

ST MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Equalities Policy & Scheme

Document Date: Summer 2025

Signed:

Puccio *Sally Curtis*

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Review Date: Summer 2026

Ratified by FGB: Summer 2025

To be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Curriculum Statement

Relationships & Sex Education Policy

PSHE Policy

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

Children Looked After Policy

Preventing and Dealing with Racist Incidents

Anti-Bullying Policy

Code of Conduct for Staff

Pupils in St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School are happy, confident and very proud of their school. They clearly understand their mission statement, 'Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him.' They can quote scripture to give examples of how they do their best to follow Jesus every day. Pupils explain that if they ever feel worried about something they are confident that adults will help them in a discreet and caring way. They are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the more vulnerable members of society and can reference Catholic social teaching when discussing their work with the local foodbank.

Catholic Schools Inspectorate October 2024

Pupils enjoy school. They respond well to the high expectations of staff. Pupils strive to do their best and achieve well. Pupils are extremely kind and caring. They frequently give up their free time to help each other. Lessons are free from disruption and lunchtimes are a buzz of happy and harmonious play.

Ofsted May 2024

At St Margaret Clitherow School we are committed to Safeguarding Children

Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him

Mission

At St Margaret Clitherow, we promote the Christian values of love, respect, tolerance and forgiveness, as revealed to us through the life of Jesus Christ. Our mission statement captures our desire to follow the example of Christ in welcoming, nurturing and developing the individual child as a unique and precious gift, created in the image of God. We recognise the dignity of each individual and aim to live as one family based on Gospel values.

St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School recognises the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 29: Your education should help you to use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people

Article 30: You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion- or any you choose.

Article 32: You have a right to be safe.

Policy Statement

St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School is a welcoming faith community where the unique identity and contribution of every member of the community is valued.

We are committed to creating an environment for learning which will enable all children to achieve the highest possible standards in an inclusive context that values learning and responds to individual and group needs. We seek to help children to develop into confident, responsible and caring adults through a rich faith experience and an ethos of tolerance, appreciation of difference and mutual respect. Integral to this is respect for everyone in their own beautiful uniqueness. It is the responsibility of every member of our community to ensure that this ethos is actively and consistently reflected in our practice.

We seek to promote equality of access, participation and opportunity in every aspect of the life of pupils, parents, staff and governors.

'We all have the same rights.' Pope Francis: Audience with children of the Peace Factory, May 12, 2015

Our purpose is to ensure that barriers are recognised and removed. Rigorous monitoring of our policies, practice and outcomes for different groups is an important part of our self-evaluation process.

It is accepted that every individual is equally important and that no-one has the right to harass, insult, attack or cause offence to any other person for any reason. All members of the school community have the right not to experience discrimination at school, whether or not it is directed at them. St Margaret Clitherow School values all children and seeks to ensure that they learn that hurtful behaviour and discrimination must be challenged at all times.

As a community, we aim to celebrate diversity and seek the full and active engagement of pupils, staff, parents and governors in all aspects of the community's development. However, we also strive to be an outward looking community, seeking to grow from the vitality and richness of the

wider community we serve. Through our policies and activities we aim to benefit wider society by fostering community cohesion.

1. Our Aims

To achieve our aims we will offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on Gospel values and working in harmony with all its members. Through this we aim to prepare young people for a life working with others in a wider community which is socially, culturally and religiously diverse. Specifically, we will:

- Maintain and promote a positive ethos of mutual respect and trust amongst pupils, parents, staff and governors in which all members of the school community feel valued and safe.
- Respect the equal human rights of all members of our community and educate our children about equality.
- Promote positive attitudes to and a valuing of the diversity of all individuals, with due regard for their differences in ability, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, lifestyle, religion, sexuality and socio-economic background through the curriculum and by example.
- Strive to support all individuals and groups that have increased vulnerability or need something extra to meet their needs, whether these needs are social, academic, physical or emotional. This potentially includes looked after children, young carers, those with special educational needs and disabilities, those who are gifted and talented, those experiencing bereavement or changing family circumstances, those with ongoing health (including mental health and emotional wellbeing) concerns, those who have bullied or been bullied, pupils who may be vulnerable socially and emotionally and those who display challenging behaviour.
- Provide positive role models for challenging stereotypes and any attitudes that may lead to self-limiting aspirations, especially with regard to gender, disability, ethnicity, culture and belief, and other aspects of experience that may increase the vulnerability of children, including looked after children.
- Create an environment in which all pupils and staff are able to reach their full potential.

