

Equality Policy

Equality at Holy Cross Federation is based on our core values expressed through our Learning Together for Life ethos.

Equality Objectives

- To ensure all pupils in the schools receive learning experiences which will enable them to achieve their potential and enrich their lives.
- To welcome and treat every member of the schools as an individual,
- To encourage pupils to become responsible and independent while preparing them for their role in a wider social context
- To reduce prejudice and increase understanding of equality and diversity within the school and promote within the wider community
- To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding through a rich range of experiences both in and beyond the school.

Introduction

This policy sets out the school's approach to promoting community cohesion, equality and diversity. It covers the 'protected characteristics' established in the Equality Act 2010 and aspects of school life which are to do with how well we treat our pupils and prospective pupils, their parents and carers and members of our local communities. We have a separate workforce Equality Policy.

This policy statement sets out:

- The school's context
- Aims and values
- The school's overall approach to advancing equality: recognising and celebrating diversity, tackling discrimination and fostering good relations in order to achieve community cohesion
- Roles and responsibilities
- Monitoring, reviewing and assessing impact

The policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole staff and has the full agreement of the Governing Body.

The implementation of this policy is the joint responsibility of the Headteacher, all of the teaching staff, the Governors and the Local Authority.

The School Context – What sort of school are we?

Holy Cross Federation is made up of the two schools - Runcton Holme and Wormegay are both Church of England Schools serving their respective villages and the surrounding area between King's Lynn and Downham Market They are smaller than average schools in a rural settings. Pupils start here with levels of attainment which vary from year to year and with cohort sizes which range from 5 to 15 pupils. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. A higher than average number has learning difficulties and disabilities. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number for whom English is an additional language is very small. The schools have not had any children seek admission from the following groups (as of the review date): refugees, asylum seekers. The schools have some Looked After Children on roll.

Information provided by parents shows that the majority of families class themselves as Christian (Anglican, Catholic and other Christian denominations), with the next largest group stating no religion. Although Church schools, they are schools for those of all faiths and none, there are currently no families who have declared themselves as being from faith backgrounds other than Christian.

Over the schools as a whole, there is an equal mix between genders.

Equality and Community Cohesion – aims and values

We aim to provide equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards. Our Equality Policy is based on a 'Learning Together for Life' ethos.

Our approach to equality

The overall objective of the schools' approach to equality is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its three equality aims as outlined in the public sector equality duty, namely to have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In order to fulfil these three aims of the general duty, we will undertake the specific duties to:

- 1) publish information which demonstrates our compliance with the duty to have due regard for the three aims of the general duty
- 2) prepare and publish specific and measurable objectives which we will pursue over the coming years to achieve the three aims

Through this policy and our staff equality policy the schools 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.

Equality at Holy Cross Federation is based on our core values expressed through our Learning Together for Life ethos. All pupils in the schools are entitled to learning experiences which will enable them to achieve their potential and enrich their lives. The management and Governors of the schools are committed to ensuring high expectations of staff and pupils and providing a high quality learning environment within the limits of available resources. We place a high value on diversity in the schools and treat every member of the schools as an individual. The ethos of the schools supports the development of self-respect and self-esteem in all pupils, staff and the community it serves. The schools encourage pupils to become responsible and independent while preparing them for their role in a wider social context.

Equality and inclusion will be achieved through analysis and assessment of children's needs, by monitoring the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' achievements and by setting targets for improvement. Learning for all children is given equal priority and available resources are used to maximum effect.

The schools of Holy Cross Federation aim to be responsive to all aspects of diversity and to increase the learning and participation of all pupils within the schools and its locality. We continue to develop inclusive values which are shared between all staff, pupils, governors, parents/carers and the wider community, in a secure, accepting, collaborative and

stimulating environment. Everyone is valued and diversity is seen as a rich resource to enhance and support the learning of all.

This inclusive culture is reflected in all school policies and practices. We ensure that classroom and extra-curricular activities encourage the participation of all pupils, drawing on their knowledge and experience outside school. Teaching and support are integrated together, enabling all pupils to overcome barriers to learning and participate fully in school life.

Inclusion will be achieved through analysis and assessment of children's needs, by monitoring the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' achievements and by setting targets for improvement. Learning for all children is given equal priority and available resources are used to maximum effect. We also ensure that the needs of Pupil Premium children are met, with rigorous monitoring of PP spending.

