



ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

EQUALITIES POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

MISSION STATEMENT

I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full - John 10:10

As a Catholic school, God is at the heart of all we do. We believe that each person is made in His image, deserving to be treated with respect and dignity.

Showing respect, love and care for everyone and everything, we aim to develop harmony between pupils, parents, the school and Parish and grow as a Christian community.

We aim to embed the virtues in every child to believe in themselves to be the best that they can be and leave school as well-rounded individuals who care about themselves, others, and the world.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Date drafted: April 2024

Date ratified by the Local Governing Committee: May 2024

Date for review by Staff and Governors: May 2025

Statement

This policy outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School to eliminate discrimination, to advance, equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. There is equality of access and we celebrate and value the diversity within our school community.

In accordance with our Mission Statement, we promote this through:

- respecting the equal human rights of all our pupils
- respecting that each person deserves to be treated with respect and dignity
- positively promoting equality and diversity
- educating pupils about equality
- respecting the equal rights of our staff and the wider school community.

Statutory Requirements

Publishing equality information and setting Equality Objectives is a requirement for all schools as part of the Equality Act 2010.

Equality Objectives

Schools are free to choose the equality objectives that best suit the needs of their community. We have reviewed our equality information and pupil data and have set objectives which will be reviewed annually.

The current Equality Objectives are to:

- Track the expected progress across the school to ensure all groups continue to make at least expected progress.
- Ensure progress for disadvantaged children is as good as non-disadvantaged children.
- Increase the involvement of the pupils in the decision making processes of the school by ensuring that all groups are represented on the school council, chaplaincy team, and play leaders.
- Ensure all pupils have access to all lessons, activities and clubs regardless of their gender, disability, religion or race.
- Ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community.

Aims

To fulfil our Mission Statement, we will:

- Provide a secure, stimulating Catholic environment where both children and adults can learn, grow and develop to their full potential.
- Ensure that each child is valued and respected.
- Develop faith in Jesus Christ through our teaching and the way we live and worship in our school.
- Develop the ability of both children and adults to deal responsibly with social, spiritual and moral issues.
- Encourage everyone to value and respect people from all cultures and communities.
- Establish open and respectful communication between pupils, teachers, school staff, parents and the wider community.

Purpose of the Policy

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 or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity. This act requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between groups.

Introduction

This Policy outlines the commitment of the staff and governors of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community. For our school this means, not simply treating everybody the same but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of pupils in school, celebrating and valuing equal opportunities, achievements and strengths of all members of the school community.

These include pupils, teaching staff, support staff, parents/carers, governors, multi-agency staff, visitors to the school, students on placement, parish and wider school community.

The ethos of our school values the individuality of all our pupils, staff and wider community. We are committed to giving everybody opportunities to achieve the highest standards. Within this ethos of achievement, we do not tolerate bullying and harassment of any kind. We actively tackle discrimination against all, including those with a disability, racial discrimination, sexual harassment and discrimination.

The school promotes the individuality of all, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, religious beliefs, gender or background and promotes equal opportunities and good relations between and amongst all. We are committed to ensuring that positive action is taken where necessary to redress the balance of inequality that may exist. We aim to reflect the diversity of our local community and society and ensure that the education we offer fosters positive attitudes to all people.

School Context

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is an average size Primary School with 201 children on roll (April 2024) and is single form entry. The school currently has 53% boys and 47% girls. Attendance was 92.88% in 2022-2023. The school serves a very local catchment area serving mainly the Hester's Way area in Cheltenham. The majority of pupils live less than a mile and Hester's Way is identified as being in the top 10% of most deprived wards in England, 2021.

The school receives Pupil Premium funding for 81 pupils (40%) (National Average – 23.8%). 81% of our pupils are in receipt of FSM. Pupils requiring short or long-term emotional care are supported by our Pastoral Lead and Assistant. 48% of our children are summer born.

The school has a Catholic identity with 37% of children who are baptised Catholic. Data shows the largest ethnic group as White British (49.5%), White Eastern European (19.9%), Black African (7.8%), White Other (5%), any other Asian background (4.6%), Indian (2.7%), mixed White/Asian (1.3%), mixed White & Black African (1.8%), White Western European (1.52%), White Irish (1%), Gypsy Roma (1%), White & Black Caribbean (1%) and any other ethnic group (1%).

Transitional links are established with other feeder pre-schools to support and ensure a smooth transition for all pupils. Data shows that the majority of pupils (71% in September 2023) start Reception with skills that are below Age Related Expectations (ARE).

The school holds strong links within the surrounding community, working alongside local primary and secondary schools, the Parish and clergy, the Diocese, local nursing homes, Gloucestershire Catholic Schools Partnership and Cheltenham Learning Partnership to facilitate extended opportunities for children and staff.

46% of pupils have EAL (well above the national average 22%) with the vast majority of these entering school with very little or no English. There are 32 different home/first languages are spoken by children. Provision for EAL children is excellent as shown in the progress they make in their time at school. 23% of our children have a SEND need.

19% of our pupils currently on role are mobile. 34% of our Year 6 children are mobile pupils and 33% of our Year 5 children are mobile. The socio-economic and academic level of new pupils transitioning into our school will be addressed, in order to limit any negative impact that this may cause.

The school rigorously monitors and tracks the progress and attainment of all the pupils, as well as the wide range of groups within the school. This is undertaken in a variety of ways, including Learning Walks, Pupil Conferencing, Work and Assessment Scrutinies, Pupil Progress Meetings, Pupil Progress and Attainment Tracking and Lesson Observations. Having reviewed any changes to the school context, adaptation may be made to future provision, which take into account these changes to our demographics.

Local Governing Committee

The Local Governing Committee is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team comply and are responsible for implementing the policy and objectives; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos
- challenge prejudice and discrimination

- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images of race, gender, and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Equal opportunities for staff

The Local Governing Committee of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the school. The Local Governing Committee recognises the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce.

The Local Governing Committee and leaders of the school will operate at all times within the requirements of antidiscrimination legislation and will promote equality positively in its staffing decisions with the exception of reserved posts which protects the distinctive nature of our Catholic School. All decisions including advertising of vacancies, short listing, selection, induction, appraisal, training, promotion, terms of condition of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and fair assessment of need.

The only personal characteristic to be taken into account will be those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of particular groups. All staff are expected to support the specific Catholic nature and ethos of the school.

All staff have the right, through the agreed procedures, to challenge any decision or action which they believe to be in breach of these principles. Any member of staff who knowingly contravenes the policy may face disciplinary action.

Policy Links and Impact:

The school will continue to develop both statutory and non-statutory policies to promote equality of all groups, including the varied minority groups within the school. Each policy will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from different groups that make up our school to ensure that all are given equal opportunities.