Equality and Diversity Policy and Scheme

2026-2029

The Willows Primary School

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Purpose of the Document

The overall objective of The Willows Primary School Equality and Diversity Policy and Scheme is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members. Partners and contractors are also expected to abide by the policy.

1. Policy statement

Through this Equality and Diversity Policy and Scheme, The Willows Primary School seeks to ensure that no member of the school community, or any person through their contact with the school, receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, socio-economic background, where the person lives, or, spent convictions.

Equality and Diversity is more than just meeting legal obligations, or targets. It makes a difference to the lives of the people we serve, treating all people with dignity and respect, and recognising the value of each individual. This means an ongoing commitment to ensuring that our services meet the varied and individual needs of children and young people in our school. We will make sure that our employment practices are fair and promote equality. We will actively value the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures, locally and nationally. We will prepare children and young people for living in a diverse society with increasing global connections and controversial issues.

We will ensure that the principles of this policy are reflected in all our policies, practices, procedures and services and are part of everything we do.

a) In accordance with our school vision and aims we pledge that our pupils:
- respect and value themselves and other people
- recognise themselves as citizens of the wider world

b) We will assess our current school practices ("Equality Impact Assessment") and implement all necessary resulting actions in relation to:
- ethnicity,
- religion or belief,
- socio-economic background,
- gender and gender identity,
- disability,
- sexual orientation, and
- age.

c) We will promote community cohesion at school, local, national and global levels, comparing our school community to its local and national context and implementing all necessary actions in relation to:
- ethnicity,
- religion or belief, and
- socio-economic background.

2. Statutory requirements

The equality objectives in Section 9 below address our duties under current equality legislation, up to and including the Equality Act 2010.

The access plan in Section 10 below addresses our duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001.

The community cohesion plan in Section 11 below addresses our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

3. Guiding Principles

These principles have been drawn from a specimen school policy for equalities prepared by the DCSF and we fully endorse and accept them.

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value
All learners and potential learners are of equal value and benefit equally from school policies, practices and programmes, whatever their ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Principle 2: Relevant differences are recognised
Treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Policies, practices and programmes do not discriminate, but may be differentiated to take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes, relationships and a shared sense of belonging
Policies and programmes promote positive attitudes and interaction, mutual respect and good relations, an absence of harassment or prejudice-related bullying between people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development
Policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in recruitment, professional development and promotion. Steps are taken to positively promote equality, especially where there is evidence of inequality.

Principle 5: Current inequalities and barriers are addressed and reduced In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of policies and programmes, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by addressing, reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist between people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Principle 6: Policy development involves widespread consultation and involvement
People affected by a policy or programme are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. Such consultation is both direct and through representative organisations, and is based on principles of transparency and accountability. It involves those who in the past have been excluded or disadvantaged, and who continue to face barriers:

Principle 7: Society as a whole benefits

Policies and programmes benefit society as a whole, locally, nationally and internationally, by fostering greater cohesion and greater participation in public life of people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

4. Community Cohesion

Children come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Socially children tend to come from the same socio – economic groupings, but there is more diversity in the range of ethnic and religious backgrounds. We have adopted a more explicit approach to multicultural teaching and learning in order to support pupils from many different cultures and beliefs. 22% of children are eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

The Willows Primary has approximately 12% of its children on Special Needs/ Inclusion register, with 3% of these having a statement or EHC. Within this, there are a range of special needs (Behavioural, Social and Emotional, SPLD, MLD and Physical). At the time this policy is written there are six Looked After Children.

25% of children have English as an Additional Language. There were no permanent exclusions in the twelve month period preceding this document.

5. Responsibilities

One named governor John Perry takes the lead, but the governors as a whole are responsible for:

- drawing up, publishing and implementing the school's equality objectives
- making sure the school complies with the relevant equality legislation; and
- making sure the school Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed
- monitoring progress towards the equality objectives and reporting annually

The head teacher is responsible for:

- making sure steps are taken to address the school's stated equality objectives;
- making sure the equality, access and community cohesion plans are readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils, and their parents and guardians know about them;
- producing regular information for staff and governors about the plans and how they are working;
- making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out; and
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including prejudice-related incidents.
- enabling reasonable adjustments to be made, in relation to disability, in regard to students, staff, parents / carers and visitors to the school.

All staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality and community cohesion in their work;
- avoiding unlawful discrimination against anyone;

- fostering good relations between groups; and
- dealing with prejudice-related incidents;
- being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- taking up training and learning opportunities.

