

Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School
 "Nurturing curiosity and inspiring imagination"



2024-25

Equality Policy, incorporating the Public Service Equality Duty

DOCUMENT STATUS

Produced By	Version	Date	Action
Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School	1	03.11.14	Adopted by school's Personnel and Finance Committee
		23.07.15	Adopted by school's Curriculum Committee
	See App A	April 2017	Reviewed Equality Objectives 2016-2020
		20.03.18	Ratified by full governing body
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		14.12.20	Reviewed by school's full governing body alongside updated Equality Objectives for 2021-25 (Appendix A)
		30.11.21	Reviewed by school's full governing body
		06.12.22	Reviewed by full governing body
		05.12.23	Reviewed by full governing body
		03.12.24	Reviewed by full governing body

Legislation

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011

Review Frequency

Governing body to review every four years or sooner if the need should arise; and annually publish information demonstrating how the school is meeting the aims of the general public sector equality duty

Approval

Governing body free to delegate to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the headteacher

Data Protection

This policy should be read with due regard to the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

Equality Policy – Meeting the School’s Public Sector Equality Duty

Introduction

Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School is an inclusive school where all members of its community are of equal worth. The school demonstrates its commitment to this by prioritising the well-being and progress of every child in the school and by striving to ensure that all members of the community are treated with fairness and equality.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to support the school’s commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships with people. It also ensures that the school continues to tackle issues of disadvantage and under-achievement of different groups represented in the school.

The school’s approach to equality is based on the following seven key principles.

1. Equal Value: All learners are of equal value - whether or not they are disabled, whether they have additional learning needs, whatever their gender, ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background.
2. Different Identities: Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School recognises, respects and values people of different identities. It takes account of differences and strives to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to disability, additional learning needs, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. The school believes that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
3. Positive Attitudes and Relationships: The school fosters positive attitudes and relationships. It actively promotes positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. Cohesion and Belonging: A shared sense of cohesion and belonging is also fostered. All members of the school community are encouraged to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
5. Practising Equality: The senior leadership team observes good equalities practice for staff and ensures that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including recruitment and promotion and continuing professional development.
6. High Expectations: The school has the highest expectations for all its children. It expects that all children can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
7. Raising Standards: Staff work to raise standards for all pupils but especially for the most vulnerable. The school believes that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

Purpose

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*). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils, staff, parents and carers or treat them less favourably because of their gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief, gender reassignment or sexual orientation. Pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership are also *protected characteristics* which are covered by this policy but not as part of the school provisions related to pupils.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools, to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties.

The Public Sector Equality Duty or ‘General Duty’

This requires all public organisations, including schools, to:

- 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;**
- 2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and**
- 3. Foster good relations between different groups.**

Two ‘Specific Duties’

This requires all public organisations, including schools, to:

- 1. Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by 6 April 2012; and**
- 2. Publish equality objectives at least every four years which are specific and measurable by 6 April 2012.**

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about the school’s approach to promoting equality.

Development of the Policy

When developing the policy, the school took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Ofsted Inspection Framework 2019 which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards. It is also noted that Ofsted has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

Links to Other Policies and Documentation

Although this policy is the key document for information about the school’s approach to equalities, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the school ensures that information about its responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in its other policies.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers and the way they comply with this is found in the school's recruitment policy.

Objectives

1 Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- a) The school takes account of equality issues in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for its children and the way it provides access for children to facilities and services.
- b) Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School is aware of the *reasonable adjustment duty* for disabled children, which is designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled children and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- c) The headteacher and chair of governors ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- d) The need to consider the equality implications when developing, adapting and reviewing any policy or procedure is taken seriously, as well as when making any significant decisions about the day-to-day life of the school.
- e) Equality and diversity are actively promoted through the curriculum and by creating an environment which encourages respect for all.
- f) Admission arrangements are fair and transparent, never discriminating against children by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief.
- g) The school's policy on behaviour takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- h) Reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for children with a disability or additional needs are made. Data on absence from school is closely monitored for evidence of over-representation of different groups and action is promptly taken to address concerns.
- i) All forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying are challenged to conform with the school's commitment to inclusion and equality.
- j) There is guidance for all staff on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. All bullying incidents are treated equally seriously.
- k) A record is kept of different prejudice-related incidents and, when appropriate, the school provides a report to the governing body about the numbers, types and seriousness of these and how they have been dealt with.

2 Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups

- a) Staff know the needs of the children very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform the school's planning and to identify targets to achieve improvements.
- b) The school works in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals of children who have a disability or additional needs.
- c) Data is collected and progress and outcomes of different groups of children are monitored. This is then used to support school improvement. Action is taken to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in reaching age-related expectations in communication and language.
- d) Data on the school population is collected, analysed and published by gender and ethnicity, EAL (English as an Additional Language), on the percentage of pupils identified as having a special educational need (additional need) and/or disability and by year group.
- e) Attendance data is also collected, analysed and used in relation to different groups so that the school can work with parents and carers to improve attendance.
- f) A range of teaching strategies are used to ensure that the needs of all children are met. Support is provided to children at risk of under-achieving.
- g) Equality of access to a broad and balanced curriculum is ensured for all children, removing barriers to participation where necessary.
- h) The governing body reviews the Accessibility Plan annually and makes reasonable adjustments to increase the extent to which children with disabilities can participate in the curriculum, to improve the physical environment and to improve the availability of accessible information to disabled children and other users of the school premises.

3 Fostering good relations

- a) Children are prepared for life in a diverse society and the school ensures that there are activities across the curriculum that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- b) Children are taught about difference and diversity through an inclusive curriculum.
- c) Materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community are used in terms of race, gender and disability, avoiding stereo-typing.

- d) A whole-school ethos is promoted, as well as values that challenge prejudice-based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- e) Opportunities are provided for children to appreciate their own culture and to celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- f) Opportunities are also provided for children to listen to a range of opinions and to empathise with different experiences.

Other Specific Duties

1 Publishing information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by 6 April 2012

The school meets this duty by publishing this document on the school website.

2 Publishing equality objectives at least every four years which are specific and measurable by 6 April 2012

The objectives identified by the school represent the school's priorities and are the outcome of a review of and analysis of data and other evidence. These objectives may be part of the School Improvement Plan or may be additional to it and are reviewed at the end of the academic year.

In addition, the school has an Accessibility Plan which looks at equality of opportunity for children with disabilities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

- The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented
- Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's equalities work

Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination
- The headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur

- Plan and deliver activities that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that:
 - Promote positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
 - Maintain the highest expectations of success for all children
 - Support different groups of children through differentiated planning and teaching
 - Keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their work

Visitors

- All visitors to the school, including parents and carers, are expected to support the school's commitment to equalities and to comply with the duties set out in this policy

Equal Opportunities for Staff

The school is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. Wherever possible, the school ensures that the staffing reflects the diversity of its community.

As an employer, Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School strives to ensure that it eliminates discrimination and harassment in its employment practice and actively promotes equality across all groups within its workforce. The school respects the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, children and parents/carers, complying with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy

Information about equalities in this policy is reviewed every four years but sooner if required and adjustments are made as appropriate.

Sharing the Policy

This Equality Policy and the equality objectives are available on the school website. Reference to the policy is made in the staff handbook, as part of induction for new staff. The whole school community is made aware of this policy, objectives and data through the school website and by providing a copy of the policy on request.