- Respond promptly to any instances of hurtful or discriminatory behaviour, supporting offended individuals, educating those causing offence and taking steps to ensure that unacceptable behaviour or experience is eradicated.
- Implement and monitor school policies, processes and plans with due regard to the promotion of community cohesion and equality.
- Respond to the particular diversity needs of our school population with due attention to wider needs arising from our families' socio-economic and educational backgrounds, their home language, culture and their heritage.

2. LEGAL BACKGROUND

Our school is committed to meeting its public sector equality duties in line with the Equality Act 2010.

The general duty is that the school should have due regard towards:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- and fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Protected Characteristics are:

Protected Characteristic	For employees	For pupils
Disability	✓	✓
Ethnicity & race	✓	✓
Gender (sex)	✓	✓
Gender identity & reassignment	✓	✓
Religion & belief	✓	✓
Sexual orientation	✓	✓
Age	✓	N/A
Marriage & civil partnership	✓	N/A
Pregnancy, maternity & breastfeeding	✓	N/A

In addition to addressing the protected characteristics above, our school is committed to taking action on wider equality strands (e.g. 'vulnerable' children such as those in public care and young carers).

3. Specific Procedures and Processes for Delivery

Monitoring and Standards - all diversity areas

- We place a high priority on identifying the ethnicity, first language and specific diversity needs of all our pupils.
- Diversity aspects, including ability, disability, gender, ethnicity and relevant additional areas, are used to monitor achievement, attainment and progress, with a particular focus on the closure of any gaps in achievement at Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Our school plan also identifies and prioritises the reduction of underachievement amongst vulnerable pupil groups, e.g. EAL, FSM, SEND pupils.

- Diversity aspects are identified in the management and monitoring of all aspects of behaviour management, bullying, racist and prejudice based incidents and attendance. Analysis is used to plan for positive change and development.
- Ongoing reviews of all policies and documentation include consideration of diversity issues and their impact.
- The take up and impact of extra-curricular clubs is subject to periodic monitoring.

The Curriculum, Resources and Teaching and Learning - all diversity areas

- Teaching and curriculum provision supports high standards of attainment for all.
- The diversity of cultures and backgrounds represented in the school and the wider community is used by all staff as a positive resource to promote an understanding of local, UK and global diversity.
- Through the curriculum and pastoral support processes we seek to enable our pupils and staff to increasingly develop
 - a critical awareness of community, diversity and equality
 - a willingness to learn from different cultures, backgrounds, faiths, beliefs and lifestyles
- Lessons and activities across the curriculum teach pupils
 - to understand and value their own and others' personal, social and cultural identities
 - to respect and value difference and diversity and the skills to challenge prejudice and stereotyping
 - the skills of participation and responsible action
- Pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through fieldwork, visits and meetings with members of different communities.
- Staff are trained to have the confidence and skills to challenge all instances of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination. Pupils are taught to recognise prejudice, intolerance and discrimination and that they have no place in our community (the school has separate detailed procedures in relation to Anti-bullying and Preventing and Dealing with Racist Incidents).
- Staff recognise pupils' first language abilities as a teaching and learning resource and a strength.
- Classrooms and other common spaces in the school where work is displayed present positive and challenging images that are non-stereotypical and reflect the diversity of our society and world. This includes resources and materials used to teach Relationships and Sex Education.
- The school promotes positive attitudes to diversity throughout the year in themed events and activities.

Admissions and recruitment - all diversity areas

- We ensure that no aspects of diversity are a barrier to any individual's admission or recruitment to the school (see Admissions and Recruitment policies). Government and Diocesan guidelines and advice ensure that over-subscription criteria (including the practice of faith) are legal and comply with regulations. Admissions criteria go out for consultation to the wider community every year.
- Access to Continuing Professional Development, support and other opportunities are made available to all staff and we monitor to ensure that no disadvantage results from any aspect of their own or their family's diversity.

Wider outcomes for pupils - all diversity areas

- Pupils are encouraged to feel that their access to opportunities, both now and in their aspirations for future career and lifestyle choices, are not restricted by any aspect of their own or their family's diversity, ethnicity or socio-economic background. This is promoted at all times.

Parents and the wider community - all diversity areas

- Active steps are taken to involve all parents, and wherever appropriate additional steps will be taken to overcome barriers and ensure accessibility, including the use of translations, interpreters, large print, tape letters and reasonable adjustments to the physical environment.
- Parent working parties will be asked to review and develop school policies and procedures as appropriate.
- The school actively supports the Stevenage Educational Trust (SET), and works collaboratively with local schools, voluntary groups and wider agencies to ensure that we are represented and part of a wider diverse community.

Additional standard procedures and processes – disability

The school has a separate Accessibility Plan which details on-going arrangements for pupils with disabilities.

