

# St Matthew Academy

## EQUALITY Policy

(Including Equality Statement and Objectives)

St Matthew says '*let your light shine.*'

At St Matthew Academy we let our light shine by:

- Growing our inclusive, caring Catholic community
- Nurturing faith, discovering talents and cultivating ambition
- Transforming each other through integrity, courage and service

enabling everyone at St Matthew Academy to flourish.

Date of approval	Autumn 2023
Date of review	Autumn 2027

## 1. Equality Statement and Introduction

***“It is important that everybody is seen as equal before God” Blessed Mother Teresa***

St Matthew Academy is an inclusive academy where we focus on the well-being and progress of every young person and where all members of our community are of equal worth. We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

The Equality Act 2010 clearly defines seven groups of people who are considered under the legislation to have protected characteristics. At St Matthew Academy our strong Catholic Ethos and Vision, Gospel Values and community involvement lead us to be committed to creating and sustaining an environment of mutual tolerance, respect, dignity and good relations. Our Gospel Values commit us to protecting vulnerable groups and guarding against discrimination, harassment and victimisation in any form.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

This policy provides information and an analysis, which ensures that the Academy complies with its Public Sector Equalities Duty (PSED), as prescribed in the Equality Act 2010. Equality is at the heart of our vision statement, which is outlined below.

Our approach to equality is based on the following seven key principles

1. All learners are of equal value. Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages, which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, work and visit here.
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our community to feel a sense of belonging within the academy and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in academy life.
5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development
6. We have the highest expectations of all our pupils. We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential
7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

## **2. 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 or pregnancy or maternity.

Age, marriage, and civil partnership are also 'protected characteristics' but are not part of the academy's provisions related to pupils.

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

### **2.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty or 'general duty'**

This requires all public organisations, including schools, to

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

### **2.2 Two 'specific duties'**

This requires all public organisations, including schools, to

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by April 6th 2012
- Publish Equality objectives at least every 2 years which are specific and measurable – Please see Appendix 1

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 provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

## **3. Development of the policy**

When developing the policy, we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and the Ofsted Inspection Framework 2012, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

## **4. What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

### **4.1 We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and suspension; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

The school policy on Behaviour takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act.

We closely monitor data on suspensions and absence from the academy for evidence of over- representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment, which champions respect for all.

The Headteacher ensures 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.

We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day-to-day life of the academy

#### **4.2 Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying**

The academy challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- Prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- Prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- Prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes.

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents; provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of these incidents and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents.

#### **4.3 What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups**

We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our student admissions meetings.

We know the needs of our pupils very well, collect, and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements. We collect data, monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils, and use this data to support academy improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills.

- We collect, analyse and publish data on:
  - The academy population by gender and ethnicity;
  - The proportion of pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability;
  - Proficiency in English
- We publish an analysis of standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage:
  - White English
  - Black African

- Black Caribbean
- Disadvantaged
- English as an Additional Language
- Special Educational Needs
- Looked after Children

We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.

We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as 'less able'. We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils.

We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving. We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the academy's Equality Objectives.

We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

We implement an Accessibility Plan designed to increase the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum; improve the physical environment and improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

#### **4.4 What we are doing to foster good relations**

We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils.

We teach about difference, diversity, and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE, Citizenship and across the curriculum.

We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the academy, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.

We promote a whole academy ethos and values that challenge prejudice based on discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.

We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.

We include the contribution of different cultures to world history.

We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.

We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole academy events e.g. Black History Month, Deaf Awareness week, International Women's Week.

#### **4.5 Other ways we address equality issues**

We maintain records of all training relating to Equalities

Our monitoring records include evaluations of aspects of Equalities

We have a rolling programme for reviewing all our academy policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and wellbeing of our pupils.

The implications for equalities of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced

#### **4.6 In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole academy community we:**

Review relevant feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, and/or focus meetings  
Secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events

Review feedback and responses from pupils, from the school council, PSHE lessons and whole academy surveys  
Analyse issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans or Behaviour Support Plans/Pastoral support Plans.

Ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Governing Body meetings and from the governing body's working groups.

Publishing Equality Objectives: The objectives, which we identify, represent the academy's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we achieve improved outcomes for the different groups.

### **5. Our Equality Objectives**

We review and update our equality objectives every two years (Appendix 1) and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them (Appendix 2). We involve and consult staff, pupils, governors, parents, and carers.

### **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect all members of the academy community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

A checklist for Academy Staff and Governors can be found in Appendix 3.

#### **6.1 Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the academy complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Every Governing Body committee keeps aspects of the academy's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the academy environment. Governors review the Equality Policy annually and evaluate the success of the academy's equalities work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys)

## **6.2 The Headteacher and Senior Leadership team**

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. A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. He will have expert and informed knowledge of the Equality Act.

## **6.3 Teaching, Support and Operational Staff**

All teaching, support and operational 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 curricula and lessons that reflect the academy's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- Maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- Support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the academy as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the academy year.

## **6.4 Visitors**

All visitors to the academy, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in academy newsletters to enable them to do this.

## **7 Equal Opportunities for staff**

We are 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 based on merit and ability and in compliance with the law.
- We ensure that wherever possible the staffing of the academy reflects the diversity of our community.
- As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.
- We respect the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
- We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

**8 Equal Opportunities for pupils (see separate policy)**

**9 Complaints**

Complaints arising from the operation of this policy will be dealt with in line with the academy's complaints procedure



## **Appendix 1**

### **Our Equality Objectives for 2023/2024 and 2024/2025**

- To reduce the gaps in pupil attainment and progress for key groups: boys, SEND, Black Caribbean and Mixed Other
- Achieve a reduction in the percentage of fixed term exclusions for pupils with protected characteristics, in particular: girls, SEND, White British, Black Caribbean, White & Black Caribbean and Other Ethnic Group
- Develop the understanding of all members of staff on the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and train all members of staff and governors involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities and non-discrimination. This will also support in ensuring that through our recruitment processes, wherever possible the staffing of the Academy reflects the diversity of our community.

We review and update our equality objectives every two years and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, pupils, governors, parents, and carers.

## Appendix 2

### Our Equality Objectives for 2021/22 and 2022/23

- To reduce the gaps in pupil attainment and progress for key groups: boys, SEND, White British, Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black African and Mixed White and Black Caribbean
- Achieve a reduction in the percentage of fixed term exclusions for pupils with protected characteristics, in particular: boys, white British pupils and those with SEND
- To increase levels of parental and pupil engagement in learning and school life, across all activities to ensure equity and fairness in access and engagement

We review and update our equality objectives every two years and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, pupils, governors, parents, and carers.

Review of Objectives 2022/23	
To reduce the gaps in pupil attainment and progress for key groups: boys, SEND, White British, Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black African and Mixed White and Black Caribbean	<p>We are pleased to report that analysis of the 2023 Y11 results show that boys had an attainment score of 4.9 compared with the girls' score of 4.8 indicating on average the boys had higher attainment. However, the progress of boys was +0.25 compared with +0.47 for the girls indicating almost a quarter of a grade difference. It is important to note that both nationally and in the LA boys had a negative progress score.</p> <p>The progress and attainment of pupils with SEND (11 in total) and EHCPs (3 in total) has improved. Although there is a significant gap in attainment, the EHCP pupils had a progress score of +0.53, SEND pupils +0.20, indicating positive progress for both groups and significantly better than national and LA progress figures.</p> <p>The data for ethnic groups continues to indicate gaps in achievement and progress for the 24 Black Caribbean pupils (progress of -0.07) in this year's cohort. There was only one other ethnic group with negative progress this year, Any Other Mixed background (progress of -0.14) so this group must be tracked carefully. The progress of the White British pupils was strong for this cohort (+0.32) as it was for Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils (+0.41). There continues to be some fluctuation from year to year so therefore, the Academy will continue to review the attainment and progress of said groups on an individual basis.</p>
Achieve a reduction in the percentage of fixed term exclusions for pupils with protected characteristics, in particular: boys, white British pupils and those with SEND	<p>Data shows that 12.5% of pupils at SMA received a suspension compared with just under 10% nationally.</p> <p>Drilling down into the data we can see that 13% of girls compared with 12% of boys were suspended and the girl's percentage is significantly higher than the LA. In addition, 19.6% of pupils with SEND were suspended and this is 5% more than LA figures.</p> <p>The Ethnic Groups with the highest proportion of suspensions were Black Caribbean and White &amp; Black Caribbean however there were more than double the percentage of White British Pupils suspended at SMA compared with the LA.</p> <p>The Academy and in particular the pastoral team is working diligently to offer the right support and early interventions to pupils and implement effective strategies so as to reduce the amount of fixed term exclusions across the Academy. We acknowledge that exclusions are a symptom of poor and unacceptable behaviour and we need to work on the root causes of negative behaviour to affect a positive change. As such, this will remain a target for the Academy next academic year.</p>
To increase levels of parental and pupil engagement in learning and school life, across all activities to ensure equity and fairness in access and engagement	<p>We have increased the level of parental engagement in learning and school life in a variety of ways. These include a regular newsletter, Friends of SMA, Weekly Coffee mornings and a focus on promoting the SIMS app which affords parents and carers the opportunity to have up to the minute access to the progress of their child in regards to achievement points, behaviour points etc.</p> <p>We hosted our first Black Caribbean Parent focus group where we listened to the experience of this group of parents and carers and made improvements in areas they gave feedback on including communication and curriculum and assessment information sharing. In the new academic year, we plan to hold more regular events, utilising a range of community speakers to broaden the focus and encourage even better attendance.</p>

## **Check List for Academy Staff and Governors**

- The academy collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, e.g. student achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the academy provides
- The Equality Policy and Plan and Objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, governors, pupils and other stakeholders
- The academy publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties
- The academy analyses Student achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when there trends or patterns indicate a need
- The academy sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes
- The academy ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The academy ensures that visitors to the academy understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference
- All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in academy life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and the school council
- The academy monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern
- Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the academy community
- Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and class assemblies
- The academy takes part in annual events such as Black History Month, Deaf Awareness Week, International Women's Day etc. to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender
- The academy environment is increasingly accessible to pupils, staff and visitors to the academy
- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the academy and issues such as language barriers are considered
- The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information
- The Governing Body is increasingly representative of the community it serves
- Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled.