

St Fidelis Catholic Primary School

Compassion, challenge and excellence: bringing children to Christ through education.

Equality information and objectives



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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives.

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools. The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools are all replicated in the current act – such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to schools of a religious character.

3. Catholic Context

As a Catholic school, the Gospel Values should be at the heart of any Catholic education, emphasising Christ as the foundation of all that we do as a school.

Gospel Values	Scripture
Compassion kindness, service of neighbour	"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them." Luke 6:32
Justice action against wrong doing	"Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there." Luke 19:45
Preferential option for the lost and the least	"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." Luke 15:6
Love generosity, magnanimity	"Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you." Luke 6:27

4. Rights Respecting Context

As a Rights Respecting school, we seek to promote and give due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 2 Non-discrimination	The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.
Article 14 Freedom of thought, belief and religion	Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.
Article 23 Disability	A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

5. Protected characteristics

There are eight protected characteristics:

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

The first and last protected characteristics above are listed in the Equality Act 2010, but are not listed in the DfE guidance. Age as a protected characteristic does not apply to pupils in schools, so pupils can be treated in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development without risk of legal challenge.

6. Unlawful behaviour

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation.

- Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.
- Harassment is “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”.
- Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act.

7. Special provisions for disability

The Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. In particular, it works in only one direction – that is to say, it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. This means that schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities. In addition to having a duty to consider reasonable adjustments for particular individual disabled pupils, schools will also have to consider potential adjustments which may be needed for disabled pupils generally as it is likely that any school will have a disabled pupil at some point. However, there will be times when adjustments cannot be made because to do so would have a detrimental effect on other pupils and would therefore not be reasonable.

8. General exceptions

Schools with a religious character (commonly known as faith schools) have certain exceptions to the religion or belief provisions which allow them to discriminate because of religion or belief in relation to admissions and in access to any benefit, facility or service:

- Schools with a religious character may give priority in admissions to members of their own religion. The Admissions Code provides that this may only be done when a school is oversubscribed – schools subject to the Code are not permitted to refuse admission to pupils not of their faith if they have unfilled places.
- In addition to the admissions exception, schools with a religious character also have exceptions for how they provide education to pupils and in the way they allow access to other aspects of school life which are not necessarily part of the curriculum.
- These exceptions allow such schools to conduct themselves in a way which is compatible with their religious ethos. But the Equality Act does not permit less favourable treatment of a pupil because they do not (or no longer) belong to the school's religion. Nor does it allow them to discriminate on religious grounds in other respects, such as excluding a pupil or subjecting a pupil to any other detriment. It also does not permit them to discriminate in relation to other protected characteristics.
- Schools are also free to celebrate religious festivals and could not be claimed to be discriminating against children of other faiths.
- Schools need to be careful that blanket uniform policies do not discriminate because of race, religion or belief, gender, disability, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.
- Voluntary-aided schools may apply religious criteria when recruiting or dismissing any member of their teaching staff. In recruitment, remuneration and promotion they may give preference to persons:
 - whose religious opinions are in accordance with the tenets of the religion of the school;
 - who attend religious worship in accordance with those tenets; or
 - who give, or are willing to give, religious education in accordance with those tenets.
- Religious criteria may not be applied to any other posts in a Voluntary Aided school unless there is a genuine occupational requirement. This would need to be justified but might, for example, apply to a member of staff required to give pastoral care to pupils.

9. Special issues for some protected characteristics

Schools that already employ non-discriminatory practices and adhere to government guide lines should already be acting within the spirit and letter of the Act and should need to make only minor adjustments:

- Schools need to make sure that all gender variant pupils, or the children of transgender parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.
- The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Schools need to make sure that pupils of all races are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.
- Discrimination because of religion or belief means treating a person less favourably than another person is or would be treated, because of their religion or belief, or the religion or belief they are perceived to have, their lack of religion or belief, or the religion or belief, or lack of it, of someone else with whom they are associated. The Equality Act makes it clear that unlawful religious discrimination can include discrimination against another person of the same religion or belief as the discriminator.
- Schools need to make sure that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.
- Schools need to make sure that all gay, lesbian or bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.

10. Eliminating discrimination

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions:

- Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act – for example, during meetings.
- New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive information as part of the school's staff handbook, which is revisited at least annually.
- Staff treat incidents of bullying that relate to a protected characteristic as important and note the relationship to the school's duties under this policy.

11. Advancing equality of opportunity

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Analyse attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing.
- Evaluate the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement and implement actions in response.
- Make reasonable adjustments, such as providing auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils.

12. Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas.
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute.

13. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school, particularly the governing body, ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups.

14. Equality objectives

The school has four objectives:

- Increase the representation of staff from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds over the next four years.
- Maintain the diversity of the governing body so that strategic decision making is well informed and robust.
- Develop staff awareness of the importance of equality and the ways that inequality might manifest within the school environment.
- Report all forms of prejudice-motivated bullying to the governing body termly so that these are taken seriously and dealt with equally and firmly.

15. Measures of equality

The school has a range of tools that will be helpful in judging success with regard to these equality objectives:

- Annual pupil survey.
- Annual parent survey.
- Annual staff survey.
- Easy direct access to senior leadership by children, parents and staff.
- Annual achievement data.

16. Statement of Intent on the Diversity of the School Workforce and Governing Body

Nationally the teaching workforce is more diverse than ever before. This reflects the increasing diversity of the United Kingdom and its pupil population. Yet data from the Department of Education shows that amongst others, women and ethnic minority teachers remain under-represented at senior levels:

- 8% of teachers come from ethnic minority backgrounds, but only 3% of headteachers come from ethnic minority backgrounds
- 74% of teachers are women, but only 66% of headteachers are women

Research also suggests that there is more to do to support teachers from minority groups such as disabled teachers and we recognise that many teachers will have more than one of these characteristics.

Under-representation is an issue amongst governors and trustees also.

- Only 4% of governors and trustees are from an ethnic minority background nationally
- Although the majority of governors and trustees are women, it is less likely they will be in leadership roles.

By recognising these national statistics and trends, St Fidelis sees this statement of intent as an important platform to respond to these highlighted disparities for these groups and challenge for our school to step up and respond.

The value of a diverse workforce and school leadership is clear. Diversity within our school is valuable in fostering social cohesion and most importantly, in supporting pupils to grow and develop in an environment of visible, diverse role models.

We want to be a school that prides itself on promoting a diverse workforce, that supports the progression and retention of all teachers, teaching assistants and all school staff, and that builds an inclusive environment for staff and pupils where they can be themselves.

Each part of the school can play a valuable role in supporting the progression of all teachers and removing any biases in recruitment practice. We all have a part to play in this. This is why we are inviting all our staff to join us and to work with us to drive this important change.

Whilst this statement offers an important first step in setting the case for change, we recognise that we must be clear on how we will drive change. This is why we will be talking to staff, governors, parish and local community to understand what needs to happen to drive this change as part of our recruitment and retention strategy. We look forward to working across the school to effect positive change in this area.

Appendix 1: St Fidelis Key Staff Diversity Data - October 2018

Governing Body	Gender	Ethnic Background
12 people	6 Female 6 Male	7 White British 1 White Irish 2 White Other 1 Black African 1 Asian British

Leadership Team	Gender	Ethnic Background
4 people	2 Female 2 Male	3 White British 1 White Irish

Teachers	Gender	Ethnic Background
20 people	18 Female 2 Male	17 White British 2 White Irish

Support	Gender	Ethnic Background
22 people	21 Female 1 Male	15 White British 2 White Irish 4 White Other 1 Black African

Midday Supervisor	Gender	Ethnic Background
13 people	13 Female 0 Male	4 White British 1 White Irish 1 White Other 3 Black African 1 Black Caribbean 3 Asian

Administrative/premises	Gender	Ethnic Background
10 people	8 Female 2 Male	8 White British 2 White Irish

Appendix 2: St Fidelis Key Staff Diversity Data - October 2019

Governing Body	Gender	Ethnic Background
13 people	8 Female 5 Male	7 White British 1 White Irish 2 White Other 3 Black African

Leadership Team	Gender	Ethnic Background
4 people	2 Female 2 Male	3 White British 1 White Irish

Teachers	Gender	Ethnic Background
21 people	19 Female 2 Male	17 White British 3 White Irish 1 Canadian

Support	Gender	Ethnic Background
20 people	19 Female 1 Male	12 White British 1 White Irish 5 White Other 2 Black African

Midday Supervisor	Gender	Ethnic Background
17 people	17 Female 0 Male	9 White British 2 White Other 2 Black African 1 Black Caribbean 1 Chinese 1 Indian 1 Other

Administrative/premises	Gender	Ethnic Background
10 people	8 Female 2 Male	8 White British 2 White Irish

Appendix 3: St Fidelis Key Staff Diversity Data - June 2022

Governing Body	Gender	Ethnic Background
13 people	9 Female 4 Male	7 White British 1 White Irish 2 White Other 3 Black African

Leadership Team	Gender	Ethnic Background
4 people	2 Female 2 Male	3 White British 1 White Irish

Teachers	Gender	Ethnic Background
24 people	22 Female 2 Male	16 White British 3 White Irish 1 White Other 3 Black African 1 Any Other Asian Back.

Support	Gender	Ethnic Background
22 people	22 Female 0 Male	9 White British 1 White Irish 6 White Other 2 Black African 1 Chinese 3 Mixed or Multiple Back.

Midday Supervisor	Gender	Ethnic Background
18 people	18 Female 0 Male	9 White British 2 White Other 2 Black African 1 Black Caribbean 1 Chinese 2 Indian 1 Mixed or Multiple Back.

Administrative/premises	Gender	Ethnic Background
11 people	8 Female 3 Male	9 White British 2 White Irish

Appendix 4: St Fidelis Key Staff Diversity Data - January 2024

Governing Body	Gender	Ethnic Background
13 people	9 Female 4 Male	7 White British 1 White Irish 2 White Other 3 Black African

Leadership Team	Gender	Ethnic Background
4 people	2 Female 2 Male	3 White British 1 White Irish

Teachers	Gender	Ethnic Background
24 people	22 Female 3 Male	16 White British 3 Black African 3 White Irish 1 White Other 1 Any Other Asian Back.

Support	Gender	Ethnic Background
24 people	23 Female 1 Male	11 White British 9 Other Mixed Back. 2 Other Ethnic Back. 1 Black African 1 Indian

Midday Supervisor	Gender	Ethnic Background
20 people	20 Female 0 Male	10 White British 4 Other Ethnic Back. 2 Indian 2 Black African 1 Black Caribbean 1 Mixed or Multiple Back.

Administrative/premises	Gender	Ethnic Background
11 people	8 Female 3 Male	9 White British 2 White Irish

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