Additional procedures and processes – ethnicity and religion

As a school we recognise:

- the vulnerability of isolated minority ethnic pupils and non-Catholics in the school
- the challenge of expanding pupils' contacts and insights into diversity of culture and religion/belief.

Additional procedures and processes – wider diversity areas

- The school's policy on Education of Children in Public Care is in a separate dedicated document.
- The school welcomes all members of the community and seeks to promote participation wherever possible from diverse representatives.
- Appropriate support is provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body, supported by the Headteacher and staff, is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this scheme.

Commitment to implementation

The Headteacher retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the action plan is delivered effectively. The SLT will ensure that equality & diversity principles guide their work. The Headteacher will include Equality information in the termly report to Governors, as appropriate. All staff are responsible for delivering the scheme both as employees and as it relates to their area of work.

The link governor for Equalities is Marie Stewart.

Governors will:

Policy Development	Ensure the development and regular review of the school's equality and other policies.
Policy Implementation	Provide leadership and ensure the accountability of the Headteacher and senior staff for the communication and implementation of school policies. Ensure the monitoring of equality outcomes relating to wellbeing of employees and the work of the school.
Behaviour	Provide appropriate role models for all managers, staff and pupils. Celebrate examples of good practice from the school and among individual leaders, staff and pupils. Ensure a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases, homophobic/bi/transphobic or racist incidents.
Public Sector Duties	Ensure that the school carries out to the letter, the spirit of the statutory duties.

The Headteacher and senior staff will:

Policy Development and implementation	Initiate and oversee the development and regular review of equality policies and procedures. Ensure consultation with pupils, staff and stakeholders in the development review of policies. Ensure the effective communication of the policies to all pupils, staff and stakeholders. Ensure that managers and staff are trained as necessary to carry out the policies. Oversee the effective implementation of the policies.
Behaviour	Use informal and formal procedures as necessary to deal with 'difficult' situations. Provide appropriate role models for all managers, staff and pupils. Highlight and celebrate good practice. Ensure a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents.
Public Sector Duties	Ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties effectively.

Subject Leaders and teaching staff will:

Policy Development	Identify and report equality policy implications as they arise in the classroom and in all dealings with pupils, staff and parents. Respond to consultation requests by creating opportunities for pupils and staff to share their comments, suggestions and feedback, ensuring that all voices are heard. Develop and deliver a curriculum that fulfils the requirements of our equalities duty. Monitor outcomes, progress and participation of pupils by equalities dimensions and report any concerns at an early stage. Undertake and respond to equalities training as necessary.
Behaviour	Model positive attitudes, values and behaviour that promotes equality dimensions. Respond appropriately to the behaviour of pupils and staff, as a whole, and as individuals (praising/challenging as necessary).
Public Sector Duties	Contribute to managing the implementation of the school's Equality Scheme.

All teaching and support staff will:

Policy Development	Contribute to consultations and reviews. Raise with line managers any diversity issues or concerns which could contribute to policy review and development. Maintain awareness of the school's current Equality Policy and procedures.
Behaviour	Implement the policy as it applies to staff and pupils. Behave with respect and fairness to all colleagues and pupils, carrying out to the letter and spirit the school's equality scheme. Provide a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents.
Public Sector Duties	Contribute to the implementation of the school's Equality Scheme.

Parents/Guardians/Carers will:

- Ensure that a teacher or the Headteacher is contacted as soon as possible if either an adult or a child is emotionally hurt by any comment made at school.
- Be made aware that there are different levels and sources of support available within the school. These are allocated by the Headteacher in order to meet the unique needs of children in each class.
- Ensure that the ethos, values and aims of the school are reinforced in the home.
- Share information so that the class teacher is aware of any particular needs or circumstances that could help us to provide appropriate support e.g. disabilities of any family member or caring responsibilities that impact on the family.
- **Endeavour to be appropriate role models for their children.**

Pupils will:

- Respect themselves and each other.
- Use language that is inclusive and is not underpinned by discriminatory or hurtful offline or online influences.
- Raise any concerns about their own or other people's safety and wellbeing as soon as possible with an adult.
- Grow in awareness of their rights and their responsibilities to each other.

5. Stakeholder engagement and consultation

Our school is committed to encouraging all stakeholders to contribute to the development and review of all policies and procedures affecting the life of the school and its impact within the wider community. The range of techniques used to ensure stakeholder consultation includes:

- Ofsted style questionnaires
- parent/governor/pupil/staff working parties focused on key policy development issues
- staff/pupil interviews
- invited feedback on meetings
- pupil council discussion, suggestions and minutes
- PA feedback
- Staff Appraisal feedback

Feedback from stakeholders is welcome at any time and will feed into policy and practice development.

