

Single Equality Trust Statement and Objectives

September 2022-2024

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Date ratified: 28th Sept 2022

Committee Reviewed: Standards Board

Date ratified by LGB: May 2023

Adopted by: Noremarsch Junior School

Relevant Legislation:
Equalities Act 2010

Related Policies:
Safer Recruitment Policy
Curriculum Policy

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Legislative background - the Equalities Act 2010

The Equalities Act 2010 replaces all of the previous pieces of anti-discrimination law that have been introduced over the last forty years in Great Britain (for example, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005). The purpose of this new act is to consolidate and streamline the requirements whilst ensuring the protection of individuals from unfair treatment and promoting a fair and more equal society.

Previous equality duties involved schools producing separate policies and action plans for race, disability and sex. The new Equality Act introduces a single equality duty for all public sector organisations including schools, this is known as the 'Public Sector Equality Duty' (PSED). This duty requires all schools to show how they are meeting the aims of the Equality Act 2010 by giving 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The Equality Act protects the same groups of people that were covered by previous equality legislation, but these groups are now referred to as 'protected characteristics'.

What do schools have to do?

Previously public bodies were bound by three sets of duties to promote disability, race and gender equality. In April 2011 these were replaced by a single public sector equality duty (known as the PSED or the equality duty). This new duty extends to all the aspects of a person's identity – known as 'protected characteristics' – that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. These are race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The equality duty has two main parts: the 'general' equality duty and 'specific duties'. The general equality duty sets out the equality matters that schools need to consider when making decisions that affect pupils or staff with different protected characteristics.

This duty has three elements. In carrying out their functions public bodies are required to have 'due regard' when making decisions and developing policies, to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is defined further in the Equality Act 2010 as having due regard to the need to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantages
2. Take steps to meet different needs
3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

We are required to carry out two specific duties in order to ensure we meet our equality duty. These are:

- To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty.
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives.

Ascend Learning Trusts Statement

This Equality Statement brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community.

Our values

When founding the Trust in 2017 the Trustees believed the schools needed to be at the heart of the communities they service. Our schools and the Trust itself welcomes its diverse communities of staff and pupils, we believe Excellence in Education can only be achieved by working together with shared vision and values to enrich the lives of all who work or are educated in our schools.

The Trusts visions and values will ensure we will meet the duty through:

- **Compassion** – recognising and understanding the needs of diverse stakeholders, many of whose lives we will enrich and enlighten through their experiences in the classroom.
- **Respect** – acknowledge and celebrate the different traditions and cultures and developing a community who contribute to each school to enrich and enlighten all.
- **Ambition** – holding our community at the heart of all of our decisions, ensuring it is a great place to learn and to work, creating a vibrant community with amenities for all age groups.

We value difference and diversity, we want all to achieve no matter what their starting point, valuing the whole person over academic success. We seek to remove the barriers that prevent historically disadvantaged groups from realising their potential ensuring fairness and social justice.

We will treat all staff, pupils, visitors and applicants for employment equitably. No one will be accorded less favourable treatment because of age, disability, race, sex, sex reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, family circumstances, marital/civil partnership status, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or transsex status.

We understand the principal of the Equality Act 2010 and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity.

Meeting the general duties

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, each school within the Trust aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish * attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils

* Any data published will adhere to our Data Protection procedures and ensure no data is published which could directly or indirectly identify an individual pupil

"In line with our Data Protection procedures, any data published will be anonymised, meaning the data will not be published in a form where it can identify individuals. The anonymisation process ensures the published data, even when combined with other data sets, still cannot be used to identify individuals."

Application of the principles within this statement:

The principles will be applied and reflected in:

- The delivery of the school curriculum
- The teaching and learning within the school
- Our practice in relation to pupil progress, attainment and achievement
- Our teaching styles and strategies
- Our policies and practice in relation to admissions and attendance
- Our policies and practice in relation to staff
- Our care, guidance and support to pupils, their families and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to pupil behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Our partnership working with parents and carers
- Our contact with the wider school community

We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion is generally defined as 'Working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and the wider community.'

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.

In fulfilling our legal obligations we will:

- Recognise and respect diversity
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging
- Observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development
- Aim to reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers
- Consult and involve widely
- Strive to ensure that society will benefit

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

We believe that promoting Equality is a school community responsibility:

Staff School Community	Responsibility
Our Trustees & Executive Team will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a designate Trustee board (Standards Board) with specific responsibility for the Equality Statement and Objectives • Ensure our policies and practice align with our equality duty • Monitor the work of schools to ensure their curriculum and teaching practice aligns with their equality duty • Evaluate and review the statement and objectives every 4 years (monitor annually)
Our Local Governing Body will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate a link governor or LGB group with specific responsibility for the Equality Statement • Ensure that the objectives arising from the Statement are part of the school's strategic aims • Support the Headteacher implementing any actions
The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain, monitor and review the schools action plan (Appendix A) • Ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the equality Statement • Oversee the effective implementation of the Statement • Align practice in the school with our equality duty • Ensure staff have access to training • Monitor the Statement and report to the Local Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the Statement and publish this information • Ensure that the Leadership Team is kept up to date with any development affecting the Statement or actions arising from it
Each Leadership Team will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Statement • Provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Statement with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues • Assist in implementing reviews of this Statement • Ensure middle leaders undertake regular CPD in relation to Equality (every 4 years)
Each school staff will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New staff will all complete Diversity Training as part of National College • Be fully aware of the Equality Statement and how it relates to them • Be expected to act in accordance with the Statement • Be actively involved in developing school 'pledges' and actions. • Understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Statement • Make known any queries or training requirements

