



## **Marshland St James Primary and Nursery School**

# **Equal Opportunities Policy**

### **Introduction**

We believe that every child has a right to a high quality education that will enable them to reach their full potential. To this end we strive to meet every child's needs, acknowledging the individual differences in our school and the surrounding community.

All of our children are valued and have the right to equal regard and opportunity. This is founded on the principle of valuing individuals, irrespective of race, gender, class, ability, creed etc. We encourage our children to be tolerant and show respect for others.

We believe that school has an important part to play in laying the foundations for good citizenship. It should enable pupils to play a full role in society and feel confident to challenge any inequalities they encounter.

Our commitment to equality permeates every aspect of school life and is reflected in all our policies. We believe that equality is a pre-requisite of quality education. In practice this means every pupil will have access to the same range of experiences and will be offered the same opportunities.

Equal opportunities means equal access regardless of differences.

This policy is in accordance with The Equality Act 2010, which replaced all previous legislation in relation to equal opportunities. In line with that legislation, it seeks to ensure that this school provides equal opportunity for all children and adults, giving due regard to groups with 'protected characteristics', in terms of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership, in accordance with the Act.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- We aim to act positively and have due regard to the need to challenge and eliminate unlawful discrimination – within both our school and our community.
- We aim not to discriminate against anyone, be they staff, pupil or parent, on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, level of educational need or background.
- We aim to promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some pupils differently.
- We seek to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups of pupils.

- We aim to ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training processes are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.
- We aim to challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.
- We value each pupil's worth, celebrating the individuality and cultural diversity of our school community, and showing respect for all minority groups.
- We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are often caused by poor self-image and also aware of the relationship between that and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

## **Racial Equality**

In our school we will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion;
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups;
- seek to educate pupils in a manner which promotes community cohesion in a multicultural society.

We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will deal with it in accordance with school procedures. We endeavour to make our school and its environment welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of diverse cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So, for example, in the curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children learn the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs

## **Disabilities**

Some children in our school may have disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of these children, as we are to meeting the needs of all within the school. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not disadvantaged compared with nondisabled children.

The school is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled children and adults full access to the school premises and to all areas of learning.

Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, ensure access, modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities if children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

Marshland St James has a full Accessibility Policy and ongoing Action plan which is reviewed on an annual basis. We are committed to providing an accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion. Marshland St James Primary School plans, over time, to ensure the accessibility of provision for all pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

## **Gender Equality**

We recognise that nationally, there is an unacceptable discrepancy in the achievement of boys and girls. We are committed to seeing all individuals and groups of pupils making the best progress possible in our school.

We have put in place a number of measures to raise the achievement of the boys, in literacy in particular. These may include:

- ensuring that early literacy skills are promoted in all activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- ensuring that the starting points for writing activities capture the interests and imagination of boys and girls alike;
- removing gender bias from our resources and ensuring, for example, that fiction books capture boys' interest;
- employing a variety of activities, and include a kinaesthetic element;
- making sure that our school environment promotes positive male role models, in relation to learning and achievement;
- minimising male stereotyping;
- providing challenge, competition and short-term goals;
- valuing and celebrating academic achievement in ways which will motivate boys.

We realise that although gender is one of the key factors affecting educational performance, it affects different sub-groups of boys and girls in different ways. Social class, ethnic origin and local context are all strongly linked to the relative achievement of boys and girls. We also seek to ensure that policies designed to improve the attainment of one gender group does not do so at the expense of the other.

## **Role of the Class Teacher**

- Class teachers recognise the possibility of their own prejudices, but do their best to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. We do not knowingly discriminate against any child.
- When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups, or of boys and girls. All staff will ensure that the language they use does not reinforce stereotypes or prejudice.
- We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics include examples of the significant contributions women have made in this country's history. In geography, the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia, and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.
- All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any incidents in the school log book and draw them to the immediate attention of the headteacher.

## **Role of the Headteacher**

- ensure that the school's policy on Equal Opportunities is implemented effectively;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on Equal Opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations;
- ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against;

- promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum for pupils, and in providing opportunities for professional development for staff;
- promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in school assemblies, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the school. Respect is of the key Christian values adopted by the school.
- manage all incidents of unfair treatment, and any racist incidents, with due seriousness, and in line with this policy.

### **Role of the Governors**

In this policy statement, the governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities and accessibility, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

The governing body seeks to ensure that people from the 'protected groups' as defined by The Equality Act 2010, are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or minority group a child may come from.

The governing body will monitor equal opportunities in all areas of school data, including: admissions, attainment, exclusions, stakeholder feedback and rewards and sanctions.

The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities. The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their gender, religion or race.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The governors will therefore:

- monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it with the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process, so that no one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- require the headteacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy; Marshland St James Primary School Equal Opportunities Policy May 2017
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents/carers, staff or pupils regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the school's Behaviour Policy, and the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated. This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years or sooner if it is considered necessary.

**Date Reviewed by Governors: Summer 2017**

**Next review by Governors: Summer term 2020**