

The Grove School Equality Statement

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to publish information to show how we are working to:

Eliminate discrimination

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic* and people who do not share it

Foster good relations between groups of people

The ***protected characteristics** – which relate to a primary school – are:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Religion and belief

Other groups of pupils we believe it is also important to consider are:

Looked-after pupils / children who were previously look-after and adopted children

Vulnerable

Young carers

Refugees

Pupils eligible for free school meals or living in poverty

This forms part of our published information and is designed to show information that will be most useful and interesting to our families. On the school website, there is also our Equality Policy; our Equality Action Plan; our Access Plan; our Anti-Bullying Policy and our PSHME (Personal, Social and Health Education) Policy

At The Grove School we strive to treat each member of our community as an individual; to make each individual feel valued and to teach our pupils to do the same. Trying to achieve this involves us all learning what we all have in common as well as valuing our many differences. We think that children will learn better in a school where everyone feels equally safe and welcome. We believe everyone has the same rights but may have different needs and so making school 'fair' for everyone is not about giving everyone the same things.

Equality and diversity is at the heart of our curriculum. We refer to the analogy of 'window, sliding doors and mirrors' Rudine Sims Bishop. Ensuring that all children have the opportunity to experience others worlds, imagine themselves in other worlds and have opportunities to be inspired by people like them. We ask ourselves these questions when planning our schemes of work taken from Bennie Kara's keynote closing statement in the Team English Online Conference 2020

Who is missing from our curriculum?

Whose voices are lost?

What is not acknowledged through the schemes of work or choices of text?

How are we balancing positive representation against the inevitable narrow lenses of canonical texts?

Who is othered?

What powerful knowledge are we teaching the children?

Which hinterland knowledge would enrich the stories behind characters, countries or events?

Where do students hear the other stories?

And finally this question

Where do children experience the window, sliding doors and mirror?

As well as teaching the children about equality and diversity through the curriculum and particularly through our PSHME curriculum, we also regularly discuss these ideas with the children in assemblies and aim to reflect these values in our day to day interactions with the children.

We teach children about 'put downs' and prejudicial language so they recognise this as inappropriate. Our school is a safe place to be and children are confident they will be looked after if things go wrong.

Gender Equality

What this means to us:

- **Stereotyping** means expecting girls and boys to behave or look a particular way. We recognise that there is still incredible **pressure in society** for us to conform to gender specific roles /looks and we need to teach children about this
- We value **individuality** and this includes individuality in children who don't want to act or dress in a way that is 'typically like a boy' or 'typically like a girl'
- We respect and support children's gender identities whether they accept, question or want to change the gender ascribed to them at birth

How do we promote gender equality?

- Staff use language carefully to reflect gender equality (for example: we wouldn't say 'ladies first', we would teach the children about letting each other through a door as a polite thing to do; we would talk about fire-fighters not firemen; police officers not police men or women; nurse not male nurse which suggests a man as a nurse is unusual)
- Teachers don't ask children to get into boy and girl groups / teams in (for eg) PE
- We do run girl-only sports clubs because these sporting activities are often dominated by boys and so we positively discriminate
- We make sure that there is a gender balance to our pupil surveys; school councils, choosing plays to perform so that we hear the voice of boys and girls equally
- We challenge stereotypes through the books we read children; choices of images we present.
- We analyse all our data by gender to check if there is an issue we need to address (eg improving the attainment of boys in writing)
- Children are supported and valued by each other whatever anyone's gender or sexuality
- Our school is inclusive and safe for LGBTU children.

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- We don't tolerate gender put-downs (for example: calling a boy 'a girl' to make him feel bad; calling a girl a tomboy because she plays football)
- We strive to ensure reading books reflect our gender equality policy stories that give stereotypical messages about girls' or boys' roles in the world. We do have books that are aimed at girls or boys and we know these appeal to children but aim to ensure there is a good choice for children.
- We have a school uniform that does not dictate girl or boy specific items.

