

BACKGROUND

The requirements of the Equality Act have been introduced incrementally since October 2010. In April 2011 the general public sector duty came into force and by April 2012 schools will have the specific duty to publish information and the specific duty to publish objectives.

The primary purpose of the legislation is to bring together existing equalities legislation. Primarily these are the Equal Pay Act of 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act of 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and three major statutory instruments of recent years protecting discrimination in employment on grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. It also builds on the 2006 Equality Act which instigated the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The 2010 Act imposes equality duties in respect of each of the equality strands (now called protected characteristics).

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Public authorities are also required to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status.

The Equality Act has a single equality duty of positively combating inequality. It brings all existing provisions broadly into line with one another and extends beyond race, gender and disability to now include the characteristics of age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. The Act also identifies other characteristics such as marital status, pregnancy, having caring responsibilities or maternity. The definition of equality is therefore wider than it has been before. Additionally, requirements that in the past have been seen as good practice are now legally enforceable. For example, the law now requires that as part of their procurement processes, public bodies should prefer companies that it contracts with to have a positive record on equality matters.

There are also implications for the community cohesion agenda. The existing duty to promote good race relations has been replaced with a generic one to promote good relations. The Equality Act will require all public authorities to take the aspects of interaction, empowerment, personal security and attitudes to others into account. Community cohesion is in sympathy with most, if not all, of the requirements in the legislation and thus there should not be a radical departure in terms of delivery. As part of Lancashire's continuing commitment to fostering community cohesion, we will work to narrow gaps in outcomes resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. This is in line with Lancashire County Council's priorities on closing the gaps (see 'Narrowing the Gaps: 2010 – 2013, Fairness for All' – Lancashire County Council).

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Schools are obliged to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PESD). This duty establishes, in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, that public authorities are required to pay 'due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation that are prohibited by the equality Act; and
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

This policy outlines the commitment of the staff, pupils and Governors of Lathom High school to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community. For our school this means not simply treating everybody the same but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of pupils in school, whilst celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all members of the school community. These include:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Parents/carers
- The Governing Body
- The Lathom Trust
- Multi-agency staff linked to the school
- Visitors to school
- Students on placement

We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

At Lathom High school, equality is a key principle for treating all people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential - irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

We are dedicated to our ethos of PROUD – Perseverance, Responsibility, Ownership, Understanding and Determination, which is promoted through giving every child the right curriculum, the highest quality of teaching and the best learning support possible.

Learning and support does not stop at the end of the school day. We have an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and also serve as a centre of learning for the community.

We believe that everyone should be treated equally and with respect. We want school to be a safe and happy place where everyone has a right to be free from bullying, of any type, be it racist, homophobic or any other discrimination and where everyone is entitled to voice their opinions free from prejudice.

The following extracts are from Lathom High Schools Ofsted Inspection June 2016

- “Pupils feel safe in school and say that they are well looked after and supported by their leaders”
- “Leaders have successfully managed the sudden increase in the number of pupils on roll caused by the closure of a local school. Those pupils have been enabled to settle into the school well, and their progress is beginning to accelerate”
- “Pupils feel that they are taught to keep themselves safe, they learn about about keeping themselves safe online in a variety of different contexts appropriate to their age”
- “Pupils say there is little bullying at school and that when it occurs, it is dealt with quickly”
- “The pupils new to school felt that they have been well supported and welcomed by their fellow pupils”
- “Pupils who attend alternative provision are well supported to make progress through a curriculum which matches their needs and is closely monitored to measure impact”

SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Lathom High School is a smaller than average sized secondary school. It is located on the edge of Skelmersdale and is adjacent to the other secondary school within the town.

	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Year 7	82	44	126
Year 8	79	50	129
Year 9	65	67	132
Year 10	59	66	125
Year 11	64	57	121
Totals	349	284	633

The school is physically accessible with access ramps. Within the building a lift ensures accessibility to all levels and a disabled toilet can be accessed on the middle floor.

The following extracts are from RAISE online 17.11.2016 Summary Report:

Ethnic Groups and English as a first language (nil returns not included)

	School %	National %
White		
British	89.1	96.3
Any other		
White background	7.2	5.6
Mixed		
White & black Caribbean	1.3	1.9
Not disclosed	0.5	0.5
First Language		
English	92.9	81.8
Other	6.9	18

The staff are predominately White British and female from Christian or non-religious backgrounds.

Most students come from a small geographical area and join the school with an average level of attainment. The area is of relative high social disadvantage. Over 50% are eligible for the pupil premium grant.

- 11 students with a known disability
- 5 Children Looked After

ETHOS AND ATMOSPHERE

- The leadership of the school community will demonstrate mutual respect between all members of the school community
- There is an openness of atmosphere which welcomes everyone to the school
- All within the school community will challenge any type of discriminatory and/or bullying behaviour, eg through unwanted attentions (verbal or physical) and unwelcome or offensive remarks or suggestions
- All pupils are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect
- Provision is made to cater for the spiritual needs of all the children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and externally based activities
- A key challenge is ensuring our children have an understanding of and value the multi ethnic and cultural diversity of the United Kingdom
- Regular parent/Carer drop in sessions are held at school with members of the Senior Leadership Team
- The Headteacher has an open door policy for all staff
- The school has developed and continues to strengthen links with other schools and the community

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This policy applies to the whole school community. It has been drawn up as a result of the outcomes of a transparent process:

- School Council
- Staff Representatives
- Governing Body
- Staff induction/exit interviews
- Home/School agreement
- SMSC lessons
- Tutor time
- Parents' Forum
- Peer Listeners

We have identified people from different religions are underrepresented. We intend to address this by working with local religious groups, schools and organisation within and outside of the local community, we publish it on our website and have hard copies available if requested.

We have strategies in place to promote the participation of students in decision making and in making a positive contribution to school life. We embed equality and inclusion into these strategies so that learners from diverse backgrounds are involved in shaping provision and improving practice.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Lathom High is an inclusive school, working towards greater equality in the whole school community. We use the curriculum and teaching to enhance the self-esteem of all those it serves and to provide a learning environment in which each individual is encouraged to fulfil her or his potential.

We collect and analyse a range of equality information for our students:

- Attendance Data
- Attainment Data
- Involvement in alternative curriculum placements
- Complaints of bullying and harassment
- Curriculum options selected by students
- Exclusions and truancy
- Racism, sexism, homophobia and all forms of bullying
- Parental involvement
- Participation in extended learning opportunities

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupils' progress, as they move through the school. As part of this process, we regularly monitor the performance of different groups, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress. We use this information to adjust future teaching and learning plans, as necessary. Resources are available to support groups of pupils where the information suggests that progress is not as good as it should be. The governing body receives regular updates on pupil performance information.

School performance information is compared to national data and local authority data, to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress when compared to all schools, and to schools in similar circumstances.

Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in pupil performance and provide specific support as required, including pastoral support. This allows us to take appropriate action to meet the needs of specific groups in order to make necessary improvements. We are also committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation. We recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and strive to establish a governing body that is representative of all sections of the community in order to respect and respond to the diverse needs of our population.

We collect and analyse a range of profile information of our staff and governors:

- Applicants for employment
- Induction Process
- Skills audit
- CPD
- Sickness absence including maternity
- Disciplinary and grievance cases
- Staff appraisal and performance
- Exit interviews
- All information collected is treated in the strictest confidence on a need to know basis only.

Due regard is given to the promotion of equality in the School Improvement Plan. The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the policy, their role is to :

- Lead discussions, organise training, update staff in staff meetings, support discussions
- Work with the governing body on matters relating to equality
- Support evaluation activities that moderate the impact and success of this policy

DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICE

Teaching and Learning

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

- Provide equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- Use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping
- Use materials to promote a positive image of and attitude towards disability and disabled people
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and religions and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
- Use a range of sensitive teaching strategies when teaching about different cultural and religious traditions
- Develop pupils advocacy skills so that they can detect bias, challenge discrimination, leading to justice and equality
- Ensure that the whole curriculum covers issues of equality and diversity
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education
- Provide educational visits and extended learning opportunities that involve all pupil groups
- Take account of the performance of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of pupils
- Identify resources and training that support staff development

Learning Environment

There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination. All pupils are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others. Parents are also encouraged to view their own children's achievements in this light.