The Headteacher, Sarah Thursfield, is responsible overall for dealing with reports of prejudice-related incidents.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for following relevant school policy.

6. Staff development

Staff undertake training and development in relation to equality and cohesion in terms of professional responsibilities as well as statutory requirements as and when appropriate. This may take the format of staff meeting updates or full training sessions when needed. All staff are given equal opportunity to take part in staff training and have access to courses appropriate to their professional development and responsibilities as well as statutory requirements.

7. Publication and review

This Equality Scheme fulfils statutory requirements under the terms of legislation referred to above. As it is a public document, the school governors publish it by making it available on request.

The scheme will be kept under regular review for three years and then replaced in January 2025.

8. How we conduct equality impact assessment

As a school we carry out rigorous monitoring and analysis of all pupils and their progress twice a year so that the Headteacher, SLT, subject leaders and class teachers can use the information to ensure the appropriate progress is made by all pupils regardless of race, disability, socio-economic background, belief or gender. Through analysis we are aware of any groups or individuals who are not making at least expected progress. Evidence of this analysis can be found in the Pupil Progress files.

Equality objectives identified by this process should be included in the three-year plan in Section 10 below.

9. How we chose our equality objectives

Our equality objective-setting process has involved gathering evidence as follows:

i. from the monitoring and analysis of pupil progress in the identified groups.

ii. from the monitoring and evaluation evidence file, SEN files, vulnerable pupil information (held on My Concern)

iii. from involving relevant people including pupil and parental surveys. The evidence was then analysed in order to choose objectives that will:

i. promote equality of opportunity for members of identified groups

ii. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and

iii. foster good relations between different groups in terms of:

- ethnicity,
- religion or belief,
- socio-economic background,
- gender and gender identity,
- disability,
- sexual orientation and
- age.

10. Equality Objectives 2026-29

(To be kept under regular review)

Equality objectives (focused on outcomes rather than processes)
Ensure that children arriving in school with little or no English are supported with immediate interventions to make rapid progress in English to enable them to access the curriculum.
Ensure that the curriculum reflects the schools religious and ethnic diversity
Ensure that staff and the governing body are aware of current legislation surrounding diversity and equality and understands the schools responsibility
Ensure that vulnerable groups of pupils achieve challenging targets and the gaps in attainment for these pupils are reduced. Pupils to make at least expected to good progress over each academic year.
To continue to raise attainment of more able pupils throughout the school and provide access to all pupils to engage in extended school provision.

11. Accessibility Plan 2022-25

This can relate very closely to the disability elements of the equality objectives in Section 10 above, except that it covers pupils only whereas the equality plan includes all members of the school community.

	Actions
i. Improvements in access to the curriculum	• At least one collaborative planning meeting annually between the class teacher, ToD and 1-1 support for each HI pupil. • All key adults from the school and the Resource Base to attend termly ADPR meetings.
ii. Physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services.	• Daily checks for children wearing cochlear implants, hearing aids and radio aids. • Ensure the Soundfield System (where appropriate) works in all classrooms and the halls, and that whilst using temporary classrooms the HI pupils are placed in the most acoustically suitable environments. • HI team to provide induction training for all new members of staff. • Annual training/updates from the HI team to all staff.
iii. Improvements in the provision of information for pupils	• Ensure access to computer technology appropriate (i-pad) for pupils with disabilities. • Availability of written school documentation in alternative formats when requested or employment of a signer or interpreter to ensure clarity of conversation at parents' consultation meetings. • Embrace technology to support translation of documentation eg google translate on the school's website, translation facility on Class DoJo.

12. Community Cohesion Plan 2022-25

The choice of appropriate actions to promote community cohesion is based on the needs identified in the contextual statement in Section 3 above, relating to ethnicity, religion or belief and socio-economic background.

For this purpose, the four geographical dimensions of "community" are as follows:

- the school community
- local communities
- communities across the UK
- the global dimension

	Actions (focused on outcomes rather than processes)
Teaching, learning and the curriculum	• helping pupils to learn to understand others and to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values • recognize similarities and appreciate different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds • to develop the skills of participation and responsible action
Equity between groups in school, where appropriate	• to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible • strive to remove barriers to access and participate in learning and wider activities • work to eliminate variations in outcomes for various groups
Engagement with people from different backgrounds, inc extended services	• to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds • build positive relations • receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups