

St Luke's Catholic Primary School

A Whole School Policy for Equal Opportunities and Race Equality

Background

This is the result of the review of the Equal Opportunities policy. Following the statutory code of practice in effect from May 2002, distinct sections have been added to clarify the duties of the school to promote race equality and challenge racism.

Aims

We aim to develop the children's awareness of the diversity of the society in which we live. We aim to make the whole of their school experience equip children to develop positive attitudes towards a pluralistic society.

Equal Opportunities Statements of Principle

Discrimination on the basis of creed, colour, culture, origin, gender, sexual orientation and ability is unacceptable in our school.

Every person in school will contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for and appreciation of each other, as individuals, and we celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups.

An objective for our school will be to educate, develop and prepare all of our children for life.

We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school.

We ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.

We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning, for example, negative images in books.

We challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.

We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences built into the curriculum and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

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Race Equality Statements of Principle

We are committed to combating racial discrimination and racial harassment by challenging stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs. We are currently following the 'Guidelines on the Reporting and Recording of Racist Incidents' from Liverpool Education Authority.

As our school is ethnically very diverse, we are conscious of the need to put effort into the celebration of cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups.

We endeavour to make the school a welcoming place for all. We will strive to address negative attitudes and behaviour towards people from black and minority groups, asylum seekers and refugees and travellers.

We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all staff, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.

We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning, for example by ensuring that book resources reflect a diverse society and do not contain negative images.

What is Racial Harassment?

"A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person". The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report.

A racial harassment is any hostile or offensive action against individuals or groups because of their skin colour, ethnic origin, religion or cultural background. This can be in the form of verbal harassment [name calling, insulting slurs/insinuations, persistent teasing], physical [hitting, kicking, spitting, taking/abusing belongings, threats of violence] and indirect harassment [excluding from group, humiliating, spreading nasty rumours, ridiculing and insulting graffiti].

It can be very distressing for the child who has been subjected to a racist incident and their parents. They need to know that it will be taken seriously. St Lukes Primary School. is firmly committed to its equality policy which provides the knowledge that sanctions will be imposed on any perpetrators.

It is the right of all pupils to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racial harassment which includes racist name-calling, racist caricature based on prejudice, the stirring of racial hatred and the drawing or writing of racist materials.

Children are encouraged to be aware of what racism means through the Citizenship programme and are encouraged to report incidents where there is the suspicion of racism. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident as follows:

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- We will listen carefully to all complaints and reassure complainants that an investigation will take place and that they will be informed of the outcome.
- We will reinforce the school's total rejection of racial harassment.
- We will deal with any health and safety issues immediately as necessary.
- The class teacher will report the incident to the Head or Deputy and all persons concerned with the incident will be interviewed.
- Details of the event will then be recorded and will be kept secure with the Headteacher.
- The headteacher will inform parents by phone of the first incident. The incident will be recorded in the Incident File.
- A second incident will result in the parents of the offending child being invited into school to discuss the matter with the Head.
- A third incident will result in appropriate action being taken.

Methods of promoting race equality and working towards the elimination of racism
Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So, for example, as part of our citizenship lessons in the autumn term, time is set aside to celebrate Black History where each year group are involved in a practical activity, eg mural making, poetry workshop, visit to the Liverpool Slave Gallery etc. Each class undertakes a study of a black role model to build awareness of black and minority groups.

In the Spring term, time is set aside where adults are invited in from a variety of jobs to challenge traditional stereotypes in the work place eg a woman footballer and a house husband. Supporting this, classes undertake a study of a woman who has contributed to history. In the Summer term, time is put aside to challenge disability stereotyping through role play and story.

In the religious education we study world wide religions and their associated celebrations.

PSHE supports equality within the curriculum through its scheme of work. There are a number of different reasons why some people racially harass others, of which the following are particularly significant: fear, ignorance, insecurity and upbringing. These areas will be discussed and addressed during PSHE lessons, always emphasising that such views are unacceptable.

Admissions policy – the school follows the Governing Body Admission Policy, which does not permit gender, race, colour or disability to be used as a criteria for admission. Race equality is promoted through the ethnic monitoring information gained from the admissions form.

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Registration – children's names should be accurately recorded and correct pronounced. Children should be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

When selecting classroom material, teachers pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist [or sexist] in nature. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.

Providing a wide variety of multi-cultural experiences for the children during their time at the school including visits, visitors to school, performances and establishing links to other schools].

In assemblies we use stories and poems from a variety of cultures and faiths and use real life situations [eg newspaper articles] to challenge racism.

The deputy headteacher monitors the progress of boys and girls half termly, with the EWO taking into account ethnicity, gender and whether the children are in public care.

The Learning Mentor and Head monitor attendance and exclusions with the EWO taking into account ethnicity, gender and whether the children are in public care.

Due to our school being ethnically very diverse, we are aware of additional support for pupils from black and minority groups, including funds and resources for asylum/refugee pupils etc, and take up such services.

Gender

What is Gender?

Gender is the expected social role which a person takes on as a result of cultural influences. It is learned through socialisation rather than the effect of biology.

The need for a gender policy

The influences which affect the acquisition of gender role are many and varied and many of these are beyond the influences of the school. However, it has been shown repeatedly that gender expectations do affect children's performance in school and ultimately their adult work opportunities.

Many of the influences which the school imparts may appear trivial on their own and are often the subject of trivial comments. However, taken as a whole, they can have a huge influence on children's expectations for themselves and for others. In devising a school gender policy and the action to ensure its implementation it is necessary that we avoid introducing any influences which encourage stereotypical gender differences into the life of the school.

Daily organisation of the school

The daily organisation of the school can unwittingly reinforce gender stereotypes and to counter this the following action is to be taken:

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all staff, including non-teaching staff, should endeavour to avoid any organisational procedures which involve gender differentiation as this may appear to legitimise this in the eyes of the children. With this in mind:

- all school lists should be alphabetical with no separation by gender;
- all space, facilities [except toilets] and equipment in the school should be available to both boys and girls;
- in the allocation of monitor duties there should be no gender differentiation [except for access to toilets];
- staff should be aware that their actions can reinforce gender expectations, eg a male to 'sort out the computer' or female to 'mend a torn coat';
- both male and female teachers to lead assemblies so that both provide role models as 'authority figures'.

Classroom organisation and interaction

Within their own classrooms, teachers should be cognisant of the numerous ways in which they contribute to children's perceptions of gender role. They should be alert to these possibilities and be able to stand back and review their practice. In doing so they should consider the following courses of action:

- note to be taken of seating arrangements and whether they should be adjusted to counter gender bias;
- the allocation of children to groups for practical activities should be without gender bias;
- ensuring that rotas for classroom duties do not show gender bias;
- having the same behavioural expectations for both sexes, both in presentation of work and the manner in which they act;
- ensure conscious avoidance of the proven tendency of teachers of either sex to ask boys to answer more than girls;
- through keen observation and raised awareness to aurally monitor interaction between teacher and pupil, and pupil and pupil for instances of gender bias and to intervene to point this out thereby raising the awareness of the children.

The Curriculum

The school has been aware for some time of the need to avoid any gender bias in the development of new curriculum guidelines and this practice will continue as new curriculum policies are laid down. The subject of compensatory activities ie positive discrimination in certain areas counter to current gender stereotypes, was discussed by the staff and rejected as it was felt that such activities would only serve to emphasise gender differences.

Language

The language that children use, read and write can be a major source of gender bias.

Action to obviate this will be:

- teachers should be aware in their selection of materials of the role which language acquisition can play in reinforcing gender differences
- most recently published material does attempt to avoid stereotypical portrayals of males and females, however older books and much fiction should be checked before use to ensure that they are suitable;
- bias found in books should be highlighted by guided discussion among the children.

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Mathematics

This is a traditionally 'male' subject. Action to counter this will be:

- teachers should endeavour whenever possible to show that girls efforts are valued as highly as boys;
- mathematically based careers should be regarded as equally suitable for girls as for boys.

Science and technology

Again a subject with traditional 'male' connotations. Actions to counter this will be:

- teachers must ensure that boys are not allowed to dominate groups working on practical activities;
- activities have an interest value independent of gender.

Computers

Again boys tend to dominate. Action to obviate this will be:

- every effort must be made to ensure that girls have an equal amount of 'hands-on' time; girls efforts are not dominated by boys;
- software should be selected that does not have a gender bias in terms of content or interest value;
- all teachers irrespective of gender should strive to attain equal competence at basis computer use so that role models seen by the children are not stereotyped.

Creative activities

The school has abolished all differentiation between boys and girls in art, craft and textiles and all activities are offered to all children. Action to obviate bias will be:

- mixing of gender groups for art, craft and textile activities will continue;
- the role drama can have in dispelling biased gender expectations cannot be over-emphasised, providing opportunities for both sexes to feel empathy with problems which another may encounter.

Physical Education

This is an area in which segregation is common and traditional. After review, the staff decided on the following action:

It is appropriate to continue the practice of teaching major team games to groups of mainly boys or girls. However, opportunity is provided for boys and girls to participate in soccer, netball, cricket and rounders etc [several children avail themselves of this opportunity].

Home/School/Community Links

Such links provide opportunities both for the school to show how and why it is addressing the gender issue and to heighten parental awareness of how gender affects their children's lives. With this in mind the school takes the following action:

- the school brochure should contain a statement of the school's policy on gender issues;
- the wording of all correspondence to parents should be monitored to eliminate gender bias;
- fathers as well as mothers should be encouraged to participate in activities both during and after school.

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Race, culture and gender

We have a minority in school from different cultural backgrounds where gender expectations are different. Whilst it is not suggested that different rules should apply to them, the school must take the following action:

- be sensitive to the different expectations that they and their parents may have.

The role of the governors – Race Equality

The governing body has set out its commitment to promoting race equality and equal opportunities in this policy statement, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated fairly and with equality. They have agreed to:

- use the advice in the CRE's guidance 'Learning for All' as a basis for future development planning [find policy];
- ratify the Equal Opportunities and Race Equality policy and included action plan;
- ensure that the school continues to assess the impact of its policies on black and minority groups, staff and parents with emphasis on the progress and attainment of ethnic minority pupils, and attendance and expulsions;
- adopt the LEA's guidance 'Dealing with Racist Incidents';
- the governing body seeks to ensure that no-one is discriminated against on the grounds of race when applying for jobs at our school;
- the governing body will receive an annual report on the number of racist incidents from Autumn 2003 which needs to be minuted;
- appointment of Race Equality governor.

The role of the governors – equal opportunities

- the governing body seeks to ensure that all people are regarded equally when applying for jobs at the school;
- the governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their gender, disabilities, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion affects the school uniform, then the school will support each case sensitively and with respect for the child's cultural traditions;
- Ensure that work is carried out throughout the curriculum which supports the above policy.

The role of the Headteacher

It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's equal opportunities race equality policy and s/he is supported by the governing body in so doing.

It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities and race equality and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The headteacher ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to these policies, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.

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The headteacher promotes the principle of race equality and equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays shown around the school.

The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness.

The role of the Equal Opportunity Co-ordinator

To report to governing body annually and ensure that equalities related issues are on both governor and staff business agendas.

To record, investigate and monitor any racist incident and file securely.

Plan termly work promoting equal opportunities within the curriculum.

To update the policy regularly in line with LEA guidelines.

To go through the policy with all supervisory staff and further training when necessary.

The role of the class teacher

The class teacher ensures that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child.

When selecting classroom material, teachers pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. To promote race equality, teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of black and minority groups and that challenges stereotypical images.

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When designing schemes of work, we use this policy to guide us, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics in our school include examples of the significant contributions women have made to developments in this country's history. In geography topics the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world .

All our teachers challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any serious incidents in mark books and log with the equal opportunities co-ordinator who will then pass them onto the headteacher.

Monitoring and reviewing – Race Equality

The importance of schools making explicit their total rejection of racial harassment has already been described above. The manner in which all policies, procedures and practices for the prevention of racial harassment are carried out and followed through will be crucial for schools to be perceived as delivering an appropriate and professional service by those who believe they are being racially harassed.

It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this Race Equality and Equal Opportunities policy. The governing body does this by:

- monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitoring the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- requiring the headteacher to report to governors on an annual basis on the effectiveness of this policy;
- taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding race equality, equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or pupils;
- monitoring the school behaviour and exclusions policy, so those pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

Monitoring and reviewing – Gender

This policy document is not, and never could be, the final word on the subject. We cannot be complacent and say that we have 'done' gender. Part of this review is the need for monitoring. This will involve the following action:

- in the spring term adults are invited in from a variety of jobs to challenge traditional stereotypes in the workplace eg a woman footballer and a house husband.
- there is recognition of the need for constant review;
- to facilitate this a member of staff is designated as responsible for monitoring progress on gender equality of opportunity;
- time during school based INSET will be made available for periodic review of progress on gender equality of opportunity;
- programmes for raising awareness among the children will be devised and put into operation;

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- the annual publication of the school's data analysis booklet. This booklet having specific reference to academic performance in terms of gender, ethnicity and ability groupings.
- regularly monitor how policies, procedures and practices are working in order to check on issues of fairness and bias, eg monitoring the attainment of different groups of pupils;
- ensure that a representative sample of pupils, parents, staff and governors are consulted [possible through a questionnaire] about how policies, procedures and practices are working from their perspective;
- ensure that all staff follow school policies, procedures and practices fairly and without bias;
- ensure that immediate action is taking when unfairness or bias, unwitting or otherwise, is detected.

Signed: M Clarke

Dated: October 2007