

## **BILBROOK CHURCH OF ENGLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

*This policy needs to be read in conjunction with other school policies and particularly the Race Equality and Behaviour policies*

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## 1. What sort of school are we?

Bilbrook Church of England Middle School is a small middle school. It serves a recognised area of social deprivation in Bilbrook, with a relatively high percentage of children on free school meals, children with special educational needs and children from ethnic minority backgrounds. Attendance rates are good at around 94%

The main feeder schools are Lane Green First School, Birches First School and St Chad's Primary School, Pattingham. In addition there are many other feeder schools both in Codsall and Wolverhampton. Some pupils enter the three tier system in the first schools, some directly into Year 5 and some into vacant places in Year 7. A small number of pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 to move to 11 – 18 high schools.

The school aims to provide a lively, relevant and stimulating curriculum, which is enhanced through educational visits, residential courses, and a wide variety of extra curricular opportunities.

A large proportion of the staff is female, and 7% of the staff is from minority ethnic groups.

## 2. Aims of Equal Opportunities Policy

Equality of opportunity at this school is about providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

It is based on the following cores values and ethos as expressed in this school's statement of vision and aims:

### School vision

At Bilbrook Church of England Middle School we believe that we are all learners for life.

### Aims

Educating children and ensuring that they grow up to lead safe, happy, healthy and successful lives is at the heart of what we do.

Our aims are an expression of the 5 outcomes for young people in the Every Child Matters agenda.

- 1 **Be healthy.** We are committed to developing the physical, mental, emotional and sexual health of our young people.
- 2 **Stay safe.** We are committed to protecting our young people from mistreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, as well as accidental injury, bullying, discrimination, crime and anti-social behaviour. We recognise their right to well-being.
- 3 **Enjoy and achieve.** We are committed to helping our young people to attend and enjoy school and recreation, achieving national education standards, and personal and social development.
- 4 **Making a contribution.** We are committed to helping our young people to participate in decision-making, volunteering and supporting the community and environment, abiding by the law and school rules, developing positive relationships, dealing with major life changes, and building confidence.
- 5 **Economic well-being.** We are committed to nurturing our young people's aspirations, and helping them to prepare for employment and a fulfilling life.

These aims are designed to ensure that the school meets the needs of all, taking account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and

social circumstances. It is important that in this school we meet the diverse needs of pupils to ensure inclusion for all and that all pupils are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

### **3. The School's Commitment to Race Equality**

This school is committed to the principle of race equality, and in relation to this our aims are:

- To ensure that all pupils and staff are encouraged and able to achieve to their full potential
- To respect and value differences between people
- To prepare pupils for life in a diverse society
- To acknowledge the existences of racism and to take steps to prevent it
- To make the school a place where everyone, irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, feels welcomed and values
- To promote good relations between different racial groups within the school and within the wider community
- To ensure that an inclusive ethos is established and maintained
- To oppose all forms of racism, racial prejudice and racial harassment
- To be proactive in tackling and eliminating unlawful discrimination

*See separate Race Equality Policy*

### **4. Leadership and Management**

All the school policies reflect a commitment to equal opportunities, including race equality.

The governing body and school management set a clear ethos which reflects the school's commitment to equality for all members of the school community.

The school promotes positive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity.

The school management will work in partnership with others to promote equality of opportunity and oppose all forms of oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination.

All staff contribute to the development and review of policy documents. The school ensures the involvement of governors and takes appropriate steps to enable the contribution of parents.

The evaluation of policies is used to identify specific actions to address equality issues.

Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of all pupils and appropriate breadth of content in relation to the school and the wider community.

Additional grants and resources (such as those provided for minority ethnic and Traveller pupils) are appropriately targeted and monitored.

### **5. Staffing: Recruitment and Professional Development**

The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and in line with statutory duties and LEA guidelines.

Steps are taken to encourage people from under represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school.

