

Single Equality Policy **St. Matthew's Primary School, March 2010**

Equality – aims and values

At St Matthew's Primary School, we aim to provide equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards. Our Equality Policy is based on the following core values as expressed in this school's aims.

At St Matthew's we aim to...

- make our learning inspiring, challenging and fun
- achieve our best
- celebrate success
- treat ourselves and others with respect
- take responsibility for our learning, behaviour and our school

This will make our school a happy and safe place to be.

Our Values:

In St. Matthew's...

- ...we value working hard and trying our best;
- ...we celebrate our successes and learn from our mistakes;
- ...we value our diversity and individuality;
- ...we treasure our friendships and other relationships;
- ...we respect independence and team work;
- ...we encourage participation and everyone's voice is listened to.
- ...we take pride in our work, our school and our community.

Our approach to promoting equality

The overall objective of the school's Equality Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

Through the Equality Policy, the school seeks to ensure that no member of the school community or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, socio-economic background, where the person lives or spent convictions.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

A Cohesive Community

St Matthew's Primary School is a large multi-ethnic city primary school, which serves a mixed socio-economic community. Although we are situated in a relatively affluent area of central Cambridge, a significant number of our children travel to the school from outside catchment. Many of the houses are

small and house prices are extremely high. There is a council estate adjoining the school and there has been a substantial rise in the provision of social housing within catchment over the last few years. Our pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. 30% of our pupils come from single parent families and 12% are entitled to free school meals. 6% of our pupils move in or out of the area each year. Children enter in all year groups and some come midterm. A number of these do not have experience of the national curriculum due to overseas schooling. We have a high level of EAL children (12%) There are approximately 25 languages spoken by our children in their homes. These children have varying stages of fluency in English. 8.5% of our pupils are on the special needs register: the majority of these have relatively mild learning difficulties.

In order to achieve a cohesive community, we will need to:

- Promote understanding and engagement between communities.
- Encourage all children and families to feel part of the wider community.
- Understand the needs and hopes of all our communities.
- Tackle discrimination.
- Increase life opportunities for all.
- Ensure teaching and the curriculum explores and addresses issues of diversity.

Race Equality

As in line with the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, St Matthew's Primary School aims to:

Promote good relations between different racial and cultural groups within the school and the wider community.

Acknowledge the existence of racism and take steps to combat and prevent all forms of racism, racial prejudice and racial harassment.

Our Equality and Inclusion Policy 2009, outlines the specific duties of the school including:

- preparing a written race equality policy, within our Equality and Inclusion Policy, and keeping it up to date.
- assessing the impact of their policies, including the race equality policy, on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups, particularly the impact on pupils' attainment levels.
- monitoring the impact of policies on pupils, staff and parents and on pupils' attainment levels.

Disability Equality

Our Equality and Inclusion Policy 2009 outlines the school's commitment to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.

St Matthew's Primary School Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan

3 Year Period covered : June 2008 – June 2011

Statutory Framework

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. The Governing Body has three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- to plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils. An Accessibility Plan (AP).

This scheme and the accompanying action plans set out how the Governing Body will promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the ways in which information is communicated to both pupils and parents so that their understanding and knowledge is comparable to a pupil who may not be disabled

St Matthew's school has a responsibility to take account of all disabled people, students, staff, parents and visitors. All disabled people connected to the school are involved in the positive promotion of disability and in the elimination of discrimination. Within the scheme, reference is therefore made to disabled people and not disabled pupils unless there is the need to specifically identify a particular group e.g. pupils in the classroom.

The school endeavours to make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure all disabled people are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. To make these reasonable adjustments we aim to:

- Plan ahead
- Identify potential barriers· Work collaboratively with disabled people
- Identify practical solutions through a problem solving approach
- Ensure staff have the necessary skills
- Monitor the effects of the adjustments and this policy
- Recognise the importance of home school partnership and look to parents to inform the school at the earliest opportunity if they or their child has a disability.
- Consider the effect of any proposed change upon all members of the school community and the available resources.

Definitions

Part 1 of the DDA defines a disabled person as someone who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. The DDA identifies “substantial” as “more than minor or trivial” and “long term” as a period longer than (or is likely to be longer than) 12 months.

The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning difficulties, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, ADHD, diabetes, and epilepsy. These may all constitute a disability, but only if the effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term, as defined above.

The effect on normal day-to-day activities is on one or more of the following:

- School mobility - getting to and from school, moving around the school site or going on school visits.
- Manual dexterity - holding a pen, throwing a ball, playing an instrument.
- Physical coordination - washing, dressing, taking part in PE.
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects - to carry a bag
- Continence - going to the toilet.
- Speech - communicating with others or understanding what they saying
- Hearing - what people are saying or listening to a DVD or tape.
- Vision - being able to see clearly (with glasses/contact lenses)
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand - concentrating on and understanding information.
- Perception of risk of physical danger - touching hot objects, crossing roads safely.

Statement of Values

In St. Matthew’s Primary School we value...

- ...respecting each other – treating others how we wish to be treated;
- ...celebrating each others’ differences;
- ...accepting responsibility for our actions;
- ...taking a pride in our school, our work and our community;
- ...working co-operatively with others;
- ...having responsibility for our own learning and behaviour, everyone trying our best.

This school will aspire to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate discrimination
- Eliminate harassment relating to a disability

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to take account of disabled peoples' disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people

For the DES we will especially eliminate discrimination, harassment related to disability, promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other people, promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to take account of disabled people's disabilities even when that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

Student and School Analysis

A key starting point for the school's DES will be an assessment of:

- the nature of the school population;
- the nature of the school, including a consideration of the impact of the school's existing plans and priorities.

The following issues need to be considered:

- Who is in the school? Pupils, parents, staff, governors and visitors
- Who is disabled? Pupils and adults presently in the school
- Who is not at school? Absent pupils and adults through illness, excluded pupils
- Who might we expect in the future? New intake from nurseries and pre-schools and children allocated places via Admissions throughout the year
- The level of staff awareness of what the DDA requires of them
- The presence of disabled pupils in the school and the pattern of their participation in the life of the school
- Information on how well disabled pupils are accessing the curriculum
- FFT data at KS2 to track groups of children
- Patterns of attendance and exclusion
- Participation in extracurricular activities, school trips and so on
- Issues such as bullying, peer relationships, medication (training)

St Matthews Primary School will endeavour to analyse the impact on disabled people in the way the school is organised, looking at:

- The physical environment and the accessibility of the school site
- School policies and procedures and the effect these have upon pupils and adults, staff, parents and visitors
- The way the information is provided
- Priorities in the School Development Plan
- Outcomes of Every Child Matters
- Gathering information on the recruitment, development and retention of disabled staff

Views of Those Consulted During the Development of the DES

The DES has been informed by:

- The views and aspirations of disabled children and young people themselves
- The views and aspirations of disabled staff
- The views and aspirations of the parents of disabled pupils
- The views of staff on the DES working party
- The priorities of the local authority

A working party will be formed from interested stakeholders, who have expressed an interest in helping the school form a Disability Action Plan in order to meet the three key duties.

The Main Priorities in the School's DES

The DES and Accessibility Plan has 3 main strands:

- a. Increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils.
- b. Improvements to the school environment to increase accessibility for disabled people.
- c. Improvements in the provision of information for disabled people.

a. Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum

This is achieved through the School Development Plan and the review of the curriculum. The school will also draw upon the expertise of external partners which will include:

- Speech and Language Therapists
- Educational Psychologist
- There will also be valuable contributions from curriculum leaders
- Planning and timetabling and the appropriate deployment of teaching assistants
- Advice and support from the ALSTT and
- Pupil involvement and the use of the School Council
- Links with ARU and services
- Use of separate teaching spaces

For disabled pupils consideration must be given to particular groups:

- PE for students with a physical impairment
- Music for deaf and hearing impaired students
- Easy language or taped information for pupils with learning difficulties

- Pictures and symbols for pupils with communication difficulties e.g. use of visual timetable
- Modified assignments for pupils with specific learning difficulties
- Large print for visually impaired pupils
- Appropriateness of general classroom furniture
- Classroom organisation so disabled pupils can freely move around
- Clear signs for visually impaired pupils especially health and safety advice
- The self-esteem of disabled pupils by promoting positive images of disabled pupils in books, teaching materials and the wider curriculum
- The elimination of bullying towards disabled pupils
- Promoting the appointment of children with disabilities on the school council

For disabled parents the production of school information can be made available in different formats such as:

- Braille
- Large Print
- Audio copies

The consideration of disabled adults visiting the school

- Access to disabled facilities such as toilet (New Hall), staff room and so on
- Clear floor areas
- Clear signs

Clear procedures in place for teachers to support the placement of adult students within school e.g. CRC students, teacher trainees.

b. Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services:

An environment that welcomes diversity and difference and a school that learns how to improve access for disabled pupils will be good for all.

