

Equality Information and Objectives

St Helen's Primary School



**Approved by: Full
Governing Body**

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Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Roles and responsibilities	2
4. Eliminating discrimination.....	3
5. Advancing equality of opportunity	3
6. Fostering good relations.....	4
7. Equality considerations in decision-making	4
8. Equality objectives	4
9. Monitoring arrangements	8
10. Links with other policies	7

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- 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

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteacher

The equality link governor is Trish Fordham. They will:

- Meet with the designated member of staff for equality every term, and other relevant staff members, to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed

- Ensure they're familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training
- Report back to the full governing board regarding any issues

The 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

The designated member of staff for equality will:

- Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils
- Meet with the equality link governor every term to raise and discuss any issues
- Support the headteacher in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in section 8.

4. Eliminating discrimination

At St. Helen's Primary School we observe good equalities practice for staff, ensuring that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including recruitment, promotion and including CPD.

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

The school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, and an equality link governor. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and governors aware of these as appropriate.

5. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people who are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school clubs)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year to governors showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information to governors
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils

6. Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies and in RE lessons, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs.
- Ensuring all children have an understanding and acceptance of different cultures and lifestyles through our No Outsiders programme.

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically on the completed risk assessment.

8. Equality objectives

In writing our Equality Objectives we have been guided by the following principles:

- All learners are of equal value
- We recognise and respect difference
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging
- We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
- We consult and involve all stakeholders
- We base our practices on sound evidence
- We provide measurable objectives

Objective 1: To ensure that children in a range of identified groups (FSM, PPG, SEND, EAL, vulnerable) have equal access to the curriculum and wider opportunities in school, both academic and non-academic.

Why we have chosen this objective: It is our firm belief that no child in our school has less than equal access to the full range of opportunities available, but we have not carried out any formal analysis to be certain this is the case, especially of non-academic opportunities. We would like to be certain that our belief is backed up by evidence.

To achieve this objective we plan to:

- Monitor engagement across the non-academic curriculum for all identified groups.
- Create an action plan based on the outcomes, including removing barriers to engagement
- Continue to monitor and report on the academic engagement and attainment of identified groups to the Full Governing Body, including how we ensure equity for all.

Progress we are making towards this objective:

Spring term 2025 – Analysis shows that, of 31 planned child-led clubs, 29% were being led by FSM/PPG children, 29% were being led by children on our SEND register, 19% were being led by children we consider to be vulnerable. No Young Carers/ Services Families children are leading clubs.

All children in school are invited to take part in sports activities throughout the academic year.

After school clubs – So far in the 24-25 academic year 65% of FSM children, 41% of children on the SEND register, 37.5% of vulnerable children and 60% of Young Carers have accessed an after school club. There are 8 children who appear in multiple groups who have not accessed any clubs this year – these will be our focus children for 25-26 academic year.

We ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum by organizing interventions on a rota basis, so that children do not miss the same session every week. We endeavour to ensure that children do not miss core learning in order to address difficulties in core subjects e.g. children don't leave a maths lesson to work on a maths intervention.

2: To ensure that all groups in school are heard and included by extending opportunities for pupil voice across the school, including creating safe spaces for children to discuss difficult issues.

Why we have chosen this objective: We know that children continue to face challenges with their mental health and wellbeing following the pandemic. In addition, we acknowledge that children face continuing and developing challenges in the online space that may affect their wellbeing or even cause harm. We hope that, by offering safe spaces and environments for the children, they will be able to discuss these very real concerns openly and without fear of prejudice.

To achieve this objective we plan to:

- Ensuring training supports staff to be aware of and understand the challenges faced by children and young people, especially in the online space
- To create opportunities for children to share their thoughts, beliefs and feelings about issues that are important to them through leadership opportunities (reading ambassadors, sports crew, arts council etc), our PSHCE lessons, assemblies and nurture groups
- To celebrate mental health awareness days across the whole school to promote open discussion of mental health and wellbeing
- To analyse the outcomes of the 2023-24 academic year pupil survey and share an appropriate response with the children

Progress we are making towards this objective:

Spring term 2025 – all teaching staff have received training from both the computing lead and Senior Mental Health Lead linked to:

- Ensuring the curriculum supports children to make safe choices online
- Ensuring children understand how to keep their personal data safe
- Ensuring staff know how to spot the potential negative effects of inappropriate online behaviour in children

Nurture groups run twice weekly and offer children a range of opportunities to discuss concerns including, but not limited to, anxiety and striving for perfection, friendships and controlling own responses, low self-esteem/ self-worth, emotional regulation, Young Carers, parental separation, building positive relationships with friends.

Analysis of the children's survey showed that:

- 93% of children are happy at school
- 91% feel safe
- 91% feel the school makes sure children are well-behaved
- 84% feel the school deals effectively with bullying (this shows a drop since the previous survey where the children scored 95%; we plan to address this as part of the next anti-bullying week)
- 96% feel they know what they are learning at school
- 96% feel the school responds well to their concerns
- 96% feel the school supports their learning
- 99% feel the school has high expectations for their learning
- 94% feel they make progress at school
- 94% feel they receive valuable information about their progress (up from 82.5% previously)
- 96% feel there is a good range of subjects at school
- 91% feel they can take part in clubs at school
- 85% feel the school supports their wider interests (this is up from 82% previously but still not as high as we would like)
- 96% would recommend the school to another pupil/family

Objective 3: To identify unconscious bias and encourage children to develop ideas, ambitions and career aspirations that challenge.

Why we have chosen this objective: In the 2023-24 academic year the school took part in the 'Start Small, Dream Big' DfE pilot for careers education in primary schools. As a result, the school now has a well-developed careers program which is embedded across the whole curriculum in every year group. Identifying and challenging unconscious bias is key to ensuring that there are no perceived barriers, linked to protected characteristics, for any child who may be interested in a particular future career.

To achieve this objective we plan to:

- Create a survey to create a measurable judgement of children's current unconscious bias, analyse the outcomes of the survey and target specific areas where bias is identified
- The CRL leader and Headteacher will work together to research and create resources to share with children that will challenge the bias identified.
- Ensure staff training develops understanding so that they feel able to challenge stereotypes/ unconscious bias when it arises in teaching and learning, linked to the Safer Spaces Toolkit

Progress we are making towards this objective:

Staff training on unconscious bias and a reminder of the contents of the Safer Spaces Toolkit has taken place. Staff have reported feeling confident to challenge unconscious bias, especially linked to gender stereotypes.

WRM and Skills Builder resources use range of diverse images, which the children see every day. In addition curriculum displays around school ensure there are examples of people of different faiths and ethnicities visible, across a range of roles.

Once every two weeks children complete work linked to our No Outsiders program which uses age-appropriate stories to address a range of possible areas of bias e.g. how families can be made up/ transgender issues.

In 2022 a survey was carried out with the children to try to understand any bias they held with regard to careers. The outcomes showed widely stereotypical views held across most classes e.g. a ballet dancer is female, a police officer is male etc. The CRL and HT have planned a picture-based survey to be completed with 1/3 of the children in each class to try to ascertain their views now, following a series of assemblies, work in the classroom and additions to displays to see if views have also changed. In the previous survey no children offered images of disabled people in response to careers, so we have made sure to include a range of disabilities in the images we share with children.

Objective 4: To embed the importance of good attendance within the culture of the whole school community to secure equality of opportunity for pupils' engagement, attainment and progress.

Why we have chosen this objective: Attendance across the whole school in the 2023-24 academic year was good at 96.68% overall. However, we continue to have a handful of children whose attendance falls below 90% and, sometimes, even below 85%. We can see that there is a direct correlation between poor attendance and reduced academic outcomes for these children, as well as lower levels of engagement across non-academic activities and, on occasion, their wellbeing. We hope to support children and their families to improve their attendance and engagement, which we hope will also improve their attainment and progress.

To achieve this objective we plan to:

- Ensure there is regular monitoring of attendance across all groups and that children whose attendance is falling below 90% are picked up quickly and families are supported to improve
- Communicate with all stakeholders regularly on the importance of regular and full attendance in school and the impact of non-attendance and lateness on disrupting learning (e.g. using information posters from the Attendance service)
- Provide individualized adaptations and support for children who may be struggling to attend school due to mental health difficulties
- Ensure parents are regularly updated on their child's attendance as part of parent consultations, written reports and letters (if falling below expectations).
- **Progress we are making towards this objective:**
- Attendance monitoring happens at least half termly and is shared with governors as part of the HT report. Attendance is monitored separately for children in receipt of benefits-related FSM, SEND and children with an EHCP (currently only one child). A governor is assigned to attendance monitoring and carries out regular visits, including joining attendance meetings with our link Attendance Officer at the LA. During these termly sessions the LA scrutinizes our documentation and processes to check that we are working effectively with families to support regular attendance.
- The HT attends all briefings from the NSA team – these are useful to keep up with any changes in legislation, processes and to receive up to date resources that can be shared with parents.
- The HT meets with parents when a concerning pattern of absence becomes evident – this might be 90% attendance or lower or a pattern of absence on specific days. As part of these meetings NSA resources are shared which demonstrate the impact of reduced attendance on sessions missed – this has proved a more useful way of communicating with parents than simply discussing percentages of attendance. We have seen a positive impact on attendance after these informal meetings that often means a more formal approach can be avoided.
- Parent newsletters contain information on attendance as part of a rolling program, including information about when children should be off school for illness and when they can safely come in. We have used these rules effectively with some parents whose children are kept off for minor illnesses.
- Attendance is shared at all parent consultations and in the end of year report.
- If a child is having difficulty attending school e.g. for SEMH reasons, we work in collaboration with parents to put in place adjustments to try to remove barriers to attendance. These may include, but are not limited to, an adult tasked to meet and greet the child in the morning, an early/ later start time, the option to come into the school via the front door instead of the gate etc. If the issue persists, we can use resources within the Cambridgeshire Therapeutic Thinking tools e.g. anxiety mapping, to help us to understand where 'pinch points' are occurring and put adjustments in place to

address them. In more extreme cases a part-time timetable may be agreed for a fixed period of time to ease anxiety and build resilience, with the aim of returning to full attendance as soon as possible.

9. Monitoring arrangements

The link governor, headteacher and designated member of staff will update the equality information we publish, at least every year.

This document will be reviewed by St Helen's full governing body at least every 4 years.

This document will be approved by the full governing body.

10. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Risk assessment
- Safer recruitment policy
- Code of Conduct for adults working with children and young people