



St Mark's West Essex Catholic School

Equality Scheme

Date Reviewed: June 2019

Next Review Date: June 2021

Committee: Curriculum, Pupils and Admissions

1. Policy statement

The School believes that Equality is not about treating everyone the same, but recognising the different needs of individuals.

- a) St Mark's West Essex Catholic School is committed to the principle of equal opportunity for all, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender or physical disability. This policy applies both to staff and pupils. In accordance with our mission statement we pledge:
- to respect the equal human rights of all our pupils;
 - to educate them about equality; and
 - to respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of the school community.
- b) We will assess our current school practices ("Equality Impact Assessment") and implement all necessary resulting actions in relation to:
- ethnicity,
 - religion or belief,
 - socio-economic background,
 - gender and gender identity,
 - disability,
 - sexual orientation, and
 - age.
- c) We will promote community cohesion at school, local, national and global levels, comparing our school community to its local and national context and implementing all necessary actions in relation to:
- ethnicity,
 - religion or belief, and
 - socio-economic background.

Equality Statements

(a) Pupils' attainment and progress

St Mark's West Essex Catholic School expects the highest possible standards. Staff have high-expectations of all pupils and continually challenge them to reach higher standards.

St Mark's recognises and values all forms of achievement. We will monitor and analyse pupil performance by ethnicity, gender, disability and special educational need and social background. Any disparities which are identified will be addressed through targeted curriculum planning, teaching and support.

(b) The quality of provision – teaching and learning

All staff ensure the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel all contributions are valued. Positive steps are taken to include pupils who may otherwise be marginalised.

We take account of pupils' experiences and starting points and are responsive to pupils' different learning styles. All pupils are regularly consulted about their learning.

Pupil grouping is planned and varied to reflect the requirements of learners and their social development needs. Allocations to teaching groups will be kept under continual review and analysed by ethnicity, gender and background. Our teaching styles include collaborative learning. All pupils will be encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem solving tasks. Pupils will be encouraged to be a resource for their peers.

Staff encourage pupils to become independent and assist them in taking responsibility for the management of their own learning and behaviour.

Staff will use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupil progress. Assessments are analysed for gender, cultural and social bias, and take account of access issues, eg print size.

St Mark's believes that self-assessment is a teaching-learning strategy, and we will provide all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.

(c) The quality of provision – curriculum and other activities

St Mark's provides an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds. We will monitor and evaluate its effectiveness through target setting and attainment analysis.

All pupils participate in the mainstream curriculum of the school.

The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

Boys and girls

Pupils learning English as an additional language

Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including Gypsies and Travellers

Pupils who are gifted and talented

Pupils with special educational needs

Pupils with a disability

Pupils who are in public care

Pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion

Lesbian, gay or questioning young people

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.

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

Extracurricular activities and special events eg school productions, cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils and take account of parental preferences related to religion and culture.

(d) The quality of provision – guidance and support

St Mark's actively promote good personal and community relations and recognise diversity as having a positive role to play within the school.

All staff are expected to foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among boys and girls from all ethnic groups and range of abilities.

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

Our pastoral support takes account of religious, cultural and ethnic differences, special educational needs, disability and the experiences and needs of Traveller pupils, refugees and asylum seekers' children.

St Mark's provides appropriate support for pupils learning English as an additional language and pupils are encouraged to use their home and community languages to enhance their learning.

St Mark's expects work experience providers to demonstrate their commitment to equality, including disability, gender and race equality.

Victims of harassment and bullying are given appropriate support using external agencies where appropriate. The perpetrators are dealt with in line with school policy and are provided with relevant support to consider and modify their behaviour.

(e) Behaviour and Attendance

St Mark's expects high standards of behaviour from all pupils, appropriate for their development level.

We have procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour that are fair and applied equally to all. All staff are expected to operate consistent systems of rewards and discipline.

It is recognised that cultural background and disability may affect behaviour. Our school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

Clear procedures are in place so that all forms of bullying and harassment, including racism and harassment related to disability, sexism and homophobia, are dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently and are in line with relevant local and national policies and guidance such as those for anti-bullying and dealing with racist incidents. All forms of harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with relevant school policies.

All staff are trained to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice and are offered support in handling such matters.

St Mark's encourages staff to explore their own views and attitudes to difference and to monitor their practice in relation to this policy. Adults in school take care to lead through example, demonstrating high expectations of all pupils.

We monitor exclusions by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Background is also considered. Action is taken in order to address any disparities between different groups of pupils.

St Mark's will take all reasonable steps to prevent the exclusion of a pupil for a reason related to any disability they may have.

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

Information and advice on attendance and exclusion can be made available to parents/carers in accessible formats such as relevant community languages and large print.

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

Families are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to pupil attendance and absence is always followed up in a way that takes account of cultural issues or matters relating to a child's disability.

We make provision for leave of absence for religious observance, for staff as well as pupils.

We monitor attendance by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Background is also considered. Action is taken in order to address any disparities between different groups of pupils.

St Mark's will fully support children with long-term medical needs who may have an erratic attendance because they are in and out of hospital.

We expect full-time attendance of Traveller and Gypsy pupils.

(f) Partnership with pupils, parents, carers and the wider community

St Mark's monitors parental involvement and have strategies to raise participation of underrepresented groups of parents and sections of the community. Information and meetings for parents are made accessible for all.

Progress reports to parents/carers are clearly written and free from jargon to encourage parents to participate in their child's education. Parents with a disability, or needing a different language or format, may ask the school for support with this access.

Parents are fully involved in the school-based response for their child with special educational needs, understand the purpose of any intervention or programme of action and are told about the parent partnership service when SEND is identified.

St Mark's encourages participation of underrepresented groups in areas of employment, eg through work experience placements.

Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalised groups.

St Mark's works in partnership with parents and the community to address specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to difference.

St Mark's premises and facilities are equally accessible for use by all.

(g) Leadership and management

Steps are taken to ensure the school's admission process is fair and equitable to all pupils.

St Mark's will not discriminate against a disabled pupil in the arrangements it makes for determining admission.

St Mark's will admit pupils with already identified special educational needs. Pupils with statements of special educational needs will always be admitted unless, through the statutory assessment process, it is demonstrated that the pupil's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children.

Comprehensive information about pupils' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet etc is included in the admissions process.

St Mark's adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equitable and in line with statutory duties and national guidelines.

St Mark's will take steps to encourage people from underrepresented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school and ensure recruitment and selection processes are monitored.

Equality and diversity issues are reflected in our school's employment practices.

Everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this policy. All staff and visitors must support the ethos of the school, promoting equality and challenging bias and stereotyping wherever they observe it.

We will ensure that staff training continually highlights equality issues. Equality is incorporated in the induction programme for new staff.

The skills of all staff are recognised and valued. All staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge.

Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this policy.

Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and the school strives to reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

St Mark's opposes all forms of racism, homophobia, prejudice and discrimination.

Resources and displays in our school reflect the experience and backgrounds of pupils promote diversity and challenge stereotypes. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school, eg the inclusion of images relating to minority ethnic and Gypsy and Travellers children; displays to be positioned at eye level etc.

(h) Linguistic Diversity

We recognise and celebrate the linguistic diversity in British society. We look for opportunities to enrich the curricular experience of all our pupils by:

- Highlighting how English has borrowed from other languages
- Raising awareness of the similarities and differences between English and other languages
- Reflecting the multilingual nature of wider society in our resources
- Providing pupils with the opportunity to work with pupils from international partner schools.

2. Statutory requirements

The equality objectives in Section 10 below address our duties under current equality legislation, up to and including the Equality Act 2010. They also relate to the Essex Council procedure for recording incidents involving pupils in schools.

The access plan in Section 11 below addresses our duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001.

The community cohesion plan in Section 12 below addresses our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

3. Community cohesion

The following statements outlines both the data and current issues relating to ethnicity, religion/belief and socio-economic factors. In examining the school's context, it relates closely to the beginning of the SEF. It demonstrates the awareness of the governors and their community partners of how the school community compares with the wider community, both locally and nationally.

- St Mark's West Essex Catholic School was opened as a school in 1965, in response to a local need for a faith school. Due to the number of Christians in the local area, it was agreed that St Mark's would provide a faith based education for pupils from Catholic and Church of England primary schools in Harlow and the surrounding area.
- St Mark's West Essex Catholic School became an academy in August 2011.
- We take pupils from a wide range of Christian backgrounds and denominations as well as a small number of pupils of other faith backgrounds. This mix of pupils has, for many years, provided diversity within the pupil cohort which enriches the school.
- The Catholic character of the school is reflected in the Mission Statement, governors' policies and much of the day to day practice. It also is confirmed within our Articles of Governance and was inspected under Section 48 Regulations in July 2013.
- We draw from a geographical area that includes Harlow town, Essex countryside and towns which are in the immediate locality to Harlow town.

- The proportion of minority ethnic pupils continues to increase with the current percentage now reaching over **49.7% (summer census 2019)**. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is currently **20% (summer census 2019)**. **65** different languages are spoken by our pupils **(summer census 2019)**.
- The Sixth Form is particularly important and provides approximately 20% of our total pupil roll. Within Years 12 and 13, there are approximately 70% "internal pupils" and 30% joining us from other schools.
- A percentage of pupils on Pupil Premium of the main school are currently is **21%**.
- **1.4%** pupils have Educational Health Care Plans while **15.5%** of pupils are designated as pupils with SEN support **(summer census 2019)**.
- Behaviour of pupils is excellent. However, the school experiences increasing numbers of serious pastoral issues - often resulting from instability at home and parental breakdowns. In addition to the large number of mid-year admissions, which have led to an increase in exclusion rates. Referrals to outside agencies and internal support mechanisms have increased as a result of these factors rather than a general deterioration in behavior.
- The attendance figure for the school is 94.6% compared to our target of 95%. Due to a number of pupils who are unable to attend school due to medical issues.
- The recruitment of staff can be a challenge with our proximity to London and the inadequate compensation of the Fringe Allowance. However, the school is normally fully staffed and we prioritise the appointment of subject specialists who, if asked, can teach to 'A' level. Recruitment and retention is significantly enhanced by our increasing involvement in ITT, on-going CPD, induction and the general reputation of the school.
- All feedback suggests high levels of confidence from stakeholders (attendance at events, monitoring of letters/e-mails and visitor feedback etc). Parents show high levels of commitment to their children's progress, attend events in large numbers (e.g. we normally account for between 85 - 100% parents at each Year Group Parents' Evening, Information evenings and concerts etc) and demonstrate strong commitment to the overall aims and ethos of the school.
- The Head and senior staff play active roles within local groups / partnerships. The Head is a member of the Planning Group for Brentwood Diocese Secondary Heads Association; a member of the Association of Secondary Headteachers in Essex, as well as a member of local Headteachers groups for Harlow and the Diocese. St Mark's is also working with the School Direct ITT and SCITT partnerships and CPD collaborations.

4. Responsibilities

The governors as a whole are responsible for:

- drawing up, publishing and implementing the school's equality objectives
- making sure the school complies with the relevant equality legislation; and
- making sure the school Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed
- monitoring progress towards the equality objectives and reporting annually

The head teacher is responsible for:

- making sure steps are taken to address the school's stated equality objectives;

- making sure the equality, access and community cohesion plans are readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils, and their parents and guardians know about them;
- producing regular information for staff and governors about the plans and how they are working;
- making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out; and
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including prejudice-related incidents.
- enabling reasonable adjustments to be made, in relation to disability, in regard to pupils, staff, parents / carers and visitors to the school.

All staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality and community cohesion in their work;
- avoiding unlawful discrimination against anyone;
- fostering good relations between groups; and
- dealing with prejudice-related incidents;
- being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- taking up training and learning opportunities.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for following relevant school policy.

5. Staff development

As part of our regular CPD programme, including induction for all new staff, training and development in relation to equality and cohesion in terms of professional responsibilities as well as statutory requirements are highlighted.

6. Publication and review

This Equality Scheme fulfils statutory requirements under the terms of legislation referred to above. As it is a public document, the school governors publish it by making it available on request.

The scheme will be kept under regular review for two years and then replaced in **July 2021**.

7. Reporting on progress and impact

Evidence will be kept of the impact of our actions to promote community cohesion, in respect of ethnicity, religion or belief and socio-economic background.

8. Equality impact assessment

All aspects of our process for monitoring the potential impact of school practice with pupil progress, attendance, exclusions etc are analysed in terms of

- ethnicity,
- religion or belief,
- socio-economic background,
- gender and gender identity,
- disability,
- sexual orientation, and
- age.

Interventions are then put into place if required.

9. How we chose our equality objectives

Our equality objective-setting process has involved gathering evidence as follows:

- i. from the equality impact assessments,
- ii. from the data collected internally and externally
- iii. and from involving relevant people (including disabled people)

The evidence is then analysed in order to choose objectives that will:

- i. promote equality of opportunity for members of identified groups
- ii. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and
- iii. foster good relations between different groups in terms of
 - o ethnicity,
 - o religion or belief,
 - o socio-economic background,
 - o gender and gender identity,
 - o disability,
 - o sexual orientation and
 - o age.

10. Equality Objectives 2019-21

Equality objectives
St Mark's West Essex Catholic School is one in which Gospel values inform all aspects of community life.
At St Mark's West Essex Catholic School each person is recognised as an individual, valued and enabled to fulfil her or his potential to the highest possible standard.
St Mark's West Essex Catholic School expects the highest possible standards. Staff have high-expectations of all pupils and continually challenge them to reach higher standards.
St Mark's recognises and values all forms of achievement. We will monitor and analyse pupil performance by ethnicity, gender, disability and special educational need and social background. Any disparities which are identified will be addressed through targeted curriculum planning, teaching and support.
We take account of pupils' experiences and starting points and support their development as learners.
St Mark's believes that self-assessment is a teaching-learning strategy, and we will provide all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.
The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.
Staff challenge stereotypes and foster pupils' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.

