



FOREST HILL SCHOOL

EQUALITIES' POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

October 2014

*Review: annually, or if a
situation occurs which
necessitates amendment*

Mission Statement

Forest Hill School is a larger than average community school where students live within a geographically small area. Over 60% of the students come from ethnically diverse origins with those of Black Caribbean heritage making up a fifth of the school's population. The number of students known to be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is above the national average (23%). Over a third of students have Special Education Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, which is significantly higher than seen nationally.

Promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination are at the heart of everything we do at Forest Hill School. We are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents and carers in receipt of services from the school, irrespective of race, age, gender, identity, sexual orientation, SEN/disability, religion or belief (these are known as Protective Characteristics) and within our school their socio-economic background. We will build on our culture that celebrates inclusion and diversity as a real strength in which all of those associated with Forest Hill School are proud of their identity and able to contribute and participate fully in school life.

Many of our students are from households that suffer from poverty, unemployment, family breakdown, low aspirations and poor health. Some of our students are young carers.

We are absolutely clear that access to a quality education is the way in which young people can escape disadvantageous circumstances and enhance their choices and life chances.

The achievements and outcomes of our students will be tracked and monitored by race, gender, SEN, disability, CLA and FSM, with the analysis of this data used to support students, target interventions to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.

We recognise that discrimination exists and the inequalities people suffer as a result must be challenged. We will take action to reduce them and create a positive environment which is based on respect, tolerance and understanding for all.

Single Equalities Policy

Legal framework

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to disability, ethnicity, sex (gender), religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender identity (and as relevant, pregnancy/maternity, and in relation to employment; age and marriage/civil partnership).

We recognise and act on all opportunities to promote community cohesion.

We recognise that these duties and intentions 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.

Guiding principles

The Single Equalities Policy expresses the school's commitment to eliminating discrimination and contains guidelines for staff on tackling prejudice-related bullying or harassment or less favourable treatment.

In fulfilling the legal obligations and our intentions cited above, we are guided by **nine principles**:

Principle 1

All learners are of equal value

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value and we try to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and respectfully

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their sex (gender)
- whatever their gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual orientation
- whatever their age

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 in the kinds of prejudice that people may face, in relation to:

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

(and as relevant, pregnancy/maternity, and in relation to employment; age and marriage/civil partnership)

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, and an absence of sexual, homophobic, and gender identity based 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 sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- whatever their gender identity

(and as relevant, in respect of pregnancy/maternity, age and marriage/civil partnership)

Principle 5

We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

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 in relation to:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men
- sexual orientation
- gender identity

(and as relevant, in respect of pregnancy/maternity, and in relation to employment; age and marriage/civil partnership).

Principle 6

We consult and involve widely

We 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. As appropriate, we consult and involve groups and individuals in relation to:

- disability
- religion/belief
- sexual orientation
- sex (gender)
- gender identity
- ethnicity

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 all groups and individuals in relation to:

- disability
- religion/belief
- sexual orientation
- sex (gender)
- gender identity
- ethnicity
- age

Principle 8

We base our practices on sound evidence and information

We maintain and publish **at least annually**, quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- religion/belief
- sexual orientation
- sex (gender)
- gender identity
- ethnicity

Principle 9

Objectives

We review and publish specific and measurable objectives annually, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement in which we have been involved (principle 7), in relation to:

- disability
- religion/belief
- sexual orientation
- sex (gender)
- gender identity
- ethnicity

The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.

We revisit our equalities information and objectives annually within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation.

We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually to Governors on progress towards achieving them.

The curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the relevant principles set out in paragraph 4 above.

Ethos and organisation

We ensure the relevant principles listed in paragraph 4 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
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

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:

- prejudice around disability and special educational needs
- prejudice around racism and xenophobia, including that 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
- prejudice reflecting sexism and homophobia
- prejudice against gender identity issues

There is guidance available to staff on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

We continue to record and report racist and homophobic incidents, and review this anonymised data termly with the Full Governing Body.

Roles and responsibilities

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.

A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

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.

A senior member of staff (Deputy Headteacher, Inclusion) has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

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 relevant principles in paragraph 4 above
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

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.

Religious observance

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

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.

Breaches of the policy

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

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, language and gender.

As part of our monitoring and evaluation we will

- Publish information every year about our school population
- Outline how we have due regard for equality and how we promote community cohesion
- Publish equality objectives to show how we plan to tackle particular inequalities and improve what we do

The Forest Hill experience

- As a boys' school specialising in the Performing Arts, we have made a conscious decision to breakdown the stereotypical perception of boys' schools.
- Students from all backgrounds are nurtured and gain confidence and affirmation; our student leaders are representative of all the different groups in the school. We encourage our students to have a voice in their communities eg Young Mayor 2012.
- Our commitment to mixed ability teaching in the majority of lessons mitigates against stigma, labelling and stereotyping.
- The curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs and interest of all students and provides appropriate progression rates.
- We provide consistent encouragement to students to make non-stereotypical choices and move out of their comfort zone, eg large numbers of students choosing GCSE Dance as an option.
- Our new buildings provide full disabled access and there is effective support, both academic and social, for disabled students. We were the first Lewisham Secondary School to admit wheelchair dependent students.
- A strong Single Equality Policy was reviewed and adapted by the staff and FGB in 2012. This includes clear expectations for dealing with racism, sexism, homophobia and prejudice against disability, and contains extra guidance on homophobic bullying, sexist and racist language and religious or cultural harassment. We monitor behavioural interventions and exclusions in relation to ethnicity and SEN status.
- A strong inclusion support programme is in place including our House pastoral system. Mentors, AWO, School Counsellor and weekly Panel (team and child) meetings to identify and develop support programmes for vulnerable students.
- As well as challenging prejudice and harassment, there are many positive strategies to promote equality and respect for diversity, e.g. an LGBT Alliance has been set up in response to students' request; a high-profile campaign has taken place about the use of language. A staff handbook is available to support staff in addressing LGBT-related matters.
- Diversity is celebrated through assemblies, performances and through whole-school celebration of such events as Black History Month, LGBT History Month, and through our inclusive curriculum.
- There is robust monitoring of achievement, followed by proactive interventions to support groups identified as underachieving. These interventions have had significant impact in closing the gap between various groups in recent years.
- Effective EAL support enables EAL students to flourish and achieve well.
- In the Sixth Form, vulnerable students are targeted with bursaries to support their continuing education.
- Year 12 students participate in university visits to raise aspirations, and there is bespoke support with university applications.

Fostering good relations

Forest Hill School is a most dynamic, vibrant and harmonious multicultural community where students learn to respect others' culture, religion, viewpoints and lifestyles in a local context where there are high levels of conflict, violence and street crime.

Community cohesion is promoted within the school community by ensuring:

- Admissions criteria are open and enable a mixed intake which reflects the local 'catchment area' and associated culturally diverse communities.
- The staff profile broadly reflects the diversity of British society.
- EAL students, including recent arrivals and refugees and asylum seekers, flourish in the school and consistently achieve at levels higher than the school average (see attainment data).
- There are extremely low levels of racist and homophobic abuse and logs of racist incidents indicate that students are very clear about the school's values of tolerance and respect.
- Students from different backgrounds get on noticeably well, as is evidenced by visibly heterogeneous friendship groups .
- The achievement of FSM students has improved this year, as has that of other nationally underperforming groups.
- Our Performing Arts specialism allows us to showcase the vibrancy and diversity of the school community in regular performances which integrate and celebrate the huge range of our students' cultural background, interests and individual talents.
- All students study a Religious Education and PSHCE course in KS3 and KS4, to prepare them for active citizenship in a multicultural society. The course tackles current and often controversial issues in a way which aims to raise awareness and understanding and promote dialogue. Our KS4 RS syllabus focuses on Islam as well as Christianity, with the aim of addressing intolerance and stereotyping observable in the local community. This is well-received by students and has enhanced engagement in learning.
- Use of a prayer room is available for students upon request.
- Our open, discussion-based approach to RE and PSHCE, in discrete courses in Years 9-11, as well as our assembly programme, teaches about a plural society, challenges prejudice when it occurs, moves students' horizons from local to global, and provides creative opportunities to explore respect and diversity.

Key Stage 4 Targets 2014/2015

	5 x A* - C	5 x A* - C including English & Maths
Pupil Premium	60%	55%
Cohort	70%	65%

Key Stage 4 Equalities' data – GCSE Headline figures September 2014

- **60% of the cohort (140/232) achieved 5+ A*-C** **(90% in 2013 - 201/224)**
- **58% of the cohort (135/232) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M)** **(67% in 2013 - 149/224)**

- 44% of Black Caribbean students (15/34) achieved 5+ A*-C (85% in 2013 – 35/41)
- 44% of Black Caribbean students (15/34) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (49% in 2013 – 20/41)

- 36% of Black African students (10/28) achieved 5+ A*-C (94% in 2013 – 31/33)
- 32% of Black African students (9/28) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (64% in 2013 – 21/33)

- 70% of White British students (57/82) achieved 5+ A*-C (86% in 2013 – 56/65)
- 68% of White British students (56/82) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (69% in 2013 – 45/65)

- 70% of Mixed White/Black Caribbean students (7/10) achieved 5+ A*-C (88% in 2013 – 14/16)
- 70% of Mixed White/Black Caribbean students (7/10) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (63% in 2013 – 10/16)

- 48% of Pupil Premium students (40/83) achieved 5+ A*-C (84% in 2013 – 65/77)
- 47% of Pupil Premium students (39/83) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (51% in 2013 – 39/77)

- 67% of non-Pupil Premium students (100/149) achieved 5+ A*-C (93% in 2013 – 137/147)
- 64% of non-Pupil Premium students (96/149) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (75% in 2013 – 110/147)

- 46% of FSM WBRI students (6/13) achieved 5+ A*-C (63% in 2013 – 5/8)
- 46% of FSM WBRI students (6/13) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (50% in 2013 – 4/8)

- 40% of SEN students (36/90) achieved 5+ A*-C (84% in 2013 – 64/76)
- 38% of SEN students (34/90) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (43% in 2013 – 33/76)

- 57% of EAL students (26/46) achieved 5+ A*-C (92% in 2013 – 36/39)
- 52% of EAL students (24/46) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (69% in 2013 – 27/39)

- 0% of LAC students (0/4) achieved 5+ A*-C (100% in 2013 – 1/1)
- 0% of LAC students (0/4) achieved 5+ A*-C (E&M) (0% in 2013 – 0/1)