



## Equal Opportunities Policy

As agreed by the full Governing Body November 2003 and reviewed by the School Ethos and Worship Committee during the Summer Term 2006

To be reviewed during Spring Term 2008

This policy has been formulated using the Staffordshire LEA 'Guidance on Writing an Equal Opportunities Policy' and meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

### Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

#### a. General Duty

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 imposes a general duty on schools to:

- ⇒ Promote equality of opportunity
- ⇒ Promote good race relations
- ⇒ Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination

#### b. Specific duties

To help schools meet the general duty, they also have a number of specific duties imposed on them which include:

- ⇒ Writing a race equality policy and keeping up to date
- ⇒ Assessing the impact of policies, including the race equality policy, on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups, particularly the impact of attainment levels of pupils
- ⇒ Monitoring the impact of policies on pupils, staff and parents and on the attainment level of pupils

The Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE) race equality standards, *Learning for All*, provides schools with a set of criteria which can be used as part of school self-review processes to assess how effectively schools are addressing race equality and promoting diversity.

## 1. Aims of Equal Opportunities Policy

Equality of opportunity at St Michael's School is about providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest standards of achievement. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community, pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

It is based on the following core values and expressed in this school's mission statement.

TO PROVIDE a positive and enjoyable learning environment within a Christian ethos, encouraging every child to realise their potential in all areas of their development and helping them to develop respect for themselves, others and their environment.

Our Mission Statement strives to ensure that the school meets the needs of all, taking account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. It is important that in this school we meet the diverse needs of pupils to ensure inclusion for all and that all pupils are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

## **2. The School's Commitment to Race Equality**

At St Michael's School we are committed to meeting the specific duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and aim to

- ⇒ Ensure that all pupils and staff are encouraged and able to achieve to their full potential
- ⇒ Respect and value differences between people
- ⇒ Prepare pupils for life in a diverse society
- ⇒ Acknowledge the existence of racism and take steps to prevent it
- ⇒ Make the school a place where everyone, irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin feels welcomed and valued
- ⇒ Promote good relations between different racial groups within the school and within the wider community
- ⇒ Ensure that an inclusive ethos is established and maintained
- ⇒ Oppose all forms of racism, racial prejudice and racial harassment
- ⇒ Be proactive in tackling and eliminating unlawful discrimination

This policy contains specific statements which reflect the school's commitment to promote race equality.

## **3. Leadership and Management**

All the school policies reflect a commitment to equal opportunities, including race equality.

The governing body and school management set a clear ethos which reflects the school's commitment to equality for all members of the school community.

The school promotes positive and proactive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity.

The school management will work in partnership with others to promote equality of opportunity, oppose all forms of oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination.

All staff contribute to the development and review of policy documents. The school ensures the involvement of governors and takes appropriate steps to enable the contribution of parents.

The evaluation of policies are used to identify specific actions to address equality issues.

Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of all pupils and appropriate breadth of content in relation to the school and the wider community.

Additional grants and resources (such as those provided for minority ethnic and Traveller pupils) are appropriately targeted and monitored.

## **4. Staffing: Recruitment and Professional Development**

The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and in line with statutory duties and LEA guidelines.

Steps are taken to encourage people from under represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school.

Steps are taken to ensure that everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this policy. New staff are familiar with it as part of their induction programme.

The skills of all staff, including support and part-time staff are recognised and valued. All staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge.

Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this policy.

Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

## **5. Curriculum**

Curriculum planning takes account of the ethnicity, backgrounds and needs of all pupils.

The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- ⇒ Boys and girls
- ⇒ Pupils learning English as an additional language
- ⇒ Pupils from minority ethnic groups
- ⇒ Pupils who are gifted and talented
- ⇒ Pupils with special educational needs
- ⇒ Pupils who are looked after by the local authority
- ⇒ Pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion

The school monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds.

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.

The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

Extra curricular activities and special events cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture.

## **6. Teaching and Learning**

Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel all their contributions are valued.

All pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum.

Teaching is responsive to pupils' different learning styles and takes account of pupils' cultural backgrounds and linguistic needs.

Teachers take positive steps to include all groups or individuals.

Pupil grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under continual review and are analysed by ethnicity, gender and background.

## **7. Assessment, Pupil Achievement and Progress**

All pupils have the opportunity to achieve their highest standards. Baseline assessment is used appropriately for all pupils. The school ensures that assessment is free of gender, cultural and social bias, and that assessment methods are valid.

The monitoring and analysing of pupil performance by gender, ethnicity and background enables the identification of groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. The school ensures that action is taken to counter this.

Staff have very high expectations of all pupils and continually challenge them to extend their learning and achieve higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement.

Self-assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.

All pupils have full opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.

All pupils have full opportunities to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do and therefore, to benefit from assessment which summarises what they have learnt. Information from assessment is used to inform future learning.

Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupils' progress.

## **8. School Ethos**

The school opposes all forms of racism, harassment, prejudice and discrimination.

The school publicly supports diversity and actively supports good personal and community relations. Diversity is recognized as having a positive role to play within the school.

Staff foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among pupils from all ethnic groups.

The school caters for the dietary and dress requirements of different religious groups.

The school enables pupils and staff to celebrate festivals and other events relevant to their particular faith and actively encourages all pupils to understand these.

Clear procedures are in place to ensure that staff deal with all forms of bullying and harassment promptly, firmly and consistently. Actions taken are in line with relevant LEA policies and guidance such as those for anti-bullying and dealing with racist incidents.

All forms of harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with relevant school policies.

Pupils, staff and parents are aware of the procedures for dealing with intolerant behaviour and that such behaviour is always unacceptable.

Staff are trained to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice.

## **9. Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions**

The school expects high standards of behaviour from all pupils.

There are strategies to reintegrate long term truants and excluded pupils which address the needs of all pupils.

Exclusions are monitored by gender, ethnicity, special educational need and background and action is taken to reduce any disparities between different groups of pupils.

The school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all.

It is recognised that cultural background may effect behaviour. The school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and discipline.

Pupils, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any minority group is always unacceptable.

### **10. Personal Development and Pastoral Care**

Pastoral support takes account of religious and ethnic differences, and the experiences and needs of refugee and asylum seeker children.

The school provides appropriate support for pupils learning English as an additional language and encourages them to use their home and community languages.

The school takes account of and meets the need of Traveller pupils.

Work experience providers are required to demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities.

Appropriate support is given to victims of harassment and intolerant behaviour, using the support of external agencies where appropriate. The perpetrators are dealt with in accordance with school policies and provided with relevant support to consider and modify their behaviour.

### **11. Admissions and Attendance**

The admissions process is monitored to ensure that it is administered fairly and consistently to all pupils, so that pupils from particular groups are not disadvantaged.

Comprehensive information about pupils' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet etc. is included in all admissions forms.

The school and families are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to pupil attendance and absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel who are aware of community issues.

Provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance which includes all staff as well as pupils.

Provision is made for pupils on extended leave so that they are able to continue with their learning.

Attendance is monitored by gender, ethnicity, special educational need and background and action is taken in order to reduce any disparities between different groups of pupils.

### **12. Partnership with Parents and the Community**

Progress reports to parents are accessible and appropriate, in order to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue.

All parents are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the school.

The school works in partnership with parents and the community to develop positive attitudes to diversity and to address specific incidents.

The school takes steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under represented groups of parents and sections of the community.

Information material for parents is easily accessible in user friendly language and is available in languages and formats other than English as appropriate.

Meetings for parents are made accessible to all. Parental involvement is monitored to ensure the participation of all groups.

Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalized groups.

The school's premises and facilities are equally available and accessible for use by all groups within the community.

### **13. Responsibilities**

The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation.

The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that the policy and related procedures and strategies are implemented.

The Headteacher will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy.

The school has a designated member of staff who is responsible for co-ordinating work in equal opportunities.

### **14. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

The effectiveness of the policy will be evaluated annually by the Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator.