

Community Cohesion and Equality Scheme

**To be read in conjunction with policies for:
Collective Worship
Character Education & British Values
Equality and Inclusion**



1. Introduction

The curriculum of our school should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils and of society and prepare our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. We already consider this part of our role, and already work in ways which promote community cohesion. As migration and economic change alter the shape of our increasingly diverse local communities, it is more important than ever that all schools play a full part in promoting community cohesion. Our school should be a thriving, cohesive community, but it also has a vital part to play in building a more cohesive society. We strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that irrespective of the origin, tradition and heritage of individual members of the school community: parent, carers, children, governors, teaching and support staff, local authority, religious denominations and local communities, everyone is equally valued and equally treats others with respect.

Every school - whatever its intake and wherever it is located - is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, ethnicity and social backgrounds. The staff and pupil populations of some schools reflect this diversity, allowing pupils to mix with those from different backgrounds. Worle Village Primary School is a thriving global community and we need to make links with other schools and organisations in order to give the pupils the opportunity to mix with and learn from and about those from a variety of backgrounds. Through our ethos and curriculum, we can promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing pupils how different communities can be united by common experiences and values. We believe that it is our duty to address issues of 'how we live together' and 'dealing with difference' however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem.

2. What is community cohesion?

By community cohesion, we mean 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 workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

The term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- the school community – the pupils we serve, 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 community of Britain - all schools are by definition part of this community;
- The global community – including the EU and international links.

3. The Duties of the School

Schools are required to meet significant 'positive statutory duties' in the areas of race equality, disability equality, gender equality and community cohesion. These duties are;

- The Duty to Promote Race Equality
- The Duty to Promote Disability Equality
- The Gender Equality Duty
- The Duty to Promote Community Cohesion

Each of these Duties requires schools to promote equality of opportunity and community cohesion in everything they do. The following pages of this policy provide an overview of each of the Duties.

The Duty to Promote Race Equality

The Duty to Promote Race Equality extends protection against racial discrimination and places an enforceable, positive duty on 'public authorities'. The Act makes it unlawful for any public authority to discriminate on racial grounds in carrying out any of its functions.

Our Duty is to identify and tackle racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations.

This means that we must have due regard in everything we do to ensure we:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups

To ensure that we meet the requirements of the Race Relations Act and positively promote our school values we will:

- ensure that pupils and staff recognise that discrimination on the basis of colour, culture or origin is not acceptable
- educate, develop and prepare all our pupils for life in society whatever their colour, origin or culture
- promote awareness of our multicultural society
- enable all pupils to attain their full potential whatever race they are
- carefully monitor the progress of any pupil(s) from different racial groups and examine whether this may be influenced by their cultural background. Monitoring will be undertaken by teachers in the assessment and target setting process overseen by the assessment co-ordinator. Any issues about progress should be identified and appropriate with timely action taken
- record any concerns and report any incidents of racial abuse
- ensure that pupils from any minority ethnic background are fully integrated into school life at WVPS especially in play and social activities
- ensure no bullying is tolerated and to follow up any incident in line with the Schools' Behaviour Policy and sanctions
- value and learn from the experiences of the pupil(s), parent or carer
- foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help promote a school and a society in which there is racial harmony.

Racist symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden in school.

We accept pupils and staff can wear special forms of dress where these are an essential part of their cultural background and are mutually agreed by the Governors and Headteacher.

The Duty to Promote Disability Equality

All 'public authorities' have a Duty to promote disability equality. We at WVPS will ensure that we comply and meet the regulations as stated in the Equality Act 2010.

The DDA (1996) defines a disabled person as someone who has 'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term (12 months or more) adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Our Values

At WVPS we will:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in the public life
- take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others
- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- improve the school environment to ensure disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services
- improve the delivery of information for disabled pupils including the use of Makaton and visual timetables.

We will also develop a Disability Equality Action Plan and review its effectiveness yearly.

The Gender Equality Duty

The Gender Equality Duty places a statutory duty on all 'public authorities' when carrying out all of their functions to have due regard to the need:

- to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Our Values:

As a school, we accept that there are gender inequalities in our society which impose limits, particularly on girls' expectations and behaviour so we constantly examine our curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias or inequality.

At WVPS we will:

- encourage pupils to be aware of the rigid sex stereotypes presented by, for example, the media
- provide a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions. All pupils experience subjects previously considered to be suitable for a single sex
- ensure that teachers allocate their time fairly between the sexes
- ensure all pupils have opportunities for working with pupils of both sexes
- break down traditional sex stereotypes (for example by not asking boys to move furniture whilst girls tidy up)
- encourage pupils to pursue less conventional subjects and interests

We do not differentiate between the sexes in our school uniform.

4. What can we do to promote community cohesion?

How does our school contribute towards community cohesion?

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion. The duty on schools came into effect in September 2007.

*Community Cohesion means 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 workplace, in schools and in the wider community.*

Common Vision means a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country. This recognises the contribution made by individuals within any community and the fact that people will naturally hold different ambitions, aspirations, beliefs and life experiences. But importantly, it places a strong emphasis on how they will also share important characteristics and experiences with those from their own and different communities.

Sense of belonging means there is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn; and there is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between difference interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny.

Life opportunities highlights the importance of equality – both the importance of tackling inequality gaps, but also the importance of making this social change visible to all communities, communicating fair treatment at all times. By creating opportunities for pupils' achievement and enabling every child and young person to achieve their potential, schools make a significant contribution to long term community cohesion.

As all children and young people can benefit from meaningful interaction, this Duty means that all schools will need to consider how to give their pupils the opportunity to mix with and learn with, from and about those from different backgrounds, for example through links with other schools and community organisations. Through their ethos and curriculum, schools can promote discussion of a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing pupils how different communities can be united by shared values and common experiences.

WVPS already works in ways that promote community cohesion and the production of this stand-alone Community Cohesion and Equality Scheme will build on our practice. It also presents us with the opportunity to define our activity through a formal approach to planning, monitoring and reviewing our practices and their impact.

Similarities Between the Duties

There are many links and similarities between the duties shown previously. This document is our Single Community Cohesion and Equality Scheme.

We feel that by producing a single scheme (instead of separate schemes for each of the four Duties), we will be able to more effectively ensure that:

- we fully consider equality issues, drawing links between the different equality 'strands' and act accordingly to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity
- we can more effectively manage and monitor the impact of our activities to promote equality of opportunity
- we can more effectively review our approaches to promoting equality of opportunity

- We can effectively and coherently connect our aspiration to promote community cohesion with our work recognising all equalities 'strands'.

Overall, the development of a Single Community Cohesion and Equality Scheme has the potential to show and deliver a comprehensive and robust approach to equality and community cohesion issues in school.

Our school pupil population is less diverse, than some schools with predominantly of one faith, socioeconomic or ethnic group therefore we will need to provide opportunities for interaction between pupils from different backgrounds. Just as each school is different, each school's contribution to community cohesion will be different and will need to develop by reflecting:

- the nature of the school's population – whether it serves pupils drawn from one or a small number of faiths, ethnic or socio-economic groups or from a broader cross-section of the population, or whether it selects by ability from across a wider area
- the location of the school – for instance whether it serves a rural or urban area and the level of ethnic, faith and socio-economic diversity in that area.

In the light of this duty, we need to consider how different aspects of our work already supports integration and community harmony; to take stock of what has worked well so far. We also need to consider where there may be scope to improve their existing work through a more explicit focus on the impact of their activities on community cohesion.

Our school's contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.
- Engagement and ethos – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally.

What do we need to consider in promoting community cohesion?

We need to consider what activities already take place within the school and what might be arranged in cooperation with other schools. In addition, we need to promote well-being as some of the work and activities that support community cohesion can also contribute towards the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of 'making a positive contribution', 'enjoy and achieve' and 'achieving economic well-being'.

Teaching, learning and curriculum

As an effective school we will have a high standard of teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. We have opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity will be integrated across the curriculum.

We need to ensure:

- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in citizenship classes for pupils to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.
- A programme of curriculum based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.

- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- An effective voice and involvement of pupils in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.

Equity and excellence

We should continue to focus on securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic status, ensuring that pupils are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential. The school tracking system will enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group. We need to redouble our efforts to monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment. Monitoring of whether pupils from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others should be accompanied by appropriate behaviour and discipline policies in place to deal with this. Our school admissions criteria emphasise the importance of admission arrangements that promote community cohesion and social equity.

Engagement and ethos

School to school: We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We shall look either locally or further afield and the means of developing the relationship may be through exchange visits or more likely through the internet. Sharing facilities also provides a means for pupils to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama.

School to parents and the community. Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

- Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the pupils, ensuring that the pupil voice is heard and able to effect change.
- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals.
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, curriculum evenings, parent and child courses and family liaison work.
- Provision of signposted, extended services, and in particular bringing parents together from different backgrounds through parenting and family support and community use of facilities for activities that take place out of school hours, including adult and family learning, coffee mornings, ICT and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes.

The pursuit of equality and diversity is a journey, not a destination. This means it is something that we have moral and legal obligations, and indeed, obligations surrounding quality, to continuously strive towards. Equality and diversity, in essence, is the pursuit of sustainable excellence through healthy relationships with people. It's a worthwhile journey.