

Equality Objectives

1. The Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as **protected characteristics**). For schools, this means that it is unlawful to discriminate against 'protected characteristics' identified as gender; race; age; disability; religion or belief; gender reassignment; sexual orientation; pregnancy or maternity.

Under the Act, the school is expected to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

As a public organisation, we are required to:

- Have due regard to the PSED when making decisions, taking action or developing policy and practice.
- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty.
- Publish Equality Objectives which are specific and measurable.

The Trust Equality and Diversity Policy is in line with national guidance, and our school Equalities statement contains information about how the school complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We also give guidance to staff and the wider school community on our approach to promoting equality. This includes 'advancing equality' which means ensuring shared opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Our Equality Objectives reflect the school's priorities, our Vision and Mission Statement values:

"The community of St. Mark's believes that every individual is created by God and is precious to God. Each person is called to serve God and their neighbour and to fulfil their potential. St. Mark's is a Catholic School, which has at its heart a love of God, the education of its students, and a mission to serve our neighbours and community. We seek to foster a spirit of truth, reconciliation, justice and peace. We are committed to developing the spiritual, intellectual, moral, cultural, social and physical potential of all our members within a safe and supportive environment."

Education is central to our approach as a school. We are committed to promoting honest and open conversations so that we learn from one another and listen to the lived experience of under-represented groups within our community.

St. Mark's Equality Objectives for 2021-22

1. To challenge and seek to eradicate the use of any homophobic, sexist, racist and other discriminatory language or behaviour.
2. To ensure that School and Year Councils are inclusive and provide students with meaningful opportunities to have a voice and influence decisions.
3. For leaders and governors to complete a self-assessment review of the whole school approach to EDI. This will be used to refine our equality priorities.
4. For all staff to complete training in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
5. To create an anti-racism policy in line with the Trust.
6. To positively support employees from under-represented groups to access appropriate career development and training, and build this into staff development conversations.

These objectives are more fully developed in our School Improvement Plan for 2021-22. The first key objective 'to ensure that we have a distinctive and inclusive Catholic community at St Mark's underpins the whole plan.

The Equality Objectives will be reviewed annually and will be updated at least every four years.

What we are doing to foster good relations across all protected characteristics.

1. We promote a whole-school ethos and values which challenge prejudice-based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour;
2. We aim to provide a school environment that welcomes, protects, respects and celebrates diversity.
3. In order to prepare children for life in a diverse society we ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students;
4. We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through RE, PSHCE, form time, assemblies and across the curriculum;
5. All departments carried out an audit in 2020-21 to ensure that their curriculum reflects the diversity of the school. Action points will be implemented by July 2022;
6. We ensure that materials and resources reflect the diversity of the school population and local community. This includes a wide range of diverse reading material in the LRC.

7. We provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
8. We are developing further opportunities for students to contribute to our work in equality and diversity, e.g. through School Council initiatives, celebration of diversity, the listening project and competitions.
9. We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, school assemblies, visiting speakers and whole school events;
10. The school is a member of the Catholic Association for Racial Justice and our theme for Lent was a time to Act in conjunction with the theme of Racial Justice Sunday.
11. Parent letters and Veritas include equality matters, but we will seek to further develop engagement.
12. The school reviews relevant feedback from parents' evening, from issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans
13. We review the feedback from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events.

Other related policies can be found on our website and include: DoWAT Equality and Diversity; RSHE; anti-bullying; Safeguarding and Child Protection; SEND and Behaviour policy.

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