



Westgate Primary School Community Cohesion Policy

Rationale

Since September 2007 all schools have had a duty to contribute to working towards a society in which there is a common vision and 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 a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the work place, in schools and in the wider community.

We at Westgate Primary School make this contribution by creating opportunities, through the curriculum and otherwise, for pupils to interact with those from different backgrounds to themselves to enrich their understanding of community and diversity. We work in partnership with our community and other organisations to ensure we do all we can to promote and establish strong, respectful relationships that enhance the outcomes for children and their families. The curriculum of our school aims to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional and physical development of our pupils and of society and prepare our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Through our ethos and curriculum, we promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing pupils how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

We recognise that a school's community is defined in 4 dimensions:

- the school community - the pupils it serves, their families and the school's staff
- the community within which the school is located – the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area;
- the UK community - all schools are by definition part of this community
- the global community - formed by EU and international links.

At this school, we understand that there are links between this duty and the duty to promote equality, although each has a distinctive focus. We recognise that our school's contribution to community cohesion should be organised under three main headings:

1. Teaching, learning and curriculum

- helping children and young people to learn to understand others
- to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values
- to promote awareness of human rights and to apply and defend them
- to develop the skills of participation and responsible action

2. Equity and Excellence

- to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible
- striving to remove barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities
- working to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups

3. Engagement, partnerships and extended services

- to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds
- build positive relations
- receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups

Our statutory duties are based on the following legislation:

The Race Relations Act 1976;

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000;

The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005;

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, as amended by the Equality Act 2006;

The Education and Inspections Act 2006;

We recognise that these four sets of duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against discrimination to those with a protected characteristic.¹ It also places a duty on schools to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations between different groups. Promoting community cohesion is about much more than eliminating discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between groups. However, communities will not be cohesive where discrimination and inequalities exist. Therefore, action to eliminate discrimination and advance equality should be an integral part of work to promote community cohesion.

Aims and objectives

We aim to educate our pupils so that they understand how our national and local society is made up of diverse groups. We will cultivate an attitude of respect and understanding for all cultures reflected in our local area. We will celebrate diversity so that pupils learn how cultural differences enhance all our lives. We aim to help pupils understand what makes a cohesive community and how this is important in enabling people to enjoy living in this area. While Westgate is situated in a town that is largely mono-cultural, it sits on the edge of 2 large and culturally diverse cities, where many of our families work. It is important therefore for our pupils to understand how our local area is linked to these wider local contexts

This policy needs to be considered alongside our Equal Opportunities policy and our single equality policy which sets out our commitment to eliminating all forms of prejudice and discrimination. In promoting the respect for all members of our society we believe we will make an important contribution to the promotion of community cohesion.

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

Our curriculum provides opportunities to promote the values of equal opportunities and respect for all. It builds upon pupils' understanding of the diversity in our local area and region, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity are integrated across the curriculum.

- Our teaching, learning and curriculum, such as, Religious Education, PSHE, collective worship/ assemblies promotes common values, and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them.
- Our assemblies, themed events such as 'anyone can day', 'diversity week' and 'disability awareness' all promote equality and community cohesion and are linked to our Otley Family of Schools 'Equality and Diversity Charter'

- We ensure that teaching will help pupils to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, the opportunities in PSHE for pupils to discuss issues of identity and diversity through our ‘Identity, society and equality’ topics for each year group from the ‘You, me and PSHE’ scheme of work.
- We have a programme of cultural visits and opportunities to meet members of different communities.
- When relevant, we provide additional support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible standards in English as soon as they can.
- Our school maximises opportunities for all pupils to express their opinions and we involve them as fully as possible in the governance and organisation of the school and in the way they can participate in the community and make a difference in school and beyond the school gate- for example through our School Council and opportunities to participate in local democracy alongside children from other schools.
- Our Equality working group consisting of a governor, teaching assistant, teacher, parent and assistant head teacher. We also have two equality school council representatives who attend some of our meetings too. This group works on our equality action plan and helps to promote equality and diversity across school.

Through all our teaching we show respect for individual views and opinions. Our school is a place where pupils from all backgrounds and cultures are welcomed and valued. We promote an ethos where diversity is respected. In all our work we encourage positive relationships between staff and our pupils and we provide opportunities for staff to listen and respond to the views of all our pupils.

Equity and Excellence

We do all we can to provide targeted additional support to those pupils who need it. For example, any pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) will be provided with extra support to assist them in developing their English language skills as quickly as possible.

Teachers and support staff will strive to develop strong links with all parents and carers whatever their cultural background.

We continually focus on developing strategies that support us in securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that pupils are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential. The school tracking system enables us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.

We rigorously monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment, acting within agreed policies to ensure that such incidents are not tolerated and that all children and members of our community feel emotionally and physically safe.

Engagement, partnerships and extended services

We promote community cohesion by developing in our pupils an understanding of our local area in a national and international context. We will seek to build partnerships with schools that have a different ethnic and social mix to our own to try and promote an understanding of the diverse society found in this country, though establishing and maintaining these partnerships remains a challenge. We also have international links with schools in other parts

of the world. This involves correspondence between pupils and at a school level, and fund-raising where appropriate.

We encourage partnerships with a wide range of groups that can help us to develop an understanding of different cultures and backgrounds. We have links with local faith groups and provide opportunities to visit sacred sites in the area, including through Bradford Interfaith Services. We invite members of different groups to visit our school and help our pupils appreciate the variety of cultures found in our area.

We promote community cohesion through our joint Family of Schools work, where as a cluster of schools we look at how we can promote equality and diversity within our community: for example, Our 'Living Books Day' where children explored themes such as identity and perceptions, and celebrated diversity within the local community, and our 'global citizenship-focused Agenda Day', which was facilitated by young people through Investors in Children so that children come together to discuss their ideas, express their views and opinions about their local community and to create solutions to their problems and concerns.

We also invite external agencies in to promote equality: for example, Barnardo's to deliver the Anti-HBT (homophobic, biphobic & transphobic) programme. This is a whole school approach to fostering inclusive learning environments and tackling HBT behaviours.

Engagement with parents is also important for developing community cohesion e.g. open days, curriculum evenings, parent workshops, Friends of Westgate (PTA) and other events;

Staff recruitment and continuing development

We pay particular attention to the recruitment of staff to the school to try and reflect in our staff the social make-up of our area. We ensure that our school recruitment methods follow the equal opportunities guidelines and we encourage applications from groups that are under represented at the moment.

We ensure that all staff (including non-teaching staff) have professional development opportunities related to community cohesion and equalities issues so that we continue to have a school ethos where all members of the school community are valued and respected.

The leadership and management of community cohesion

The leadership and management our work on community cohesion is a responsibility of the headteacher and the assistant head teacher (Community and Pastoral). They will ensure that it remains an issue that underpins all our work in the school. They will have the specific responsibility to coordinate the specific activities carried out to promote community cohesion and ensure that this is reflected in all school planning.

The school promotes community cohesion by gathering and analysing all available data to inform our actions. This includes the monitoring of attainment by different ethnic groups and analysis of our curriculum to evaluate how our teaching and learning properly reflects the different culture represented in the wider local area. We plan actions to promote community cohesion. This can involve particular events such as a 'anyone can day, diversity day or world food day' or it may involve a review of school policies on such matters as staff recruitment. We also carefully monitor the impact of our work in promoting community cohesion.

Our Family of Schools works closely together to address community cohesion and to tackle discrimination. This has led to formulation and adoption of our own joint Anti-Racism Charter and, more recently an Equalities Charter.

Monitoring and review

Our progress in promoting community cohesion will be reported to governors at least annually. We review the impact of our work on all groups in the school. We particularly analyse how different cultural groups perform and if there are any gaps in attainment we address them as rigorously as possible.

We continue to monitor the impact of our work through the review of a number of important indicators. These include the number of incidents of poor behaviour that are racially or culturally motivated.

We work with parents and community leaders to strive to improve the effectiveness of our work. We are committed to developing strong and effective channels of communication with all sections of our community in an attempt to listen to any concerns that may arise and better serve the needs of all stakeholders.

The policy was agreed in May 2023 will be reviewed on a three yearly basis.

Signed: (on behalf of the governing body)

Signed: (head teacher)

Date: 08/06/2023

See also:

- Anti-Racism Policy
- Single Equality Policy & Action Plan
- Otley Family of Schools Anti-Racism Charter
- Otley Family of Schools Equality & Diversity Charter
- Hate Incident Reporting Form
- Hate Incident Reporting in Schools (HIRS), Academies and other Children's Services settings in Leeds Guidance
- Behaviour & Discipline Policy