

PENSHURST CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Single Equality Scheme

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Approved by the Governing Body on 23/9/24		
Signed by the Chair of Governors:		
Signed by the Headteacher:		

Single Equality Scheme

1. Values

Penshurst CE Primary School is a school in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes, well-being and the happiness of every individual matter. We believe that everyone has the right to succeed and the entitlement to develop their full potential. We recognise that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths, which will affect the way in which they learn.

As an inclusive school, we have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, which meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Educational experiences and opportunities will be provided to enable individuals to progress to the best of their ability.

2. Equal Opportunities Statement

We promote equality and the building of a democracy in which all members have rights and responsibilities, and the same opportunity to benefit from, and take part, in the education provided by the school – within and beyond its premises. Diversity is valued as a rich resource that can contribute to the learning of all pupils and staff.

3. Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives.

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

4. Disability Statement

Penshurst CE Primary School is proud to be an inclusive school. We offer access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils regardless of disability. We strive to ensure all pupils can access, educationally and physically, all learning opportunities within and beyond the school.

Within the confines of an old building, we aim to ensure that all users can access key learning areas, and will ensure that no user experiences any discrimination or reduced entitlement to learning due to being unable to physically access areas of the school.

As with any additional needs the school works closely with parents and appropriate outside agencies to ensure equality of access for all.

1. Characteristics of our school

Penshurst CE Primary School is a mixed gender, small village school. The majority of pupils live in the ecclesiastical parish of Penshurst in the Sevenoaks school district. The remainder of the children come from a wider catchment area stretching into Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells districts. The proportion of children from Penshurst village compared to those from further afield has fallen slightly over time.

Penshurst is a Church of England school, and the religious make-up of the families at the school is primarily Christian. Both the immediate village and local district are primarily Christian, with an extremely small proportion of other religions represented. The second highest proportion of the population have stated 'No Religion'.

Penshurst CE Primary School is predominantly White British in ethnicity with only a small proportion of the school community representing minority groups.

The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is currently low at the school. The percentage of children with SEN is slightly above the national average and rising, although the percentage with an EHCP is slightly below average.

The school resides in and draws the majority of its pupils from an affluent, well-educated area with no significant pockets of deprivation. Penshurst CE Primary School is predominantly mono-cultural with the pupil demographic broadly reflecting that of the immediate and wider surrounding area. Whilst this provides opportunities in terms of ability, engagement and achievement, the school needs to ensure that it prepares its pupils for an adult life in a much broader cultural environment in the UK and globally.

2. Setting our priorities

The priorities for the Single Equality Scheme (SES) are set in the light of:

- Identification summarised in the overview of outcomes;
- views expressed by stakeholders that have been involved in the development of the scheme;

Our priorities are:

Children and young people

- narrowing the attainment gap between different groups of children and young people in the school e.g. children using alternative forms of communication and Looked After Children (LAC);
- challenging race and gender and ability stereotypes.

Our community

- ensuring involvement of children and young people, parents and carers from minority ethnic backgrounds;

- improving access to information e.g. translation and interpretation to inform and engage parents/carers for whom English is an Additional Language

Our school community

- improving the involvement of disabled children and young people, staff and parents and carers;
- tackling bullying based on race, religion, age, gender, disability, sexuality or poverty;
- considering objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap or differences between groups;
- promoting positive attitudes toward diversity;
- meeting our statutory duties

3. Aims

Our aims are to:

- Broaden the horizons and outlook of our pupils and staff, including their tolerance and appreciation of diversity
- Ensure the equality of opportunity for different groups to progress
- Prepare our pupils to become effective citizens in a multi-cultural society

Specific strategic objectives relating to equality will be developed as part of our School Improvement Plan and progress will be reviewed and published annually.

4. Principles of Our SES

a. Purpose of the SES

We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality for all students, staff, other members of the school community and service users regardless of their ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or beliefs as defined within existing equalities legislation.

The purpose of our Single Equality Scheme (SES) is to fulfil the duties to promote equality for people with 'protected characteristics' and to embed fairness and equality at the heart of our school community and in all aspects of our provisions, criteria and practices (PCPs).

Protected Characteristics include: Gender, Race, Culture, Religion, Language, Age, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Family background and poverty.

We recognise within this Scheme the inequality linked to poverty and socio-economic factors and emotional insecurity. We will do this within the framework of our school motto and our mission statement.

Our SES enables us to meet the duties under equality legislation, and to achieve the following for all groups:

- eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination;
- eliminate harassment and bullying (schools must keep accurate records of bullying and harassment related to equalities and report as required to the Local Authority);
- advance equality of opportunity through vision, strategy and practice;
- foster good relations.

Through our SES we make links to all our actions and commitments to:

- promote community cohesion;
- narrow the attainment gap in outcomes between children and young people;
- improve outcomes as described within the Kent Children's and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

b. A Relevant and Proportionate Approach

In promoting equality and complying with legislation we apply the principles of relevance and proportionality. We aim to ensure that our actions are proportionate to the equality issues within our school and relevant to our PCPs. This means we prioritise those actions that enable us to tackle the most significant issues with regard to equality in order to deliver the best equality outcomes. In doing this we focus on PCPs that have the greatest effect, or potential effect on different stakeholders. We also apply proportionality in ensuring that our PCPs are proportionate means of achieving legitimate aims.

We do not assume that existing representation alone determines relevance, so we apply the principle of anticipatory duty in helping us to identify what is relevant. We also anticipate that there will be 'hidden' disabilities and equality issues so we are thorough in identifying factors that lead, or have the potential to lead, to inequality (for example, the neglect of gifted and talented pupils).

