



Treorchy Comprehensive School

Strategic Equality Plan

2016 – 2020

'Community School Committed to Excellence'

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Foreword

Treorchy Comprehensive School believes that all people are of equal value, regardless of gender, colour, race, ethnic/racial/national origins, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age, ability or disability, and that individual differences enrich society as a whole. (In this policy, this will be shortened to “race, gender or disability” for readability reasons only).

In order to prepare our pupils for the wider community and society, Treorchy Comprehensive School aims to reflect diversity in a positive way, encouraging pupils to develop an understanding of the ways of other individuals and groups and respect for different ways of life and value systems.

The school will:

- Promote a positive, supportive ethos in which all pupils and staff feel that they are valued, their needs are met and they are able to achieve their full potential.
- Respect and value differences between people, promote good relations between different groups within the school and wider community and prepare all pupils for life in a diverse society.
- Ensure equality is an integral part of planning and decision making across all areas of the school.
- Work in partnership with parents and the wider community to tackle and eliminate all discrimination, making the school a place where everyone feels safe, welcome and valued.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Treorchy Comprehensive School is a large 11-18 mixed comprehensive school in the county of Rhondda Cynon Taff. There are 1,656 pupils on roll of which 364 are in the Sixth Form. Most pupils come from local primary schools though over the past three years over 60 pupils a year have entered the school having attended primary schools outside the traditional catchment area.

The school's intake is from a varied social background and represents the full range of ability. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 23.5%, which is well above the national average of 17.1% for secondary schools.

Academic ability on entry is below national averages. The school has 16% of pupils on the special educational needs register, compared with the national average of 19.6% for secondary schools. While most pupils come from English speaking homes approximately nine percent of pupils are fluent in Welsh.

1.2 Purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan

The Strategic Equality Plan has been developed so that the School can set out how it aims to meet its commitment to equality and how it will meet its legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010.

2. Public Sector Equality Duties

2.1 The General Duties

There are several pieces of legislation which ensure legal protection around equalities. These include:

The Equality Act (2010) which has a particular section on public sector duty, The Gender Recognition Act (2004) and The Human Rights Act (1998).

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new general duty on Schools (and public sector organisations) when making decisions and delivering services to make sure it thinks about (referred to as having due regard in the legislation) how to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained in 2.4 below).
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When thinking about how to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't the School also has to think about the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and are connected to that characteristic
- Meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

The School also has to particularly think about how it will tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

2.2 The Specific Duties

The Equality Act provides a power to make regulations imposing duties on public bodies to support better performance of the general duty; these are known as the Specific Public Sector Equality Duties and are different in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Specific Duties underpin the General Duty and have been developed around four main principles:

- Use of evidence
- Consultation and Involvement
- Transparency
- Leadership

The Welsh Government published regulations that introduced the Specific Duties for Wales in March 2011, these set out the actions the School must take in order to comply and include the following areas:

- Setting Equality Objectives & Publishing a Strategic Equality Plan
- Ensuring it engages with people who have an interest in how the School's decisions affect them
- Collecting and publishing information relevant to compliance with the general duty
- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and publishing the results if there is a substantial impact identified
- Publish employment monitoring information annually
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the general duty amongst its employees and use its performance assessment procedures to identify and address the training needs of its employees in relation to the general duties
- Set a gender pay equality objective where a gender pay difference is identified
- Think about including conditions relevant to the general duty in its procurement processes

2.3 Who has to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duties?

The Equality Act imposes obligations on everyone concerned with the provision of services to the public, however the Public Sector Equality Duty only applies to organisations that have been identified as 'public authorities' under the act this includes Schools, local Councils, Fire and Rescue Authorities and the National Parks in Wales.

2.4 Who is protected under the Public Sector Equality Duties?

Everyone is protected under the Equality Act however the general and specific public sector equality duties refer to people who have particular 'protected characteristics'.

This is the term used in the Equality Act to identify the types of things that affect how people are treated and can mean people may experience discrimination. The law is designed to protect them, they are:

- Gender – male, female, transgender, gender neutral
- Age – young and old

- Disability – all disabled people
- Gender Reassignment – people who were born in the wrong gender
- Race – people of any colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins
- Religion or Belief – includes any religion or lack of religion
- Sexual Orientation – how people feel as well as act in respect of people of same sex, opposite sex or either sex
- Pregnancy and Maternity – from the time the woman becomes pregnant

The need to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also applies to marriage and civil partnership.

2.5 Governing Body

The governing body has set out its commitment to equality and diversity in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on the various protected characteristics. The governing body:

- seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school;
- takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils;
- ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school

In order to meet its reporting responsibility, the governing body will report on the progress of the SEP annually, as part of its Annual Report to parents.

2.6 Senior Management Team (SMT)

The SLT promotes equality and eliminates discrimination by:

- implementing the school's SEP, supported by the governing body in doing so;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the Act and are fully informed of our school's SEP and equality objectives,
- ensuring that all appointments' panels give due regard to this plan, so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities;
- promoting the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promoting respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life;
- treating all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, according to the Authority's and school's policies
- ensuring that all staff are aware of the SEP.

2.7 Staff – teaching and non-teaching

The school regards equality for all as a responsibility for all. All members of staff contribute to ensuring that our school is a fair, just and cohesive community by:

- ensuring that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's SEP;
- striving to provide material that gives positive images based on the protected characteristics and challenges stereotypical images;
- challenging any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents as prescribed in the LA and school's policies, e.g. reporting of racial incidents;
- supporting the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents

3. Engagement Process

The school regularly engages by talking directly to stakeholders covered under the Equality Act by use of questionnaire processes, meetings or surveys. The questionnaires in some instances are anonymous to encourage completion.

The groups surveyed are summarized below.

The School Council
Key Stage Councils
Learning Coach groups Councils
Curriculum Councils
MAT Council
ALN Council
Governors
Parents
All Pupils
Teachers

The wide range of information gathered to support our planning and action to promote equality and eliminate discrimination includes analysis of the following areas:

- Admissions
- Attendance
- ALN
- Ant-Bullying
- Child Protection and safeguarding
- Discipline
- Exclusion
- Assessment Recording and Reporting
- Feedback from staff (surveys, meetings, INSET days)
- Complaints statistics
- Bullying statistics

- Analysis of parent/carer questionnaires, consultation evenings etc
- Feedback form Governing Body reporting to parent evenings
- School Council feedback
- Pupil survey results
- Issues raised during annual reviews
- School Inspection reports
- School Polices (as relevant)
- School Improvement Plan

Feedback is through a variety of media and forums such as meetings, assemblies, newsletters

4. Relevant Information

Internal school documents and policies such as those listed above and other documents such as the School Development Plan and School Self-Evaluation in conjunction with national data such as WAG guidance or any surveys/reports on schools provide evidence as to how the school has met the General Duty, and how the school has identified its equality objectives

The school publishes a copy of its SEP and its action plan to meet its equality objectives. The school reports annually on the progress made on the action plans and the impact of the SEP itself on school ethos and practice within the school. This is undertaken as part of the Governors' Annual Report.

5. Equality Impact Assessments

Impact assessment refers to the review of all current and proposed plans and policies in order to help us act to promote equality and to ensure no person is disadvantaged by school activities through discrimination. Impact assessments are an on-going process to ensure that the school's plans and policies are developed in an increasingly inclusive and equitable way.

As part of the school's compliance of the specific duties of the Act, we will continue to undertake impact assessment of all new policies and plans prior to them being implemented. Similarly, we will impact assess our existing policies and plans whenever they are reviewed. As such, impact assessments are incorporated into the school's planned review and revision of every policy. Where impact assessments have been done, they will influence changes to policy and the review of the SEP itself.

6. Staff Awareness

The school is required to promote knowledge and understanding of the General Duty amongst its staff and the dissemination of this information will be incorporated into the schools yearly programme of Continuous Professional development and Performance management Process.

7. Equality Objectives

Our chosen Equality Objectives are:

1. Make the SEP an integral part of the School's working culture
2. Develop the work through evidence
3. Complete the Action Plan

We have action plans covering all relevant protected characteristics (Appendix 1). These describe how we are taking action to fulfil both the general and specific duties.

Our action plans are cross referenced with the School Improvement Plan which ensures that they are checked, monitored and evaluated systematically.

The action plans show:

- objectives and specific actions;
- expected impact and indicators of achievement (success criteria);
- clear timescales;
- who has lead responsibility;

The school evaluates the effectiveness of the SEP on a regular basis, through the governing body and with Estyn when the school is inspected.

The SEP will be updated annually as part of a 5 year Strategic Equality Plan that seeks to meet the needs of protected groups. A 3 year accessibility Action Plan linked to the Strategic Equality Plan will also be produced.

8. Gender Pay Objective

The School has not developed a Gender Pay Objective for the following reasons:

- The School has adopted and implemented the local authorities objective, analytical job evaluation system based on job demands for all non teaching staff which determines their salaries based on national pay spines, all teaching staff are paid in accordance with nationally negotiated rates.
- The school is committed to ensuring that its staff are paid in line with national rates which are determined in a fair and equal manner.

Employment Monitoring Report:

The School is unable to produce the Employment Monitoring Report as the staff group is too small to carry out the analysis required without the identification of individuals which is contrary to data protection legislation. However the information on school based staff will be included in the Council's Annual Report and the School is committed to ensuring fair and open treatment for all its staff during

recruitment, promotion, identification of training and development needs and all other internal staff processes.

9. Publishing and Monitoring Results

The school publishes a copy of its SEP and its action plan to meet its equality objectives. The school reports annually on the progress made on the action plans and the impact of the SEP itself on school ethos and practice within the school. This is undertaken as part of the Governors' Annual Report.

As part of our responsibility to monitor the SEP, we commit to:

- revisiting and analysing the information and data used to identify priorities for the SEP and action plans. This incorporates use of the overview of outcomes;
- using the impact assessments to ensure that actions taken have a positive impact across all protected characteristics, that the promotion of equality is at the heart of school planning and that discrimination is being eliminated effectively. The review of the SEP informs its revision, the setting of new priorities and action plans.

This process continues to:

- involve the participation of a full range of stakeholders;
- be evidenced based - using information and data that the school has gathered and analysed;
- use the evidence to do accurate impact assessments which inform priorities.

We will undertake a full review of our SEP by September 2016.

10. Contact Details

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1

Action Plan

We recognise that we cannot do everything at once. We have agreed priority areas for improvement and established a School Access Plan for 2016 – 2019 to address these issues.

We recognise that to be effective we need to make our action plan specific.

We have set out each of the key actions that we will be taking.

We have identified key individuals to deliver each of these actions.

We have tried to be as clear and as explicit as possible about the improvements we expect to arise from these actions.

We recognise that any positive changes resulting from these actions only make sense if they are recognised as improving things..

Appendix 2

Accessibility Plan

Accessibility Plan

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ADMISSION OF PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES

The arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities are the same as the arrangements for all pupils in the school and this information can be found in our Admissions of Pupils Policy.

Our specialist teacher for Additional Learning Needs liaises with staff from feeder schools and the appropriate LEA. On occasions it is necessary to assess the situation carefully to ensure that we can fully meet the needs of the pupil concerned.

Our admissions policy ensures that disabled pupils are not treated less favorably. Like all other pupils, pupils with disabilities are included in mainstream classes or the additional learning needs (ALN) class as their academic ability requires.

The school has been fitted with some ramps, lifts and a disabled toilet. A team of Learning Support Assistants are also employed to meet the needs of pupils.

The Governing Body has a link governor with responsibility for pupils with disabilities.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

For the purposes of this policy a disabled person is defined as 'a person who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on a person's everyday life. Mental health conditions are also covered when they are a clinically well-recognised illness.

INTRODUCTION

The school and its governors fully support the ideal of ensuring equality of opportunity for all providing it is not incompatible with the efficient education of other children.

Improving the accessibility of schools is not just about removing barriers, it is about increasing access in the widest sense, to ensure that teaching and learning is fully accessible to all pupils.

This policy in conjunction with our Disability Equality Scheme deals with our plans and strategies to continue improving accessibility for disabled pupils and will address ways of:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum and in activities such as after school clubs, leisure and sporting events and school trips
- improving the physical environment of the school for disabled pupils
- ensuring that all written information is accessible to all pupils
- allocating adequate resources for the implementation of the plan

Whilst the focus is on improving access for disabled pupils some of the strategies may also improve access for disabled staff, parents and members of the public.

Whenever possible we will work in partnership with the LEA, sharing information and expertise, to produce this accessibility strategy.

This plan will be reviewed in March each year and revised if necessary. A new plan will then be produced at 3 yearly intervals.

THE ALN FRAMEWORK

Planning to increase access for disabled pupils will help the inclusion of children with statements of ALN. The school has a strong tradition of educating children with statements of Alternative Learning Needs and will continue to do so unless this is incompatible with the efficient education of other children.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION DUTIES

The school will not treat disabled pupils less favourably than other pupils and will always take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage.

ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

Planning for improved access to the curriculum will include consideration of school and classroom organisation and support, timetabling, curriculum options, deployment of staff and staff information and training.

We will develop curriculum audits which review patterns of achievement and participation by disabled pupils in different areas of the curriculum, e.g. the inclusion of physically disabled children in PE. We will use a variety of approaches when planning and delivering the curriculum. For example:

- Grouping arrangements which enable pupils with disabilities to work with their peers.
- Peer support arrangements such as buddying, mentoring or a “circle of friends”.
- Pupils’ assessment needs and any reasonable adjustments which may be necessary to enable them to participate in national tests and qualifications as fully as possible.
- Staff training needs and sharing of good practice

IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The school is committed to working with the local authority to identify areas that need modifications and to develop a planned programme of improvements within the resources available.

IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF INFORMATION TO DISABLED PUPILS

This part of the duty covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its pupils – such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to disabled pupils. This might include alternative formats such as large print, audio tape, braille, a recognised symbol system, the use of ICT and the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or in sign language.