

Equalities Report

Spinfield School Governing Body Equalities Report

Name: Neil Martin (NM) – Equalities Governor

With specific thanks to Jayne Spreadbury (JS) – Headteacher
Rebecca Holland (RH) – Deputy Headteacher
Claire Clark (CC) – Assistant Headteacher

Date: 10th July 2020

Summary:

I am pleased to report that I believe that the school continues to meet the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.

Recorded incidents

With regard to equalities incidents regarding teachers, pupils or parents / carers in this academic year to date, the school has informed me that there were 4 incidents reported, all of which were of a racial nature.

I have reviewed each of the incidents with JS. All related to comments or statements made by pupils to either other pupils in the school or a teacher.

In each incident, the pupil and parent was spoken to by a senior member of staff, in most cases the Headteacher herself. Again relative to each situation, a wider briefing was given to the specific whole year group and in one situation a whole assembly to ensure that learnings were taken and appropriate behaviours re-confirmed. Following one incident, there was also a staff briefing to ask the teaching staff to be vigilant to this type of behaviour.

I am pleased to say that I felt that each situation was taken very seriously by the school and addressed appropriately

Progress of equalities agenda

The disruption caused by the school closures on March 20th which impacted attendance, travel capacity and usual operations of the school, has also understandably made it more difficult to progress the equalities agenda as fully as they would have liked.

This is disappointing as it clearly happened at the same time as a significant equalities movement, Black Lives Matter, rose in prominence and visibility following the death of George Floyd in America on May 25th. This was not just a movement that was in mainstream media, but was also being represented in youth media such as Blue Peter, Newsround and children's newspapers.

As the school's first equalities objective is to 'eliminate discrimination, promote equality and celebrate diversity' this would have had prominence in the school agenda, had they been in full attendance and RH confirmed that it would have been a subject on which they would have framed a full school assembly.

That said, the school did respond to this with the following actions:-

1. The school distributed a 20-page guidance document to parents called 'A parent's guide to black lives matter'. This is a briefing document created by a group called Yoopies which helps parents talk to their children and explain about the Black Lives Matter movement. It is positioned as 'resources, activities and tips for families to empower children to work towards racial equality.

It is a document that was widely used in education circles and referenced in the national media and I was extremely pleased to see that the school took the decision to issue to parents at a time when they could not have face to face discussions with all children as the school was closed to most year groups at the time.

2. In year 6, teachers facilitated conversations through the period starting with beginning the day watching the Newsround report of the tragic incident and subsequent marches and protests. The view being that the programme provided a platform for discussion within the pods about how young people were feeling about the movement and their own safety. Children were encouraged to share their opinions sensitively, appreciating that others may have different views.

The children in year 6 also completed a reading comprehension on 'The Windrush' in order to gain insight of the context for many of the UK protests.

3. Moving forward, Ms Clarke as English co-ordinator, will be completing an audit of books in both key stage libraries to ensure that there are a range of texts from a variety of authors, focussing on a range of cultures and topics. The plan being to address gaps in representation identified with additional

books purchased from the travelling book fair. This has been supported by a document created from an English network group that recommends texts of value in this area. This is also an activity that the school librarian regularly keeps under review and makes recommendations to ensure that the library content reflects the diversity within our society as a whole.

Purpose of Report:

This report aims to outline the Schools adherence to the requirements of the 2010 Equalities Act. A Department for Education report outlining advice for Schools on the fundamentals of the Act and implications can be found at this link

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

The role of school governing bodies with regards to Equalities are as follows:-
Governing bodies are the “responsible body” for ensuring that the school meets the requirements of equality legislation. Essentially this means they should:

1. Ensure the school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that its employees do not carry out unlawful discriminatory actions or behaviour.
2. Support and guide the school to have “due regard” for equality in all its functions.
3. Ensure the school complies with the Equality Duty and meets the two “specific duties” for schools. These specific duties are as follows
 - To publish information to show how they are complying with the Equality Duty. This must be updated at least annually.
 - To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.

Activities Undertaken

- NM virtually met with RH via Teams on 25 June 2020 to discuss the Equalities requirements.
- We discussed the challenges that the school has faced to promote the equalities agenda during shutdown.
- We discussed and reviewed the Yoopies document that was going to be shared with parents and the framing of the letter that would accompany it.

- RH also put me in touch with Clare Clarke to understand the way in which the black lives matter movement was being discussed with Year 6, who have been in school since June 1st , alongside other broader activities that she was looking at as English coordinator and who equalities is represented in the literature that the school uses.
- On July 10th, NM reviewed with JS each of the equalities incidents reported. In each case, the situation was outlined by JS along with the follow up actions / discussions that were had with those involved, parents, wider year groups and the whole school and staff where appropriate.
- Separately, from my observations from school reports submitted to governors and progress data, I believe the school continue to look to identify trends in attainment between specific groups to ensure that no specific groups are showing concerning trends. These include ethnicity, SEN, pupil premium and pupil premium without SEN, EAL, gender and academically more able (AMA).
- With regard to the annual publication of compliance to the equalities act, could I ask the school to publish compliance on their website following confirmation of this report being captured in the minutes of the Full Governors Board meeting in July 2020.
- The current objectives run for the period to March 2021 and therefore we are still compliant with the requirement to produce measurable objectives every 4 years.