How we would like to improve our Gender Equality work:

- We are aiming to increase children's understanding of gender stereotyping and sexism and begin these discussions right from the beginning in EYFS.

- Subject leaders will develop their curriculum areas further and every day learning and teaching practices (eg resources; worksheets; powerpoint images; displays) will be thought through carefully.
- To teach the children about stereotyping within society through the curriculum and undertake a 'Stereotype trail- checking toys/displays/books corners.

Family Equality

What this means to us:

- We value all family types as equally special and recognise that children need to be proactively taught that other children's families can be different to their own family type.
- How will we make all families feel equally valued and help children from different family types get on well together?
- We use the term 'grown ups' as a general term rather than 'mums and dads' to refer to children's significant adults so that children who live with one parent; 2 mums; 2 dads; foster parents or who live with extended family don't feel that their own family make-up is not included. We ask club providers to use this language too.
- Not only do we avoid certain language, we also actively talk about different family types and children regularly hear all family types recognised in our language. We buy books that include a variety of family types.
- We ensure separated parents are included in their child's school life.
- We realise that there are financial inequalities between families at The Grove and we aim to ensure no family or child is excluded from a school event or activity for financial reasons and that we do not add stress or embarrassment to families
- We recognise that children who are adopted into families or fostered often have specific needs and may need additional care. We employ a play therapist that helps support these children.
- We are sensitive to areas of the curriculum / the calendar year that may affect children (eg we carefully consider Mothering Sunday and Father's day and talk to the children's parents)
- We get to know our families and discuss celebrations that are taught within school to ensure they are comfortable for their children to take part e.g Christmas.

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- We don't tolerate any put downs about families and deal with them seriously – we take any put-down as an opportunity to educate children about diversity and equality
- We teach children about homophobia and homophobic put-downs. The casual use of 'gay' as a negative adjective is never tolerated and children are taught why this can never be acceptable
- We never leave children out of trips because their grown-ups can't afford to pay for them
- We ensure that parents who have English as their second language have the opportunity to have an interpreter during parent's consultations.
- We ensure families know that our uniform can be bought affordably in local supermarkets and provide good quality second hand clothes too.

How we would like to improve our Family Equality work:

- We would like to celebrate families in 'Good To Be Me' weeks regularly over the child's time in our school and within the RE / PSHME curriculum. Our hope and experience is that celebrating family diversity will encourage children to share and therefore educate other children about the variety of family types in our community
- To carry out a Poverty Proofing Audit to ensure no family or child is excluded from a school event or activity for financial reasons and that we do not add stress and embarrassment to families. <https://www.beem.org.uk/Services/5103>
- We will investigate how we could provide a free place in each fee-charging club
- We are aiming to increase visual representations of different family types through books we buy

Disability Equality

What this means to us:

- We celebrate different abilities in many ways while also supporting the specific needs children may experience. We teach children to celebrate difference and that difference is not about lack or less but about rights, needs, attitude and access. We teach the children that equality is not about everyone getting the same but about everyone getting what they need.
- If a child is joining our school and has a disability, we recognise that those parents will need additional time with school staff so they can tell us about their child's needs and for us to explain how we will work towards meeting their child's needs
- We recognise that helping a child to be equally included may need specific support and we will work with parents and other agencies to ensure we do this well
- Disabilities can affect a child's achievement or social experience in very different ways. Although achievement is a major factor, we also are clear that a child's social experience is vital to a good education and can help children achieve a positive social experience in a variety of ways

How do we promote disability equality and help all children get on well together?

- We teach children about disability equality through the curriculum via specific units of work as well as our general language and attitude
- Occasionally, and with parental consent/involvement, we support disabled children to teach their peer group about their specific needs to enable children to support and understand those children better. Children respond to this incredibly well. Difference is often obvious to children and this benefits from being discussed and accepted openly to support positive relationships. Children have become so confident about their differences that they have been enabled (as older primary children) to talk to their whole class or the school about their own disabilities (eg severe dyslexia or autism) and this has always had a positive impact
- All children have equal access to all of school life. This includes clubs and trips including residential trips in Years 5/6
- Children may become diagnosed with a learning disability during their time at our school (eg dyslexia). We have clear pathways to diagnosis of specific learning difficulties / disabilities and parents/carers will be involved with this process and given information about support offered as a result. Parents are welcome to discuss any concerns about their child's development at any time and they will receive information about additional support at least twice a year.

