

**THE FRIARY SCHOOL**  
**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

**Issue No 3**  
**Date: June 2006**  
**Review: 2009/2010**

<b>This policy is designed to support all the school's aims and objectives.</b>
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**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1. Statement of general principle**

The principal of equal opportunity is embedded in the statement, aims and objectives, culture and ethos of the Friary School. We believe that opportunities within the school should not be restricted by virtue of age, gender, disability, ethnicity or social background. This principle applies to pupils and their families, and to employees of the school.

We intend to provide the best personal advice possible to all members of the school community so that there is equal opportunity for everybody to succeed.

The purpose of this document is, therefore, to provide a clear statement of equal opportunity, both in principle and in practice, so that a consistency of approach, with a view to raising standards further, can be provided.

**2. The aims of Equal Opportunities**

There are 3 inter-related aims for securing equality of opportunity in our school:

1. ensuring high quality education for all our pupils and;
2. supporting the development of cultural and personal identities;
3. preparing our pupils for full participation in society.

In committing ourselves to these aims, we are demonstrating our firm belief that our school really can make a difference to the lives and life-chances of our young people. We are also recognising that our duty is not simply to ensure that opportunities are offered, but also that positive action is taken to encourage pupils to take up and use these opportunities.

Our commitment to these aims is supported in law, and in many significant educational documents, including Staffordshire Education Authority's own Equal Opportunities policy and the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice.

## **2. A STATEMENT OF CURRENT PRACTICE**

### **1. Curriculum**

- (i) The school is committed to a broad entitlement curriculum for all pupils. At Key Stage 3 all pupils participate in the core curriculum and take the full range of foundation subjects. Where new subjects are offered as option choices, at Key Stage 4 and 5, the school ensures that:
  - there is equality of access to these courses, with no restriction based on gender, ethnic background, or disability;
  - pupils are fully informed of all the available options, and are actively encouraged to take opportunities. This happens in the immediate run-up to choices being made through form tutors, subject leader and senior staff presentations, as well as in personal interviews and in more general equal opportunities topics covered in the PSHE programmes of study throughout the school and in PE and drama in particular.
- (ii) In the PSHE programme of study across the school, positive attitudes are promoted towards gender equality, cultural diversity and special needs. These issues are also evident in other areas of the curriculum, such as RE.
- (iii) The multi-cultural nature of society is addressed specifically in RE, but is also supported in the other curriculum areas. (see SMSC policy).
- (iv) The nature of democracy and the duties, responsibilities and rights of citizens are delivered specifically in PSHE, and in citizenship lessons, as well as in other areas of the curriculum. (see SMSC policy).

### **2. Teaching and Learning**

The school is committed to:

- (i) Ensuring that work in the classroom is equally appealing to boys and girls, through a variety of teaching and learning styles.
- (ii) Ensuring that provision is made for both under-achieving and exceptionally able groups, through differentiated work, the use of classroom assistants, and through extra-curricular activities, such as homework clubs.
- (iii) Ensuring that when teaching groups are created, equality implications are taken into account, in particular with regard to ethnicity and gender. Grouping will avoid the possibility of bias and stereotyped ideas about pupils' potential and motivation. So, for example, setting is based on evidence of ability, and not behaviour, thus avoiding large numbers of boys in lower sets.
- (iv) Ensuring that teaching resources are of the highest quality. Teaching resources must appeal to all pupils, and must provide positive attitudes towards gender, equality, cultural diversity, and special needs. Stereotypes will be avoided.

- (v) Ensuring that teachers have high expectations.
- (vi) Ensuring that the language and vocabulary in the classroom avoid stereotyping, negative images and discrimination.
- (vii) Ensuring that pupils have equality of opportunity in completing homework and coursework tasks. Homework rooms and computers are available every lunchtime and some departments run homework clubs to help pupils with problems.

### **3. Culture and Ethos**

- (i) The school's admission policy is based on criteria, which prohibit discrimination against pupils on the basis of gender, ethnic background, aptitude or special needs.
- (ii) The school has toilet facilities for the disabled and wheelchair access to a significant amount of the school; wheelchair bound members of the school community have full access to the curriculum and range of facilities and we are a designated pathway school for wheelchair bound pupils.
- (iii) The school takes its responsibilities for Racial Equality very seriously and procedures reflect the spirit of the guidelines laid down by the LEA and the Commission for Racial Equality.
- (iv) The school has significantly increased its intake of statemented special needs pupils, and actively supports their learning needs. (See teaching and learning).
- (v) The school supports pupils whose medical condition, if not properly managed, could impede their access to education. The LEA guidelines of 2002/3 relating to pupils with medical needs and the dispensation of medicines form a basis to this support.
- (vi) Systems and routines within the school promote equality, such as mixed genders within registration, and effective anti-bullying strategies, which are understood by staff and pupils (see bullying policy).
- (vii) Corridor and classroom displays promote positive attitudes, avoiding stereotypes.
- (viii) There are positive adult role models in the school which break down gender and disability stereotypes.
- (ix) Year Councils and the School Council encourage all pupils to participate in the running of the school.
- (x) Extra-curricular activities are available to all, and are actively supported by the pupils. There is a range of activities to suit a variety of interests.
- (xi) There are high expectations of pupils in all areas of school life. This is reflected in expectations of high academic standards, excellence in extra curricular activities, and excellence in behaviour and conduct around school. These expectations are supported by well used systems of reward and punishment, which include methods for dealing with cases of racial or sexual harassment (see recognition and rewards policy).

- (xii) There are close links between school and home, and the school is constantly seeking to improve these links in order to improve the quality of the education for all pupils. Recent developments include the establishment of a parents' forum in which all parents are encouraged to participate. Curriculum booklets which give parents information on the work which the pupils will be doing are accompanied by parents' information evenings; both of these include guidance on how all parents can best support their children.
- (xiii) Collective worship promotes all equal opportunities issues. These times in the school day are frequently used to challenge prejudices, discrimination and stereotypes, and to consider cultural and personal identities.

#### **4. Staff recruitment and development**

- (i) Staff appointments are based on merit, avoiding judgments based on gender, ethnicity, age or disability.
- (ii) Given that merit must be the primary concern, attention is also paid where possible to appointing staff who help to present positive role models..
- (iii) Interview panels include both male and female members wherever possible.
- (iv) All staff have equal access to identifying their development needs and participating in the identified training or development activity. This is achieved through the whole school development process and performance management. (see staff development policy).
- (v) Any instances of racial or sexual harassment among the staff are dealt with in line with established disciplinary procedures.

#### **3. RACIAL EQUALITY**

- (i) The school's commitment to tackling racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations is an important principle within the Equal Opportunities Policy. Sections 4 and 5 below provide further indications of the school's determination to ensure that this remains a priority.
- (ii) References are made to the monitoring of the policy's effectiveness in practice. This will be the responsibility of the Head of Pupil Support in terms of pastoral matters; the Deputy Head (Curriculum) in respect of curricular provision; and the Information Manager will provide the relevant attainment data. However it is the responsibility of all staff to uphold the spirit of the policy.
- (iii) Additional pastoral and/or learning support will be provided wherever possible in cases where intervention is necessary.
- (iv) The school will comply with the LEA's recommended guidelines on Racial Equality and in particular will forward the recommended report of racist incidents on a termly basis.
- (v) Above all the need to prepare pupils for life in a multi-ethnic society underpins this part of the Policy.

#### **4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- (i) It is the role of every department leader/head to ensure that the policy statements are reflected in the day-to-day practice of the department. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the compliance to the policy is carried out at department level on at least an annual cycle.
- (ii) Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the department leader or head in carrying out these duties is the responsibility of their line manager in the Senior Management Team, and will be carried out at least annually.
- (iii) Monitoring and evaluating the processes at whole-school level is carried out at least annually by the Senior Management Team, who then report to the governors.
- (iv) The guidelines on Racial Equality are reviewed regularly. Termly returns of racist incidents are made to the LEA. In addition the attainment and progress of ethnic groups are monitored. Separate records of pupil achievement are made at the end of each Key Stage.
- (v) The system runs on at least an annual cycle, but more frequently if specific issues arise.

#### **5. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- (i) To continue to develop strategies to address the needs of all pupils, including the under-achieving and the exceptionally able pupils. The strategies will include all of the following:
  - varied teaching styles, which take account of varied learning styles;
  - differentiated work;
  - use of classroom assistants;
  - use of individual education plans;
  - extra-curricular activities;
  - the development of personalised learning and assessment especially;
  - the development of intervention to tackle the underachievement of any pupil;
  - the expansion of pupil tracking procedures, specifically to involve more staff and make a greater impact on all pupils, but especially those in minority groups;
  - improving links with parents and other partners.
- (ii) Further development of the buildings to enable the school to accommodate more disabled pupils.
- (iv) To keep the issue of racial equality under review as part of the school's strategy for promoting social inclusion.