedback on their learning to the child. Marking and oral feedback has a far greater impact on these children's achievement and teachers therefore adapt their feedback for these children.
  4. We will challenge gender stereotypes including the use of colours and particular activities or pursuits as gender-biased. We recognise that this is particularly important in the first few years of school and when children are very young and their attitudes to themselves and others are forming.
  5. In PHSE and SRE life-style choices and particular sexual orientation will not be promoted above another. Teachers will respond factually and without judgement, for example most people are heterosexual but some people are attracted to people of the same sex, this is normal human diversity.

In relation to Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare:

1. We will maintain a rigorous anti-bullying stance to protect students and staff, including and beyond those in groups protected by the Equalities Act 2010, from harassment and discrimination.
2. We are aware that children with some difficulties, for example autistic spectrum, may lash out or shout in a manner that in other children could constitute bullying. However, without the 'intent to harm' these incidents are managed in terms of their additional needs and not as bullying. Adults' discussions with individuals, groups, classes and, where necessary parents, will ensure that other children and families understand and respect the fairness of this approach.
3. Children will be permitted and supported in making choices free from judgement and ridicule; for example a boy wanting to dress up as a woman in role play or a girl preferring to play traditionally masculine games such as football.
4. Events such as mothers' and fathers' day will be handled with sensitivity for children in care, of single or same sex parents and their views will be sought. For example, if a child wanted to make two cards for mother's day or a card for an auntie, granny or family friend, it would be facilitated and respected.
5. Teachers will do their best to know and be aware of children's family makeup insofar as it affects their wellbeing in school. When potentially sensitive issues, for example adoption, are discussed in class, teachers will make every effort to communicate with parents and carers: before (if the learning is a planned activity) or promptly if the issue arises during the day and is discussed.
6. Teachers will offer additional parent/carer meetings for any children with vulnerabilities e.g. pupil premium indicators, special educational needs or disabilities.
7. Parents are encouraged and expected to inform the school of issues that may affect their child, such as divorce. Staff will not ask for or require details other than information that might affect the child's wellbeing in school.
8. Toilets for staff are gender neutral. Same sex toilets are indicated for children and a toilet with sanitary wear disposal unit is available for older girls and women. Where we identify the need for same sex toilets for the children, these will be labelled accordingly.
9. We challenge and address all discriminatory language relating to disability, age, race and sexual orientation. This includes when young children use terms unknowingly, for example the word 'gay' as a general term for stupid or idiot. Challenging will include discussion of what the terms actually mean and why they are offensive and unacceptable.

10. Adults using discriminatory language and/or behaviour in school will be subject to disciplinary action. Children will have their language or behaviour challenged and expected to address their conduct.
11. All incidents of racial abuse or perceived racial harassment will be formally logged in line with the law. Incidents of homophobic bullying or targeting an individual because of disability are treated with the same seriousness as racist incidents and logged formally in school. Parents and carers are informed. Some very young children may make highly inappropriate comments which on investigations turn out to be without malice or intent. These incidents are logged but this is noted and children supported in understanding why their actions or words were wrong and unacceptable in school.
12. All records of bullying and incidents outlined above are included on the school's safeguarding record system and more serious ones on an additional bullying form which is shared with parents/carers.

#### In relation to Outcomes for Pupils:

1. We will aim to improve the academic performance and achievement of children in receipt of free school meals and those looked after by the Local Authority. Current good progress for vulnerable groups and individuals will be challenged in order for any learning gap to be narrowed and closed, where possible, and for this group to achieve in line with their peers and exceed where this is within their capability.
2. We will aim to improve outcomes for children with English as an additional language. This is a group historically underrepresented in school and so staff need to develop their understanding of their needs, knowledge and understanding of how best to support them.
3. The Pupil Premium will be used for the interests of the individuals and groups at whom it is targeted. In doing so other children may also derive benefit.
4. Staff will work with outside agencies and seek training and support when needs are difficult to meet from existing or current resources. For example, seeking translation services or support for disabled children.
5. We will use in-school/DfE data to identify underachievement and where groups or individuals require additional support. While numbers are small meaning data is not statistically relevant it does throw up some questions.
6. We will aim to improve the performance of students with special educational need and disabilities so that the gap between their attainment and that of other students is substantially narrowed and closed where this is within the child's capability.

#### **Glossary of terms**

EAL English as an additional language

FSM Free school meals

LGBT+ Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus other identities e.g. non-binary, queer, pansexual

PHSE Personal, health and social education

SEN&D Special educational needs and/or disabilities

SpLD Specific learning difficulties (dyslexia)

SLT Senior leadership team