

Hamsterley Primary School



Equal Opportunities Policy

Date written: (September 2021)

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: (October 2021)

Date of next review: (September 2022)

'An entitlement to learning must be an entitlement for all pupils'.

Our school code uses the Equality Act 2010:

To treat everyone Equally and Fairly regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender Identity
- Race and Nationality
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy
- Marriage
- Sexual Orientation

Introduction:

All pupils at Hamsterley Primary School have an equal right to develop and achieve their potential. Equality of opportunity underpins the school curriculum and the work of the school. Children at Hamsterley Primary are treated as individuals with their own abilities, difficulties, attitudes, backgrounds and experiences.

The Education Reform Act entitles all pupils in school to a National Curriculum, which is balanced and broad based. The National Curriculum includes cross - curricular dimensions such as equal opportunities for boys /girls, multicultural education and special educational needs. Wherever possible the curriculum will develop children's knowledge an understanding of different beliefs, cultures and needs.

At Hamsterley Primary we aim for an atmosphere of trust and respect among children as well as between teachers and children. Citizenship education programme is about how we treat each other and, more importantly, how we learn to respect one another and ourselves as citizens of the world. It also fosters an understanding of the diversity of cultures and needs that exist in school and in the wider community.

Parents:

We will introduce and communicate the equal opportunities policy to parents through the school prospectus, admissions meetings with parents and on parent's evenings.

Children:

It is the right of every child irrespective of age, race or nationality, religion or belief, disability, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, special needs or ability to achieve their full potential. Each child should have access to an education, which will enable them to utilise their talents to the full and achieve their potential. We must develop children to become sensitive to, and aware of,

ways in which equality of opportunity is denied and how this might affect them in society.

Staff:

It is the responsibility of all staff to foster and facilitate this ideal by creating a welcoming environment for all children. They will endeavour to establish an atmosphere within school which effectively reduces prejudice and raises self-esteem, so that all children can develop independence, freedom of choice and knowledge of their right to take on whatever roles they choose, no matter what their background, gender or ability. As a staff we have to remember that we are role models. We must recognize and challenge discrimination as and when it occurs.

Aims:

To ensure that:

1. Every individual within the school achieves their full potential and has equal opportunities.
2. Every child is given access to the best possible level of achievement appropriate to their age and ability through appropriately differentiated work.
3. Staff, parents and children are informed and educated, and reminded of the issues to ensure a continuity of approach throughout the school.
4. Prejudice is recognised and challenged to build positive attitudes to difference.
5. Understanding and mutual respect of all children, regardless of differences, is promoted.
6. Contributions from various cultures are included and acknowledged in the planning and teaching of the full range of National Curriculum subjects, resources and school displays.
7. An awareness of the unfairness and injustice of stereotyping is raised.
8. Any form of bullying including verbal, physical, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and psychological bullying by any group or individuals is challenged and addressed.
9. High levels of acceptable group and individual behaviour are promoted by ensuring that all the school community is informed of school expectations and procedures.
10. There is a commitment to minimising all school exclusions by implementing agreed strategies and procedures ensuring that each child is given the opportunity to achieve and succeed.
11. Absences, racist, sexist, disablist and HBT incidents and bullying are recorded and monitored.

Example of strategies

At Hamsterley Primary School some that of the ways in which we carry out these aims are:

- Planning activities of a non- stereotypical nature such as the home corner and apparatus.

- Giving children time to talk in class discussions to give everyone opportunity to voice opinion and discuss how they are feeling.
- Encouraging the sharing of experiences - encompassing all equality issues.
- Reviewing/updating resources so that appropriate messages are presented to the children.
- Planning role-play experiences to include addressing age, disability, race and gender.
- Providing a differentiated curriculum by developing classroom approaches that cater for individual differences but which do not make distinctions that have negative effects on children, their learning and development.
- Displays around school promoting positive equality issues.
- Providing an entitlement curriculum, which aims to offer the same balanced curriculum and learning experiences to all.
- Staff on playground duty to identify loners, the assertive group and negative physical contact.
- Children encouraged to think about the exclusion of others and the negative effect it can have.
- Involving children in rulemaking in the classroom and at a whole school level through the school council.
- Using assembly time and themes to reinforce equal opportunity issues.
- Using targets and rewards for children to reinforce acceptable behaviour and attitudes.
- Ensuring that all children will have equal access to all resources (some children will need encouragement / direction in the use of resources).
- Subject leaders to address equality issues within their subject.
- Giving children a voice, through the school council.
- Sharing in various religious celebrations throughout the year.

The curriculum

All children will have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life. We will need to monitor our practices to achieve this. Children should be given the opportunity:

- To make choices without rejecting any as being inappropriate, e.g. sport, monitor jobs
- To gain self-worth and self-confidence, freeing them to develop a sense of who they are and what they want
- To have equal educational experiences so that they can make appropriate choices from a base of common skills and knowledge.

Resources

- Books, work cards, equipment and other resources will be checked to see that they are non-stereotyping
- Children will be encouraged to learn to identify and question stereotypes if they are found in existing material
- Resources such as computers, technology equipment and playground space will be allocated fairly.

Hidden curriculum

Displays will show positive role models from all backgrounds covering the 9 protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. There is a need to discuss and counter prejudices and hidden belief. The development and sharing of common interests will be encouraged. Children's individual characteristics and feelings need to be respected and valued.

Staff Training

Active participation of all school personnel is necessary for a successful policy. Staff meetings will take place as a means of monitoring / evaluating the policy. Also 'raising awareness sessions' will be planned. All the staff has responsibility for promoting Equal Opportunities.

Success criteria

Equal Opportunity will be recognised or highlighted in the following areas:

- SATs results
- Playground/classroom interaction
- Displays in school
- Perceptions of Governors and Parents
- Teaching styles
- Differentiated work on offer to parents
- Use of resources
- Teacher assessment

Homophobic bullying and using homophobic language

Homophobic language is terms of abuse used towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people or those thought to be LGB. It is also used to refer to someone or something as inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are different in some way or have gay friends, family members or their parents/carers are gay.

Dismissing it as banter is not helpful as even if these terms are not referring to a person's sexuality they are using the terms to mean inferior, bad, broken or wrong. We will challenge the use of homophobic language in our school even if it appears to be used without any homophobic intent.

Transphobic bullying

Transphobic bullying occurs when people are bullied due to their gender identity, their perceived gender identity or because they don't conform to culturally conventional gender roles. Trans is an umbrella term that describes people whose sense of their gender or gender identity is seen as being different to typical gender norms.

Children of school age may experience gender variance, which could make them a target for bullying. According to figures provided by Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES), one in 1,000 school children suffer from gender dysphoria – roughly one for every Secondary school – though not all of them will seek gender reassignment surgery. According to research by GIRES and lobby group Press For Change, most children who experience gender variance fail to complete their school education. More seriously, around half of all trans teenagers will make a suicide attempt before they turn 20. Trans teachers are also at risk of transphobic bullying.

Gender variance is different to sexual orientation. Gender identity is different to sexual attraction. Trans people, just like everyone else, can be straight, lesbian, gay or bisexual. Therefore transphobic bullying is different from homophobic bullying.

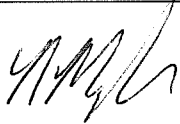
We are aware of the impact homophobic and transgender bullying have in terms of:

- Low self-esteem
- A culture of fear
- Pupil discipline
- Pupil or staff absenteeism
- Reduced staff effectiveness
- Increased staff turnover
- Poor teaching performance
- Academic underachievement
- Stress
- Poor health
- Self-harm

As such we will take action to ensure that homophobic and transgender bullying is not tolerated:

- I. A reporting procedure is in place.
- II. Each case will be tackled on its merits.
- III. Investigations will take place which may involve: meetings with pupils, parents, staff.
- IV. Sanctions may include: removal of privileges, internal exclusion, exclusion/permanent exclusion.
- V. Incidents are recorded and reported to governors. This is used to assess the strength of the policy.

Signed by:

Headteacher/ Principal		Date: 25.10.21
Chair of Governors	Mark Jen Hollander	Date: 25/10/21.

