



Marches Academy Trust

Date of last review: June 2017

Equality Plan

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1. Mission statement

The Marches Trust is committed to ensuring equality of education, opportunity and experience for all students, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, age, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of students is monitored and we will use this data to support students, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination challenge bullying and stereotyping and create an environment which champions respect for all.

2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the Trust operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students;
- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents and carers in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which raise awareness and reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our students.

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

3. Equal Opportunities for Staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at The Marches Trust.

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However we seek to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer duties:

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Leadership Group support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

4. Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), introduced under the Equality Act 2010, applies to public sector bodies, including maintained schools and academies as well as to listed local authorities. The legislation states that a listed authority must comply with both a general duty and with specific duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The Academy Trust as a public body should include the following nine **Protected Characteristics** groupings of people when considering the PSED obligations, Appendix A:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Academy Trust should ensure due regard to the needs of all people in these groups when developing policy and strategy.

All individuals with any of the 'protected characteristics' must be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

General Duty

The General Equality duty may be described as the duty on a listed public authority, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the three equality aims.

These aims are:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited. In relation to students; schools and academies may seek to meet this aim by monitoring admissions, exclusions, attendance and prejudice related incidents. In respect of staff; schools and academies may seek to meet this by ensuring that there are appropriate employment policies in place,
- To advance equality of opportunity between groups/people who share a relevant protected characteristic and groups/people who do not share it, by considering the need to remove or minimise disadvantage, by taking steps to meet different needs, and by encouraging participation when it is disproportionately low.
- To foster good relations between groups/people who share a relevant protected characteristic and groups/people who do not share it.

Specific Duties

The specific duties support the performance of the general duty, listed authorities are required to prepare and publish details of how the Trust is:

- Eliminating discrimination.
- Improving equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics.
- Consulting and involving those affected by inequality in the decisions a Trust takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Policy and review this annually;
- Set equality objectives and review these at least every four years.

a. Race Equality

The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. The school works to ensure there are no practices that could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of such students.

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination;
- Improve equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare an Equality Policy which includes our written policy for race equality;
- Assess the impact of our policies, including this Plan, on students, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these students;
- Monitor the impact our plans and policies have on such students, staff and parents towards raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

b. Disability

The Trust takes account of Special Educational Needs and has an Accessibility Strategy which takes account of disability.

Definition of disability

A disabled person is someone who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities;
- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well-recognised”, although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal duties

The Trust seeks to ensure that any reasonable changes are in place as needed to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what the trust offers to the same extent as a person without that disability. This involves:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

c. Gender Equality

The Trust will work to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male students and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between males and females.

d. Sexual Orientation and members undergoing gender reassignment

The Trust will work to protect members of the community from discrimination, including from perception. No practices will result in unfair, less favourable treatment of students or staff.

e. Pregnancy or Maternity

Protection against discrimination is now extended to students who are pregnant or have recently given birth.

f. Marriage and Civil Partnership

The Trust will work to ensure that individuals are protected from discrimination, including from perception. No practices will result in unfair, less favourable treatment of students or staff.

g. Age

The Trust will work to ensure that individuals are protected from discrimination. No practices will result in unfair, less favourable treatment of students or staff.

h. Religion or belief

The Trust will work to ensure that individuals are protected from discrimination. No practices will result in unfair, less favourable treatment of students or staff.

i. Community cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between students from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

5. Consultation and involvement

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, students, parents, carers and stakeholders. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from annual parents' evenings, parent-school forum meetings and response to newsletter articles or letters from stakeholders;
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / INSET;
- Feedback from the school councils, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school (PASS);
- Issues raised in appraisal meetings or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at governing body meetings.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of governors

- The governing board of each school has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to students, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability.

- The governing board seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at the school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The governing board take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and students.
- The governing board welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The governing board ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in the school on account of any of the protected characteristics.

The role of the Headteacher (or senior leader responsible for Equalities)

- To implement the Trust's Equality Plan with the support of the governing board in doing so.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- All appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- Promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- Treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and associate (non-teaching)

- Ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the Trust's Equality Plan.
- Strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- Challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the appropriate Progress Director.
- Teachers support the work of associate staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

7. Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of any of the protected characteristics is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / pastoral leader/ Headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: "...any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".

