

Castle School



**Castle
School**

Equality Information & Objectives

Headteacher Approval	Governor Approval	Castle School
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Date: 1/9/2024	Date: 1/9/2024	Review date: 1/9/25

Introduction

This document forms our combined equalities policy, information and plan and is designed to communicate the following:

- Our Diversity statement
- Our legal responsibilities in terms of race, disability, gender & gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation
- Our particular provision for Special Educational Need
- Our intention to promote community cohesion
- Our response to recent legislations
- Our desire to fully meet statutory requirements
- An overview of some actions we have taken to date
- Our Equality Objectives

As a school we are committed to equality and diversity and we recognise the importance of making sure our policies, procedures and the way we run the school are barrier free.

We have incorporated all policies into this document to create a coherent framework for promoting diversity and equality within our school. The purpose of this document is to show how our school is going to promote equality for disabled pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. We believe in treating everyone fairly and we are committed to creating an environment in our school which is appropriate and accessible to all.

We aim to encourage and listen to the views of all stakeholders in developing the work of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together - students, staff, governors, and parents / careers. All school staff and members of the schools community have a responsibility to treat everyone fairly and to promote arrangements for people with disabilities.

Equality Aims

This document has been prepared in line with the National legal context including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- This policy also has due regard for non-statutory guidance, including the following:
 - DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools'

The Equality Act

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

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

Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics are identified in the Equality Act 2010:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteacher
- Ensure they're familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training
- Report back to the full governing board regarding any issues

The headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils

- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors each year

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in in the Equality Objectives section below.

School Context

Our cohort draws mainly from Derby City with some pupils who joined from Derbyshire and grew in the previous academic year by 100% (the school roll doubled). While the majority of students are white British, our students are representative of the Derby context which is ethnically diverse.

Ethnicity

Our cohort come from a variety of cohorts, the majority from a white British background (98%) Summer 2024

Religion

Most of our families do not identify with a particular religion

Gender

In Summer 2024 62% of our cohort were people who represented as males.

Special Educational Need and Disability

The number of children we support with SEND

We had 50 pupils at the end of the academic year. 6 pupils were dual registered with local mainstream schools. 44 pupils have an EHCP plan assigned to them

Disadvantage

There are a high percentage of students eligible for pupil premium.

Our Approach

As a school we will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment that embraces respect for all. At Castle School, we believe that diversity is a strength and, as such, should be celebrated by all who learn and teach here. We work with our pupils to teach them about equality and anti-bullying aspects. These topics are covered in the curriculum area, keyworker dialogues and during our assemblies. We use restorative justice practices and comic strip conversations strategies to support them in resolving socially confusing situations.

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Leadership, Management and Governance

The Governing body is committed to meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and aims to follow the good practice set out within the statutory codes of practice and guidance which support the legislation. While the governing body has overall responsibility to ensure that equality is promoted throughout the organisation, it is the responsibility of all staff, including those helping on a voluntary basis, to promote equality.

The governing body recognises that all staff need to be aware of, and understand, their responsibilities regarding equality legislation and guidance. The governing body recognises that discrimination may occur on more than one of the grounds at the same time and that equality of opportunity cannot be achieved by treating all people alike. The governing body acknowledges that it has a key leadership role in promoting equality and community cohesion and recognises the need to work with school staff and partner organisations, including the local authority.

Policy planning, implementation and review

The governing body will endeavor to ensure that all relevant policies reflect the school's commitment to the principles of equality and that this commitment is reflected clearly in all its work.

All staff are encouraged to contribute to the formulation, development and review of policy documents. The school ensures the involvement of governors and, where appropriate, takes steps to enable the contribution of pupils and their parents/carers and other relevant parties.

All policies, procedures and strategies are regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting equality. As further equality requirements come into force policies, procedures and strategies will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in fulfilling the requirements of new legislation.

Outcomes of monitoring and assessment will be reported to the governing body and other key partners. Members of the school community will be kept informed of Equality and Diversity initiatives being undertaken.

