



Equality Policy

This Policy will be reviewed by the Community and Safeguarding Committee every 3 years or, in the event of a change in legislation, earlier.

Equality at St Michael's C of E (Aided) Primary School is about providing equality and excellence for all to secure the highest possible standards of attainment. Equality applies to all members of the school community: including children, parents, staff and governors.

It is based on our core values and ethos as expressed in our school's aims and mission statement. These aims are designed to ensure that the school provides equality of education and opportunity for all. The school meets the needs of all, taking account of learning ability, disability, ethnicity, culture, gender, language, race, faith or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic factors.

The school recognises that it has to make special efforts to ensure that all individuals and groups prosper including:

- Boys and girls, men and women
- All minority ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers
- Children or families from all faiths or no faith
- Children and others with special educational needs
- Children and others with a range of disabilities
- Children who are looked after and their carers
- Children or staff who are gay or lesbian
- Children or staff who are pregnant or have just given birth
- Children or staff undergoing gender reassignment
- Children or staff who are facing particular challenges (eg bereavement, returning following a period of absence).

The school analyses pupil achievement termly, with a particular focus on children within vulnerable groups to track their progress to ensure that support is available when required.

Our school is culturally, socially and academically diverse and we have children from many different faiths and children of no faith. 45% of our children are from minority ethnic groups and 35 % of the school have English as an Additional Language (EAL).

We have significant overlap between our children from 'vulnerable groups.' Therefore, narrowing the gap for vulnerable children and ensuring equality of opportunity tends to involve addressing multiple barriers.

The school is aware of the following issues that may be barriers to effective learning:

- low self-esteem, low expectations and peer group pressure
- experience of bullying, harassment or social exclusion
- low income leading to difficulty in participating in some aspects of school life and no adequate home study space
- low parental support or different parental expectations
- frequent moves and lack of stability in life leading to time out of school or low attendance
- lack of help with emotional, mental & physical well-being and poor behaviour including exclusions
- language difficulties

- special educational needs
- lack of physical access to school facilities or services
- inappropriate curriculum
- difficulty in recruitment, management and development of staff and governors

School's Commitment to Equalities

As a school we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The general duties are to:

- eliminate discrimination,
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

We understand the principal of the act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity.

We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN convention on rights of the Child, the UN convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

This policy aligns with the Special Education Needs Policy and Access Policy. St Michael's recognises that it has a legal obligation under the Disability Discrimination Act to meet the needs of people with disabilities even if it requires giving them more favourable treatment.

Responsibilities:

One named governor, Anne Pearsall, takes the lead, but the governors as a whole are responsible for:

- drawing up, publishing and implementing the school's equality objectives
- making sure the school complies with the relevant equality legislation; and
- making sure the school Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed
- monitoring progress towards equality objectives and reporting annually

The head teacher is responsible for:

- making sure steps are taken to address the school's stated equality objectives;
- making sure the equality and access plans are readily available and that the governors, staff, children and their parents and guardians know about them;
- producing regular information for staff and governors about the plans and how they are working;
- 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, including prejudice-based incidents.
- enabling reasonable adjustment to be made, in relation to disability, in regard to students, staff, parents / carers and visitors to the school.

All staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality and community cohesion in their work;
- avoiding unlawful discrimination against anyone;
- fostering good relations between groups;
- dealing with prejudice-related incidents;
- being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- taking up training and learning opportunities.

Our head teacher and Chair of Governors are responsible overall for dealing with reports of prejudice-related incidents.

St Michael's has identified the following strategies, which are specifically designed to address the issues outlined above:

Establishing, maintaining and developing a school culture and ethos

St Michael's is committed to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice. We aim to equip children with an awareness of our diverse society and to appreciate the value of difference. Some of the ways in which we achieve this are:

- The school celebrates the diversity of the community in which we live and those of other communities through our International Evening in particular and through other community events.
- Planning for the curriculum includes opportunities for children to develop an awareness and empathy of diverse groups.
- The School's Disability Equality Group includes representatives from a range of groups within school, including parents, children, governors and staff
- The school celebrates the achievement of all groups in assemblies, class rewards and head teacher's awards. These are monitored with regard to equality.
- The children have opportunities to meet and work with people of different faiths through Collective Worship and through an RE scheme of work which includes visitors to the school and visits to a range of places of worship.
- The school also caters for the dietary requirements of different religious groups and enables children and staff to celebrate festivals and other events relevant to their particular faith and actively encourages all children to understand these.
- The school promotes high expectations with regard to behaviour and reminders of these expectations including our whole school approach to anti-bullying are displayed in all classrooms and in communal spaces in school.
- All children have opportunities to participate in the same activities as their peers.
- The school follows OCC guidelines on employment procedures.

Preventing and dealing effectively with bullying and harassment

We recognise that the groups covered in this policy are more vulnerable to bullying and harassment, and therefore seek to ensure that:

- All parents and children are informed about the school Behaviour Policy and our policy on bullying and harassment.
- The profile of issues linked to bullying is raised during Anti-Bullying Week when the whole school reflects on expectations and practice. Reminders with regard to our policy and Anti-Bullying code are sent home to parents.
- Clear procedures are in place to ensure that staff are able to confidently deal with all forms of bullying and harassment promptly, firmly and consistently. When appropriate parents are notified.
- The head teacher and governors have carried out an Anti-Bullying audit and produced an action plan to ensure that we are constantly striving to offer excellent provision for all our children.
- Any reported incidents of discrimination or bullying are conveyed to the full governing body via the head teacher's report to governors.
- The school reports incidents of bullying and harassment to the LA.

Listening to children, staff, parents and others

The school actively seeks the views of all stakeholders through questionnaires, the governors' Community and Safeguarding Committee, School Council, parent teacher consultations, open evenings and IEP reviews. The work of the Disability Equality Working Group ensures that we hear the full range of views, including those of parents and children with disabilities.

Our 'open door' policy also provides parents / carers with opportunities to discuss concerns with staff or the head teacher as soon as they arise.

Equalising opportunities

St Michael's recognises that some of the groups covered in this policy are likely to be economically disadvantaged. We therefore seek to alleviate difficulties by ensuring that:

- The Charging Policy is reviewed regularly to ensure that systems are in place to make sure that no child is disadvantaged economically.
- When private providers offer clubs, and a charge is made, the school seeks sources of financial support when appropriate, in order that all children have the opportunity to participate.
- The head teacher monitors participation in extra-curricular activities using a range of groups, e.g. Free School Meals (FSM), EAL, SEN
- Funding from local charities, e.g. Oxford City Charities, the Dawson Trust, is sought to provide financial support for residential visits.

Informing and involving parents and carers

St Michael's recognises that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to find school intimidating, strange or inaccessible.

- At St Michael's we distribute a weekly Missive to provide parents and carers with information about the school, the curriculum and special events. This is distributed by ParentMail or via a hard copy and is also posted on the school web-site.
- One to one parent consultations take place in October and February and parents are invited to meet their child's new teacher in September. IEP reviews are organised at times that suit parents / carers and school staff. Where appropriate Home-School link diaries are used as a form of communication specifically for children with special needs.
- The Governing Body has two elected parent members. Governors make themselves available at the parent consultations so that parents / carers can approach them should they wish to raise or discuss issues.
- Curriculum overviews for each term are available on the school web-site. At Friday Sharing Assembly we welcome all parents / carers and this is an opportunity to share in the work of the children and to be provided with information about the school.
- Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target particular groups, e.g. The International Evening to celebrate diversity in our community. Regular PTA meetings are an avenue for discussion and sharing of ideas linked to fundraising and social events.
- The Disability Equality Group is convened to discuss issues linked to SEN and Disability. Parents / carers with a disability were encouraged to contact the school so that we can ensure their needs are being met.

Through these means, we offer a range of means of communication between school and parents / carers and encourage them to discuss any concerns they may have. The communication ensures that parents /carers know how well their children are progressing, explains how they can help their children at home and how parents can be involved in the life of the school.

Welcoming new children and helping them to settle in effectively

We recognise that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to find school intimidating, strange or inaccessible, and may need support to settle and make a positive start at St Michael's.

- At St Michael's we recognise the concerns that parents and children may have in starting a new school. Children are offered school visits prior to starting school and discussions with the class teacher / SENCo / head teacher.
- The school liaises with feeder schools to ensure that transition procedures are followed and a smooth transition achieved.

