

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Equal Opportunities Policy

Agreed by Governors: July 2024

To be reviewed: March 2025

Mission Statement

*As one family working together
to be the best that we can be,
we live, love and learn with Jesus.*

Introduction

Catholic schools are committed to fostering a spirit of justice and universal brotherhood in accordance with the message of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church.

The Second Vatican Council clearly reiterated what has always been fundamental to the Catholic belief and teaching - namely the basic equality between all human beings.

"All human beings are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's image: they have the same nature and origin and being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same divine calling and destiny Forms of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the ground of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design".

Gaudium et Spec. 29 (Joy and Hope)

Aims and Objectives

We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff or pupil, on the grounds of their sex, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins. This is in line with the 1976 Race Relations Act and covers both direct and indirect discrimination.

In line with the teaching of the Church, the Diocesan guidelines and our own Mission Statement, we promote equal opportunities in St Augustine's School in the following ways:

- by creating a happy working environment within the school where the development of the whole child is promoted in a Christian environment.
- by making children aware of their own uniqueness and to nurture a sense of dignity for themselves as individuals.
- by promoting in them a respect for others as individuals and a tolerance for their abilities, disabilities, age, gender, or social background.
- by building up a relationship of mutual respect and trust with children and parents.
- by reinforcing positive attitudes and values through our school ethos, curriculum planning and its delivery and by ensuring that all children have equal access to all the benefits, facilities, services and regards offered by the School.

Anti-racism

It is the right of all pupils to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident and record the incident.

We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. So, for example, we will immediately remove any offensive graffiti that we may find in school. We promote an understanding of different 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, the History curriculum gives due emphasis to ancient African traditions and cultures in the work that the children do on the Ancient Egyptians. In the Religious Education curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children study the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

Should anyone at our school be a victim of racism, we will do all we can to support that person in overcoming any difficulties they may have.

Management

St Augustine's School staff (teaching, non-teaching and ancillary) seek to be seen in our working practices, roles and relationships endorsing a very precise commitment to Equal Opportunities by:

- providing professional equality for each staff member to reach their potential on any level for which they have the experience and suitability.
- ensuring that the curriculum organization and leadership is composed of individuals having diverse experiences and perspectives thus enriching planning, management, delivery and evaluation.
- ensuring that staff attitudes, expectations and behaviour towards pupils and their families reflect equality of opportunities.
- providing adult role models for our children which take in a full range and levels of responsibility.

Staffing and Staff Development

The Governing Body and those adults involved in appointments, deployment, professional review and staff development have to be seen:

- regularly auditing the schools staffing profile with a view to correcting imbalances or under representation
- recognising the influence staff have on children's attitude formation; and ensure that staff lead by example
- ensuring that at times of appointments, panels/committees are aware of not only legal requirements but also commitment to equal opportunities
- supporting all staff in gaining regular in-service access to equal opportunities programmes
- ensuring that curriculum delivery and classroom practices reflect equality of opportunity.

Curriculum Planning and Review

In St Augustine's School, our children have access to breadth, balance, coherence, relevance, differentiation and progression. The "hidden curriculum" and the message it transmits are equally important.

As we make our children aware of the difference in people and their individual value, we shall also strive to make our children aware of the similarities between people - similarities that transcend cultural differences. We shall endeavour to make our children understand the causes of inequality and oppression, its effects on certain groups of people in this and other countries now and in the past. Topics covered in Religious Education, History and Geography will illustrate these concepts. Children will be encouraged to discuss issues relating to equality and justice as they arise in these subject areas. In our teaching we shall help our children to recognise the importance of equality and their responsibilities for achieving it in them selves and others. In various areas of the curriculum they will be encouraged to use positive action and develop positive attitudes towards groups who may be discriminated against eg disabled, people of African Caribbean or Asian heritage, people from Eastern European or other backgrounds, the poor.

Discussion will take place with all members of staff to ensure that equal opportunity policies are adequately reflected and clearly represented as an integral part of subject area policies and schemes of work.

Curriculum Delivery and Teaching Strategies

As teachers we are aware that children learn in many different ways and consequently we are aware of our need to reflect on our teaching strategies and the relationship between equal opportunities and classroom practice.

- Do we use a variety of teaching methods in order to cater for the different learning styles of pupils?
- Do we structure activities to provide equal opportunities for all pupils to extend their learning eg Pupils grouped according to ability in Mathematics, Spellings, Reading: - on other occasions grouped according to mixed ability, mixed gender to extend other learning opportunities?
- Do we support children who have more or less ability than others, by targeting support with the provision of special needs?
- Do we ensure that each child has equal access to teacher's time?
- Do we arrange equipment to be accessible to both boys and girls and to ensure that materials do not contain stereotyping especially in the area of library resources?
- Do we encourage boys and girls to partake in all activities available in sports and technology?
- Do we ensure that parents, helpers and the community have equal involvement in school life?
- Do we recognise and celebrate success in areas of achievement, of exercising responsibility, good behaviour and care?
- Do we intervene when aggressive behaviour is directed at one pupil, group, gender or race, whether in class or on the playground?
- Do we seek to enhance and celebrate the different religious and races of children in our school?
- Do we ensure that classroom and school displays reflect the work, interests and abilities of all our children?

Assessment Recording and Reporting

A very necessary part of the National Curriculum is assessment.

At St Augustine's school we wish to emphasise the positive about our children's achievements as well as the areas in which they can strive to do better.

We seek to value each child's efforts during their work and heighten their self esteem and respect for their own abilities. Our reporting and recording system will focus on achievement positively and not failure.

While teacher attitudes and expectation are subject to bias we will seek at St Augustine's to be as objective as possible at each stage about the process eg Moderation exercises by staff.

We will ensure that:

- individuals' progress is based on evidence of individual performance rather than on preconceived ideas about the group of which it may be part
- use a range of assessment methods, where possible, so that all children have equal chance to demonstrate achievement eg Marking a set piece of work, setting a 'test' on work covered, producing a practical piece of work; the decision will rest with the year group teacher
- ensure that materials used in assessment are free from bias and stereotypes.
- advice/guidance will be sought on the assessment of bilingual children when necessary.

Parental and Community Involvement

In St Augustine's school we recognise the important role of parents, families and the community as educators. We will seek to ensure that our policies and practices underpinned by our Mission Statement, nurture in our children:

- a healthy respect for the local and wider community
- a welcome for parents and members of the community to contribute to school with their knowledge and expertise
- a valuing of dialogue with parents, with adults in the school and with the Governors.

Resources

In St Augustine's School we shall endeavour to ensure that all resources available to children are as free as possible from bias and stereotyping.

Books in all our library areas are being carefully chosen with particular regard to portraying positive images of all groups of people.

Some discussion needs to take place with staff for reviewing existing books and materials used in school.

We would hope that through our teaching and example our children will be helped to develop skills of recognising and challenging bias or stereotyping where it exists.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this Equal Opportunities Policy. The governing body does this by:

- monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school
- monitoring the staff appointment process so that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against
- requiring the headteacher to report to the governors on an annual basis on the effectiveness of this policy
- taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or pupils
- monitoring the school behaviour and exclusions policies so those pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed regularly by staff and governors or earlier if local or national directives are received.