



**BIRKWOOD
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES (including British Values) POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2024

Overview

It is the policy of Birkwood Primary School to promote equity and diversity in all areas of our life and work. We will not tolerate discrimination on unlawful or unfair grounds. All will be treated equally and given equal access to the curriculum and life of the school. All will have equal opportunity to benefit from all that we offer. Our intention is to develop an ethos in which all will thrive. Diversity and differences will be valued and respected by all and they will contribute to the richness of our school life and learning.

Aims

Birkwood Primary School will play its part in helping all learners to become members of a welcoming and cohesive community to fit them for life in the UK whose population has an increasingly rich diversity of backgrounds, origins, beliefs, faiths and cultures.

We will work towards a society in which there is a common vision and a sense of belonging by all communities. A society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued. A society in which similar life opportunities are available to all and strong and positive relationships exist and continue to develop in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

We aim:

- To serve the needs of the school/local community
- To be an active part of the community within which the school is located (Cudworth, Barnsley and Yorkshire)
- To be aware of our place in the UK community
- To be aware of the place of the UK in the global community

Legal duties

We will comply with the duties under the Equality Act 2010:

'Schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.'

This includes having due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

School will have due regard to the duty with every decision made and keep a written record to show that we have actively considered equality duties and reflected on relevant questions.

Guiding principles –

In fulfilling the legal obligations we are guided by seven principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

We see all learners and potential learners as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender or orientation

Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised and celebrated
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences are recognised

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

Our policies, procedures and activities promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations and an absence of sexual harassment

Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- and gender

In turn it is school's aim that these principles will act upon any evident discrimination in line with the School's Access Policy and Plan, Behaviour and Discipline Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy and Pay Policy. Birkwood Primary School will take every necessary step to avoid discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

To promote equality and eliminate discrimination further, Birkwood Primary School will consult parents/carers, pupils, staff, Governors, members of the local community and use research (both national and local) to reduce the possibility of inequality within policies and procedures.

Respect for diversity and difference, is taught and promoted through the school ethos, planned lessons and methods of collective worship. Throughout these processes, we aim to educate about people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it (in a safe and sensitive environment), thus advancing equality of opportunity.

The curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the 5 principles.

Ethos and organisation

Our School Vision reinforces the following statements:

- (i) The school is seen as a learning community and that strong links are further developed in the wider community.
- (ii) All children fulfil their learning potential and achieve a high level of attainment through providing the opportunity for independence and creativity.
- (iii) Children leave Birkwood Primary School with positive values and prepared to be good citizens. They demonstrate care and respect for each other and are well behaved.
- (iv) Together we create a purposeful, happy and safe environment in school.
- (v) There are high expectations from all, staff, governors, parents/carers, children and the community so that children can pursue their ambitions and leave with high aspirations.

We ensure that the principles apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- learners' progress, attainment and assessment
- learners' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents and carers
- working with the wider community.

Strategy:

- a) The school will contribute to promoting community cohesion by developing its teaching, learning and curriculum to help children learn to understand others, to value diversity, whilst also promoting shared British Values.
- b) This school will promote awareness of human rights as a UNICEF Rights Respecting School (Silver). All will apply and defend them.
- c) We will develop the skills of participation and responsible action necessary for living together as citizens of the United Kingdom.
- d) We will promote equity and excellence to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed and do well.
- e) We will provide access and participation in learning and wider activities and working to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups.
- f) We will provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations: including where appropriate, links with different schools and communities.
- g) Where we can, we will offer access to provision of extended service with opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

Our governing body will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout our school, including to staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year (pupil population), and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteacher
- Ensure they are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

Our headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors
- Identify any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom and within the school and community
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur

- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work
- have regard to this document and work to achieve the equality objectives

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- in relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for pupils
- In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Promotion of Fundamental British Values:

Tolerance, the Rule of Law, Freedom of Expression, Community and Equality

In addition, the DfE have reinforced the need

‘to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.’

The Government set out its definition of British values in the 2011 Prevent Strategy, and these values have been reiterated in 2014. British values are not something that are fixed or even something that is necessarily uniquely British.

Children are encouraged to:

- Respect and obey the law – to recognise, what is fair and unfair and what is right and wrong
- Respect the rights of others, including their right to their own opinions
- Freedom of expression and Equality are a right
- Treat others with tolerance, fairness and respect, dealing with feelings in a positive way
- Look after themselves and their family – keeping healthy and safe
- Look after the community in which they live

Democracy

Birkwood is a democratic school. We encourage all children to contribute to decision making and value their opinion. Each year children discuss their class and school rules, and the rights associated with these. Children have the opportunity to apply for positions within school eg Head Boy and Girl, School Councillors, Playground Leaders, classroom monitors etc.