Equalities and Cohesion Objectives

The following are examples, rather than an exhaustive list, of some of the activities undertaken to demonstrate the policy in action and progress against objectives:-

1. To eliminate discrimination, promote equality and celebrate diversity
 - Numerous visits to venues/buildings of different religious groups have continued
 - Home visits for EHCP child with long term illness
 - Cop cards faith talk
2. To prevent and deal effectively with bullying and harassment
 - Reviewed the anti-bullying policy
 - Engagement with anti-bullying week in November 2018
 - Audited by Bucks CC for bullying
 - Bullying record sheets
3. To listen to pupils, staff, parents and others
 - Parent and pupil questionnaires

- Parent rep meetings
- 4. To continue to develop the curriculum
 - Inset day on writing incorporated themes. Looked at intent / implementation and impact
 - Discussions held at staff meetings including a specific review at June 26th staff meeting
 - IPad training
- 5. To equalise opportunities
 - Consulted with pupil premium parents on spending
 - All children attended relevant residential / other school trips
- 6. To inform and involve parents and carers
 - Set up school emails and parent mail
 - Teachers always go to the school gate and make themselves accessible
- 7. To welcome new pupils and helping them to settle in effectively
 - In year transfers are given a buddy
 - Specific certificates and rewards
- 8. To address the full range of learning needs
 - Use funds for specialist teaching service
 - Interventions, including before school
 - Use of Claire Farrell (nurture my potential)
- 9. To support learners with particular needs
 - 1:1 support where required and possible
 - Early interventions
 - Extra learning deployment – teaching assistants
- 10. To make the school accessible to all
 - Appropriate accommodation made in and out of school for children with specific requirements
- 11. To ensure fair and equal treatment for staff and others
 - 'Safer recruitment' practices adopted for all staff recruitment to ensure non-discriminatory and employment practices
 - Clear expectations and development for staff
- 12. To encourage participation of under-represented groups
 - School looks to role model empowerment of all groups including disabled, ethnic, religious and socially economically disadvantaged groups
 - All children are offered sporting opportunity and extra curriculum activities (e.g. x-games, dance, etc)
- 13. To monitor and evaluate policy

- Specific staff meeting to review the policy and objectives and review progress. This was held on June 26th 2019 this year.

Appendix

What is the Equality Act 2010?

The Equality Act 2010 replaced nine major Acts of Parliament, as well as almost a hundred sets of regulations, dealing with equality and discrimination. The Act provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful.

The new law should make it easier for school leaders and governors to understand their legal responsibilities and tackle inequalities in education.

In England and Wales, the Act applies to all maintained and independent schools, as well as academies and free schools.

It covers all aspects of school life to do with how a school treats pupils and prospective pupils, parents and carers, employees, and members of the community. Everything a school does must be fair, non-discriminatory and not put individuals or groups of people at a disadvantage. In particular, a school must not discriminate, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to:

- Admissions.
- The way it provides education for pupils.
- How it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service.
- Excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

What actions and behaviours are unlawful?

The Act defines a number of types of unlawful behaviour, including:

- Direct discrimination.
- Indirect discrimination.
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils or staff.
- Discrimination arising from disability.
- Harassment related to a protected characteristic.
- Victimisation of someone because they have made, or helped with, a complaint about discrimination.

Protected characteristics

The Act uses the term “protected characteristics” to refer to aspects of a person’s identity. Treating a person less favourably because they have one or more of these characteristics would be unlawful. The protected characteristics are:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

The protected characteristics of age and marriage and civil partnership apply to schools as employers, but not in relation to their provision for pupils.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Since April 2011, schools have also been bound by a part of the Equality Act 2010 called the Public Sector Equality Duty (also known as the PSED, or simply the “Equality Duty”).

The Equality Duty replaces the previous three sets of duties on schools to promote disability, gender and race equality through having equality policies and action plans for these groups. Some schools chose to meet these previous duties by combining the three policies into a “single” equality policy.

There is now no requirement for schools to have equality policies, schemes and/or action plans. This has been made clear in the updated list of statutory policies for schools from the Department for Education (DfE).

The new Equality Duty has two parts: the “general” duty and “specific” duties.

The general duty is the overarching legal requirement for schools and means they must consider how their policies, practices and day-to-day activities impact on pupils and staff. Schools are required to have “due regard” to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations.

The two specific duties for schools aim to assist them to meet the general duty. Schools should have complied with these two duties from April 6, 2012. They are:

- To publish information to show how they are complying with the Equality Duty. This must be updated at least annually.
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.