



Equality and Diversity Procedure & Equality Objectives

Written by: Sandy Turner

Approved by: Local Governing body

Date this version approved: June 2024

Date for review: June 2025

Equality & Diversity Procedure

INTRODUCTION

Our Ethos

At the Link we “dig deep to aim high”.

We value all of our learners equally recognising their individual strengths, barriers and aspirations. The team around the children and young people work to ensure every learner is understood. We seek to overcome barriers today so that young people and parents can look forward to a bright future tomorrow.

We link hands to ensure every child is understood so that they will achieve their full potential. We overcome barriers today so that children and parents can look forward to a bright future tomorrow.

The Primary site

The Primary is proud of its diverse community of pupils, staff and stakeholders and is committed to maintaining excellence in teaching and learning by ensuring there is equality of opportunity for all, fostered in an environment of mutual respect and dignity. This is achieved by making sure our school vision and values are central to all we do and drive our actions and behaviour. Our shared ethos enables us to think about and plan for the future of our children with imagination and wisdom.

The Secondary site

The Secondary site is committed to creating an inclusive environment, where people are treated with dignity and respect and where we anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances so that everyone can achieve their potential. We are committed to promoting and advancing equality of opportunity, not only because it is an important part of the mission, vision and values of the school, but also because by attracting and retaining the most diverse range of students, staff and partners, we will ensure future success for everyone.

We believe that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and without discrimination, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, circumstances or background.

The Satellite Site

Our ethos of the site focusses upon ensuring all students are supported to overcome their anxiety-based barriers in order to provide equality for all. This is achieved by making sure the following site values and vision are central to the provision our aim is to **REGULATE-REACH-TEACH**

What is Equality and Diversity?

As used within the OHC&AT Equality and Diversity policy, 'equality' means ensuring everyone is able to participate in all our activities.

'Diversity' acknowledges there are differences between people, which should be recognised, respected and celebrated.

The equality duty has two main parts: the 'general' equality duty and 'specific duties'.

The General Duty

The general equality duty sets out the equality matters that the school needs to consider when making decisions that affect pupils or staff with different protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, belief, sex, sexual orientation).

In carrying out our functions we aim to:

1. Eliminate discrimination by

(Primary site)

Making sure systems for good communication and expression of opinion are valued in school. This includes child centred approaches to communication such as intensive interaction and the behaviour ethos that encourages staff to recognise all behaviour as communication.

Formal opportunities for expressing opinions are embedded in the school, including a school council that meets regularly and considers equality objectives as part of their agenda and for staff, a senior leadership open door policy where active listening is the norm.

Ensuring available resources are used to give every child good access to the curriculum and community environments. Using additional grants wisely so that pupils with complex disabilities have the resources they need for equal access.

Ensuring any discrimination is recognised and recorded. Discrimination is challenged for pupils through bespoke interventions that are monitored for impact. This may include the use of comic strip conversations, social stories and in house theory of mind activities.

(Secondary site)

Making sure systems for good communication and expression of opinion are valued in school. This includes encouraging staff to be aware of and listen to the different ways students communicate and to recognise all behaviour as communication. It also includes

encouraging a coaching culture for staff so that active listening and probing questioning support colleagues to address issues and find solutions.

Providing formal opportunities to express opinions making sure these are embedded in the school, including a school council that meets regularly and considers equality objectives as part of their agenda and for staff a senior leadership open door policy where active listening is the norm. Regular surveys and discussions about school policies and practice especially related to mental health and well-being ensure an open culture where strengths and development areas are fed into whole school improvement plans.

Ensuring available resources are used to give every student good access to the curriculum and community environments. Using additional grants wisely so that students with particular learning barriers or those who are more vulnerable have the resources they need for equal access.

Ensuring any discrimination is recognised and recorded. Discrimination is challenged for students through whole school and bespoke interventions that are monitored for impact by the senior leadership team and school SENCO. This includes the monitoring of rewards, progress data, behaviour data and end of year outcomes.

(Satellite site)

PANDA

Using the PDA society PANDA acronym of **P**ick your battles, **A**nxiety management, **N**egotiation & **C**ollaboration, **D**isguise & manage demands, **A**daptation allows us to support each individual student within a child centred approach. Allowing flexibility to meet individual needs of every learner that enters our site.

CONNECTION

Student voice leads our everyday practices; our learners need to feel they have trusted adults and support around them. We prioritise understanding our learners' interests, motivations and enjoy these alongside them developing social connections, trusting bonds and reducing anxieties.

CHILD & FAMILY CENTRED

Learners' needs drive the curriculum offer, teaching & learning, CPD and resources that are needed across the site. Our learners' needs drive the flexibility that we place into the curriculum, environment, activities and systems within the site in order to provide the best opportunities for each individual. As a site we work collaboratively with learners and their families to address wholistic approaches that support goals for reaching each individual learner's best potential and future steps within school, their families and local community.

CO-REGULATION

We use nurturing, OT and emotional wellbeing strategies to support our students to regulate their emotional and sensory systems with an emphasis upon coregulation where students are enabled and encouraged to take a role in their self-regulation with support from staff.

2. Advance equality of opportunity by

a) Removing or minimising disadvantages

This may include adapting equipment or the environment so that all pupils have equal access; the school's statutory accessibility plan aids this aim.

It also includes strategies that help to narrow any achievement gap. Person centred EHCPs ensure key strengths, barriers and needs are highlighted for learners and that the most appropriate provision to help pupils and students overcome barriers are outlined. In the Primary, Provision maps and regular monitoring of these ensure pupils receive the highlighted provision that will best minimise their key disadvantages. In the Secondary individual and small group interventions as well as the Access curriculum lead by the school therapists ensure students receive the highlighted provision that will best minimise their key disadvantages.

Additional grants, such as the pupil premium are used wisely to get the best impact for pupils that may have additional socio-economic disadvantages on top of their learning disabilities. Regular monitoring from senior leads and governors ensure pupils receive the best possible strategies for their needs.

b) Taking steps to meet different needs

The school has a person-centred learning ethos. Pupils are grouped by learning need and ability rather than age in order to ensure high levels of differentiation throughout the day and to make sure pupils receive teaching and strategies for learning that are motivating and effective.

Person centred EHCPs ensure pupils receive bespoke support for protected characteristics that may affect learning even if they are the only pupil in the school that may need a particular strategy.

c) Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

The school is data rich. This enables senior staff to identify pupils at risk of any kind of discrimination or pupils that are underachieving so that appropriate interventions can be put into place.

3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics

The school aims to look positively at difference and celebrate diversity. This is a strength of the spiral PSHE curriculum and Link Priority Curriculum where learners are encouraged to develop their emotional understanding, regulation and support for others.

Wherever possible diversity is openly celebrated whether that is in the school's disability awareness programme or through the celebration of traditions and festivals from the school's community.

The curriculum schemes of work always identify an aspect of learning related to a different culture or country so that learning and talking about difference is part of the pupil's everyday experience.

Staff are encouraged to be proud of their differences and heritage and to role model positively for pupils during learning and assemblies.

The Specific Duty

There are two specific duties that the school are required to carry out. These are:

1. To publish information to demonstrate how we are complying with the equality duty, at least annually;
2. To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.

Link Secondary Site Equality Objectives 2021-22 (Evaluated)

Disability

Implement the plan to update the Playground with large and small leisure resources that will reflect the needs of the wide cohort of physical and social needs in the school population. **A plan for renovation of the playground has been formulated. This will take place in 3 stages due to financial restrictions and difficulties with workforce and available materials due to the Covid pandemic. Stage 1 of the project (Playground levelling and installation of a football and basketball court) will take place in the Summer holiday 22.**

Produce and deliver second stage training of the less common learning needs and disabilities at The Link to ensure the very best evidence-based practice is embedded for these young people – with a focus for the next academic year on Selective Mutism and Pathological Demand Avoidance. **Achieved- Training has taken place for all staff and this has enabled all of those with these less common learning needs to benefit from evidence-based strategies for these groups. This has led to successful integration and positive outcomes for these learners.**