6. Impact Assessment

1. All school policies are reviewed for equality implications as part of the rolling programme of review and issues arising are identified and where required carried forward into the School Plan.
2. Key outcome data for equalities, e.g. bullying and racist incident data, identified imbalances in participation/achievement by group, and changes in school context data relevant to equalities will be included in the Headteacher's termly report to governors and identified through analysis of the analyse school performance report.
3. Progress on the delivery of specific equalities objectives will be reported as follows:
 - those related to staff will be addressed by the Finance and Personnel Committee.
 - those related to pupils and parents will be addressed by the Curriculum Committee.
4. Performance in relation to our equalities duties will be reported to the full governing body, including against the following strands (eg through the Headteachers report)
 - Identification of any specific concerns related to achievement levels by diversity strands.
 - Identification of any specific concerns related to attendance and behaviour by diversity strand.
 - Identification of any specific concerns related to bullying and racist incidents by diversity strands. Notification that all bullying and racist incidents have been dealt with promptly, recorded and resolved.
 - Evidence that high levels of trust and confidence have been maintained from the full diversity of parents.
 - Evidence that the taught curriculum reflects and celebrates the diversity of cultures and backgrounds represented in the school, the local community and in British society.
 - Is valuing and nurturing of individual pupils' identities.
 - Evidence that all school staff have received appropriate training or induction on equalities issues.
 - Progress on any specific equalities objectives.

APPENDIX 1

EQUALITIES INFORMATION FOR STAKEHOLDERS

COMPILED JUNE 2025

We have tried to make this information as accessible as possible and should you require any further information please do contact the Headteacher via the school office.

The Governing Body are keen to receive any feedback on the quality of the information that you have received through this document.

All parents and carers are encouraged to share information with us relating to the protected characteristics in order that we are able to meet their needs. Any information shared will always be treated in the strictest confidence.

1.0 General school context

With 233 pupils on roll, the school is an average sized one form entry Catholic Primary School. Although situated in the Broadwater area of Stevenage, we attract pupils from 10 different wards across Stevenage.

2.0 Disability

The school was rebuilt in 2000 and benefits from being fully accessible. However, parent consultation arrangements were altered in 2010 to respond to the need to ensure fair and easy physical access for all parents and carers.

The school has installed a Soundfield audio system in classrooms across the school (Yr 1 to Yr 6). Soundfield is an amplification system which enables all pupils to hear the spoken word clearly; it can also be used so that pupils sharing their work can be heard clearly. This is benefiting all pupils and staff, while also meeting the specific needs of individuals with hearing disabilities.

Although the hall does not benefit from a Soundfield system, additional wireless lapel microphones were purchased in 2016 and can be used in this environment.

A mechanical platform lift enables free access to both levels of the school building.

Lockers were introduced into all corridor areas in September 2016 in order to improve disabled access in cloakroom areas.

The visual impairment team continues to advise about the impact of the environment on such pupils. Improvements made in relation to this include:

- Increased contrasts in key areas including outside
- Painting of step edges as necessary
- Maximising light and shade in classrooms

See also section on Special Educational Needs.

4.0 Gender

The current school gender balance is: 58% girls and 42% boys

There are some girl heavy cohorts; class teachers are aware how this may impact upon dynamics and respond carefully to the needs that this may create.

Equality of opportunity is promoted for all activities. There are, however, some occasions in sport where a league that is entered has its own age appropriate rules about participation. These rules are adhered to. However, opportunities for participation in a wide range of sports through the curriculum and clubs is offered to all pupils.

5.0 Gender identity and reassignment

Pupils are taught about the negative impact of gender stereotypes/expectations on individuals and groups. Any issues, particularly relating to language and attitudes, are dealt with proactively and confidently by all staff.

Our Relationships and Sex Education Policy and scheme of work actively challenges stereotyping in all its forms, especially in relation to gender or sexual identity. The unique value of all people underpins all aspects of RSE policy and provision.

6.0 Race and ethnicity

6.1 Minority ethnic groups

57.1% of the student population are from minority ethnic groups with a growing number of pupils from eastern European, African and Filipino backgrounds. The school has 12 of the 17 ethnic groups. Minority ethnic group perform very well compared to other pupils and as such it is the White British groups that are underperforming in comparison.

The growing diversity of our community enhances our school. The curriculum provides opportunities to explore and celebrate the diversity of the school. Minority ethnic groups continue to achieve well against White British groups within the school and compared to groups nationally. The achievement of these groups continues to be monitored carefully.