We ask whether our PCPs affect different groups in different ways and try to implement them in ways that promote equality. This is achieved through systematic monitoring of outcomes, impact assessment and action planning incorporating the fullest possible participation of stakeholders.

c. Participation

Participation is based on information gained about representation of different groups. We aim to do this as fully as possible while recognising issues of sensitivity in relation to the different protected characteristics. We take particular steps to ensure disabled children and young people, parents and carers are involved as is their entitlement.

Our consultative groups and working party include representation from the widest range of relevant groups that we can reasonably achieve. They are responsive to the diversity in our school and organised in such a way as to promote direct participation.

The school involves stakeholders including children and young people, staff, parents/carers and other users of the school in relation to all equalities duties. We take into account the preferred means of communication for those with whom we are consulting e.g. translated materials or interpretation facilities for disabled people or those for whom English is an additional language or are newly arrived in this country.

The views of stakeholders, trade unions and other equalities related groups are genuinely taken into account when we set priorities.

d. Anticipatory Duty

We apply the principle of the 'Anticipatory Duty' in all aspects of our SES which means that we think ahead about how our PCPs may affect different members of our school. This is embodied specifically in the process of risk assessment where we consider not only the impacts but also the potential impacts, whether positive or negative.

5. Responsibilities

a. Governing Body

The governing body has a duty to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. Functionally, the governing body discharges this responsibility through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), along with the Equalities Governor and the SMSC of the Governing Body.

b. Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) promotes equality and eliminates discrimination by:

- raising awareness of all the duties within the whole school community;
- referring to relevant and up-to-date documentation from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC);
- ensuring understanding of the broad legal definition of disability;
- sensitively encouraging declaration of protected characteristics by children and young people, parents/carers, staff and other users of the school;
- working with trade unions to implement the relevant duties in employment functions;
- ensuring that action plans are undertaken for all protected characteristics;
- ensuring that the principles of relevance, proportionality, reasonable adjustment and positive action are applied appropriately;
- providing appropriate training for staff, Governors and other members of the school community;
- monitoring the outcomes and impact of provisions, criteria and practices on all groups, and respond with appropriate actions;
- in the event of expectations not being met, ensuring action is taken in accordance with the status of those involved.

c. All Members of the School Community

The school regards equality for all as a responsibility for all. All members of our community (staff, contractors, volunteers, children and young people etc.) contribute to ensuring that our school is a fair, just and cohesive community.

6. Information gathering

a. Purpose and process

The collection of information is crucial to supporting us in deciding what actions to take to improve equality and eliminate discrimination within the school community. The information also subsequently helps us to review our performance so it needs to be detailed enough to enable us to measure how we are delivering on equality duties. The information also helps us to do accurate impact assessment and identify which of the school's aims have been achieved and what we need to do better.

b. Types of information gathered

The wide range of information gathered to support our planning and action to promote equality and eliminate discrimination includes the following:

- Identification of children and young people, parents, carers, staff and other users of the school representing the different protected characteristics. This helps us develop and monitor the scheme. Comprehensive and sensitive efforts are made to collect accurate information and meet security of information requirements, in addition to our duty to secure accurate information relating to ethnicity and first language;
- pupil attainment and progress data relating to different groups;
- children and young people's views actively sought and incorporated in a way that values their contribution;
- information about how different groups access the whole curriculum;
- sports and activities choices of all groups;
- uptake of the extended school offer by group;
- exclusions data analysed by group;
- records of bullying and harassment on the grounds of any equality issue;
- data on the recruitment, development and retention of employees;
- outcomes of activities promoting community engagement and community cohesion;
- outcomes of actions taken to secure the involvement of parents and others who have been identified as difficult to engage.

7. Outcomes

Of all the information we collect, the most important indicators of how successful we are in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination are the outcomes for various individuals and groups. We record our outcomes using a wide range of criteria, both academic and experiential, for the various protected characteristics and other vulnerable groups, mindful of the principles of proportionality, relevance and potential impacts (whether positive or adverse).

Our outcomes are recorded in summary form as part of our monitoring/reporting and in the Head Teacher's reports to the Governing Body. A detailed review of outcomes for minority groups is conducted annually in the autumn term following publication of statutory data.

Information is also reported to the Governing Body via the Headteacher Reports presented at Full Governing Body Meetings. Information regarding the academic progress of all minority groups forms part of the detailed data pack presented to governors at the termly Teaching and Learning Committee Meetings.

Where this review of outcomes reveals significantly poorer outcomes for any particular group then steps are taken to identify barriers for children or groups of children and their progress is monitored.

8. Publication and reporting

The SES can be found on the school website and as part of the Policies Document Management Register, held in the School Office. The school can provide a copy in a range of formats and actively makes it available to parents/carers and others, including those identified as difficult to engage.

The school reports annually on progress made against the School Improvement Plan and relevant equality objectives within it.

9. Review

As part of the review of the SES, the school commits to:

- revisiting and analysing the information and data used to identify priorities for the SES and action plans. This incorporates use of the overview of outcomes;

The review of the SES will be conducted by the Governing Body's SMSC committee and may trigger the constitution of a SES Working Party.

The review of the SES informs its revision, the setting of new priorities and action plans. This process continues to:

- involve the participation of a full range of stakeholders;
- be evidenced based - using information and data that the school has gathered and analysed;
- use the evidence to do accurate impact assessments which inform priorities.

10. Equality Objectives

See Appendix 1 for 2024/2026 Equality Objectives document