

Nanpean Community Primary School
Nurturing Children's Passion to Succeed



Equal Opportunities Policy
Headteacher: Mr Nicholls
Chair of Governors: Mrs Watts

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Introduction

The Education Act of 1988 made it the legal responsibility of the Headteacher and the Governing Body to ensure that equality of opportunity is provided for all pupils and staff in their school.

The Governing Body and the Headteacher of Nanpean CP School are aware of their responsibility and realise that education can be 'a powerful vehicle' for freeing all pupils and staff from stereotyping roles and allowing them to develop their own personalities and talents, regardless of their physical, sensory, intellectual, emotional/behavioural difficulties, gender, social and cultural background, religion or ethnic origins.

Genuine equality of opportunity will not be achieved by mere compliance with relevant legislation. It can be achieved only if those concerned have the will to formulate equal opportunities policies that are fully implemented, carefully monitored and reviewed.

Equal Opportunities may relate to any of the various ways in which people may be seen as part of an identifiable group e.g. social class, disability, ethnicity, gender, language and religion. Whilst relevant legislation has been in place for many years, Nanpean CP School is aware that we need to constantly consider our practices with regard to equal opportunities to ensure compliance with legislation. We aim to clarify, support and develop best practice and underpin consistency within our school community.

Previously public bodies were bound by three sets of duties to promote disability, race and gender equality. In April 2011 these were replaced by a single public sector equality duty (known as the PSED or the equality duty). This new duty extends to all the aspects of a person's identity – known as 'protected characteristics' – that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. These are race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The equality duty has two main parts: the 'general' equality duty and 'specific duties'.

The general equality duty sets out the equality matters that schools need to consider when making decisions that affect pupils or staff with different 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:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is defined further in the Equality Act 2010 as having due regard to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantages
2. Take steps to meet different needs
3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

In order to help schools in England meet the general equality duty, there are two specific duties that they are required to carry out. These are:

- To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty.
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives.

What does this mean for schools?

For a school, having 'due regard' means:

- When making a decision or taking an action a school must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- It should consider equality implications before and at the time that it develops policy and takes decisions; not as an afterthought, and it needs to keep them under review.
- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of a school's functions. The analysis necessary to comply with the duty should be carried out rigorously and with an open mind – it is not a question of just ticking boxes.
- Schools need to do this themselves and cannot delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else.

There are six principles, called the Brown Principles, established by case law that underpin what due regard means: timeliness, awareness, rigour, non-delegation, continuous and record-keeping.

For schools, age is not a protected characteristic in the equality duty in relation to education or the provision of services, it is included, however, in relation to staff.

Marriage and civil partnership are also protected characteristics but only in relation to employment.

How does it help schools?

The equality duty supports good education and improves pupil outcomes. It helps a school to identify priorities such as underperformance, poor progression, and bullying. It does this by requiring it to collate evidence, take a look at the issues and consider taking action to improve the experience of different groups of pupils. It then helps it to focus on what can be done to tackle these issues and to improve outcomes by developing measurable equality objectives.

Rationale

At Nanpean School, we believe that all pupils and staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity or circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together (as a whole) – our pupils, staff, governors, visitors, volunteers, parents & carers.

School Context

Nanpean School is a LA maintained school with approximately 170 pupils of primary age (aged 4 - 11) on roll. There is a below average proportion of pupils from backgrounds considered to be of ethnic minority, and there is a below average proportion of pupils who speak English as an Additional Language. However, we have a high proportion of children considered with Special Educational Needs (SEND) in comparison to other schools nationally, and we have a high level of deprivation in relation to other schools nationally (85.2% of pupils live within the most deprived 0-30% areas and 47.8% of pupils live within the most deprived 0-20% areas). We have worked hard to ensure the school is at the heart of the community that it serves, which is part of what is considered the 'Clay Area' on the outskirts of St Austell. We have strong links with internal and external stakeholders.

Aims and Values of Nanpean School

The school aims that all children:

- are independent learners
- are confident, adaptable and well-balanced
- value diversity and respect differences
- understand their responsibility to others
- are motivated and self-disciplined.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

At Nanpean CP School:

- We do not discriminate against anyone, whether they are staff, pupil, or visitors on the grounds of their gender identification or sexual orientation, race, colour, religion, nationality, and their ethnic or national origins. This is in line with the 1976 Race Relations Act and covers both direct and indirect discrimination.
- We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school.
- We ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities and facilities provided by the school.
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers for learning.
- We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.
- We challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.
- We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and promote respect for everyone.
- We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote tolerant, social attitudes and respect for all.

Application of this Policy

At Nanpean School, we operate in relation to this Equal Opportunities Policy on a day to day basis and this is evident in our practice, including in the following ways:

Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;

- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

Admissions

The Education Reform Act 1988 abolished Local Education Authority planned admission limits and requires schools to admit pupils up to at least the standard number for admission if there is a demand for places. It is unlawful and discriminatory (except in the case of single-sex schools) to refuse admission to prospective pupils on the grounds of sex, or race or to try and balance the number of boys and girls to be admitted. It is also unlawful to ask parents, on racial grounds, to produce passports or other documentary evidence as proof of a child's entitlement to education in a maintained school. However, it is sometimes necessary to ask parents for proof of a child's age in connection with school admissions. In such circumstances if a birth certificate or other documentary evidence is not available, a passport might provide the required information. (See Admission Policy)

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

Equal Opportunities for Staff

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer duties

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;

- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

Implementation Key features identified through best practice from schools include:

- Meeting the individual needs of pupils
- Pupil Voice
- Parental Engagement
- Strong school leadership
- Regular & robust self-evaluation
- Quality First Teaching
- Identifying vulnerable groups
- Auditing

Anti-racism

The staff at Nanpean CP School recognise that it is the right of the pupils to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities and facilities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident.

We endeavour to make our school welcoming to everyone. We promote an understanding of different cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school. Likewise, our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for everyone.

Should anyone at our school be a victim of racism, we will do all we can to support that person in overcoming any difficulties they may have.

The Curriculum

The curriculum of the school should be broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated. It should encourage the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, whilst preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It should focus on developing their basic skills.

Dimensions such as a commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils, and recognition that preparation for life in a multicultural society is relevant to all pupils will permeate every aspect of the school curriculum.

Equal opportunities are about helping all children to fulfil their potential. Teachers are rightly concerned when their pupils underachieve and are aware that educational outcomes may be influenced by many factors, and these could include things such as a pupil's gender or social, cultural or linguistic background. The curriculum is not simply a collection of subjects but embraces everything that goes on in a school, which results in children learning about the world around them.

The role of Governors

The governing body of Nanpean CP School has set its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy statement, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated fairly and with equality.

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 gives access to people with disabilities.

The governing body welcomes all children or staff who join the school, whatever background or disability they may have.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their sex, religion or race, whilst also ensuring that all children have access to the full range of the curriculum.

The role of the Headteacher

It is the Headteacher's role to implement the school's equal opportunities and anti-racist policy and be supported by the governing body in so doing.

It is his/her role to ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations. He/she ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities. The Headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life; for example, in school assemblies, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays around the school. The Headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness.

The role of all staff (teaching and non teaching)

Staff at Nanpean CP School will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child. When selecting classroom material, they pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. They strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.

When reviewing or revising schemes of work, we use this policy to guide us, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues. All our staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any serious incidents in a file, and draw them to the attention of the Headteacher. Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.

Tackling discrimination

- The Equality Act 2010 defines discrimination as- treating a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic, the perception that they have a protected characteristic or because of a person's association with someone who has a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination is the unjustifiable application of a provision, criterion or practice, even though it is applied to everyone.
- Harassment or victimisation on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.
- All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.
- Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher/Headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the Local Authority on a termly basis.

What is a discriminatory incident?

- Harassment or victimisation on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.
- A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of discriminatory incident

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and reporting incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

Complaints

If anyone feels that they have suffered harassment or been treated unfairly because of their sex, colour, race, nationality, ethnic group, regional or national origin, age, marital status, disability, political or religious belief, sexual orientation or class, they should report this without fail through the School's complaints procedure.

Complaints by staff will be dealt with under the Grievance or Dignity at Work Policies, as appropriate.

We take all complaints seriously and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour. Complaints about staff will be investigated using the appropriate procedures.

Monitoring complaints is also another way of gathering information to see whether we are meeting our equality duties. We will report annually on any complaints made and action taken.

Related documents

Related documents include, but are not limited to: The Accessibility Plan; SEND Policy; Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy; Behaviour / Anti-Bullying Policy; and Admissions arrangements.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this Equal Opportunities policy. The governing body does this by:

- Monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils at the school;
- Monitoring the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- Requiring the Headteacher to report to governors on a basis of the effectiveness of this policy on a pre-determined period agreed by the governors;
- Taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or pupils;
- Monitoring the school behaviour and exclusions policy, so those pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

See also 'Equality Act 2010 Advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities'.