All children, including those who have been identified as able, gifted or talented, will be given opportunities within lessons and through extra curricular activities to use and develop their gifts and talents. These opportunities will be provided in accordance with the Gifted and Talented policy.

A cohesive community

Runcton Holme and Wormegay schools together make up the Holy Cross Federation. The two schools work very closely together sharing a Headteacher and many staff. The schools draw pupils from their defined catchment areas according to agreed admissions criteria. School admissions are defined by the admissions policy published by Norfolk County Council. In the event of over-subscription, the published criteria will be used to determine priority for places (see admissions policy).

We work closely with Downham Market Academy and its partner primary schools, as part of the wider geographical educational community called the Downham Market Cluster.

Our schools serve a predominantly white British community with a very amount of other minority ethnic groups. The faith community within Runcton Holme and Wormegay is predominantly Christian. Collective worship is Christian and supports the Anglican tradition, with elements of liturgical form. The schools serve the wider geographical community through hosting events and offering facilities for community use.

The schools work in conjunction with the locality team and we work with other agencies such as health and social care with the aim of meeting the needs of families better by sharing information and strategies.

Both schools have a Friends committee which is an association of staff and parents who work together to enhance links between school and community. The group supports events within the schools and organises social occasions outside school hours for children and parents.

The schools prepare its pupils to become part of the local and wider community and recognises the 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

Strands of Equality

The schools are opposed to all forms of discrimination, including those forms that are directed towards religious groups and communities.

We have an internal reporting system to record and deal with racist and other prejudice-related incidents, and also report via the county Prejudice-Related Incident reporting form.

We will consider the implications for equality and diversity in planning and developing new policies. Each policy will include an explicit statement on equality and will be assessed for any potential adverse impact on particular groups who share a protected characteristic.

Data is kept up to date and is used to monitor pupils' attainment and progress and to set targets in relation to protected characteristics.

Data is used to monitor all areas of school life, for example exclusions, rewards and sanctions. Any pattern of inequality we find is used to inform future planning so that we can eliminate any potential discrimination in relation to protected characteristics.

Within our regular review cycle we assess the impact of all our policies and procedures to ensure they have no adverse effect on any particular groups and to see how effective they are in eliminating discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between different groups.

In relation to the protected characteristics, the monitoring of pupil attainment, racist incidents, exclusions and other areas of school life identified in improvement plans will be shared with parents/carers, governors and staff on a regular basis, and in accordance with the data protection policy.

With the exception of our lawful admissions policy criteria relating to over-subscription, we treat pupils equally irrespective of their own or their parents'/guardians'/carers' religion or belief or lack of it. This also applies to access to benefits, facilities or services. In addition, pupils will not be excluded from school or subjected to any detriment on the basis of their (or their parents') religion or belief or lack of it.

Roles and responsibilities

All who work in the school have a responsibility to actively tackle all discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity and inclusion and foster good relations.

We are committed to:

- promoting positive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity
- involving pupils, parents/carers, all staff, governors and the wider community in developing policies, procedures and practices which tackle racial discrimination and promote inclusion
- monitoring teaching and curriculum development to ensure high expectations of all pupils and appropriate breadth of content in relation to the school and the wider community
- encouraging and supporting all pupils and staff to achieve their best
- recognising and valuing the skills which the whole school community offers
- ensuring additional grants and resources (such as the pupil premium) are appropriately targeted and monitored

Our governors are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with all current equality legislation.
- Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed (reviewed annually)

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ❑ Making sure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents/carers know about it
- ❑ Making sure its procedures are followed, and reporting to governors.
- ❑ 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 all prejudice-related incidents: racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and disability-related, and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- ❑ Reporting racist, sexist, homophobic and other prejudice-related incidents.
- ❑ Advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good community relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone.
- ❑ 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 (the Headteacher) and a named governor. Responsibilities include:

- ❑ Coordinating and monitoring work on equality issues
- ❑ Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist, homophobic and other prejudice-related incidents)
- ❑ Monitoring the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups of pupils (e.g. BME, PP and SEN pupils) alongside other groups.
- ❑ Monitoring exclusions

Monitoring, reviewing, assessing impact

This policy is supported by the school's equality objectives which may run for 4 years but will be reviewed and reported upon annually to the governing body.

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

Any pattern of inequality found as a result of analysing our equality information is used to inform new or revised equality objectives, future planning and decision-making.

The Headteacher and the governors 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.

Equality will be monitored by the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT)