

Maple Primary School Equality Policy

2013



Welcome to our Equality Policy!

Our Policy provides details of our overall aims, the underlying principles which guide our approach to equality and an outline of our legal responsibilities. It highlights the rich diversity of our school community in terms of gender, language, ethnicity, faith and disability. It also sets out roles and responsibilities for the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

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1: Vision and Values

Our equality vision and the values that underpin school life

Maple Primary School is deeply committed to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination.

The school endeavors to foster good relations amongst our school community. This includes all of our stakeholders, including children, staff, parents/carers, governors and members of the wider community.

Equality applies to all members of the school community and is simply defined within this document as a need to provide fair treatment, opportunity and advancement for all. Equality within the school environment is not, however, a question of treating everyone exactly the same. We do not discriminate, however we do have to take into account the individual needs and backgrounds of all of our stakeholders.

Please see Section 3, Legal Duties, for a breakdown of our core responsibilities.

We will be guided by the aims of our school, our closely aligned existing inclusion policy and our staffing policies.

1. The Aims of our School - Every Child Matters

- We provide an inclusive and stimulating learning environment where our children feel secure and confident.
- We provide a broad and balanced curriculum which motivates our children by providing them with enjoyable and challenging opportunities to fulfill their individual academic, creative, physical, emotional and social potential.
- We enable our children to acquire knowledge and skills within a framework of positive attitudes and high expectations.
- We foster a sense of friendship and community through an effective home/school partnership in which our children and their differences are valued, encouraged and supported.
- We develop consideration and tolerance, sensitivity and honesty, courtesy and mutual respect, resilience, independence and enquiring minds in all our children.
- We work together to nurture a sense of well-being and an awareness of the academic, physical, social, cultural, emotional and spiritual needs of others.

2. Inclusion at Maple School

At Maple School, we seek to value the individuality of all of our children and adults within the wider school community.

We are committed to giving all of our children and all other stakeholders every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. This policy helps to ensure that this happens for all

members of the school – regardless of their age, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, faith, ethnicity, abilities, disability, special educational needs, attainment or background.

Our school aims to be an inclusive school. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our children. We achieve this through the attention we pay to different groups of children. For example:

- girls and boys;
- minority ethnic and faith groups;
- children who need support to learn English as an additional language;
- children with special educational needs;
- gifted and talented children;
- children who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion;
- looked after children;
- children without access to ICT at home.
- travellers.
- minority groups within a class (e.g. a significantly higher proportion of girls or boys).

Children within our Hearing Impaired Unit (HIU) are fully integrated and receive specialist teaching and support both within the Unit and in their classes. Children with other special educational needs are supported in class in a variety of ways. For example, the school has a dedicated SEN TA and other trained support staff who work on a one to one basis with individual children or with small groups.

Classrooms and the hall have a Soundfield amplification system and carpeting (classrooms) to dampen background noise. This system helps us foster inclusion within the school environment and, as well as significantly assisting our hearing impaired pupils, also has a range of benefits for other children within the school. These systems are held to help create a better learning environment for children who have:

- English as a second language.
- Attention deficit disorders.
- Autism.
- Short term hearing problems (e.g. glue ear).
- Speech/language delay.

From a staff perspective, Soundfield systems also help protect from vocal strain.

3. Staff Recruitment, Retention and Training

We strive to treat all of our staff equally during their careers at the school. This is applied in our recruitment, retention and professional development and training policies and practices.

2: School Context

The characteristics of our school

Maple is a county, co-educational, day school for children between the ages of four and eleven years. The school is of single class entry with the exception of the current Year Five which has two classes. Maple is home to a Hearing Impaired Unit (HIU).

The large majority of pupils are from white British families. There is a range of minority ethnic backgrounds which has increased over the last few years. The school has a small but increasing minority of children whose parents were born outside of the UK and, as a result, some of our pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL).

Characteristic	Total	Breakdown (number and %)
Number of staff	39	87.2% Female 12.8 % Male 97% White 3% Minority Ethnic (ME) background. 0% staff disability.
Number of governors	13	69.2 % Female 30.8 % Male 1% governor disability 0% of governors are from a ME background.
Number of children/gender breakdown	245	116 Number and 51.4% Female 119 Number and 48.6% Male
Religious character	n/a	Data not collected as optional on parent data capture form on joining the school.
Mobility of school population	2	0.8% of total children have mobility issues
Pupils eligible for FME	11	4.5% of children entitled to free school meals.
Disabled pupils (SEN/LDD)	13	5.3% This includes 7 children in the HIU.
Disabled pupils (no SEN)	4	1.6%
Minority Ethnic (ME) pupils	28	11.4%
Pupils who speak English as an additional language	31	12.7%
Average attendance rate	96.38 %	Average over last five years
Awards, accreditations, specialist status		Green Flag ECO Award Gold Artsmark Award Primary Science Quality Mark – Silver Award ICT Accreditation Intermediate Internationals Schools Award Healthy School Award

3: Legal Background

The duties that underpin our equality policy

Our Equality Policy is underpinned by the 2010 Equality Act. The Equality Act introduced a single public sector equality duty, replacing the previous separate equality duties on race, disability and gender. This new duty covers service delivery, employment and staff management, as well as policy development and implementation.

The Equality Act requires public bodies, such as schools, to “have due regard to the need to”:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Act sets out “protected characteristics” that, in effect, cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Some of these characteristics cover all stakeholders; others apply to adults in the school community rather than to pupils. For schools, the protected characteristics are:

- age (for staff only);
- disability;
- ethnicity and race;
- gender (including sexual identity);
- gender identity and reassignment;
- pregnancy, maternity and breast feeding (staff only);
- religion and belief;
- sexual orientation;
- marriage and civil partnership (staff only).

In addition, the school has identified some of its own characteristics that are not covered by the Act. These can be seen in Section 2 of this document under Inclusion at Maple School.

We are also bound to follow specific provisions on disability to ensure that disabled people are not put at a disadvantage because of their disability. To this end, we recognise that there are times when we may need to make reasonable adjustments in the way we treat individuals with disabilities or special educational needs to ensure that they can benefit from school services to the same extent as others.

We also recognise the importance of the duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. Through our ethos and curriculum, we aim to promote a common sense of identity and support equality and diversity, showing pupils how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

The Act also requires us to publish our Equality Policy, its related objectives and our progress. Further information can be found in Section 7.

4: Roles, Responsibilities & Communication

Developing, implementing and publishing information

The management and implementation of this policy and its objectives is the responsibility of the Governing Body, supported by the Headteacher and staff. The Headteacher retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the overall plan and objectives are delivered effectively, supported by a designated governor and the Deputy Head (who is currently the school's Inclusion Co-ordinator).

All staff are responsible for delivering the scheme both as employees and as it relates to their area of work and reporting progress to the Headteacher.

Every 12 months, the Headteacher and the designated governor will collate data on actions and progress and report to a Full Governors Meeting.

Responsibility for	Key person
Ownership of equality policy document	Chair of Governors/Head/Deputy Head/Designated Governor
Disability equality (including bullying incidents)	Head/Deputy Head
SEN/LDD (including bullying incidents)	Head/Deputy Head
Accessibility	Head/Deputy Head
Gender equality (including bullying incidents)	Head/Deputy Head
Race equality (including racist incidents)	Head/Deputy Head
Equality and diversity in curriculum content	Head/Deputy Head
Equality and diversity in pupil achievement	Head/Deputy Head
Equality and diversity – behaviour and exclusions	Head/Deputy Head
Participation in all aspects of school life	Head/Deputy Head
Impact assessment	Head/Deputy Head/Health and Safety Governor
Engagement /Stakeholder consultation	Head/Deputy Head/Chair of Governors/Designated Governor
Policy review	Governors/Head
Communication and publishing	Head/Governors/Clerk to the Governors

The primary stakeholders within the school community have certain responsibilities and roles as part of our Equality Policy. These are:

Governors

- Take an on-going leadership role in the development, delivery and communication of this and all other related policies.
- Promote good practice and ensure that this is promoted within the school community.
- Stand as 'critical friends' and appropriate role models to all members of the school community.
- Ensure a consistent response to incidents (e.g. bullying/racism/discrimination).
- Congratulate examples of good practice from staff, pupils and community stakeholders.
- Ensure that the school carries out the letter and the spirit of its statutory duties.

Headteacher/Senior Management Team

- Manage the development, implementation, review and communication of all equality policies and procedures.
- Consult with stakeholders within the school community to develop future equality objectives.
- Ensure that all of the school's stakeholders have appropriate opportunities to make their voices heard.
- Provide effective training, guidance and support to allow all staff to adhere to the school's Equality Policy, its aims and objectives.
- Take accountability for policy implementation by staff and pupils and set a suitable example by behaving in accordance with its aims.
- Congratulate and share good practice; challenge and change if necessary.
- Utilise a range of informal and formal procedures to deal with difficult behaviour or situations consistently.
- Make sure that the school fulfils its statutory duties.
- Behave with respect and fairness to all stakeholder groups, carrying out the letter and spirit of the school's Equality Policy.

Teachers and Support Staff

- Make contributions to equality initiatives, reviews and consultations.
- Be aware of the school's Equality Policy and its objectives.
- Implement any general or specific objectives as directed.
- Highlight and learn from good practice and give guidance/support if issues arise.
- Behave with respect and fairness to all stakeholder groups, carrying out the letter and spirit of the school's Equality Policy.

Pupils

- Treat all other pupils, staff, parents and members of the whole school community with fairness and respect.
- Respect, learn about and value the differences between individuals.
- Listen and learn when equality issues are discussed during Circle Time.
- Contribute to equality consultations and reviews.
- Talk to a member of staff if they believe that something has happened that is unfair or disrespectful.

Parents/Carers

- Treat all members of the school community with fairness and respect.
- Value the differences between individuals.
- Make active contributions to consultations, surveys and discussions about the school's equality procedures as requested.
- Volunteer to come into school and help pupils learn about different religions, backgrounds, situations etc.
- Talk to a member of staff if they witness any incidents that are unfair or disrespectful in the spirit of this policy.

The school equality scheme will be aligned with the School Development Plan. Its implementation will be monitored within the school's self-evaluation and other review processes.

Our policy has its own specific objectives that further our equality duty aims. Legally, these have to be set every four years; we may set objectives within shorter timescales as necessary. Our current objectives and timescales for delivery can be found at the end of this document. This will be updated annually and published on the Maple school website. Parents will be notified of changes via school newsletters.

5: Engagement - Participation and Involvement

Involving our school community.

We welcome the participation and involvement of all members of our school community (children, staff, governor, parents/carers and community members) in the ownership of this policy, now and going forward.

When tackling any equality issues, we will listen to the people affected by our decisions and also be informed by those groups with special knowledge such as disability and equality groups.

Please find below some examples of how we listen to and engage with our school community:

- School Council – This is an open discussion forum that meets once a week. Two pupils from each year group are elected by their peers and represent their classes in meetings. Council members raise questions, give opinions/feedback, highlight concerns and make suggestions.
- Pupil Questionnaire – The most recent survey for the children took place in February of 2012. This bi-annual survey for children in years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 asks the children to rate 27 statements covering all aspects of school life. The data captured is anonymous but split by gender.
- Pupil Voice – Staff subject co-ordinators talk to cross-sections of pupils on a termly basis to gather opinions and to monitor their views on the subjects taught within the curriculum.
- IEP Review Meetings – Parents whose children have IEPs (Individual Education Plans) have termly meetings with their class teachers.
- Statemented Children – Parents whose children have Statements have annual review meetings with staff.
- Circle Time – These informal sessions between the class teacher and the children are key to building good relations amongst pupils and allow for any issues to be discussed and tackled in an open discussion forum. Sessions can be planned in advance or can be used to address specific concerns/issues.
- Group Surveys – The school/Governing Body periodically survey specific groups/characteristics. Recent examples include a HUI parental survey and whole school gender and disability surveys.
- Staff Voice – A formal staff survey is run on a bi-annual basis (at the same time as the parental survey, see below). Staff meetings are held twice weekly to discuss issues and business items and staff are given an annual appraisal and mid-year review with the Headteacher.
- Bi-annual Parent Surveys – The most recent parent feedback survey took place in February 2012. Parents are asked to rate how strongly they agree with five statements about the school and, in a more open ended style, asked what they value most about the school and what they would like to see improved or developed.