A link governor is assigned to monitor the school's Equality Objectives (see below) annually and reports to the board findings on progress made towards the objectives set.

Admissions, attendance, behaviour and exclusion

Admissions to Castle are through the LA and via SEND or IYFA processes.

The school's procedures for managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all. However, it is recognised that social/cultural background and other personal factors may affect behaviour. The school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and sanctions. Where possible we seek to find alternatives to exclusions. For all exclusions there is a right to appeal in line with current legislation.

Exclusions and attendance are monitored and evaluated resulting in effective action taken in order to identify trends and therefore reduce gaps between different groups of pupils.

Absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel. Those involved in this work are aware of and sensitive to community issues. There are strategies to reintegrate long-term truants and excluded pupils, which address the needs of all pupils.

Students, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any vulnerable group is always unacceptable.

Appropriate and reasonable provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance for both pupils and staff.

Student Support

Students have an enhance support at our school. This includes: academic, social, wellbeing or any other need. There are a number of different programmes we run to support our pupils through a personalized approach. We have implemented number of social skills interventions programmes to support pupils self esteem, self awareness, confidence and friendships. These are delivered by dedicated staff members

in 1:1 sessions. In addition to this number of students have been provided with additional Art therapy support to boost self esteem and confidence. We have implemented number of visits to external providers to support students with independence and through inspirational role models. We actively use student voice to explore more active opportunities to support pupils. We have invited external speakers to talk to our students about different well being issues, exam de-stress sessions. Students were supported with YOGA where they have learnt about calming activities.

Recruitment

We promote an inclusive staff body and ensure staff are trained in safer recruitment practices.

Staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every academic year e.g. updates to current legislation in relation to equality, inclusivity, safeguarding and code of conduct.

Our Curriculum

Our school strives to ensure that all students have an equal chance to access education. We have strong links and partnerships with a range of providers and external agencies and, where possible, develop links with the local community to support students in securing the best economic future and to take full advantage of their opportunities in society.

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes towards diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

Extra-curricular activities and special events aim to cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils.

The school will try to reflect due regard towards parental preferences and concerns but not at the expense of equality.

Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of pupils from all groups

Teaching and Learning

All pupils have access to a broad, balanced and rich curriculum in accordance with DfE guidelines.

All staff ensure that the learning can take place in an inclusive environment in which pupils feel safe, and their contributions are valued. Teaching styles include collaborative learning so that pupils appreciate the value of working together. All pupils are encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem solving tasks.

Pupil grouping, and staff allocation is continually reviewed to ensure greater participation in the classroom.

All pupils are encouraged to become independent and to take the appropriate responsibility for their own learning.

All staff challenge stereotypes and foster pupils' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities. This is achieved through specific displays that celebrate diversity, these are reviewed regularly to ensure that they can reflect the inclusive ethos of the school and the changes in today's society, enriching our students cultural capital.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2006 defines a disabled individual as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'

The school makes every reasonable adjustment to accommodate disability to ensure that everyone can access education. Changes, where necessary and reasonable, are made to ensure that access to provision is available.

Partnership with parents and the community

The school endeavours to provide information material for parents in accessible, user-friendly language and also translated into the parent's language where applicable. Our main method of communication is via the telephone with parents, as we believe this works best for our families.

All parents are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school. Reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate parental needs with regard to the information provided and meetings, for example translators and interpreters.

When appropriate the school will take steps to encourage the involvement and participation of parents who find it difficult to engage with the education system. The school works in partnership with parents, carers and the community to address specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to diversity. The school's premises and facilities are available for use by all groups within the wider community.

Advancing equality of opportunity

At Castle, we promote equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities
- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum

areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures

- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues.
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging all pupils to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures
- Developing links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach

Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

Equality objectives

These objectives are set at least every 4 years and reviewed annually. Our landscape and context has changed considerably since the objectives were set. As individual schools in our collaboration we will now set our own objectives from September 2023.