11. Access Plan 2019-21

St Mark's West Essex Catholic School's Accessibility Plan - Disability Equality ACTION PLAN 2019 - 2021

AREAS OF PRIORITY (as identified by DCSF)	TARGETS	TIMEFRAME	PERSON WITH RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOME
2A: Increasing the extent to which people with a disability can participate in the school curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of pupils with disabilities with reference to new legal requirements • Collection and collation of information regarding pupils with disabilities • Annual curriculum review of courses offered to pupils • Heads of Department to review programmes of study and amend as required • Heads of Year to further develop pastoral support systems • Developing systems for working with outside agencies, taking into account new LA protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On going – annual review • On going – as required • September • July • On going • On going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Support Co-ordinator • Learning Support Co-ordinator • Associate Headteacher i/c curriculum courses • Heads of Department • Heads of Year • SLT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate course offered to pupils • Appropriate programmes of study in place • Pupils more confident in accessing school life • All pupils given equal opportunity to access trips and visits. Staff have greater confidence in leading trips/visits. • Procedures in place for working with outside agencies
2B: Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which people with a disability can take advantage of education and associated services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain physical movement around the school and address issues where necessary • Heads of Department to plan, with their staff, the physical needs of pupils • Heads of Year to plan, with their staff, the physical needs of pupils with regards to tutor areas • To maintain transport / equipment / furniture available for extra curricular activities / trips / visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On going • On going – June new year start • On going – June new year start • On going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premise manager/ Premise Governors Committee • Heads of Department • Heads of Year • SLT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater independence of movement around school site • Improved access to learning for pupils with disabilities • Improved access to learning for pupils with disabilities • Improved access to learning for pupils with disabilities
2C: Improving the delivery of information to people with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a system by which requests for information in various formats can be accessed and acted upon as appropriate • Heads of Department to plan, with their staff, the communication needs of pupils • Heads of Year to plan, with their staff, the communication needs of pupils with regards to tutor areas • Trip / club / activity organisers to plan, with their staff, the communication needs of pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jun 2019 • On going – June new year start • On going – June new year start • On going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT • Heads of Department • Heads of Year • Trip / club / activity organisers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater availability of information • Improved access to learning for pupils with disabilities • Improved access to learning for pupils with disabilities • Improved access to learning for pupils with disabilities

12. Community Cohesion Plan 2019-21

St Mark's West Essex Catholic School's Community Cohesion Plan - ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2017

AREAS OF PRIORITY (as identified by Ofsted)	TARGETS	TIMEFRAME	PERSON WITH RESPONSIBILITY	Evaluation of Impact and Improvement
The extent to which the school has developed an understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of its community in a local, national and global context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the school commits to the necessary partnerships/alliances that provide benefit for our pupils, staff as well as other schools in the community • To develop an updated and relevant programme of information /consultation evenings with parents • To develop a cycle of stakeholder attitude surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept 2019 • Nov 2019 • Sept 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT • Pastoral staff • SLT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress, attainment and attendance of vulnerable pupils: exclusion data • Parental evaluations (also staff) • Consider/compare changes in each survey and between surveys
The extent to which the school has taken an appropriate set of planned actions based on an analysis of its context and is evaluating the impact of its work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure pupils' behaviour is outstanding • To achieve greater consistency of understanding and delivery of school's pastoral programmes • To respond to changed provision for CIAG and work experience • To ensure school policies reflect legislation regarding equality (Equality Duty) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On going • On-going • On-going • On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLG / Pastoral staff • SLG /HoYs • DRD • EEH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular use of evidence data e.g. exclusion, detentions, on-call etc. • identification of key trends e.g. groups of pupils, area of school, time of day etc. • Feedback from pupils, staff, focus groups etc. • Identify intended outcomes/ objectives • Establish quantitative and qualitative measurements • Review pupils destination data • Local collaboration on BAP, APG groups– data etc. • Feedback from pupils on priority need for advice/ support
The extent to which the school's actions have a positive impact on community cohesion within the school and beyond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish new partnerships and continue to work with local groups. • To ensure the school community can take maximum benefit from Local, national and international events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going • On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT • SLT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved arrangements, feedback from staff, parents and pupils • Number of pupils involved, feedback on quality of experience