Parents & Pupils School Community	Responsibility
Parents/ Carers will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Statement through LGB • Have access to the Statement through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements • Be encouraged to actively support the Statement • Be informed of any incident related to this Statement which could directly affect their child
The Pupils will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be involved in the development of the Statement and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability • Be expected to act in accordance with the Statement • Be encouraged to actively support the Statement • Be actively involved in developing school 'pledges' and actions.

Stakeholder consultation and involvement

This statement was initially shared with all LGB, staff, pupil voice groups and leadership groups. We are committed to further develop our consultation to ensure bi-annual involvement of staff, pupils and other relevant stakeholders in reviewing the progress of the pledges and actions. We will ensure that the whole school community is aware of the Single Equality Statement and our published equality information and equality objectives by publishing them on the Trusts and school's website.

Monitoring and Review

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Executive Leadership Team and our Trustees who have agreed and published this Statement which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report bi-annually on the Statement and analyse whether our Statement and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

Equality objectives

We have developed 6 equality objectives which all schools will follow:

1	The Trust is commitment to equality, this is evidenced in its strategic plans.
2	Barriers to participation are removed to enable all our staff and pupils to play a full part in the life of the school.
3	All our staff and pupils are aware of their own and the school's responsibilities for advancing a culture of equality.
4	Equality is reflected in our learning, teaching and assessment activities leading to an excellent pupil experience at the school.
5	Behaviour practices ensure ALL pupils have an opportunity for quality education
6	Analysis will used to improve future practice and commitment to equality

Annex A: Action Plan for each school in the Ascend Learning Trust

Objective 1: The school's commitment to equality is evident in its strategic and development planning.				
Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Ensure that the school's commitment to equality is evident in its key strategies, policies and documents	Commitment to be included in documents for 2022 -24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's commitment to equality is evident in the following key documents: School's Development Plans School's Prospectus / Website Staff Handbook Planned CPD, e.g. Twilight on Inclusion and Diversity T4, SEMH in T3 Use of GEC app for training and resources. 	Headteacher	Annually by LT and LGB
b) Ensure that the schools curriculum is ambitious for all and considers representation throughout	Ongoing review. Annual review at the end of first year of curriculum in T5 22/23	Within the school's curriculum planning documents and in curriculum books there will representation of groups with protected characteristics.	Curriculum lead.	Annually by LGB curriculum lead.

Objective 2:

Barriers to participation are removed to enable all our staff and pupils to play a full part in the life of the school.

Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Ensure that the school's commitment to equality is evident in its admission procedures	Admission procedures for admission in, 2022-24	Admission procedures Diverse, non-stereotypical images in all marketing materials – with balance to ensure that this does not become exploitative or false and therefore a negative act.	Headteacher	Annually by LT and LGB
b) Develop further the school's employment policies and procedures in order to provide a barrier-free environment for recruitment and employment	Recruitment procedures reviewed annually	All applicants receive full and fair treatment and are considered solely on their ability to do the job All applicants for employment who have a disability and who meet the essential criteria are invited for interview Availability of information about vacancies in alternative formats (large print, audio) OH as part of recruitment process ensures that the school are making all reasonable adjustments required to facilitate employment of the most suitable, successful candidate.	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
c) Ensure that where practicable, all new and existing school buildings are accessible to all staff and pupils	Ongoing	Planning documentation Wheelchair access where possible to all areas of the school – including the portable ramp. Adaptations to where disabled staff are required to work in order to ensure ease of access. Similar would be put in place for pupils with a physical need. Provision of study / social space for pupils with disabilities Contractors employed by the school are aware of the school's expectations regarding equality	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB

d) Staff receive regular training in diverse range of needs to ensure that barriers are removed for learners within this protected characteristic	Ongoing	<p>PDM, TA meetings and Twilights plan for opportunities to provide training and time to implement training for a range of needs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEMH – including de-escalation, Zones of regulation, supporting specific needs (e.g. anxiety, attachment, sensory needs) • SEND • ASD <p>Regular training and supervision for ELSA and safeguarding team to ensure that the best and most appropriate support is in place for learners within this group.</p>		
<p>Objective 3: All our staff and pupils are aware of their own and the school's responsibilities for advancing a culture of equality.</p>				
Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Provide a clear and coherent learning experience for all pupils which enable them to understand others, value diversity and human rights, and participate responsibly in their communities	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum provision/documentation • Assemblies • Ambassadors displays • Subject champions work • School Council 	Leaders at all levels.	Annually by LT and LGB

