



The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL,

A VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

COMMUNITY COHESION POLICY

Community Cohesion Policy

Context

1. Section 21(4) of the Education Act 2002 (as inserted by section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) states that:

‘The governing body of a maintained school shall, in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school—
 - (a) promote the well-being of pupils at the school, and
 - (b) in the case of a school in England, promote community cohesion.’
2. This duty came into effect on 1 September 2007. From 1 September 2008, HMCI has a duty under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as inserted by section 154 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) to report on the contribution made by schools to community cohesion.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has published *Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion* to support schools in implementing the duty – see DCSF website.

1. Introduction

The curriculum of our school should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils and of society and prepare our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

We already consider this part of our role, and already work in ways which promote community cohesion. As migration and economic change alter the shape of our increasingly diverse local communities, it is more important than ever that our school plays a full part in promoting community cohesion. Our school should be a thriving, cohesive community, but it also has a vital part to play in building a more cohesive society.

Every school - whatever its intake and wherever it is located - is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, language and ethnicity.

Whilst our school is characterised by ethnic, cultural, faith and linguistic diversity – **(however remember the school is mainly White British in make up)** - we still have a responsibility to ensure that our children learn about an even wider cultural and community heritage, especially the wider community of the UK and the global community.

We wish to show that through our ethos and curriculum our school can promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing our pupils how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

We believe that it is the duty of our school to address issues of ‘how we live together’ and ‘dealing with difference’ however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem. We also need to reflect upon, and appropriately respond to, the recent DCSF

guidance '**Learning together to be safe**' and work in partnership with the local authority and the Police to ensure that our pupils are appropriately informed and protected.

In the implementation of this policy, the school will act in accordance with its principles and goals, which themselves reflect the distinctive Catholic nature of the school, ensuring that all actions take full account of its Christian ethos and values.

2. What is community cohesion?

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

Community from our school's perspective

For our school, the term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- The school community – the pupils it serves, their families and the school's staff.
- The community within which the school is located – the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area.
- Obviously the parishes and the diocese form a large part of our community.
- The community of Britain - all schools are by definition part of this community.
- The global community – formed by EU and international links.

In addition, schools themselves create communities – for example, the networks formed by schools in development groups.

3 What do we need to consider in promoting community cohesion?

We need to consider what activities already take place within our school and what might be arranged in cooperation with other schools and our partnerships and links in the wider community.

Teaching, learning and curriculum

We need to ensure that we provide:

- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in citizenship classes for pupils to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.

- A programme of curriculum based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.
- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- An effective voice and involvement of pupils in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.
- Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity across the curriculum.
- An international dimension to our curriculum planning and delivery.

Examples from our school include:

- Our school has a varied and relevant curriculum that develops pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through fieldwork, visits and meetings with members of different communities e.g. all children go on school visits each year as part of the curriculum to range of Places of Worship and/or experience workshops from a variety of cultures.
- We have a well resourced Religious Education syllabus based on the local RE Agreed Syllabus which develops knowledge, attitude and skills in many of the areas at the heart of effective community cohesion.
- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and challenge prejudice and stereotyping e.g. PSHE and Citizenship.
- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- We have brought in an international perspective to our curriculum with particular regard to many examples – see international coordinator.

Equity and Excellence

Our school has a commitment to securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that pupils are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential.

The school tracking systems will enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.

Our school will monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment. Monitoring of whether pupils from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others should be accompanied by appropriate behaviour and discipline policies in place to deal with this.

Examples from our school include:

- A focus on securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic status e.g.Tracking and closing the gap between groups e.g. intervention strategies put in place to counter boys' underachievement.
- Developing the personalised progress of work.
- The development of gifted and talented children within the school as well as having effective procedures to support children with special educational needs.

- Equal opportunities and race equality policies are in place.
- Developing programmes of work for new arrivals e.g. our new arrivals procedures.
- Effective approaches in place to deal with incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment e.g. monitoring reports to Governors termly - clear school procedures.
- Monitoring our school behavior policies so that no groups suffer prejudice. Ensure that inappropriate behaviour, exclusions, racist, bullying and drug related incidents other stereotyping is monitored termly and reported to Governors.

Engagement and Ethos

We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We shall look either locally or further field and the means of developing the relationship may be through exchange visits or more likely through the internet. Sharing facilities also provides a means for pupils to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama. Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

- Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the pupils, ensuring that the pupil voice is heard and able to effect change.
- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals.
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, curriculum evenings, parent and child courses and family liaison work.
- Provision of extended services, and in particular bringing parents together from different backgrounds through parenting and family support and community use of facilities for activities that take place out of school hours, including adult and family learning, ICT and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes.

Examples from our school include:

The school community

- A school ethos established with clear aims, objectives and rules that underpin everyday practice e.g. no bullying, teasing or racist comments.
- Partnership arrangements in place to share good practice and offer pupils the opportunities to meet and learn from other pupils from different backgrounds. e.g. in geography/citizenship etc children visit schools in the national and international context. There are links built into existing schemes of work and grounded in the curriculum with pupils working together on a joint project or activity.
- Use of parents to talk about living in different communities and using their skills to promote learning.
- School council to take into account pupil views e.g. monitor racism, bullying and playground behaviour.
- Regular participation in Citizenship initiatives and awards promoted by the local authority eg The Learning for Living Awards.
- The school is involved in the International Schools Award which has given us many opportunities to develop community cohesion and to to develop an international dimension to our curriculum.
- We draw upon a number of local cultural organizations to provide speakers for assemblies or as stimulus to learning in the classroom.

The area in which the school is located

- Shared use of local facilities to provide a means for pupils to interact.
- We have strong links with our local Police Community Liaison Officer.
- Working with community representatives, for example bringing community representatives into school to work with pupils i.e. local imams and priests visiting classes, discussing the different ways people worship.
- Strong links and multi-agency working practice developed between the school and other local agencies.
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, refreshments after special assemblies, curriculum evenings, parent and child courses.
- Provision of extended services and community use of facilities for activities that take place in and out of school hours eg.. including sports, adult and family learning, information and communications technology, and English classes for speakers of other languages .e.g. school breakfast club, after-school clubs, after-school and holiday care etc.

The UK community

- Curriculum in place for children to take into account how different communities may live e.g. rural, suburban, urban through visits to other areas and other schools.
- Giving children experiences through visits and residential of differing areas and communities.
- Ensuring that children are aware of national and local events that affect people's lives.
- Learning about how different communities celebrate different festivals within Britain, e.g. Eid-Al-Addha, Ramadan, Eid-Al-Fittr, Diwali, Chinese New Year, Christmas, Harvest, Passover, Baisakhi.

The global community

- Links established locally and also International Links
- Children raise funds to support our four main charities
- Geography curriculum informs children of lives of world wide ways of living
- Charity events set up to support children around the world; children learn why they are raising funds e.g. Children in Need, Cafod etc

The Role of Governors

Our Governing Body is legally responsible for ensuring the promotion of social cohesion and the Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the duties are fulfilled within school.

On a regular basis our Governors will consider:-

- The school's impact on the community i.e. is the school exacerbating divisions or challenging them and breaking them down?
- How our school uses its own data around bullying and racist incidents to inform provision and school development?
- Whether we serve the wider community and help bring pupils and parents together?

- How representative our governing body is of the local community and pupils backgrounds?
- What our school can do to create an ethos of inclusion in which divisions and intolerance of others is unacceptable?
- How our school actively promotes understanding and dialogue between different groups, do we work in partnership with community and faith leaders?
- Any social problems which might impact adversely upon the school and how we have sought to engage key partners?
- Whether we have accessed support and good practice from within the local authority to promote social cohesion and what additional support is available?

Monitoring Social Cohesion at St Mary's school

The school staff and Academy Council will regularly review activity under the key headings above to ensure that this is further developed and refined. Evidence of social cohesion activity will be kept on file.

Links with other school policies:

- **Equality and Diversity**
- **Race Relations (This is in the Equality Policy)**
- **Citizenship**
- **Religious Education**
- **Anti-Bullying**

Websites of interest

www.ofsted.org.uk
www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/extendedschools
www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools

Signed by Chair of Academy Council Paul Jackson Date: November 2016

Signed by Head of School Helen Tomlinson Date: November 2016

Review date: November 2019