- Open Door Policy – This is a most vital element of the school listening to its community. All staff, including the Headteacher, are available to talk to parents to address any concerns or issues on an informal basis at the beginning and/or the end of most school days.
- Ofsted Parentview – Ofsted has a system that allows parents to leave feedback about the school. Details are given to parents in the first Headteacher's newsletter each term.
- Parent/Teacher Consultation Meetings – Although the main focus of these discussions is on the academic progress of pupils, these meetings are also a valuable opportunity for parents and teachers to talk about other issues such as well-being and behaviour.
- Parental Communication – Each class teacher has a group meeting for parents at the beginning of the academic year and will also produce termly class newsletters. The school produces a variety of newsletters highlighting key information for parents/carers including one from the Headteacher at the beginning of each term and Monday Messages at the beginning of each week.

In addition to these feedback and discussion forums, our pupils learn about themselves, each other, the local community, our country and the world through the curriculum and additional activities. For example:

- Children in KS1 exchange information with a small island school in The Shetland Isles.
- The Deputy Head visited and established links with a school in Africa and the USA. Children pen pal with children in the USA later in KS2.
- The school community sponsors and communicates with two disadvantaged children in Moldova.
- Children contribute Envelopes of Love to Mission Without Borders.
- Reception pupils are currently taught simple words and phrases from all of the languages in their class once a week. Pupils in KS2 are taught a modern European language (French or Spanish).
- Children in KS2, as part of the school's overall RE curriculum, visit local faith centres. KS1 (and the whole school in assemblies) are taught about key world religions, traditions and festivals.

Parents/carers and community members are also welcomed in to the school to bring learning to life and to teach pupils about a variety of aspects of life from different perspectives. Recent examples include:

- Parents and local community representatives coming into classes and assemblies to talk about their religions and traditions.
- Parents helping children cook food from different countries.
- Bringing the Paralympics to practical life in the school with sessions of wheelchair basketball.

6: Using information – Equality Impact Assessment, data and other information

Evaluating impact and outcomes – the methodology

In implementing this policy, the school will, where necessary, carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) in order to determine whether a policy, procedure or new priority (such as a move to Academy status) will have a positive or negative impact on protected groups as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

On a general level, the school also regularly collates and assesses data on harassment or inequality including incidents relating to bullying, racism, disability and gender etc. We also periodically use stakeholder surveys to give us additional information to help shape future objectives.

We adhere to statutory requirements for equality assessments. In addition, on an ad hoc basis, we implement additional investigations (for example, if we have a pupil or a member of staff coming into the school with a disability or special educational need that is new to us). These can be carried out in-house (i.e. health and safety risk assessments) and/or by external specialists. We also seek to make changes to promote equality as and when we identify areas of improvement.

This has led us to implement a range of changes in recent years, including:

- The installation of a new disabled toilet in the main building.
- Ramped access across all school pathways and entrances.
- A levelled soft-top playground surface.
- Playground equipment that promotes the development of gross motor skills.
- An increase in the use of visual learning aids in classrooms to help pupils with dyslexia.
- An on-going range of initiatives and a significant level of training to further help our children with autism.
- A modernisation of the Reception class.
- A 'Reading for Boys' initiative.
- An active recruitment program targeted at bringing more male role models into the school.

7: Our School's Equality Objectives

Key priorities for action

Following assessment of our existing equality procedures/policies and input from various stakeholder groups, our initial objectives for the period 2012-2016 will be as follows:

Equality Objectives	Protected Characteristic
1. To review school policies to ensure that they accurately reference up to date equality objectives and protected characteristics.	All
2. Investigate ways to encourage a more diverse mix of parents/members of local communities to apply to join the Governing Body.	All
3. To extend current sex education lessons to include sexual orientation/gender reassignment as per current equality legislation.	Gender
4. To use existing data to identify numbers of children from EAL families with a view to providing foreign language books in library to help promote reading and literacy	Minority/EAL
5. Brief staff on new reasonable adjustments in the classroom guidelines and trial checklist documentation.	All
6. Investigate ways to communicate and get feedback from protected characteristic groups within the school community.	All