b) Provide opportunities for pupils and their families to interact positively with people from different backgrounds and communities and provide extended services which make a positive contribution to the community	Ongoing	Curriculum provision/documentation Provision of activities Visitors to the school, e.g. drumming workshops. Opportunities for trips and visits taking learning beyond the curriculum – supported by PTA to ensure all children are financially able to access.	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
c) Integrate appropriate forms of on-going training on equality and community cohesion issues into the school's staff development programme	Ongoing	The MER calendar includes opportunities each term for training in these areas supported by access to the GEC app. Training for new teachers in providing reasonable adjustments (e.g. handouts, board work, use of voice) and in how to approach the possible differences in learning needs Raised awareness of new staff of the range of disabilities and associated technical terms All new staff to complete Equality Training on NC Opportunities for Early Career Teachers to observe best practice within and beyond the school. SEND surgeries termly with the SENCO.	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
Objective 4: Equality is reflected in our learning, teaching and assessment activities leading to an excellent pupil experience at the school.				
Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review

a) Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets all pupils' needs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the quality of the curriculum – its match to pupils' needs – and improvement over time Subject leaders to review curriculum within their subject areas to ensure equity of provision, adaptations to ensure inclusion and representation. 	Curriculum lead and subject leaders	Annually by LT and LGB
b) Evaluate the quality teaching and its impact on the learning of all protected characteristic groups		<p>The school's own evaluations of the quality of teaching</p> <p>External evaluations of the quality of teaching</p> <p>The views of pupils, parents and staff of the quality of teaching</p> <p>Analysis of pupil progress by subject, cohort, pupil group and teaching group</p> <p>The effective strategies for improving teaching: identifying and using best practice; monitoring and acting on the findings; coherent CPD (including coaching, training (inc Child Protection), mentoring, curriculum development, and tackling underperformance)</p> <p>systematic performance management</p>	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB

Objective 5:

Our commitment to equality is reflected in behaviour and practices throughout the school.

Actions	Target Date	Evidence	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Ensure the systematic and consistent management of behaviour		<p>Policies and systems for praise, managing behaviour, suspensions exclusions and attendance</p> <p>Views expressed by pupils, parents, staff and governors about behaviour, bullying, safety, respect and courtesy</p> <p>Behaviour evidence from lesson observations, 'learning walks' and off-site provision</p> <p>Overall and persistent absence and attendance rates for different groups of pupils</p> <p>Punctuality tracking</p> <p>Rates of suspension and permanent exclusion</p> <p>Tracking of behavioural sanctions/rewards and evaluations of impact</p> <p>Tracking of incidents of bullying and their resolution</p> <p>Tracking and evaluation of racist incidents</p> <p>Evidence of pupils' risk awareness from lesson observations and pupil feedback;</p> <p>Evidence of the impact of teaching about risk.</p> <p>Analysis and evaluation of incidents and breaches of IT protocols</p> <p>Weekly behaviour and safeguarding meetings</p> <p>Behaviour data shared regularly with governors.</p>	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
<p>Objective 5:</p> <p>Our commitment to equality is reflected in behaviour and practices throughout the school.</p>				
Actions	Target Date	Evidence	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review

b) Ensure that all pupils are safe.		<p>Management of safeguarding arrangements, including safe recruitment and identifying pupils at risk or in need</p> <p>Appropriate arrangements for child protection</p> <p>Following up absence</p> <p>Promoting safety through the curriculum.</p> <p>Engagement with parents and carers in supporting pupils' achievement, behaviour and SMSC</p> <p>Prompt communication on all of the above.</p> <p>Weekly safeguarding and children meeting.</p>	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
<p>Objective 6:</p> <p>Our awareness and understanding of equality is increased through the analysis of data relating to staff and pupils and the findings used to improve our policies and practices.</p>				
Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Use performance data to monitor learner achievement and respond to variations between groups of pupils, subjects, courses and key stages, trends over time and comparisons with other schools.	Ongoing	<p>Attainment and progress from historic exam/test results and comparisons with national standards and floor targets – last 3 years</p> <p>Attainment and progress of current pupils</p> <p>Attainment and progress of sub-groups of pupils, including by SEND, LAC, intake ability</p> <p>Attainment and progress in different subjects</p> <p>PPG meetings and follow up through focus children in QAR activities.</p> <p>Termly planning and assessment review meetings for Subject leaders with year group teams.</p>	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB

Appendix B – Ascend Pupil Pledges

Ask Student Voice to think of 3/5 key areas of focus for your school to ensure it is an inclusive school. Start by looking at what an inclusive school should look like, how can we improve or maintain a cohesive community.

Examples below.

We will:	Treat all people with dignity and respect, to discourage others who may prejudice others	We will recognise and value diversity, equity and inclusion in our school and wider society.	Ensure representation from different groups on pupil voice groups	Etc	Etc
How you will achieve this?	Create peer mentors or quality prefects for pupils to go to	Hold awareness events and invite the community	Look at constitution of groups and make sure it is accessible for all		
	Create safe places where pupils can be themselves	Add pledge to student and staff contracts	Identify underrepresented groups		