

Our vision - Good ground grows well.



ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Equality and Accessibility Policy and Plan

Date plan adopted by the school:	Spring 2025
Date for review:	Spring 2026

Through our Christian ethos, we teach children to hear, understand and live the word of God, helping them to give back to the world as global citizens. As every child is uniquely created in God's image, we nurture their individual development through a holistic approach to all aspects of life.

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Introduction

Our school is inclusive. We focus on the well-being and progress of every child and we are an establishment where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

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.

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles

- 1. All learners are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- 2. We recognize, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
- 3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- 4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
- 5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development
- 6. We have the highest expectations of all our children.** We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential
- 7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

Purpose of the policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy and maternity.

Age and marriage and civil partnership are also “protected characteristics” but are not part of the school provisions related to pupils.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties

The Public Sector Equality Duty or “general duty”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

Two “specific duties”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

1. Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
2. Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Appendix 1 is a checklist of key equality considerations

Appendix 2 shows the school’s Equality Plan for 2025-2029

Development of the policy

When developing the policy we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Ofsted inspection framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

Links to other policies and documentation

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our school development plan, self-evaluation review, the school prospectus, school web site and newsletters.

There are also references in the behaviour, admissions, SEN and anti-bullying policies as well as minutes of meetings involving governors, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team and school council.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the way we comply with this are found in our recruitment policy.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non- disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day today life of the school. We make a record of each specific equality consideration and this is available for review if required.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

The school policy on Behaviour - Rewards, Sanctions and Exclusions - takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying

The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously.

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.
- We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions meetings.
- We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills.
- We collect, analyse and publish data:
 - on the school population by gender and ethnicity;
 - on the % of pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability;
 - by year group – in terms of ethnicity, gender and proficiency in English;
 - on inequalities of outcome and participation, related to ethnicity, gender and disability and proficiency in English
- We publish an analysis of standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage
- We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups
- This data can be found in the Equality Data Analysis on the school's website. We also provide paper copies in the school office.
- We are aware that the legislation relates mainly to current but also to future pupils – we will for example, be sufficiently prepared if a visually impaired, hearing impaired or Gypsy Roma traveller pupil joins our school.
- We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able".
- We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils
- We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving
- We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys

We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

We are also implementing an Accessibility Plan designed to: increase the extent to which pupils with disability can participate in the curriculum; improve the physical environment and; improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Positive Action

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the school's Equality Objectives.

What we are doing to foster good relations

- We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils.
- We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE and citizenship and across the curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and that promote positive images of people
- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole school events e.g. Black History Month, Autism Awareness Days, Red Card to Racism
- We include these messages in our newsletters to parents and carers and on our social media presence

Other ways we address equality issues

- We maintain records of all training relating the Equalities Act
- Our monitoring records include evaluations of aspects of equality
- We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed
- We have a rolling programme for reviewing all of our school policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and wellbeing of our pupils.
- The implications for equalities of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole school community we:

- review relevant feedback from parents' evening, PTFA meetings and/or focus meetings or governors' meetings
- secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events

- review feedback and responses from the children and groups of children, from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children’s attitudes to self and school;
- analyse issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on individual education plans/personalised provision maps, mentoring and support;
- ensure that we secure responses and feedback at governing body meetings and from the governing body’s working groups.

Publishing Equality Objectives

The objectives which we identify represent our school’s priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the public service equality duties by the extent to which we **achieve improved outcomes** for the different groups. We produce equality data analysis which inform our discussions about the equality objectives.

Our Equality Objectives for 2025-2029 are:

- We will strive to ensure that all pupils by the end of Y6 make progress at least in line with the progress of pupils with similar starting points including pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- We will strive to achieve a year on year (over three years) reduction in the attainment gap in English and Maths at the end of KS2 between pupils within the school’s identified groups (for example, Free School Meals (FSM), English as an Additional Language (EAL), refugees) and their peers
- We will strive to increase participation by FSM, SEND, EAL and refugee pupils in after school clubs, extra-curricular activities and other extended school provision

Our school development plan is also an equality action plan.

Monitoring and reviewing objectives

We review and update our equality objectives via the school improvement plan every year and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

Governing body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the school’s commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school’s equalities work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys)

Executive Headteacher and Leadership team

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Head of School has day-to-day responsibility for co-coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. S/he will have expert and informed knowledge of the Equality Act.

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in school newsletters to enable them to do this.

Equal Opportunities for staff

- This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to 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.
- We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.
- As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.
- We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
- We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Disseminating the policy

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives is available:

- on the school website
- as paper copies in the school office
- in the staff handbook
- on display for visitors, including parents and carers
- as part of induction for new staff

We ensure that the whole school community knows about the policy, objectives and data through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.

We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.

Data Protection and Privacy

In order to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010, the school collects and analyses data relating to protected characteristics. This information is used to monitor the impact of our policies and to ensure all pupils are supported effectively.

All data is processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. For further information, please refer to the school's Privacy Notice.

APPENDIX ONE: Check list for school staff and trustees

- The school collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides
- The Equality Policy and plan and objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, governors, pupils and other stakeholders
- The school publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties
- The school analyses pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when there trends or patterns indicate a need
- The school sets equality objectives within the School Improvement Plan to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes
- The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The school ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference
- All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and the school council
- The school monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern
- Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the school community
- Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and class assemblies
- The school takes part in annual events such as Black History Month, Red Card to Racism, Autism Awareness etc. to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender
- The school environment is increasingly accessible possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school – including the acoustic environment
- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school and issues such as language barriers are considered
- The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information
- The governing body is increasingly representative of the community it serves.
- Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled.

APPENDIX TWO: Accessibility Plan

The duty to report racist incidents and the publication of the Equality Plan to meet the Disability and Gender Equality legislation must be included in the action plan.

