

# Vallis First School

## **Equality Policy 2023-2027**



**Approved by the Governing Body of Vallis First School**

**Date:** Autumn 2023

**Proposed Review Date:** September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedures

## Legal Framework

1. Vallis First School welcomes its general duties under the 2010 Equality Act and the 2011 Equality Duty to:
  - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
  - advance equality of opportunity, and
  - foster good relations,

in relation to age (for adults), disability, gender, gender identity/reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnicity, colour or national origin), religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

We also welcome our specific duties under the Equality Act to:

- Publish sufficient information to demonstrate our compliance with the general duties and,
  - Prepare and publish equality objectives, which are reviewed regularly and rewritten every four years.
2. We welcome our duty to promote community cohesion.
  3. 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.

## Our School Context and Ethos

4. Frome is a rural market town in Somerset. The town is predominantly white with a small population of Travellers/Gypsy Roma and people from Black African and Asian heritage. The school serves a very mixed catchment, which represents the breadth of diversity in the town, including: social, economic, heritage, faiths, family composition etc.
5. The ethos we try to create is 'Vallis, a safe and happy school where we can be the best we can be'.

## Our Overall Aims

6. We aim to:
  - promote equality of opportunity through vision, strategy and practice
  - involve people from different groups in the development and review of our equality work
  - eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination
  - eliminate harassment and bullying
  - ensure equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups
  - narrow the attainment gap in outcomes for children and young people
  - improve other outcomes where we identify inequality
  - take positive action to meet needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment
  - increase participation of under-represented groups in activities and public life
  - promote positive attitudes and good relations between people from different groups and support community cohesion

## Guiding Principles

7. In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

### **Principle 1: All learners, parents/carers, governors and staff are of equal value**

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, and our governors and staff, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whether or not they are pregnant or mothers
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual orientation

### **Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference**

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and of the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made and needs met
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised, and specific needs met
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised and met
- religion, belief or faith background, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met
- pregnancy and motherhood, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met
- sexual orientation, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met

We also understand that people have complex, multiple identities. No-one is just one thing and people have many affiliations and loyalties. We know that although socio economic status is not explicitly mentioned in the Equality Act, we need to consider and address inequalities as part of our work to address other inequalities.

### **Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging**

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, fair treatment for those who are pregnant or mothers, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment

### **Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development**

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity
- whatever their age

**Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist**

We use a social model of disadvantage, understanding that disadvantage is often caused by the structures, systems, attitudes and opinions of society as a whole, not by the people that suffer the disadvantage. Therefore, in addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or mothers and others
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

**Principle 6: We will seek to consult as wide a group of views as possible**

We try to engage with a range of groups and individuals to 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 recognise that there are risks that consultation processes do not always access the views of some disadvantaged groups. We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or mothers and others
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

**Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit**

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or mothers and others
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

**Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence and openness about the issues that face us**

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information (as appropriate) about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation and gender identity

**Principle 9: Objectives**

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement through which we have involved people from different groups (principle 7), in relation to:

- disability
  - ethnicity, religion and culture
  - gender
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - sexual orientation and gender identity
8. We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.
9. Accordingly, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.
10. We keep our equality objectives under review and report on progress towards achieving them.

## The Curriculum

11. We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the nine principles set out in paragraph 7 above.

## Ethos and Organisation

12. We ensure the principles listed in paragraph 7 above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:
- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
  - pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
  - teaching styles and strategies
  - admissions and attendance
  - staff recruitment, retention and professional development
  - care, guidance and support
  - behaviour, discipline and exclusions
  - involvement in extra-curricular activities
  - working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
  - working with the wider community.

## Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

13. The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1–3:
- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
  - prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
    - prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.
14. There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, and dealt with.

15. We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of racial incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

### **Roles and Responsibilities (see Appendix A)**

16. The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.
17. A member of the Governing Body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.
18. 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.
19. All staff are expected to:
- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
  - deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
  - plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles above
  - support pupils in their class who have particular needs arising from disability, Special Educational Needs, or for whom English is an additional language or who are Travellers
  - keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

### **Information and Resources**

20. We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers. Our Equalities statement (**see Appendix B**) is on our website summarising the principles behind our approach to meeting the Equalities Duty.

### **Religious Observance**

21. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

### **Staff Development and Training**

22. 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, to ensure that we are able to meet our obligations under the Equality Act.

### **Breaches of the Policy**

23. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

24. We collect quantitative data and qualitative evidence relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate. For example in response to a rise in racist incidents we may deliver a whole school assembly on 'Show racism the Red Card'.
25. In particular we collect, analyse and use data on achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disadvantage, disabilities and special educational needs and gender.

### **Meeting our specific duties under the 2010 Equality Act**

26. We publish information on our school website to show that we have complied with our general duties under the Act.
27. We have a four yearly equalities action plan to help us meet and identified areas for improvement. We review our progress. **(see Appendix C)**

This policy also needs to be in line with other school polices and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following: Accessibility Plan

## Vallis First School Responsibilities

We believe that promoting equality is the whole school's responsibility:

School Community	Responsibility
Governing Body	Involving and engaging the whole school community in identifying and understanding equality barriers and in the setting of objectives to address these. Monitoring progress towards achieving equality objectives. Publishing data and publishing equality objectives.
Head Teacher and Deputy Head teacher	As above including: Promoting key messages to staff, parents and pupils about equality and what is expected of them and can be expected from the school in carrying out its day to day duties. Ensuring that all school community receives adequate training to meet the need of delivering equality, including pupil awareness. Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.
Senior Leadership Team	To support the Head as above Leading on actions to achieve our equality objectives. Ensuring fair treatment and access to services and opportunities. Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.
Teaching Staff	Helping in delivering the right outcomes for pupils. Upholding the commitment made to pupils and parents/carers on how they can be expected to be treated. Designing and delivering an inclusive curriculum Ensuring that they are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.
Support Staff	Supporting the school and the governing body in delivering a fair and equitable service to all stakeholders Upholding the commitment made by the head teacher/principal on how pupils and parents/carers can be expected to be treated Supporting colleagues within the school community Ensuring that they are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.
Parents	Taking an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these Taking an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment given to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.
Pupils	Helping the school to achieve the commitment made to tackling inequality. Upholding the commitment made by the head teacher on how pupils and parents/carers, staff and the wider school community can be expected to be treated.
Local Community Members	Taking an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these Taking an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment made to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.



## Vallis First School equality statement of commitment for the whole school community

Vallis First School welcomes our duties under the 2010 Equality Act to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity; and,
- foster good relations;

in relation to age (for adults), disability, gender, gender identity/reassignment, marriage/civil partnership (for discrimination), pregnancy/maternity, race (including ethnicity, colour or national origin), religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

### **In fulfilling these duties, we are guided by nine principles:**

1. All our learners, parents/carers, governors and staff are of equal value;
2. We recognise and respect difference and understand that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same, as different people have different needs;
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging;
4. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development;
5. We actively work to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist;
6. We seek to consult those who are affected by our policies and activities;
7. We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and participation in public life;
8. As required by the Act, we base our practices on sound evidence and openness about the issues that face us – we publish information to show how we are meeting our duties and about our progress towards greater equality;
9. As required by the Act, we publish equality objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and the engagement with people from different groups, also considering national and local priorities and issues.

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference. Therefore, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan setting out how we shall pursue our objectives. We keep these under review and report on progress towards achieving them.

We ensure the nine principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices. We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the nine principles.

### **We welcome the emphasis in the Ofsted framework on the importance of narrowing gaps in achievement, which affect, amongst others:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| - children from certain cultural and ethnic backgrounds | - children who are disabled                                     |
| - children who belong to low-income households          | - children who have special educational needs                   |
|   | - boys in certain subjects, and girls in certain other subjects |

### **We have a full equality policy, available on request, which explains:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • How we respond to prejudice and prejudice-related bullying | • How we support staff development                                    |
| • Roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body and staff | • How we respond to breaches of the policy                            |
| • How we support religious observance                        | • Our approach to monitoring and evaluating the success of our policy |

**Areas of focus for Equalities Action Plan using School, Somerset and National data and research outcomes:**

**Narrowing the gaps, in the context of improving performance overall:**

*Attainment*

- To continue to narrow the gap in mathematics between boys and girls
- To continue to narrow the gap between boys and girls in English
- To continue to narrow the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children
- To narrow the gap in performance of disabled pupils and other pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties / ADHD / ASD

*Attendance:*

- To narrow the gap in attendance rates between Gypsy Roma Traveller and FSM children and other children throughout the school

*Exclusions:*

- To reduce the exclusion statistics for SEN children with Social Emotional Mental Health needs.

*Participation:*

- To increase the participation in the life of the school and after school clubs etc. between disabled children (including learning-disabled), disadvantaged and other children.
- To ensure the involvement of parents from the full diversity of the school population in school life eg. attendance at parents' meetings, school events, Vallis School Association Committee and Governors.

**Other areas to see improvements:**

*Aspirations*

- To encourage girls and boys to aspire to future career choices which counter the national stereotypes.

*Bullying:*

- To reduce the incidence of prejudice-related bullying, hostility and suspicion, particularly in relation to racism (especially towards the Traveller community), homophobia and sexism, and hostile attitudes and behaviour towards people who are disabled.

*Community cohesion:*

- To promote and enhance community cohesion and a sense of shared belonging in the school, and in the school's neighbourhood.
- To increase understanding of multicultural Britain and the diverse beliefs of minority religious groups in Britain.
- To ensure that the school is suitably prepared to meet the needs of incoming pupils from a new group or one increasing in size, such as Traveller children, Refugees and Asylum seekers, economic migrants etc.

*Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development:*

- To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the curriculum with particular reference to issues of equality and diversity.