Forest Academy

&

Elveden Church of England Primary Academy





Equality Plan

Date: January 2016
Written by: Janet West
Review: January 2017

1. The Equality Plan - Policy Outline

Introduction

1.1 The Equality Plan sets out Elveden Academy and Forest Academy's approach to promoting equality and diversity. The Plan responds to the statutory duties relating to disability, gender and race equality which require the publication of disability, gender equality schemes and a race equality policy. While this Plan meets these legislative requirements, the schools have recognised the importance of ensuring that its policies and procedures are effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. The schools have had their Equal Opportunities Policy in place for a number of years. It includes the Race Equality Policy. These documents will now be included in this plan.

1.2 This Plan sets out:

- background information about the area and the schools;
- both school's overall approached to promoting equality, recognising and celebrating diversity and tackling discrimination;
- specific sections on race equality, disability equality, and gender equality

The Legislation

1.4 A wide range of equality legislation is in place which places duties on public bodies, including schools, to promote equality and tackle discrimination. Race equality duties result from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Schools are required to produce Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. This results from specific duties schools must follow outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 respectively and the accompanying regulations. More detail about the legislation is included in the particular sections on disability, gender and race.

1.5 There is a range of other equality legislation which places duties upon the schools to which they must adhere but there is, as yet, no specific requirement to publish schemes or policies in these areas. Both schools have, however, included allusions to some of these other areas within its equality and diversity policy and will be working to integrate fully its approach to promoting equality in the areas of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation into this plan in the future if required.

1.6 Any requirements resulting from the duty to promote community cohesion as described in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 will also be incorporated into the plan.

1.7 The Equality Plan sets out in detail how both schools intend to meet their statutory duties and follow best practice. It is effectively a strategy and action plan which summarises the school's approach to equality across the whole school community.

2. The School Contexts – What sort of schools are we?

Forest

- Children's baseline scores at the school over recent years have been roughly average.
- The majority of children come from the immediate vicinity of Brandon.
- The Brandon wards from which the majority children come have a lower than average % adult higher education and a lower than average % of high social class households.
- The school has 14% free school meals, 22% pupil premium
- The school currently has 317 Yr 1-6 (166 boys and 151 girls) and 52 Nursery on roll.
- The school has some children with English as an Additional Language, or who come from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Elveden

- Children's baseline scores at the school over recent years have been roughly average.
- Children come from a wide range of local areas including Elveden, Brandon, Thetford and a number of small villages around these.
- The Elveden wards from which the majority children come have a lower than average % adult higher education and a lower than average % of high social class households.
- The school has 11 free school meals. (23 Pupil Premium)
- The school currently has 79 on roll – this is broken into 40girls and 41 boys on roll.
- The school has some children with English as an Additional Language, or who come from minority ethnic backgrounds.

3. Equality – aims and values

3.1 The purpose of the Equality Plan for Elveden Academy and Forest Academy is about providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards. The principles of this plan applies to all members of the school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

3.2 Our Equality plan is based on the core values and ideals for our schools

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles

1. All learners are of equal value. Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.

2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.

4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.

5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development

6. We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential

7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

4. Our approach to promoting equality

4.1 The overall objective of our Equality Plan is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality objectives to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

4.2 Elveden and Forest are committed to equality principles, and will work consistently to ensure that all pupils and staff are encouraged to achieve their full potential; a culture of respect for others is engendered and differences between people are recognised and celebrated. The schools will endeavour to create a community where pupils are well prepared for life in a diverse, pluralist society

4.3 Elveden and Forest aim to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents or carers or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, social class, where the person lives or spent convictions.

5. Leadership, Management and Governance

5.1 The governing body is committed to meeting its duties under equality legislation and aims to follow the good practice set out in the statutory codes of practice and guidance which support the legislation.

5.2 While the governing body has overall responsibility to ensure that equality is promoted throughout the organisation, it is the responsibility of all staff, including those helping on a voluntary basis, to promote equality.

5.3 The governing body recognises that all staff need to be aware of, and understand, their responsibilities regarding equality legislation and guidance.

5.4 The governing body recognises that discrimination may occur on more than one ground at the same time and that equality of opportunity cannot be achieved by always treating all people alike

5.5 The governing body acknowledges that it has a key leadership role in promoting equality and community cohesion and recognises the need to work with school staff and partner organisations, including the local authority.

6. Policy planning, implementation and review

6.1 The governing body will endeavour to ensure that all relevant policies reflect the school's commitment to the principles of equality and that this commitment is reflected clearly in all its work.

6.2 All staff are encouraged to contribute to the formulation, development and review of policy documents. The school ensures the involvement of governors and, where appropriate, takes steps to enable the contribution of pupils and their parents/carers and other relevant parties.

6.3 All policies, functions and strategies are regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting equality.

6.4 As further equality requirements come into force policies, functions and strategies will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in fulfilling the requirements of new legislation.

6.5 Outcomes of monitoring and assessment will be reported to the governing body and other key partners. Members of the school community will be kept informed of Equality and Diversity initiatives being undertaken.

7. Staffing: Recruitment and staff development

7.1 Elveden and Forest adhere to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and in line with statutory duties, local authority guidance and, where appropriate, diocesan guidelines. Our schools seek to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school.

7.2 Elveden and Forest routinely monitors all recruitment activity and staff in post by the statutory equality indicators of gender, ethnic background and disability and fulfils its responsibility to provide the data to the local authority annually.

7.3 Steps are taken to ensure that everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this plan. New staff are familiar with it as part of their induction programme. Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this plan. The school will ensure that staff and governors are able to access the appropriate levels of support and training necessary to ensure that they are aware of contemporary equality practices and procedures.

7.4 Staff receive appropriate training to enable them to deal effectively with bullying and discriminatory incidents.

8. Personal development and pastoral care

8.1 The pastoral support system takes account of disability, gender, religious and ethnic differences, and the experiences and particular needs of people living in a diverse society.

8.2 Elveden Academy and Forest Academy provide appropriate support for EAL pupils and encourages them to use their home and community languages.

8.3 All pupils are provided with appropriate career advice and guidance. Work experience providers are asked to demonstrate their commitment to equality principles. Placements are monitored to ensure compliance.

8.4 Support is given to victims and perpetrators of harassment and unacceptable behaviour. External agencies are involved, where appropriate.

8.5 Monitoring data, including that relating to disability, ethnicity, gender and SEN will be used to monitor the attainment, progress and the well-being of pupils, and, where appropriate, targets will be set to address any identified inconsistencies.

8.6 The schools will endeavour to use monitoring data, including that relating to disability, ethnicity, gender and SEN will be used to monitor admissions, attendance, exclusions and the use of sanctions and rewards. Analysed results will be used to inform planning and decision-making.

9. Learning and Teaching

9.1 All pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum in accordance with SEND Code of Practice guidelines.

9.2 Classroom staff ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel safe, included and their contributions are valued. Teaching styles include collaborative learning so that pupils appreciate the value of working together. All pupils are encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem-solving tasks.

9.3 Pupil grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under review and may, where appropriate be analysed by equality indicators.

9.4 Classroom staff encourage pupils to become independent and to take appropriate responsibility for their own learning.

9.5 Staff challenge stereotypes and foster pupils' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.

9.6 Resources and displays reflect the experience and backgrounds of the range of people living in the UK. They celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes in all curriculum areas. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school.

10. School Curriculum

10.1 Curriculum planning takes account of the needs of all pupils and considers them in relation to the various equality strands. The Senior Leadership team monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds.

10.2 The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of, boys and girls; pupils who are disabled; pupils learning English as an additional language; pupils from minority groups; pupils who are gifted and talented; pupils with special educational needs; pupils who are looked after by the local authority and pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

10.3 Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.

10.4 The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

10.5 Extra-curricular activities and special events, e.g. school productions, cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils. The schools will give due regard to parental preferences and concerns.

10.6 Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of pupils from all groups.

11. Admissions attendance, behaviour, discipline and exclusion

11.1 The admissions process is monitored by a range of equality indicators to ensure that it is administered fairly and equitably to all pupils.

11.2 Comprehensive information about pupils' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet, etc., is included in all admissions' forms

11.3 The school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all. However, it is recognised that social/cultural background and other personal factors may affect behaviour. The school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and sanctions.

11.4 Exclusions and attendance are monitored and effective action is taken in order to reduce gaps between different groups of pupils. Absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel. Those involved in this work are aware of and sensitive to community issues.

There are strategies to reintegrate long-term truants and excluded pupils, which address the needs of all pupils.

11.5 Pupils, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any group is always unacceptable.

11.6 Appropriate provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance for pupils and staff.

12. Attainment, progress and assessment

12.1 Staff have high expectations of all pupils and they continually challenge them to reach higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement.

12.2 The monitoring and analysing of pupil performance by disability, special educational needs, gender, ethnicity and other social/cultural indicators enables the identification of groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. The school ensures that action is taken to counteract this.

12.3 Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupil progress. The school ensures, where possible, that assessment is free of gender, racial, cultural and social bias.

12.4 Self-assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress giving all pupils full opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do and, therefore, to benefit from the process.

13. Partnership with parents and the community

13.1 Elveden and Forest endeavour to provide information material for parents in accessible, user-friendly language and formats and the schools will endeavour to provide information in community languages, and alternative formats when requested.

13.2 Progress reports to parents are provided in a range of formats in order to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue.

13.3 All parents are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the school. Information and meetings for parents are made accessible for all. Parental involvement is monitored to ensure the participation of parents from all groups whose children are pupils at the schools. Actions are included in the school's action plan to address any inconsistencies.

13.4 When appropriate the schools will take steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under-represented groups of parents and sections of the community.

13.5 Elveden and Forest works in partnership with parents and the community to address specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to diversity. Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalised groups.

13.6 The school's premises and facilities are available for use by all groups within the community. The school endeavours to address accessibility difficulties.

13.7 Elveden and Forest recognises it also has a responsibility to promote equality through its procurement and commissioning activities and endeavours to ensure the services it uses are aware of its equality objectives.

14. Measuring Progress

14.1 Progress on this Equality Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis. The results of reviews will be published in formats that give the widest accessibility. However, the schemes contained within this plan and their accompanying action plans each have a statutory timetable for publication. This may mean that sections of this plan will be reviewed at different times.

14.2 The schools uses a range of mechanisms to consult with and obtain feedback from its pupils, parents and staff and other interested parties. These include questionnaires to parents and pupils, use of school council, informal discussions with parents etc.

15. Future Strategic Priorities

15.1 While both schools have achieved a great deal, they acknowledge that there is always more that can be done to promote equality. It will use the Equality Plan to help drive its work forward.

15.2 Elveden and Forest recognise that it has finite resources and will be unable to achieve all the desired changes at once. The duties under the various acts are proportionate in that the weight given to equality should be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. In practice, this means that the schools will need to continue to give greatest consideration and resources to those areas it assesses as having the greatest need. Improving pupil achievement where differential has been found to exist and promoting an inclusive environment are areas where particular attention, therefore, might be focussed.

15.3 Through its auditing process and the development of this plan, including taking account of the views of those consulted during this process, the school's governing body have identified a range of equality and diversity priorities for action over the three years of the Plan. These are detailed in the action plans attached.