Implement the planned changes for greater community access in the curriculum, across the main school and sixth form, including the introduction of a school residential to Key Stage 3 - monitoring the changes for impact. **Achieved – Hard and soft data indicates that the Link Priority Community sessions and the newly introduced Community, Work related learning and Leisure skills options in the sixth form have widened learner opportunities and supported the generalisation of skills learnt in the classroom setting. The Key stage 3 residential to Jamie's farm was extremely successful at building stronger relationships, developing independence and building student confidence.**

Race, religion and belief

As part of the literacy plans to update the school reading library and schemes, ensure the books selected include a good range of material accessible to both the interests of the current cohort as well as materials that reflect the diverse nature of the school community. **The new library project is well underway. This is based in a new more spacious venue. Students have been given a strong voice in its development and particularly in the purchase of motivating reading materials of a variety of different genres.**

All Protected characteristics

Formalise the graduated parent support plan to ensure that young people who have some kind of personal development or academic gap caused partly by a protected characteristic are offered additional interventions to support their situation. **Achieved – the Secondary site**

now has a graduated parent support plan that has been formulated by the Education and Therapeutic team and is thus owned and implemented by all.

Link School Equality Objectives 2022-23

(Evaluated)

Primary Site

Race, religion and belief / Disability

Gain a greater understanding of the effect of disability within the families of less familiar ethnic or religious groups. Consider and implement at least one additional option to better support families to implement effective strategies that would be acceptable within their culturally supportive circles. **Progress made but some ongoing work to be done. Particular families targeted through the graduated parent support plan. There has been an increase in parents from ethnic communities attending parent workshops. Greater cohesivity noticed at annual reviews between parents and school staff for families where disability ethos and practice had greater variation previously.**

Secondary Site

Disability

Continue with stage 2 and 3 of the planned playground project and front of school car park development ensuring that any changes make the school outside areas accessible to those with mobility difficulties and therefore "Disability Compliant". **Stage 2 of playground project planned with work to be completed over the Summer holiday 23. This will supply new disability compliant pathways from the rear of school onto the playground.**

Satellite Site

Set up four new classrooms on the satellite site as nurture bases with appropriate furniture and resources to meet the model of "PDA pedagogy" as outlined by the PDA society. Train and develop new staff in evidence based teaching strategies for this group to ensure that placements are maintained well for this vulnerable group. **The nurture bases are set up and appropriate staff trained and in place. The Satellite site is the first of its kind in the country and is having a huge impact on the children and families with PDA. All children are regular school attenders which opposes the national picture where 70% of pupils of this profile are currently not educated within a school environment.**

Link School Equality Objectives 2023-24

Primary Site

Implement and embed the marking policy for children with Downs syndrome – adhering to their learning style and assessment differences based on latest research. Updated policy being implemented in practice, but the school need to update the policy for the website.

Secondary Site

Increase residential for all key stages ensuring all students have access should they wish to do so. This has been completed with good impact. Key stage 3 and 4 have separate annual residential. There are also opportunities for students to access Summer camps and overnight sleepovers.

Satellite Site

Enable all students to have curriculum access to the community in order to generalize learning skills. Immediate locality trips and specialised wider community trips have increased for all classes. This has led to the increase of generalised skills through the Link Priority Personal Development curriculum.

Link School Equality Objectives 2024-25

Primary Site

Rewrite the school marking policy so that it is applicable and user friendly for the different pathway groups in the school.

Secondary Site

Embed the new house point system so that students have an equal opportunity to participate and achieve success in competitions. (Cross ages and abilities).

Satellite Site

Pupils of Primary age who are ready to follow the Secondary RSE curriculum as baselined and agreed by school professionals and parents through the RSE audit will have bespoke access to this material.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Equality and Diversity Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy

Curriculum Policy (Local)

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

SEND Policy

Accessibility Plan