Steps are taken to ensure that everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this policy. New staff are familiar with it as part of their induction programme. The skills of all staff, including support and part-time staff are recognised and valued. All staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge.

Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this policy.

Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

## **6. Curriculum**

Curriculum planning takes account of the ethnicity, backgrounds and needs of all pupils.

The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- boys and girls;
- pupils learning English as an additional language;
- pupils from minority ethnic groups;
- pupils who are gifted and talented;
- pupils with special educational needs;
- pupils who are looked after by the local authority;
- pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

The school monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds.

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to 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 cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture.

## **7. Teaching and Learning**

Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel all their contributions are valued.

All pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum.

Teaching is responsive to pupils' different learning styles and takes account of pupils' cultural backgrounds and linguistic needs.

Teachers take positive steps to include all groups or individuals.

Pupil grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under continual review and are analysed by ethnicity, gender and background.

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.

Teachers encourage pupils to become independent and to take responsibility for their own learning.

Teachers challenge stereotypes and foster pupils' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.

Resources and displays reflect the experience and backgrounds of pupils, promote diversity and challenge stereotypes in all curriculum areas. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school.

## **8. Assessment, Pupil Achievement and Progress**

All pupils have the opportunity to achieve their highest standards. Baseline assessment is used appropriately for all pupils. The school ensures that assessment is free of gender, cultural and social bias, and that assessment methods are valid.

The school monitors and analyses pupil performance by gender, ethnicity and background and is therefore able to identify groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. The school ensures that action is taken to counter this.

Staff have very high expectations of all pupils and they continually challenge them to extend their learning and achieve higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement.

Self-assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.

All pupils have full opportunities to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do and therefore, to benefit from assessment which summarises what they have learnt. Information from assessment is used to inform future learning.

Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupil progress.

## **9. School Ethos**

The school opposes all forms of racism, harassment, prejudice and discrimination.

The school publicly supports diversity and actively promotes good personal and community relations. Diversity is recognised as having a positive role to play within the school.

Staff foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among pupils from all ethnic groups.

The school caters for the dietary and dress requirements of different religious groups.

The school enables pupils and staff to celebrate festivals and other events relevant to their particular faith and actively encourages all pupils to understand these.

Clear procedures are in place to ensure that staff deal with all forms of bullying and harassment promptly, firmly and consistently. Actions taken are in line with relevant LEA policies and guidance such as those for anti-bullying and dealing with racist incidents.

All forms of harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with relevant school policies.

Pupils, staff and parents are aware of the procedures for dealing with intolerant behaviour and that such behaviour is always unacceptable.

Staff are trained to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice.

## **10. Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions**

The school expects high standards of behaviour from all pupils.

There are strategies to reintegrate long term truants and excluded pupils that address the needs of all pupils.

Exclusions are monitored by gender, ethnicity, special educational need and background and action is taken in order to reduce any disparities between different groups of pupils.

The school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all.

It is recognised that cultural background may effect behaviour. The school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and discipline as stated within the school's Behaviour Policy.

Pupils, 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 minority group is always unacceptable.

## **11. Personal Development and Pastoral Care**

Pastoral support takes account of religious and ethnic differences, and the experiences and needs of refugee and asylum seeker children.

The school provides appropriate support for pupils learning English as an additional language and encourages them to use their home and community languages.

The school takes account of and meets the needs of Traveller pupils.

All pupils are provided with appropriate career and post 16 advice and guidance which encourages them to consider the full range of options.

Work experience providers are required to demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities.

Appropriate support is given to victims of harassment and intolerant behaviour, using the support of external agencies where appropriate. The perpetrators are dealt in accordance with school policies and provided with relevant support to consider and modify their behaviour.

## **12. Admissions and Attendance**

The admissions process is monitored to ensure that it is administered fairly and consistently to all pupils, so that pupils from particular groups are not disadvantaged.

Comprehensive information about pupils' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet etc. is included in all admissions forms.

The school and families are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to pupil attendance and absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel who are aware of community issues.

Provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance which includes staff as well as pupils.

Provision is made for pupils on extended leave so that they are able to continue with their learning.

Attendance is monitored by gender, ethnicity, special educational need and background and action is taken in order to reduce any disparities between different groups of pupils.

### **13. Partnership with Parents and the Community**

Progress reports to parents are accessible and appropriate, in order to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue.

All parents are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the school.

The school works in partnership with parents and the community to develop positive attitudes to diversity and to address specific incidents.

The school takes steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under represented groups of parents and sections of the community.

Information material for parents is easily accessible in user friendly language and is available in languages and formats other than English as appropriate.

Meetings for parents are made accessible for all. Parental involvement is monitored to ensure the participation of all groups.

Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalised groups.

The school's premises and facilities are equally available and accessible for use by all groups within the community.

### **14. Responsibilities**

The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation.

The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that the policy and related procedures and strategies are implemented.

The Headteacher will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy.

The member of staff named below will be responsible for co-ordinating work in equal opportunities.

### **15. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

The effectiveness of the policy will be evaluated annually by the Headteacher and Governors.

Member of staff responsible for Equal Opportunities: Headteacher

## APPENDIX 1

### Questions for assessing the impact of a school's policies, including its Equal Opportunities and Race Equality policies.

These questions give special attention to pupils' attainment levels and could include the following.

1. Does the school help all its pupils to achieve as much as they can, and get the most from what is on offer, based on their individual needs?
2. Which groups of pupils are not achieving as much as they can? Why not?
3. Is the school making sure that its policies, including its Equal Opportunities and/or its Race Equality policy, are not having an adverse impact on pupils, parents, staff or some racial groups?
4. How does the school explain any differences? Are the explanations justified? Can they be justified on non-racial grounds, such as English language difficulties?
5. What is the school doing to raise standards, and promote equality of opportunity for pupils who seem to be under-achieving and who may need extra support?
6. What is the school doing to:
  - prepare pupils for life in a multi-ethnic society;
  - promote race equality and harmony; and
  - prevent or deal with racism?
7. What changes does the school need to make to relevant policies, their aims, and any related targets and strategies?

**APPENDIX 2**  
**THE RACE RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT 2000**  
**A DUTY TO PROMOTE RACE EQUALITY - What does this mean for schools?**

**1. What is the general duty?**

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 came into force on 2 April 2001 and places a general duty on schools to promote race equality. This general duty means that schools must aim to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

The general duty is obligatory, which means that it must be met. Schools cannot claim that they do not have the resources to meet their responsibilities. These responsibilities should be built into the work that schools already do.

The weight given to race equality should be in proportion to its relevance. However it is important to note that "proportionality" and "relevance" is not dependent on the size of the minority ethnic population in a school. Race equality is important, even if there is no one from a minority ethnic group in the school or local community. Education plays a vital role in influencing young people and developing positive attitudes to diversity.

The general duty will be particularly relevant to the functions of schools such as admissions, assessments; raising pupils' attainment, curriculum development and delivery, behaviour and discipline (including exclusions), staff selection and recruitment.

What this means in practice is that schools need to:

- have a pro-active approach;
- "mainstream" race equality by building it into existing policies and procedures;
- meet all three parts of the general duty.

**2. What are the specific duties?**

The specific duties are meant to help schools to meet the general duty. The specific duties for schools are to:

**a) Prepare and maintain a race equality policy**

This policy should:

- deal with race equality explicitly and transparently
- address tackling racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations
- take account of the school's character and circumstances
- lead to action resulting in positive outcomes
- link to strategic planning and decision making
- link to other policies
- explain how it will be monitored and evaluated
- explain roles and responsibilities

The race equality policy can be combined or be part of another policy such as an equal opportunities policy or inclusion policy. However to meet the duty, the race equality policy should be easily identifiable.

It is important that the policy is put into practice and therefore, it should be linked to an action plan. This should be part of the school's existing planning processes.

