

# Stratford Rural Schools' Federation



# FEDERATION

# SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY

This version	June 2016
Approved by the Governing Body	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2016
Review date	June 2017

## Equality Statement

The schools in the Stratford Rural Schools Federation are committed to equality.

In this respect:

- We ensure that everyone in school is treated fairly and with respect.
- We recognise that people have different needs and that treating people equally does not always involve treating everyone in exactly the same way.
- We ensure that school is a safe place for everyone.
- We consult with people from different groups and involve them in our decision making.
- We recognise that extra support is needed for some pupils to help them achieve their full potential and be successful.

## Introduction

The policy outlines the commitment of the staff, pupils and governors of the schools in the Stratford Rural Schools Federation to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community. For our schools this means not simply treating everybody the same but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of pupils in school, whilst celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all members of the school community. These include:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Parents/carers
- The governing body
- Multi-agency staff linked to the school
- Visitors to school
- Students on placement

We believe that equality at our schools should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

At the schools in the federation, equality is a key principle for treating all people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential - irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

This Equality Policy statement includes:

- Each school's context
- **Part One** – the federation's aims to promote equality of opportunity and comply with the Act
- **Part Two** – the legal duties referred to in Part One
- Roles and responsibilities
- Monitoring, reviewing and assessing impact

This Single Equality Scheme provides a framework for our schools to promote equality, inclusion and good community relations, and to tackle prejudice, discrimination and their causes in a proactive way.

## School Contexts: What are our schools and their communities like?

### **Loxley C.E. (Voluntary Controlled) Community Primary School**

Loxley School is set in the village of Loxley near Wellesbourne in Warwickshire. It is a much smaller than average primary school serving a rural community with good links within the community and to the local church. Fewer than 20% of the children on roll come from the catchment area.

In 2012 the school expanded significantly which was largely due to an intake of flexi-schooled pupils. There are 11 flexi-schooled children (29.7%). These are registered with the local authority Home Education team and their progress is closely monitored.

There is a high degree of transience (50% compared to national average of 85.9%) which means that the school has to review and revise its class structure each academic year.

The Planned Admission Number for Loxley is 6, and numbers in each cohort fluctuate. There are currently 37 children on roll. Children attending the school have a wide range of attainment. The number of children with SEN is higher than the national average. The school is set in an area of low deprivation. Currently 2 pupils are receiving free school meals. However there are 6 identified Pupil Premium children within the school, having previously been in receipt of free school meals.

The school is predominantly mono-cultural, white British. There are 3 EAL pupils, with German as their first language. There is also one pupil identified as ethnic minority. No pupils or staff have a disability.

The children are arranged into 3 mixed age teaching groups. The school has a better than average ratio of adults to children.

### **Snitterfield Primary School**

Snitterfield School is in the village of Snitterfield near Stratford upon Avon in Warwickshire. It is a smaller than average primary school for children aged 4 to 11 years of age. The school is well supported by the local community.

Numbers on roll are largely stable with several year groups oversubscribed. There are currently 92 children arranged in 4 mixed age class groups.

Children join the school with a range of pre-school experiences; the majority having graduated from our on-site (privately managed) nursery facility.

Children have a wide range of attainment. The majority of pupils are White British. The % of SEND pupils is below average as is the proportion of pupil premium funded pupils. There are a small number of flexi-schooled pupils on roll. No children have a disability. **Staff??**

### **Wilmcote C.E. (Voluntary Aided) Primary School**

Wilmcote School is in the rural village of Wilmcote near Stratford upon Avon in Warwickshire. It is a smaller than average primary school, currently with 67 children on roll. Children mainly live in the catchment area, the rest coming from Stratford upon Avon.

The admissions number per year group is 16, however, numbers in each cohort do vary from year to year.

Numbers on roll have fallen over the last few years and as a result the school moved from a 4 class structure to a 3 class structure 2 years ago. The school has good links with the local community and the village toddler group meet once a week in the school.

Children start school with a wide range of prior experiences and attainment levels. The majority of pupils are white British, with a number of children from the traveller community on roll. The number of children with special needs (learning and behaviour needs) is slightly above the national average. A number of children are eligible for Pupil Premium funding. No pupils or staff have a disability.

## Part One - Aims

One of the primary aims of schools in the federation is to enable all pupils to participate in school life as fully as possible by developing each child's self-confidence; recognising their strengths and encouraging them to achieve their full potential. We want to equip our children to become independent individuals who are able to contribute fully and thrive in our complex and multi-faceted society.

We aim to create inclusive learning environments which are enriched by working with our local communities. We will take steps to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination across the protected characteristics (see Part Two) within the school community.

This means:

- Taking reasonable steps to meet pupils' needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. The aim being to enable all our children to participate as fully as possible in all the activities in school. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the school environment and activities are as accessible as possible for staff, pupils and visitors.
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards children and staff and expecting everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
- Ensuring that curriculum opportunities actively promote our shared values of equality, valuing diversity and challenging prejudice.
- Monitoring the achievement of pupils who have one or more of the protected characteristics (see Part Two). This will help the schools to ensure that individuals are achieving their potential and that the schools are being inclusive in practice. Data collected will inform any equality objectives in the school improvement plans.
- Collecting information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment and training opportunities. We will not ask health related questions to applicants before offering the job, unless it relates to the intrinsic function of the job. We will make reasonable adjustments for any disabled staff.
- Ensuring that our curricula are accessible for those pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or for those children for whom English is not their first language. Reasonable adjustments will be made, including the use of auxiliary aids if applicable. We will aim to make sure that all pupils have equal access to extra-curricular opportunities.

- Monitoring all bullying or prejudice related issues, and acting on any information gained.
- Expecting all staff to be role-models for equal opportunities, to deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and to be able to recognise and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Seeking the views of staff, children, parents and visitors through discussion, questionnaires and surveys.
- Maintaining an up to date Accessibility Plan for each site.
- Making sure that staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different forms of discrimination and what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice.

## Part Two – Legal Duties

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is set out in the Equality Act 2010. This covers employment, the provision of services and public functions, and education. Employers are liable for discriminatory acts of their employees if they do not take steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be held liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

### The Protected Characteristics within Equality Law

**Age** – Age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to employment.

**Disability** – a person has a disability if he/she has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions, HIV, MS and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

**Gender reassignment** – a person (usually with gender dysmorphia) who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex, therefore changing from male to female or female to male). 'Trans' is an umbrella term to describe people with 'Gender Identity'. 'Intersex' or 'Third Sex' is not covered by the Act but the schools will treat Intersex children with the same degree of equality as children with gender dysmorphia. Children as young as 5 may begin to show signs of gender dysmorphia and therefore it is relevant in any school environment.

**Marriage and Civil Partnership** – marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to employment.

**Pregnancy and Maternity** – maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after any birth which is the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in an employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.

**Race** – a person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers as well as white British people.

**Religion and belief** – religious and philosophical beliefs including having no faith. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent a school from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum based activities, but pupils may withdraw from acts of collective worship.

**Sex** - male or female

**Sexual orientation** – a person’s sexual orientation towards the same sex(lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual). Although children may not identify as gay or lesbian when young, promotion of sexual orientation equality is as relevant in a primary school environment as it is in a secondary school. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends ‘questioning’ or ‘coming out’ when they are at secondary school. Schools with a particular religious ethos cannot discriminate against gay, lesbian or bisexual pupils.

*It is also unlawful to discriminate because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the pupil is associated. So, for example, a school must not discriminate by refusing to admit a pupil because his parents are gay men or lesbians.*

#### **Prohibited Conduct (Acts that are unlawful)**

**Direct Discrimination** – less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.

**Indirect discrimination** – a provision, criteria or practice that puts a person at a particular disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Harassment** – conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It includes harassment by a third party (e.g. customer or contractor) in the employment context.

**Victimisation** – subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with this Act.

**Discrimination arising from disability** – treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work or medical conditions) and failure to make reasonable adjustments.

**Gender reassignment discrimination** – not allowing reasonable absence from work for the purpose of gender reassignment in line with normal provision such as sick leave).

**Pregnancy/Maternity related discrimination** – unfavourable treatment because of pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a female because she is breastfeeding.

**Discrimination by association or perception** – for example, discriminating against someone because they ‘look gay’, or because they have a gay brother; discriminating against someone because they care for a disabled relative.

*Schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities.*

### **Public Sector Duties (applies to schools)**

A school must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation to the protected characteristics above):

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.
2. Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people's needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).
3. Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding).

*In practice, 'due regard' means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty, so decision makers in schools must have due regard when making a decision, developing a policy or taking action as to whether it may have implications for people because of their protected characteristics.*

### **Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Plans (Schedule 10)**

Schools are required to:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria, practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature, for example steps and lifts.
- Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids or services.
- Provide information in an accessible format.
- Develop and implement (by allocating appropriate resources) Accessibility Plans which will
  1. Increase disabled pupils' access to the school curriculum
  2. Improve the physical environment
  3. Improve provision of information.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that schools owe to disabled pupils generally, regardless of whether the school knows that a particular pupil is disabled or whether the school currently has disabled pupils. The school will need to plan ahead for the reasonable adjustment that it may need to make, working with the relevant admissions authority as appropriate.

More information about the Equality Act 2010 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion. Aspects of educational legislation have also promoted equal opportunities, for example the Education Act includes a duty for Local Authorities to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools wherever possible.

## Responsibilities

### The Governing Body:

- Ensure that each school complies with equality related legislation.
- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the executive Headteacher and the Heads of School.
- Ensure that all other policies promote equality.
- Give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

### The Executive Headteacher, Heads of School and SENCOs:

- Implement the policy and its related procedures.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
- Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
- Ensure that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments for staff. It is unlawful for an employer to enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work – for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the required duties. Schools should not require applicants to complete a health questionnaire or seek out past sickness records until a job offer has been made.
- Ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

### All staff:

- Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures, and their responsibilities associated with this policy.
- Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.
- Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality legislation.
- To be good models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.

### Pupils:

- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy.

### Visitors:

- To be aware of and comply with the school's equality policy
- To refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour (for example, racist language) on school premises.