- Improvements to lightning, signage, colour contrast, the acoustic environment, floor coverings
- Basins/toilets at correct height, hand rails
- Access to appropriate Intervention space
- Access to specific equipment at playtimes
- Make changes needed to the layout of the playground and other common areas
- The provision of ramps, hand rails and amendments to door ways
- The provision of particular furniture and equipment to improve access
- Enlarged computer screens/ keyboards/ mouse (Rollerball)

We currently complete a Health and Safety Audit of the school environment each term. From September 2008 these will also encompass a DES and Accessibility audit.

c. Improving the ways in which information is communicated to both pupils and parents so that their understanding and knowledge is comparable to a student who may not be disabled

Information that may need modifying for disabled pupils include:

- Homework
- Timetables
- Worksheets
- General letters and notices
- Reports

Improving the delivery of information might include:

- Face to face meetings with pupils and parents
- Verbal explanations
- Telephone/ email contact
- Use of Parent Support Advisors to support families in their home environment
- Braille, large print, simplified language
- Audiotape or videotape
- Sign language
- Using a symbol system

Management and Coordination

The DES and Accessibility Plan runs for 3 years. It is reviewed and reported upon every year alongside the SEN and Inclusion policies to the governing body. The DES and any subsequent action plans are led by the Senior Management Team and form part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Resources are allocated based on identified priorities via the SENCO. Effectiveness of the scheme will be evaluated annually through discussions with the whole-school community and reflected upon to inform future developments.

Getting hold of the school's DES and Accessibility Plan

Hard copies of the DES and Accessibility Plan are available upon request at the school office.

Gender Equality

Our Equality and Inclusion Policy 2009 sets out the school's commitment to gender equality.

Under the Gender Equality Duty, schools need to take action to:

Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment

Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

In addition to these general duties, the school also has specific duties:

- Prepare and publish a gender equality scheme,
- Address the causes of any gender pay gap
- Gather and use information on how the school's policies and practices affect gender equality
- Consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information
- Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices
- Implement the actions set out within three years
- Report against the scheme annually, and review the scheme every three years.

St Matthew's School will produce a Gender Equality Scheme, outlining the actions to be taken, in order to ensure the general and specific duties are met. This scheme will be written in consultation with interested stakeholders and reviewed every three years.

Roles and Responsibilities

All who work in the school have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

Our governors are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with all current equality legislation (list here, see Section 2).
- Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Making sure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents know about it.
- Making sure its procedures are followed.
- Producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary.
- Making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out.
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.

All our staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with racist, sexist and homophobic incidents, and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping.
- Promoting equality and good community relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic circumstances.
- Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking training and learning opportunities.

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school lies with a named member of staff and a named governor. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating and monitoring work on equality issues.
- Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents).

- Monitoring the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups of pupils (e.g. Black and minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsies and Travellers).
- Monitoring exclusions.

Monitoring, Reviewing, Assessing Impact

This policy is supported by the school's disability and gender schemes and a race equality action plan.

The DES and GES run for three years, but are reviewed and reported annually to the governing body.

The School Development Plan ensures the DES and GES form an essential part of the school's action on equality. It includes targets determined by the governing body for promoting a cohesive community, inclusion and equality in the school, also with reference to the workforce. It also ensures other school policies address equality issues.

This policy will be regularly monitored by staff and governors to ensure that it is effective in tackling discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessments is used to inform future planning and decision-making.

A named member of staff and a named governor responsible for equality will monitor specific outcomes.

The Headteacher will provide monitoring reports for review by the Governing Body. These will include, school population, workforce recruitment, retention and progression, key initiatives, progress against targets and future plans.

Community cohesion will be monitored against the Cambridgeshire standards which are based on the national 'Community Cohesion Education Standards for Schools' (DFES, Home Office and Commission for Racial Equality 2004), 'Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion' (DCSF 2007, ref. 00598-2007) and 'Our shared Future' (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007).