Children have many opportunities to work collaboratively and have their voices heard. We have a School Council which meets regularly with the Headteacher to discuss issues raised in class discussions. Two Council members for each year group (Years 2 – 6) are voted in by their class peers every year.

Children have an opportunity to share their opinions through Pupil Interviews, Pupil Questionnaires and taking active roles within school.

The Rule of Law

The importance of Laws, whether those that govern the class, the school, or the country, are consistently reinforced, as well as when dealing with behaviour and through school assemblies. Pupils are taught the value and reasons behind laws, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when laws are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police and Fire Service help reinforce this message. In addition, Year 6 children visit Crucial Crew visit and learn practically about law enforcement and its importance.

Individual Liberty

Children are encouraged to be independent learners, to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. As a school we educate and provide boundaries for young pupils to make choices safely, through provision of a safe environment and empowering education. Children are

encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and advised how to exercise these safely, for example through our e-safety and PSHE lessons. Whether it is through choice of learning challenge, of how they record, of participation in our numerous extra-curricular clubs and opportunities, pupils are given the freedom to make choices. Children are taught consideration for others through the SMSC curriculum and RE. All children are keen to support charities whether local, national or global eg Children in Need and Macmillan.

Mutual Respect

Mutual respect is at the heart of our values. Children learn that their behaviours have an effect on their own rights and those of others. Members of the school community treat each other with respect. All staff demonstrate respect to everyone with whom they come into contact. They consistently model and promote behaviours and attitudes that are the foundation of positive relationships. School proactively develop children's understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures through for example, Creative Arts Week when children are immersed in learning about other countries. The strong school ethos encourages everyone to consider and support each other and to celebrate the worth and individuality of every member of the school community.

Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

We actively promote diversity through our celebrations of different faiths and cultures. Religious Education lessons, assemblies and PHSE lessons reinforce messages of tolerance and respect for others, challenging opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary. Members of different faiths and religions are encouraged to further develop the spiritual life of the school by sharing their knowledge to enhance learning within classes and the school. Each person is respected and valued equally regardless of ability, gender, faith, heritage or race. The children visit places of worship that are important to different faiths. Displays within our school community celebrate all faiths and their festivals.

In addition, at Birkwood Primary School, we promote personal values and encourage behaviour that shows:

- Care and understanding
- Co-operation
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Confidence and self esteem
- Independence
- Mutual respect
- Initiative
- Resilience

Evidence of how we promote British Values is evident in the annual SMSC audit.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body reviews this policy every year. The Governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2025.

Signed _____ Headteacher Date _____

Signed _____ Chair of Governors Date _____

Appendix 1

Our Legal Duties:

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics).

Protected characteristics

The Act defines protected characteristics as follows:

- **Disability**
- **Gender Reassignment**
- **Pregnancy and Maternity**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Religion or Belief**
- **Sex**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Age and marriage and civil partnerships**

These protected characteristics apply to pupils, prospective pupils, staff, prospective staff or anybody they are associated with, with the exception of 'age' and 'marriage and civil partnership' which do not apply to pupils and prospective pupils.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties:

The Public Sector Equality Duty or 'general duty'

This requires all public organisations, including schools to give due regard to the need to (in relation to the protected characteristics above):

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
3. Foster good relations between different groups

Two 'specific duties'

This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

1. Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
2. Publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable

Unlawful behaviour

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.

Harassment has a specific legal definition in the Act - it is “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”.

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act.

Discrimination arising from disability - treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work or medical conditions) and failure to make reasonable adjustments. The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act. In particular, it works in only one direction, i.e. it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. This means that we are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities

Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Plans

Birkwood Primary is required to:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria or practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a nondisabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature, for example steps and lifts.
- Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services
- Provide information in an accessible format.
- Develop and implement (by allocation of resources) Accessibility Plans which will;
 1. Increase physical access to school building
 2. Improve curriculum access
 3. Ensure written information is accessible for all.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that Birkwood owes to all pupils with disabilities whether identified or not, and to those pupils who will be attending in the future. Our schools will seek relevant information regarding newly placed pupils to ensure as far as possible that their needs are anticipated under this Act. We will ensure that we work closely with professionals, parents and carers as appropriate to identify the challenges presented to us by new pupils under this Act.

Community Cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty, applicable to the school, to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faith/beliefs and socioeconomic backgrounds. Birkwood Primary policies and activities should all be promoting community cohesion and inclusion wherever possible to comply with, and support these duties.