- Teacher enthusiasm is a vital factor in achieving a high level of motivation and good results from all pupils
- Adults in the school will provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity

- The school should place a very high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability.
- We will meet all pupils' learning needs including the more able by carefully assessed and administered programmes of work
- The school must provide an environment in which all pupils have equal access to all facilities and resources
- All pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in their own learning
- A range of teaching methods are to be used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils
- Consideration will be given to the physical learning environment – both internal and external, including displays and signage

Curriculum

We aim to ensure that:

- Planning reflects our commitment to equality in all subject areas and cross curricular themes promoting positive attitudes to equality and diversity
- Pupils will have opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality
- Steps are taken to ensure that all pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum by taking into account their cultural, backgrounds, linguistic needs and learning styles
- All pupils have access to qualifications which recognise attainment and achievement and promote progression

Resources and Materials

The provision of good quality resources and materials within Lathom High School is a high priority. These resources:

- Reflect the reality of an ethnically, culturally and sexually diverse society
- Reflect a variety of viewpoints
- Show positive images of males and females in society
- Include non-stereotypical images of all groups in a global context
- Be accessible to all members of the school community

Language

We recognise that it is important that all members of the school community use appropriate language which:

- Does not transmit or confirm stereotypes
- Does not offend
- Creates and enhances positive images of particular groups identified at the beginning of this document
- Creates the conditions for all people to develop their self esteem
- Uses accurate language in referring to particular groups or individuals and challenges in instances where this is not the case

Extended Learning Opportunities

It is the policy of this school to provide equal access to all activities from an early age. We undertake responsibility for making contributions to extended learning opportunities and are aware of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity (e.g. sports helpers, coach drivers) by providing them with written guidelines drawn from this policy.

We try to ensure that all such non staff members who have contact with children adhere to these guidelines.

Provision for EAL students

We undertake to make appropriate provision for all EAL children/groups to ensure access to the whole curriculum. These groups may include:

- Pupils for whom English is an additional language
- Pupils who are new to the United Kingdom
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children
- Advanced bi-lingual learners
- Use first language effectively for learning

Personal Development and Pastoral Guidance

- Staff take account of gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination and the experience and needs of particular groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, refugee and asylum seeker pupils
- All pupils are encouraged to consider the full range of career opportunities available to them with no discriminatory boundaries placed on them due to their disability, gender, race or sexual orientation (whilst acknowledging that a disability may impose some practical boundaries to some career aspirations)
- All pupils/staff/parents/carers are given support, as appropriate, when they experience discrimination
- We recognise that perpetrators may also be victims and require support.
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils can see themselves reflected in the school community
- Emphasis is placed on the value that diversity brings to the school community rather than the challenges.

Staffing and Staff Development

We recognise the need for positive role models and distribution of responsibility among staff.

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- This must include pupils' access to a balance of male and female staff at all key stages where possible
- We encourage the career development and aspirations of all school staff
- It is our policy to provide staff with training and development, which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils

Staff Recruitment

- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process
- Equalities policies and practices are covered in all staff inductions
- All temporary staff are made aware of policies and practices
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and impact

Partnerships with Parents/Carers/Families and the Wider Community

We will work with parents/carers to help all pupils to achieve their potential.

- All parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the full life of the school.
- Members of the local community are encouraged to join in school activities
- Exploring the possibility of the school having a role to play in supporting new and settled communities

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Our Governing Body will ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements in respect of this policy
- The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and report progress to the governing body
- The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of this policy
- Our staff will promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for children with additional needs and maintain a good level of awareness of equalities issues
- All members of the school community have a responsibility to treat each other with respect, to feel valued, and to speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour
- We will take steps to ensure all visitors to the school adhere to our commitment to equality

COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT

We will ensure that we buy services from organisations that comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in any tendering process.

THE MEASUREMENT OF IMPACT OF THE POLICY

This policy will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school. An action plan will be published to enable an impact assessment to be undertaken at the appropriate time within a given timescale.

PUBLISHING THE POLICY AND PLAN

We recognise that our policy is a public document that should be available to any interested stakeholder. We promote and publish our policy by:

- School website
- Distribute to staff on the computer network, identified and sign posted at staff induction and in the staff handbook
- Make it available upon request
- Add a summary and key priorities to the school prospectus

ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS

We will regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of our policy and any action plan. We will report on our progress and performance which will be shared with Governors, our School Improvement Partner, Trustees, Staff and Learners.

The findings of our reports will be used to update the action plan.

We will ensure that any action plan is an integral part of our School Development Plan and as such, our progress will have regular oversight by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.

We will formally review and evaluate the policy and action plan every three years, to set new priorities and identify new objectives.

EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

We will undertake equality impact assessments on our policy and practice which will cover all aspects of equality, race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief. This will be done by the Governing Body Staffing committee in the Spring Term