Equality Strands	Action	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	Who is responsible for implementing?	What are the time frames?	Early success indicators
All	Publish and promote our approach to Equality	Question about parental awareness of the Single Equality Scheme in the annual survey. Policy and plan clearly displayed on website	Senior Leadership Team	Summer term Spring Term	All staff familiar with the principles of the Equality Plan and use it when planning lessons, creating class room displays and dealings with individuals. Parents are aware of our approach to Equality
All	Monitor and analyse pupil achievement by race, gender and disability, and respond to any identified trends or patterns by implementing targeted and personalised support.	Termly analysis of attainment and progress data by identified groups, alongside provision mapping and intervention reviews. Evidence of impact will include improved progress for identified pupils and narrowing of any gaps over time.	Senior Leadership Team	PPMs Feb / June FFT Data Analysis at end of every term	Analysis of teacher assessments / annual data - demonstrates the gap is narrowing for equality groups.
All	Ensure that through the curriculum, school environment and collective worship, role models and heroes that young people positively identify with are promoted. These will reflect the school's diversity in terms of race, gender and disability.	Increase in pupils' participation, confidence and achievement levels	SLT / Curriculum Leaders / Class teachers.	ongoing	Notable increase in participation and confidence of targeted groups
All	Ensure that the different nationalities, events and festivals are celebrated in class	Increase in pupil confidence and positive identity.	Education Race Equality Co-ordinator /Class teachers and Support Staff	ongoing	Increased awareness of the different languages in school.
All	Ensure that displays in classrooms/corridors promote diversity in terms of race, gender and disability. (Include different languages).	Increase in pupil participation, confidence and positive identity.	Education Race Equality Co-ordinator /Class teachers	ongoing	More diversity reflected in school displays across all year groups
All	Ensure all pupils are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the School Council, class assemblies, fund raising etc.	School council representation monitored/ participation in assembly and class additional activities monitored by race, gender, disability	School Council / Teachers	ongoing	Diversity in school council membership / participation in additional school activities.

Equality Strands	Action	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	Who is responsible for implementing?	What are the time frames?	Early success indicators
Race Equality Duty	Identify, respond and report racist incidents as outlined in the Single Equality Scheme. Report the figures to the Governing body termly	The Headteacher / Governing body will use the data to assess the impact of the school's response to incidents i.e. have whole school / year group approaches led to a decrease in incidents, can repeat perpetrators be identified, are pupils and parents satisfied with the response?	Executive Headteacher / Governing body	Report: Dec April July Reports from teachers per incident	Teaching staff are aware of procedure and respond to racist incidents
Community cohesion	Celebrate cultural events throughout the year to increase pupil awareness and understanding of different communities e.g. pupils study a different world faith twice a year	Discussions with children in class / assemblies. Planning and children's books monitored to ensure they reflect cultural events.	Education Race Equality Co-ordinator/ class teachers.	Ongoing	Increased awareness of a different faith community.
Community cohesion	Develop links with other faiths through visits, talks and curriculum links.	Children will have a more rounded understanding of the beliefs of other faiths.	RE Co-ordinator / class teachers.	Ongoing	Increased awareness of different culture / community and faith. Development of relationships.

Equality Strand Accessibility	Action	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	Who is responsible for implementing?	What are the time frames?	Early success indicators
Improving the school environment to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the use of visual materials and signage in classrooms and around school. • Improved access to all areas of the school. 	Learning walks and observations with a focus on the whole school and classroom environments.	Class teachers. Site Manager.	Sept ongoing	Classrooms / key areas of the school have clear visual signage – pupils being directed to signage and responding to the increase in visual support. Ramps/Lifts in place and clear access around the school and in classrooms.
Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition Booklets produced for all pupils with adaptations for children with EHCPs where needed. Booklets produced at key times of change for children with specific needs e.g. Autism or anxiety. • Increase visual materials / Social Stories and additional resources to support communication and learning. 	Increase visual support materials available on school network (SEND). Materials used by class teachers and TAs to support transitions / manage behaviour and aid learning.	SENCO / Inclusion Team ensures that materials are available on the network / all staff responsible for implementing as appropriate.	Sept ongoing	Improvement in pupils' ability to cope with and adaptability to change to new situations.

Equality Strand Accessibility	Action	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	Who is responsible for implementing?	What are the time frames?	Early success indicators
Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum.	<p>Increase access to assisted technology / technology packages to support learning.</p> <p>Continued programme of staff training e.g. Lego Therapy, bucket time and positive handling. Key staff to disseminate training in school.</p> <p>Adaptive teaching is implemented to appropriately take account of all individual pupils' learning needs, use a variety of learning styles and are scaffolded appropriately</p> <p>Alternative arrangements made to facilitate trips and extracurricular activities e.g. transport and staffing to ensure that all pupils can participate in these activities.</p>	<p>Identification of additional equipment / packages required. Purchase of required equipment. Evaluation of technology used by individuals and groups.</p> <p>Audit of staff training / needs. Programme of training identified. Training cycle implemented – evidence in observations / Learning Walks of implementation of training.</p> <p>Learning walks / classroom observations – focus on learning styles / strategies and differentiation.</p> <p>Participation in trips and extracurricular activities for all children.</p>	<p>SENCo / Computing Lead</p> <p>SENCo/ Inclusion Team / all staff.</p> <p>SENCo/co-ordinators / all staff.</p> <p>Class teachers / SENCo</p>	Sept ongoing	<p>Improved access to the curriculum for targeted individuals / groups.</p> <p>Increase in staff knowledge/ understanding about various disabilities. Staff are increasingly able to meet the needs of children through implementation of strategies to support curriculum participation and monitoring of pupil progress.</p> <p>School visits are accessible to all pupils regardless of attainment or impairment.</p>