Any incidents of a racial/homo-bi/transphobic nature are dealt with according to school policy and are dealt with quickly, fairly and with sensitivity. Full records are kept of any incidents. Such incidents are of a very rare nature. The school curriculum, through PSHE, RE and other curriculum links aims to widen pupils' horizons, celebrate diversity and tackle any misconceptions.

6.2 Pupils for whom English is not their first language (EAL)

29.9% of pupils have a first language, which is not English, with a growing proportion of Polish pupils, in particular, entering school with no English at all.

At both KS1 and KS2 these students perform well and above the national average for this group, a large proportion achieving beyond expected progress rates. New assessment procedures for pupils with EAL were put in place and this has enabled us to accelerate the progress of such pupils very early on. Achievement of this group continues to be monitored very carefully.

7.0 Pregnancy and maternity

The school is always keen to accommodate the particular needs of nursing / pregnant visitors to the school and makes every effort to ensure that adequate accommodation is offered for this. Staff returning to work following maternity leave are supported on an individual basis.

8.0 Religion and belief

The religious make-up of the student population is as follows:

96 % Catholic and 4% Other Christian

Non-Catholic pupils currently form a very small group in our school and as such staff are aware that they could potentially be vulnerable; staff ensure, therefore, that they do not become isolated by recognising and valuing all Christian traditions.

All pupils are involved fully in the life of the school and there is an 'open door' policy to ensure a warm welcome for all families.

As part of curriculum RE all pupils from Yr 1 to Year 6 spend at least 5 hours per year studying Judaism and a further 3 hours per year studying Islam. In the RE scheme, as pupils get older they consider the views of a whole range of Christian denominations on key liturgical and social issues as well as a Catholic viewpoint. This aims to ensure that they have a breadth of experience of world faiths and that they are not isolated in thinking that everyone believes the same things as them. They also consider the views of those who do not subscribe to any faith as part of their curriculum RE response.

9.0 Sexual orientation

Curricular work to prevent unintentional harassment, e.g. the use of homo/bi/transphobic language, has raised awareness amongst older pupils of the need to think carefully about the consequences of words and actions used and their impact upon others. Any incidents of homo/bi/transphobic language are dealt with swiftly, sensitively and with confidence by all staff.

The annual review of our Relationships and Sex Education Policy and Scheme, ensures that diverse and blended families are represented in the images used. These include same sex / civil partnership images. Healthy discussion is encouraged about the diversity of family types in a non-judgmental and fully inclusive manner.

10.0 Special Educational Needs

12% of pupils are on the SEND register

1.7% of pupils have an Education Health Care Plan EHCP

The school invests significantly in the support of Special Educational Needs. Based upon recent data analysis, we wish to improve the rate of progress for identified pupils with SEND so that such pupils compare favorably with similar pupils nationally; however many pupils have very complex needs and often the reported data is not able to reflect the progress that has been made. School data suggests that interventions for these pupils have an excellent impact on their learning and progress.

This group continues to be monitored very closely; their progress is monitored carefully by the SENCO. Their smaller steps of progress demonstrate good progress based upon their starting points, particularly for those with very complex needs.

We have a strong reputation locally for being a very inclusive school and regularly promote SEND initiatives.

11.0 Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)

Currently the Government funds a proportion of the school budget based upon the number of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals. This is because nationally, the statistics suggest

that this group of pupils do not perform as highly as other pupils. This has been complicated by universal Free School Meals being made available to all infant children.

In our school the uptake of FSM is **7.4%**. We continue to promote the entitlement of FSM to parents through reminders in our school newsletter.

A nominated Pupil Premium Governor ensures that the progress of this group is closely monitored and that funding received is beneficial to these pupils.

12.0 Attendance

Pupil Premium and SEND groups are identified as having attendance issues. This data continues to be monitored very carefully and robust protocols are adhered to in order to ensure that attendance is valued. The Herts County Council attendance officer is always alerted to any individual concerns.

13.0 Bullying

Incidents of bullying and harassment are extremely rare but are recorded and monitored according to the school policy. We always aim to identify problems before they reach such an extreme stage. They are also monitored according to groups involved (victims and perpetrators).

A proactive approach by the school supports this, including:

- Regular PSHE lessons which focus on bullying, hurtful behaviour and positive relationships
- The use of a playground buddy system
- Communication boxes and question boxes as part of PSHE lessons
- Conflict resolution prompts on the playground
- Protective Behaviours work (including half termly update of a hand network)
- Training for staff
- A focus on pupil voice (including an active school council)
- An open door policy for parents

There are currently no patterns involving particular groups in this data set.