The policy should be approved by the governing body because it is ultimately responsible for seeing that the school meets the duty. Schools also need to give thought to how the policy will be communicated to all staff, pupils and parents.

#### **b) Assessing the impact of policies**

Under the duty, schools must assess the impact of policies, including its race equality policy, on pupils, staff and parents from different racial groups. In particular, schools should assess whether their policies have, or could have, an adverse impact on the attainment levels of pupils from different racial groups.

Schools are not expected to assess the impact of all policies all at once. The assessment of impact on different racial groups can be part of the normal cycle schools may have for reviewing their policies.

To support the assessment of policies schools should:

- build key assessment questions into policy development and review processes
- carry out assessments drawing on monitoring data, surveys, consultation, etc
- ensure that the information gathered is used to inform and influence planning and decision making.

#### **c) Monitoring the impact of policies**

Under the duty, schools must monitor the impact of their policies on pupils, staff and parents from different racial groups. In particular, schools should monitor the impact of policies on pupils' attainment levels.

Monitoring will involve:

- collecting and analysing data to measure a school's performance and effectiveness
- monitoring attainment and progress by racial group, analysing it and using it to examine trends
- monitoring other areas that could have an adverse impact on pupils' attainment such as exclusions, rewards and sanctions, attendance, racial harassment and bullying, parental involvement, membership of the governing body.

In particular, monitoring data will help schools to:

- highlight any differences between pupils of different racial groups
- ask why these difference exist and test the explanations given
- decide what further action needs to be taken to improve the performance of pupils from different ethnic groups
- review and set targets in relevant strategic plans

### **3. When does all this have to be done?**

Schools are required to have prepared a race equality policy by 31 May 2002. After this date they will have to show that they are maintaining a policy, i.e. that they are improving the policy and implementing it. If meeting the deadline means that schools are not able to actively consult and

involve pupils, parents and others in the process, then a school's action plan should give priority to improving the policy which should include consultation and the involvement of others.

#### **4. How are the duties enforced?**

Under the Act, the CRE has the power to enforce the specific duties. If it is felt that a school is not meeting these duties, the CRE can issue a "compliance" notice. This is a legal document that orders a school to meet the specific duties within a certain time scale. If schools do not obey any part of the notice, the CRE can apply to the High Court for a court order to make a school do so.

The general duty can also be enforced through a judicial review. This means that the High Court will consider whether a school took appropriate action to meet the duty. If the court finds that the school did not take appropriate action, it will not have met the general duty and can be ordered to do so. Anyone who has an interest, including the CRE can apply for a judicial review.

Although schools do not have to follow the Code of Practice, they do have to show that they are meeting the duties. The Code of Practice can be used as evidence in any legal action under the Act.

#### **5. Specific Duties: Employment**

Schools are not directly bound by the employment duties. However they will need to take account of employment to meet the general duty.

LEAs must annually monitor and report on current and prospective staff in every maintained school. Every maintained school will, therefore, need to supply the LEA with ethnic data on:

- staff in post
- applicants for employment, training and promotion
- if a school has 150+ full time staff, grievances, training, discipline, reasons for leaving

#### **6. What help can schools get?**

The Local Authority has produced "*Guidance on Writing an Equal Opportunities Policy*". This guidance is designed to support schools in developing and writing an equal opportunities policy, which includes the requirement on schools to have a race equality policy.

Other key documents produced by the Local Authority include:

- Education for a Multicultural Society: A Statement of Intent
- Guidance for Schools on Racial Harassment

For further advice and support, schools can contact Local Authority officers:

*"Learning for All: Standards for Racial Equality in Schools"* is a handbook produced by the CRE and provides a framework of race equality standards which schools can use to assess the effectiveness in promoting race equality. This valuable handbook has been distributed to all schools and may provide a useful starting point in helping schools to address the new duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. The handbook can also be downloaded from the CRE's website at [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)