

# St. Mary's RC Primary School

## Chepstow



## Strategic Equality Policy and Action Plan

2.02.2015

## **School Mission Statement:**

Learning for Life with Christ as our Light

## **School Vision Statement:**

Based on our Catholic faith, St. Mary's Catholic Primary School seeks to promote the Gospel message of Jesus Christ as the foundation of its existence

We, as a caring community of learning, combine innovation and tradition to enable each individual to achieve their full potential.

As a school we:

Teach the Catholic faith, to help children grow in all aspects of their spiritual and moral development.

Recognise and encourage the uniqueness and value of each individual, by nurturing and developing each child's selfworth and ability.

Provide a balanced, differentiated and relevant curriculum in pursuit of high academic excellence.

Help create a Christian community, uniting the home, the school, the Catholic parish and the wider community

Welcome children of all faiths to join St. Mary's RC School community.

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## 1. Introduction

St Mary's R.C. Voluntary Aided Primary School is located in Chepstow in South East Monmouthshire. It serves the local community areas covered by the Catholic Parish of Chepstow, Caldicot and Magor. This includes the communities of Chepstow, Caldicot Caerwent, Portskewett, Rogiet, Magor and Undy as well as the Gloucestershire communities of Tutshill Sedbury and Beachley. The broad catchment area of the school is highly varied with the majority of pupils coming from neither economically advantaged nor disadvantaged homes. The school provides education in a Faith School environment for children from Reception class to Year 6 inclusive. All pupils attending the school, irrespective of faith or denomination, have automatic entitlement to progress to the highly successful St Joseph's RC High School, Newport from Year 7 onwards.

The Equality Act 2010 provides the framework for this plan. The Human Rights Act 1998, the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 are also relevant to this policy.

### 1.1 Aims of this Plan

The aim of this policy is to:

- Ensure that in carrying out its activities the School will have due regard to elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- The advancement of equality of opportunity, across all the activities of the school between different groups.
- The encouragement of good relations between people of a diverse background.
- In the implementation of this policy the School will aim:
  - To develop and promote a culture of equality and diversity throughout the institution
  - To develop and promote a culture of dignity, courtesy and respect.
  - To respect the human rights of all our pupils and staff.
  - To work to prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination and tackle barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for identified groups of pupils and staff.
  - To deal with all forms of discrimination consistently and effectively
  - To ensure that the Strategic Equality Policy influences and informs the ethos of the School.

## 2 Commitment

The School is committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its practices and activities. It aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon our Christian values that includes **dignity, tolerance and respect** and recognises that everybody has different needs and requirements.

Under the **Equality Act 2010** the school will work towards:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;

The act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

### **3 Equality objectives**

The Equality Act 2010 requires all schools to have equality objectives in place. These objectives cover all following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and include the Welsh language in Wales.

Actions to achieve these objectives will be contained in the Equality Action Plan at the end of this document and will be included as an initiative or action in the School Improvement Plan.

To choose objectives for school we will:

- Listen to equality experts, the LA and Heads of primary schools in Monmouthshire about their choice of equality objectives
- Discuss the plan with pupils during activities associated with pupil consultation, target setting and within the school's P.S.E and most importantly, R.E. programmes of study
- Draw up a draft list with associated actions
- Consult with relevant stakeholders

### **4 The National Equality Agenda**

The following items of legislation are at the heart of the equality agenda.

#### **4.1 The Equality Act 2010**

The 9 protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act include everybody: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act sets down Public Sector Duties that apply to all the school's functions:-

- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good community relations
- Eliminating discrimination

Specific public sector duties for Wales are set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, as issued by the Welsh Assembly Government.

**Equality Act guidance February 2013** provides advice for school leaders and can be accessed via the following link

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00215460/equality-act-2010-departmental-advice> the guidance document is due for review in September 2013

#### **4.1.1 Schools with a religious character**

Schools with a religious character (commonly known as faith schools) have certain exceptions to the religion or belief provisions which allow them to discriminate because of religion or belief in relation to admissions and in access to any benefit, facility or service.

There is a general exception, which applies to all schools, to the religion or belief provisions which allows all schools to have acts of worship or other forms of collective religious observance. This means the daily act of collective worship, which for maintained schools is mandatory and should be of a broadly Christian nature, is not covered by the religion or belief provisions. The exception means that schools will not be acting unlawfully if they do not provide an equivalent act of worship for other faiths.

Schools are also free to celebrate religious festivals and could not be claimed to be discriminating against children of other faiths if, for example, they put on a nativity play at Christmas or hold a celebration to mark other religious festivals.

##### **4.1.1.1 Admissions**

Schools with a religious character may give priority in admissions to members of their own religion. The Admissions Code provides that this may only be done when a school is oversubscribed – schools subject to the Code are not permitted to refuse admission to pupils not of their faith if they have unfilled places.

In accordance with St Mary's RC Primary School's Admission Policy, the school will not refuse to accept pupils of another or no religion unless it is oversubscribed.

##### **4.1.1.2 Benefits facilities and services**

In addition to the admissions exception, schools with a religious character also have exceptions for how they provide education to pupils and in the way they allow access to other aspects of school life which are not necessarily part of the curriculum.

In accordance with these exceptions, St Mary's RC Primary School will:

- Provide religious education for pupils in accordance with the RE Curriculum as directed by the Archdiocese of Cardiff, Commissioner for Schools and Colleges and it acknowledges that it is not discriminating unlawfully by not making equivalent provision for pupils from other religious faiths.
  
- Provide extra-curricular acts of worship within premises of its own Catholic faith and acknowledges that it is not discriminating unlawfully by not arranging similar acts of worship in premises of significance to pupils of other faiths or denominations.

##### **4.1.1.3 What is not permissible**

The above exceptions allow such schools to conduct themselves in a way which is compatible with their religious ethos. But the Equality Act does not permit less favourable treatment of a pupil because he or she does not (or no longer) belong to the school's religion.

St Mary's RC Primary School will not treat a pupil less favourably because he or she has rejected the Catholic faith and declared him/her self to be of a different belief or of no faith.

Neither will we discriminate on religious grounds in other respects, such as excluding a pupil or subjecting a pupil to any other detriment, nor will we permit discrimination in relation to other protected characteristics.

## **4.2 The Human Rights Act 1998**

Human Rights and equality are inextricably linked. Equality is treated as a fundamental human right, from the principle of equal respect for the inherent dignity of all people.

Article 14 of the Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination 'on any grounds such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status'.

The words 'other status' have been held to cover, amongst other things, sexual orientation, illegitimacy, marital status, trade union membership, transsexualism, disability, carers and imprisonment.

Article 14 can only be used when attached to a complaint relating to another article of the Convention such as Article 3: right to life, liberty and security of person or Article 8: right to a private and family life, home and correspondence.

In some instances the Human Rights Act 1998 gives greater rights to people than other equalities legislation because it judges treatment against a fixed standard and does not rely on comparison between treatment of one group of people and another.

### **4.3 The Welsh Language Act 1993 & the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

The Welsh language has official status and belongs to all the people of Wales. The Welsh Language Measure puts the Welsh and English language on a basis of equality. The Welsh Education Scheme applies to all Welsh schools. The principles of the Scheme and this Plan are similar- in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations and we will take the Welsh language into account alongside all the protected characteristics.

## **5 Scope of Protection**

This Plan protects the following people:

- School governors
- Pupils
- Staff employed on a full time or part-time basis
- All permanent or temporary contracts
- Agency staff
- Casual workers

## **6 Strategic Management of the Policy**

### **6.1 Roles and Responsibilities:**

All members of the school community are expected to behave with dignity, courtesy and respect and to act in a manner that does not unlawfully discriminate at all times. Specific roles for the accountability of the Strategic Equality Policy; its management and implementation are thus specified:

### **6.2 Role of Governing Body**

The Governing body holds ultimate accountability for the Strategic Equality Policy and ensures the school complies with the Equality Act 2010 and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. This includes the approval of the Equalities Action Plan and setting of Equality Objectives.

A designated member of the governing body has oversight of this policy and its implementation. The designated Link Governor is identified in the Governing Body Guide, Annex B.

### **6.3 Role of Headteacher**

The Head teacher provides leadership in the operation and implementation of the Strategic Equality Policy for pupils and staff. Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring all staff members are aware of their responsibilities under the equality Act 2010 and are given the appropriate training and support.
- Taking appropriate action in any case of unlawful discrimination.

- Allocation of a senior staff member as the Equalities Co-ordinator for the day to day coordination of the implementation of this policy.
- Inclusion of Equality related matters in the School Improvement Plan
- Reporting significant Equality issues to the Governing Body

#### **6.4 Staff Equalities Co-ordinator**

The Equalities Co-ordinator will be the designated senior member of staff for the operation, management and coordination of all aspects of this policy and will be supported by the governing body in doing so. Responsibilities will be:

- To devise and recommend policies, procedures and action plans to ensure that all legislative requirements are met and best practice adopted.
- To collect and review data in relation to the protected characteristics and the Welsh Language relating to pupils and staff.
- To review policies and procedures in relation to compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and to make changes as appropriate.
- To advise on the provision of appropriate equality training and awareness-raising in relation to all equal opportunities and diversity matters.
- To ensure that all appointment panels are aware of this policy and give due regard when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- To ensure appropriate training for pupils, staff and governors on the Equality Act 2010 and any relevant equality and diversity issues
- To review the Strategic Equality Policy annually and advise the Governing Body of any matters with regard to the policy.

#### **6.5 Role of school staff**

- To support the aims of the schools' Strategic Equality Policy.
- To encourage non-discriminatory practices and to report any incidences of behaviour that fail to comply with this policy.
- All staff will ensure that pupils are treated fairly and with dignity and respect
- To undertake appropriate equality and diversity training

#### **6.6 Role of Pupils**

- To support the aims of the Strategic Equality Policy.
- To encourage non-discriminatory practices and to report any incidences of behaviour that fail to comply with this policy.
- To be aware of equality and diversity issues.
- To adopt the same principles when they are outside of school

There is an implied responsibility on the school staff here to educate and instruct pupils on matters of equality. Clearly, this needs to be appropriate to the pupil age and expected level of understanding of Equality issues therefore the method should be included in the Action Plan

#### **6.7 Role of parents/carers**

- To support the aims of the Strategic Equality Policy
- To support the school in the promotion of the principles of dignity, courtesy and respect

- To encourage children and young people to promote the above principles outside of school.

Again, there should be an entry in the Action Plan to specify how and when parents are to be made aware of the Equality Policy and what the school expects from parents/carers.

## **7 Training**

Equality Act 2010 and Equality and Diversity awareness raising and training will be provided for all staff as part of a structured training programme. Information will be provided to all pupils in order to raise awareness of equality and diversity and the contents of this policy through the school PSE programme.

## **8 Communication of this policy**

This policy will be available on the school's website. It will also be available in printed form from the school reception.

## **9 Confidentiality**

Any information disclosed to the School in relation to equality and diversity issues will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with legislative requirements.

## **10 Good practice for dealing with discriminatory incidents**

Any discriminatory incidents will follow the schools Positive Behaviour Policy or Bullying Prevention Policy or School Disciplinary policy for staff (whichever is appropriate). All incidents will be acknowledged, investigated and appropriate action taken. The school has a **zero tolerance** approach to all types of discriminatory behaviour and bullying.

## **11 Monitoring and evaluation.**

This policy will be monitored annually by the Headteacher or nominated member of Senior Leadership Team. Statistics will be gathered to monitor equality across all aspects of the school's processes and will be used to inform future practice as a part of the schools self - evaluation process. The school will also take into account evidence from Estyn Inspection findings and independent reviews.

## **12 Review**

The Governing Body, in consultation with the Head teacher, the pupils, staff and parents/carers, will review this policy annually in order to ensure the delivery of the action plan (Appendix 1).

## **13 Strategic Objectives**

The following are the schools strategic objectives which were decided in consultation with staff, pupils, governors and parents.

To be determined, listed below and included in the Equalities Action Plan (Appendix 1)

Signed .....Head teacher

Signed.....Chair of Governors

**Strategic Equality Action Plan  
2012-16**

**Priority One: Reduce Gaps in attainment and attendance between pupils from protected groups**

**General Duties:** Advance Equality of Opportunity  
**Specific Duties:** Assessment of Impact; Equality Information; Equality Objectives  
**Protected Characteristics:** Gender, Race,

**Source: (research/data/engagement/statutory)**

School Improvement Plan  
 Estyn Report 'Closing the Gap Between Boy's and Girl's Attainment in Schools'  
 School achievement data

**Targets:**

- To use our own and other LA, regional and national data and research to build a full picture of differences in achievement between different characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010
- To use this full data to set proactive interventions based on national or regional trends or priorities in order to offset any potential inequalities in attainment and attendance that are not currently identified.

**Success Criteria**

- There is a reduction in the gap between boy's and girl's performance at Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 (achieving expected level)
- There is evidence that we have analysed and identified any other attainment gaps for other groups of pupils who share protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- There is an improvement in the numbers of pupils achieving 100% attendance each term across all groups of pupils

**Strategically Planned Tasks: (See SIP Priorities)**

- Review teaching strategies in light of Estyn Report 'Closing the Gap Between Boy's and Girl's Attainment in Schools
- Establish a Governor sub-committee and continue to regularly monitor review and evaluate the impact of plan
- Liaise with the LA Equality Officer in order to support development of Managers, Governors and Staff in the development of knowledge around implementing these Duties.

**On Track**

**Yes**

**Yes**

**Yes**

**Yes**

**Lead Person(s) Involved**  
**MG, BC**

**Time Scale**

December 2013  
 December 2012  
 May 2013

January 2013-  
 June 2013

<p><b>Monitoring Commentary (Bullet Points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of data has identified gender gap in higher levels of writing</li> <li>• Greater provision and range of opportunities for writing have been introduced both in indoor and outdoor learning environments</li> <li>• AFL strategies are now becoming embedded across all classes throughout the school</li> <li>• Action planning has been completed and further data collection sheets for identifying specific needs of protected groups has been planned</li> <li>• The school has a link governor who is responsible for equality</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluation Commentary (Bullet Points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Priority Two: Reduce identity based incidents and bullying in school</b></p> <p><b>General Duties:</b> Foster Good Relations; Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.</p> <p><b>Specific Duties:</b> Assessment of Impact; Equality Information; Equality Objectives; Engagement</p> <p><b>Protected Characteristics:</b> Gender, Race, Sexual Orientation, Transgender, Religion or Belief, Disability</p>	<p><b>Source: (research/data/engagement/statutory)</b></p> <p>All Wales Survey of Bullying in schools (WG 2009) 22% of year 6 pupils had been 'bullied in a homophobic way'; 7% of year 7 pupils had been 'bullied in some way due to learning difficulties' and 3% of year 10 pupils had been 'bullied in some way due to race or ethnic origin'.</p> <p>“</p> <p>This is an area which is central to the inclusive nature of our school</p>
<p><b>Targets:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To expand our monitoring of race related incidents to record and report a wider range of bullying including anti-disabled, homophobic and transphobic, sexist and bullying based on religion or belief.</li> <li>2. Staff and Governors understand of the need to educate and teach equality and anti discrimination across all of the protected characteristics</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Success Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school uses the Monmouthshire LA system to recognise, report and deal with the full range of identity based incidents and bullying</li> </ul>	

- Data is collected, analysed and reported on regularly with equality objectives set
- There is evidence that work to educate and engage with pupils has reduced the prevalence of discriminatory language and behaviour in school
- Staff and Governors are aware of and supportive of the need to teach equality and anti discrimination across all protected characteristics

<p><b>Strategically Planned Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Update anti-bullying policy and practices in light of Welsh Government guidance “Embedding anti-bullying work in schools in Wales”</li> <li>➤ initial parental consultation for newly arrived pupils with EAL (see also EMTAS Action Plan)</li> <li>➤ Build data collected from whole school community (see Priority Three) to set priorities over time</li> </ul>	<p><b>On Track</b></p> <p>Yes</p>	<p><b>Lead Person(s) Involved</b></p> <p><b>MG and RC</b></p>	<p><b>Time Scale</b></p> <p>January 2014</p>
<p><b>Monitoring Commentary (Bullet Points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school policy for anti-bullying has been reviewed and impact assessed(30-01-13)</li> <li>• The school participates in Anti-bullying week to raise awareness and prevent incidents related to specific groups such as racism, sexist or homophobic bullying (See SEAL planning)</li> <li>• The school records all incidents and reports to LA</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluation Commentary (Bullet Points)</b></p>		

**Priority Three: Develop the quality and use of our Equality Monitoring and Data Collection**

**Source: (research/data/engagement/statutory)**  
Equality Act 2010

**General Duties:** Foster Good Relations; Equality of Opportunity  
**Specific Duties:** Assessment of Impact; Equality Objectives; Equality Information; Engagement; Accessibility of Information  
**Protected Characteristics:** Gender, Race, Sexual Orientation, Transgender, Religion or Belief, Disability, Pregnancy and Maternity

**Targets:**

1. To develop a better understanding of the diversity of our school community of pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- 2.

**Success Criteria**

- We know what equality data we currently collect and use. We also know where gaps exist i.e. what equality data we do not currently collect and use and have actions in place to improve this
- The School Improvement Plan uses improved equality data to set actions

Strategically Planned Tasks:	On Track	Lead Person(s) Involved MG and RC	Time Scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Put in place actions to improve the level of equality data held/not held and used across the protected characteristics for pupils, parents and staff</li> <li>➤ Use data collection to re-establish an active EEG</li> <li>➤ Timetable the review and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of policies</li> <li>➤ Liaise with LA Equality Officer to arrange equality monitoring and equality impact assessment training for key staff and members of the Equality Engagement Group</li> </ul>	Yes		September 2013 January 2014 February 2014 March 2014
<b>Monitoring Commentary (Bullet Points)</b>	<b>Evaluation Commentary (Bullet Points)</b>		

<p><b>Priority Four: <a href="#">Raise awareness of equality and diversity issues among Pupils, Staff and Governors.</a></b></p> <p><b>General Duties:</b> Foster Good Relations; Equality of Opportunity; Eliminate Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation</p>	<p><b>Source: (research/data/engagement/statutory)</b> Equality Act 2010 Staff have informed us that they lack confidence in teaching equality within the classroom</p>
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<p><b>Specific Duties:</b> Training  <b>Protected Characteristics:</b> Race, Disability, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>Statutory Code of Practice (“a listed body in Wales (including all Schools) must make appropriate arrangements to promote knowledge and understanding of the general and specific duties”)</p>		
<p><b>Targets:</b></p> <p>1. To ensure the school community at all levels are committed to fulfilling the Equality Duties</p>			
<p><b>Success Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Learning Needs Analysis demonstrates improved confidence and skill levels amongst staff</li> <li>• An improvement in monitoring racist, homophobic, sexist and other identity based discrimination and harassment evidences better recognition of incidents, with a downward trend over time</li> <li>• Pupils surveys evidence improved understanding of equality and diversity issues in schools</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Strategically Planned Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Engage more fully with annual events such as, Black History Month, International Day of Disabled People, Show the Red Card for Racism and Gypsy, Roma &amp; Traveller (GRT) History Month and similar for all protected characteristics</li> <li>➤ Purchase a range of new resources to meet the needs of all pupils from a range of backgrounds</li> <li>➤ Explore opportunities with cluster group for sharing of best practice through LA staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>On Track</b></p>	<p><b>Lead Person(s) Involved</b> MG and RC</p>	<p><b>Time Scale</b></p> <p>March 2013</p> <p>March 2013</p> <p>June 2013 and ongoing through year</p> <p>March 2013</p> <p>March 2013</p>
<p><b>Monitoring Commentary (Bullet Points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluation Commentary (Bullet Points)</b></p>		

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Head Teacher)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of the Governing Body

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_