Objective 1:

All children regardless of gender, sex, race or religion feel safe on the school

Why we have chosen this objective

The Castle School cohort arrive with significant knowledge gaps in their wider understanding of the world around them owing to prolonged periods of school refusal and social anxiety. In addition, many are exploring their own gender identity and have shown to have fixed views influenced by negative external role models.

To achieve this objective we plan to

Ensure that information about all protected characteristics are directly taught within the PSHE curriculum.

Pupils attend assemblies both from internal staff and external visitors to initiate discussion and foster and understanding of tolerance and inclusion.

Develop a robust intervention system to address all incidents of bullying related to protected characteristics with a clear focus on education and challenge

Success Indicators

- PSHE curriculum delivery will specifically highlight understanding of protected characteristics
- Compulsory attendance at assembly
- Incidents of Bullying will reduce, and any incident will show a clear intervention pathway with regular monitoring involving all stakeholders

Annual reviews of objective 1

All children regardless of gender, sex, race or religion feel safe on the school

REVIEW DATE: Summer 2024

To be completed

Progress made	Evidence	Next steps
Pupils feel safe at Castle School, this is demonstrated from the increase in pupils attendance from previous setting. Over 85% of pupils had improved attendance by more than 35% as compared to the previous settings. We have ensured this is our key priority and through active pupil voice. Pupils are supported and valued as part of the school community. We have ensured assemblies, restorative justice practices and comic strip conversations deliver our vision and values.	Year 11 questionnaire is overwhelmingly positive with regards to pupils feeling safe. Pupil voice for other year groups is overwhelmingly positive.	Continue to further embed good practices. Ensure comic strip conversations and restorative practices continue to be implemented.

Objective 2:

To ensure that adjustments to the school buildings and grounds maintain accessibility for all children and adults and ensure that building upkeep and takes account of accessibility requirements

Why we have chosen this objective

With further expansion and building work planned it is essential that the plans agreed all for full accessibility and also the current school building remains accessible and safe for all.

To achieve this objective we plan to

Modifications will be made to building / development proposals to maintain access and ongoing school upgrade maintenance will meet requirements of the Equality Act

Success Indicators

- Building work plans will indicate accessibility.
- Health and safety site walks will highlight any accessibility issues that need to be addressed

Annual reviews of objective 2

To ensure that adjustments to the school buildings and grounds maintain accessibility for all children and adults and ensure that building upkeep and takes account of accessibility requirements

REVIEW DATE: Summer 2024

To be completed

Progress made	Evidence	Next steps
Building works have not commenced, so we have been unable to incorporate this in our practice. But we ensure staff meet and greet pupils with regards to accessibility and risk assessments are carried out when health and safety issues arise.	Building work has been halted. Risk assessments are completed and updated regularly. Health and safety issues are regularly carried out and issues highlighted are rectified.	Need to ensure this is incorporated with the planned building move.

Objective 3:

To ensure that all parents and other members of the school community can access necessary information

Why we have chosen this objective

Our school's cohort is not from the immediate locality and regular contact with parents/carers in person is not easily achieved owing to our location. In addition, with the current cost of living crisis and an awareness of parent/carer needs and vulnerability all communication needs to be easily accessible

To achieve this objective we plan to

All communications will be accessible in both paper format and electronically and translated into other languages as required. Support for parents to help download communication apps

Success Indicators

Parents and carer feedback will indicate satisfaction with school communication systems

Annual reviews of objective 3

To ensure that all parents and other members of the school community can access necessary information

REVIEW DATE: Summer 2024

To be completed

Progress made	Evidence	Next steps
This has been a real positive. We send out messages to parents through group calls, keyworkers regularly communicate with parents/carers with regards to any changes. We have implemented Friday phone calls to inform parents about upcoming events in the following week. Staff regularly email parents and carers and send letters out when important events/trips and exams are planned out.	Positive parental response. Parents have commented that communication is significantly better as compared to the previous school.	Continue to ensure Friday phone calls are being implemented and parents/carers are informed about upcoming events.