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- We talk to the children about different skills, achievements and abilities. We know that children/people can be competitive and do not use a 'top/bottom group' or 'streaming' classroom set-up, this means that children experience learning with all children over time in mixed attainment groupings. They are specifically taught how to include every one and how to listen to each other's ideas respectfully
- We treat put downs related to ability/disability seriously. These can include put downs pertaining to high attainment (eg: geek; nerd) or low ability / attainment (eg: thick; stupid).

How we would like to improve our Disability Equality work:

- To increase representation of disabled people in our school. This includes curriculum developments (every subject leader's action plan aims to develop diversity within their curriculum area) and every day learning and teaching practice (eg resources; worksheets; powerpoint images; displays; (eg) historical / scientific contributions of disabled people)
- To further develop children's understanding of individual needs/ different ways of playing to improve social experiences for some disabled children

Race and Heritage Equality

What this means to us:

- We value all our children as individuals and value the diversity of racial and cultural heritage within our community. As a school with a relatively small ethnic minority community, we feel it is especially important to value and make visible not only the races and cultures represented within our community but those that are not currently represented – and to do this in a planned and proactive way throughout our curriculum.
- We value all the children's cultures and help children from different communities get on well together
- We invite families in to talk about their cultures/celebrations
- We make sure toys, displays, books etc reflect a range of people from different cultures and avoid stereotypes
- We have developed a more diverse / hidden history curriculum where hinterland knowledge is sought.

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- We do not tolerate the use of racist comments and put-downs are never tolerated
- We avoid being tokenistic
- We do not 'other' people

How we would like to improve our work:

- To introduce 'Good To Be Me' weeks and PSHE units help all children understand and respect our range of identities
- We would like to hold an annual Language Celebration in which we celebrate all the children's languages and invite members of our community to come and talk about their cultures. We try and use children's languages regularly (eg in answering the register).
- We are developing a proactive 'everyday' curriculum as well as specific lessons to explore skin colours and cultures (eg different food in lunch boxes) from the start of reception. The use of persona dolls to support multi-cultural understanding in our youngest children is being trialled as part of this
- To increase representation of skin colours and cultures in our school. This includes curriculum developments and every day learning and teaching practice (eg resources; worksheets; powerpoint images; displays)

Religious or Belief Equality**What this means to us:**

- We value the diversity of religious belief and other philosophical beliefs (eg humanism) within our local and wider community. We also respect the right to have no religion or belief.
- We believe that religious/belief education plays an important role in helping to keep our community a tolerant and inclusive place in which to live
- We value all the children's beliefs and help children with different beliefs get on well together
- Our Religious Education curriculum gives young people the opportunity to develop an understanding of their own and other people's beliefs and therefore helps young people live in a diverse society
- We invite representatives from different faiths communities to speak in our RE lessons. Children also make visits to places of worship within our community
- Our assemblies include exploration of important ideas and stories from different faiths
- Children are encouraged to ask questions and explore the big ideas raised in stories from a range of faiths
- We use language carefully. For example: we don't refer to 'Christian names'; we use BCE (Before Common Era) /CE (Common Era) alongside BC/AD; we would always say "some people believe"

- We respect the right of families to celebrate key religious festivals and authorise absences accordingly
- We respect and actively seek the religious wishes of families regarding participation in school celebrations (for example Christmas performances and birthday assemblies)
- We recognise that the wearing of religious dress and symbols can be an important expression of an individual's religious identity

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- Put-downs related to belief or religion are never tolerated

How we would like to improve our work:

- We would like to include more members of our school community to come and talk about their faith and how this affects their way of life
- We are aiming to make sure that a wider variety of special religious festivals that are celebrated by our families are also celebrated in/through school