- An induction programme has been set up for children who join the school mid-way through a school year which includes a 'buddy system'.
- Transition meetings for parents/carers of children moving into the Reception class, and children moving into Year 1, take place during term 6.
- The school provides additional help for those children who find school challenging. The relevant staff and/or SENCo attend at least one transition meeting at the nursery setting prior to transfer.
- The school works with parents and outside agencies to make sure that the identified needs of children with disabilities/SEN are met.

Addressing the full range of learning needs

We recognise that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to under-achieve. In order to address this we:

- Track the progress of all children including those in vulnerable groups. Provision mapping is used to analyse the effectiveness of interventions and ensure that targeted support is put in place for individuals or groups.
- Ensure our curriculum planning is based on earlier learning and is amended and evaluated frequently. All lessons are differentiated to take account of the needs of individuals within the class and objectives are aspirational for all children.
- Ensure that all staff have very high expectations of all children and they continually challenge them to extend their learning and achieve higher standards. Assessment for learning, including self-assessment and peer assessment, provides all children with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.
- Provide stimulating learning environments that are well organised and take account of specific needs.
- Recognise and value all forms of achievement and celebrate this in assemblies and through the School Newsletter. A range of class rewards are used to celebrate pupil participation and success, and ensure that all know that their contributions are valued.

Supporting learners with particular needs

At St Michael's we recognise that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to have particular needs. All children at St Michael's are monitored closely and those with specific needs, according to the Oxfordshire criteria, are provided with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Behaviour Support Plan or Personal Support Plan (PSP) for those children with emotional or behavioural needs or a Personal Educational Plan (PEP) for those children who are looked after. In addition we:

- Ensure that all staff working with children with particular needs have relevant training and / or observation opportunities so they can support with confidence, e.g. diabetes training, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) training.
- Use Pupil Premium funding to provide additional resources and support for vulnerable children.
- Inform parents / carers about homework and offer support when appropriate, e.g. revision books, 1:1 tuition.
- Provide learning materials to help children who are absent from school, when appropriate.

Making the school accessible to all (Cross reference with Access Policy)

The school's Disability Equality Group, meets to discuss what steps are needed in order for the school to be accessible to all. The access plan drawn up by this group is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that, wherever possible, the facilities are accessible to children, staff and parents with physical disabilities.

In addition, the school ensures that curricular and extra-curricular opportunities are accessible to all children. When this is not possible we have been able to find a solution, e.g. 1:1 support on residential

trips. The school also ensures that children with disabilities are well supported and that adult support is available if this is an identified requirement.

Ensuring fair and equal treatment for staff, children and others

We recognise that the school needs to ensure that its policies and practice do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against adults, as well as children and young people in the school. To address this we:

- Adhere to recruitment, selection and retention procedures, which are fair, equal, and in line with statutory duties.
- Conform to the LA guidance on fair and equal treatment and dignity at work for staff and others.
- Take positive action to ensure that everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this policy.
- Recognise and value the skills of all staff, including support and part-time staff, and that all staff are given status and support, and are encouraged to share their knowledge.
- Have an admission process and induction procedure which is fair, transparent and consistent for all children. This ensures that the school does not discriminate and disadvantage any pupil from any particular group.
- Make provision for leave of absence for religious observance, which includes staff as well as children.
- Ensure that the school's procedures for disciplining children and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all.
- Ensure that children, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with all forms of harassment. They know that any language or behaviour, which for example is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any minority group, is always unacceptable.

Encourage participation of under-represented groups

At St Michael's we recognise that the school has an opportunity to model empowerment of all groups including disabled, ethnic, religious and socially & economically disadvantaged groups.

We aim to recruit governors who are representative of the children's population and community and we encourage the widest participation in our PTA meetings, events and activities. The work of these groups is enhanced by our strong links with the local community including the church and through the work of our governors' Community and Safeguarding Committee.

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

At St Michael's we recognise that the strength of this policy depends upon ensuring that everyone is actively implementing it and that any gaps, and the need for further development, will arise from effective evaluation.

Parents and children have therefore been informed that the school has an Equality Policy and is committed to equality of opportunity for all children. The governors of St Michael's Primary School will monitor and evaluate this policy through the Community and Safeguarding Committee and the Disability Equality Group who will report to the Full Governing Body. The impact and effectiveness of policies will be assessed through St Michael's self-evaluation procedures.