Types of discriminatory incident

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc.;

- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and reporting incidents

It should be clear to students and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and associate, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole trust.

8. Review of progress and impact

The Plan has been agreed by the Trustees and by each school's local governing body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Plan annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on a three year cycle.

We make regular assessments of students' learning and use this information to track student progress to ensure that all groups of students are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

9. Publishing the plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements, we will:

- Publish our plan on each school's website;
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available on request.

Appendix A

ENSURING/IMPROVING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

The trust will ensure that:

- Student achievement is monitored and any trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action to narrow the gap are addressed;
- All staff are aware of the Trust's Equality Plan;
- The talents of disabled students are recognised and along with all students are given the opportunity to extend and excel;
- There is an inclusive approach to ensuring all students are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the School Council by election or co-option); assemblies; fund raising etc.;
- Disabled children can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits and journeys; lunchtime activities; PE or an accepted form of PE and dance and assemblies;
- Extended school activities such as breakfast and after-school clubs take into account student needs and access issues and students attending reflect the diversity of the school population in terms of race, gender, disability and socio-economic status;
- Staff, students, parents and carers will continue to be involved in the future development of the Equality Plan through input and feedback from surveys, staff meetings, school council meetings, parents evenings etc.

The trust will provide:

- Extra and additional support for students who are under-achieving, in order to make progress in their learning and their personal wellbeing, e.g. ensuring that children with visual impairment have enlarged texts; that children with hearing impairment have necessary auditory support;
- Additional support for parents of under-achieving children (e.g. reporting progress; discussing needs);
- Additional support for disabled parents/carers and staff to help them to play a full part in the life of the school (e.g. ensuring that meetings are held in the most accessible parts of the school to support wheelchair users).

PROMOTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND MEETING NEEDS

The Trust will:

- Promote positive images which reflect the diversity of the Trust and community in terms of the protected characteristics, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials and in classroom/corridor display;
- Actively seek to recruit disabled people to the school and support them in their work and career development, and try to reflect the diversity of the school community in its workforce;
- Actively seek to recruit disabled people to the governing bodies and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can fully participate and contribute;

- Provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools and communities;
- Provide extended services, with opportunities for students, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups;
- Supporting disabled students in the period of transition between primary and secondary school to ease the stress of moving and increase familiarity with new surroundings;
- Helping children and young people to understand others and value diversity;
- Promoting shared values, awareness of human rights and how to apply and defend them;
- Developing skills of participation and responsible action – for example through the new “Identity and Diversity: living together in the UK” strand of citizenship education.

ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The Trust will:

- Develop and adapt its procedures on tackling bullying to include equality perspectives;
- Support staff to challenge and address any bullying and harassment that is based on any of the protected characteristics;
- Keep a record and report how incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with at C3, IE room level and by the governing body;
- Review its approach to race, gender and disability bullying and harassment whenever it reviews its policy on behaviour.

MONITORING IMPACT

- Each school will collect and analyse evidence and data on children’s achievement, attendance and participation by race, gender and disability, and use this to inform strategies to raise achievement;

The Trust Equality Objectives 2017

The Marches School

The school's latest equality objectives were set in June 2017 and will be updated at least once every four years. Currently the school has two Objectives, which appear within the school's development plan for 2017-2018, with progress evaluated each half term.

1. We will work to ensure all groups experience a consistency of the use of literacy across the school so that all students write accurately and fluently.
2. We will develop our Futures curriculum to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve this award, demonstrating the LORIC principles (Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative and Communication – skills for employability and independence)

Sir John Talbot's School

The school's equality objectives have been inherent in the Behaviour Policy and the School Development Plans. Now within the Equality Policy of the school they will be updated at least once every 4 years. Currently the school has three Objectives, which appear within the school's development plan for 2017-2018 with progress evaluated each half term.

1. Further improve the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils across the school
2. Continue to swiftly reduce the level of persistent absence, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils
3. We will develop our Futures curriculum to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve this award, demonstrating the LORIC principles (Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative and Communication – skills for employability and independence)