



Listen, Love, Learn

At Our Lady's –

We are inspired, strengthened and encouraged by our Catholic faith.

We place Jesus at the centre of everything we do and say, **listening** to Him with our hearts.

We spread **love** everywhere we go, valuing and caring for each other.

We strive to be the best **learners** we can, using and celebrating our God given gifts.

"For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and Holy is his name" Luke 1: 49

This policy should be read in conjunction with the other policy documents of the school.

Equal Opportunities

The school has a wide catchment area and pupils come from a mixture of owner occupied homes and social housing. A proportion of children are from ethnic minorities, some of whom have English as a second language. Approximately 50% are Catholics and the remaining 50% are from other denominations. Pupils' attainment on entry is generally below average. Around 14% of pupils are on the Special Needs Register; 3 children have an EHCP. There are 28 children on free school meals (low due to free school meals for KS1)

At Our Lady's, by equal opportunities we mean that all children are of equal value and therefore entitled to a curriculum and set of experiences which enable them to fulfil their potential and develop their abilities. We will ensure that each child has equal access to the curriculum, and is not disadvantaged by ability, class, gender, race, age, background or faith. Equal opportunities mean overcoming our own stereotypes and prejudices. Fundamentally it is about Human Rights.

Certain divisions between people can obstruct children's achievement. Whilst these divisions seem 'natural', they are in fact socially constructed and augmented both inside and outside school. Equal treatment will not achieve equal opportunities when everyone is not equal in the first place. To enable achievement for all we must create a set of shared values that will support this.

Aims of the School

In order to achieve equality of opportunity in Our Lady's School we aim to:

- Develop the skills, knowledge and understanding which will enable everyone to be critically aware of what they see, hear and read;
- Recognise that everyone is created by God and help them to be aware of their own uniqueness and self worth;

- Develop a sensitivity and respect for the rights and needs of others regardless of gender, race, creed, culture and physical or mental disability;
- Develop positive attitudes towards diversity and to encourage everyone to value each other irrespective of ethnicity, gender or ability;
- Provide positive role models for both sexes who engender positive attitudes and values towards equality;
- Provide a secure environment where all pupils feel happy and respected and are able to work confidently;
- Encourage parents to be actively involved in their child's education and to strengthen home/school links;
- Create an atmosphere where excellence is the standard, by having high and realistic expectations of all;
- Help each child to know how to behave appropriately and confidently as an individual or group member, in all situations;
- Promote a positive self-image;
- Promote awareness, appreciation and respect regarding the local and wider community;
- Promote physical fitness and the importance of personal hygiene, exercise and diet.

Objectives

Our broad aims will be achieved and fulfilled by general objectives that promote equality of opportunity effectively and consistently across the curriculum.

The contribution of each subject area has been made explicit in individual policies. The knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes and values in relation to equality of opportunity will be built into the appropriate subject schemes of work.

To achieve these objectives the pupils will be taught to:

- have high and realistic expectations in relation to achievement;
- have the same standard of behaviour that will be promoted and expected from both girls and boys;
- become caring and be encouraged to be assertive;
- have expectations that will not be based on stereo-types and pupils will be made aware of how stereo-typing restricts the freedom of others;
- be aware of basic techniques for resisting pressure from peers and/or the media;
- know that the school is a caring community where they will be listened to;
- understand how to treat themselves and others with mutual respect and dignity;
- know that staff will recognise that every individual has special needs and that each need will vary in its identity and how it will be addressed;
- understand and respect the dignity of people with specific disabilities;
- recognise and celebrate the variety and richness of other cultures;
- know that all children will have equal access to the whole curriculum, unless they have been disapplied;
- know that all children will have equal access to the range of extra curricular activities provided;
- develop the necessary skills to recognise and challenge bias and prejudice.

Behaviour

We see bad behaviour as being a disadvantage to the child and his/her peers.

We will not accept any intolerant, anti-social or aggressive behaviour. These will be dealt with in line with other disciplinary procedures throughout the school as stated in the "School Behaviour Policy".

Bad behaviour may include:

- derogatory name calling, insults and racist jokes;
- violence or threats against a person or group;
- racist graffiti or any other written insult;
- non co-operation with others because of their ethnic group/disability/gender, etc.;
- provocative behaviour, e.g. swearing, insulting badges etc.

Good behaviour is each person's responsibility and we expect adults to set a good example at all times.

Parents

Our aim is to involve parents by communicating relevant information for them to participate fully in the school's Equal Opportunities Policy.

.....During the year you will be able to see the work of the school and talk to staff. This will help you to find out how your child is being taught and what you can do to help. (Parents Charter 1994)

Our Equal Opportunities Policy can be communicated to parents in the following ways:

- Parents consultations / surveys;
- Ensuring that information regarding current equal opportunities' initiatives is available to parents, for instance through the school prospectus and the availability of policies;
- Give parents the opportunity to see teaching materials and how they are used in the school / workshops / open afternoons;
- Maintain contact with community groups representing parents, especially religious and cultural groups.

Resources

All books and materials in the school will be free from sex role stereotyping or racial bias and will reflect as far as possible the multi-cultural and diverse culture in which we live. We will ensure that books, displays and other materials give positive role models.

Monitoring the policy

The school's arrangements for equality of opportunity are evaluated to the extent to which all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability (including giftedness), ethnicity and social circumstances, have access to the curriculum and make the greatest possible progress.

Evidence should include:

1. Standards of achievement of individuals and groups;
2. Assessment of pupils' needs within the curriculum;
3. Admissions policies, intake, exclusions;
4. Curriculum content and access;

5. Class organisation and managements, teaching and differentiation;
6. The use made of support teachers, bilingual assistants and other provision under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966;
7. Pupil relationships.

Much of this can be done within the existing monitoring structures in the school.

The governing body and school, through its adopted Equal Opportunities Policy, aims to:

- carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation (including The Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Employment Equality Regulations);
- reinforce the school's position as a provider of high quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities;
- ensure that equality remains high on the school's strategic agenda;
- in all staff appointments, the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria;
- establish good people management practice and to set out a proactive agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response;
- achieve a staffing composition that reflects the composition of the wider community;
- ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every pupil;
- ensure that pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals;
- ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the school's equal opportunities policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated either under the disciplinary, grievance or anti-harassment procedure as appropriate). All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.