

Equalities Information and Objectives

Approved by Full Governing Body: February 2022

Review Date: February 2024

Introduction

Kennet Valley C of E VA Primary School is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and with respect as we want our school to be a safe and inspiring learning environment for all our pupils. This school recognises that people have different needs, and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating everyone the same.

Kennet Valley C of E VA Primary School creates inclusive processes and practices where the varying needs of individuals can be identified and met.

This document explains how we show our commitment to equalityⁱ for our school population and how we plan to tackle inequalities that may impact at school.

Celebrating our Successes

- School has an excellent reputation for supporting all children and families in the community. This was particularly evident during the Covid Lockdown, when the school provided extra support to vulnerable children and their families. This support included extra food bags for children with FSM, ensuring the vulnerable children attended school rather than them accessing home schooling, and home visits and phone calls for all children. This was recognised even before Lockdown – *“Pupils are polite, courteous and cooperative. There is a family ethos in the school. This helps pupils to feel safe and cared for.” – Ofsted March 2020*
- The school has worked to reduce exclusion and the impact this has had on children from any specific group. This has been achieved through working with children and their families, staff training on de-escalation, and accessing external support for children as needed.
- Staff have ensured that all children have the opportunity to access sports and extracurricular clubs and monitor the involvement of girls/boys/under-represented groups in extracurricular activities/sport. *They particularly enjoy trips to museums and meeting visitors who come to the school. Pupils are keen to take part in the many extra-curricular activities on offer, including music lessons and sporting events ... Leaders ensure that pupils’ learning extends beyond the curriculum. Pupils attend a variety of clubs and take part in sporting events. These activities contribute well to pupils’ personal development – Ofsted March 2020*
- The school council has developed a child’s anti-bullying charter, which has helped to increase the understanding and confidence of pupils to recognise, address and report bullying - including the use of racist, anti-LGBT and disability-related discriminatory language. *Ofsted recognised this “Pupils told us that bullying does not happen at Kennet Valley. However, pupils know they can share worries with an adult in school. Pupils say adults will help them deal with any concerns. Relationships are strong across the school.” – Ofsted March 2020*
- The school has increased pupils’ knowledge and understanding of the different faiths and beliefs in Britain today and supporting individual pupils in the development of their sense of identity and belonging. Helping children to recognise the commonalities we all share.



Priorities for the Year 2021/22

In 2021– 2022 we are focusing on staff and children’s well-being and self-esteem following the Covid-19 pandemic, with success criteria of:

- Children and staff continuing to feel supported and know where to access help
- Children showing positive attitudes, resilience and taking ownership of their learning
- A school ethos of mutual support and understanding
- Outstanding behaviour in class and in the playground
- Confident children and staff with high self esteem
- Children continuing to develop their knowledge of diversity.

Sex (Gender) – Boys and Girls

The underachievement of boys compared with girls persists both nationally and in Wiltshire. In Wiltshire, the attainment gap was marginally under 8 percentage points in 2019, with 68% of girls achieving the expected standard in all of reading, writing and mathematics compared to 60% of boys.

In Wiltshire, the sex (girls/boys) attainment gap for the ‘major’ ethnic category All Black Pupils was larger at 10 percentage points with 62.7% of girls and 52.6% of boys achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths.

Two thirds of the gender gap in achieving the expected standard in Reading at age eleven ⁱⁱ is attributable to the fact that boys have lower levels of language and attention at age five.

This school knows that intervention targeting early language and attention have potential for improving outcomes for all children. Boys benefit from such interventions because they are more likely to have these problems to begin with. ⁱⁱⁱ

At Kennet Valley School we use a topic block system for planning and strive to ensure that these blocks will engage boys as much as girls and have had much success with past topics. Within each topic block there are opportunities for cross curricular activities which are designed to engage boys as much as girls and to teach new skills and knowledge.

Minority Ethnic Pupils

Many minority ethnic groups of pupils do well both in Wiltshire and nationally but there are also groups where underachievement persists. Underachievement for the groups highlighted in this report are a national as well as a Wiltshire concern and have been an ongoing issue since ethnic monitoring was introduced.

Very small numbers of minority ethnic pupils in Kennet Valley C of E VA Primary School mean that individual pupil-targeted approaches must be used to identify both underachievement, and to celebrate successes. LA and national attainment data provides a valuable source of information to identify potential areas of concern.

All Black Pupils Major Ethnic Monitoring Category

LA data has highlighted concerns about the attainment of the All Black Pupils major ethnic monitoring category and for the Black Caribbean minor ethnic monitoring category.ⁱⁱ

Wiltshire Key Stage 2 data for 2019 showed attainment was lower for pupils in the All Black Pupil major ethnic monitoring category compared with the White British pupils minor ethnic monitoring category. Fewer boys (8 percentage points lower) in the All Black Pupil category achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths compared with boys in the White British ethnic category. Attainment for Black Caribbean pupils was 14 percentage points lower than the attainment of White British pupils.

A lower proportion of Wiltshire pupils in the All Black Pupil major ethnic monitoring category achieved a Higher Standard in the Reading, Writing and Maths assessments compared with White British pupils. Pupils in the All Black Pupil were 3.7 less likely to have achieved the Higher Standard compared to White British Pupils.

When and as appropriate Kennet Valley C of E VA Primary School works closely with the LA to implement proven strategies to raise attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups during the primary school years.

Our curriculum, teaching, policies and practices are regularly reviewed and updated. The Black Lives Matter movement has provided a new impetus to this important work. This school is able to receive regular guidance and information from the LA as well as sharing best practice with other Wiltshire schools.

Equality Objective: Black Lives Matter

This school will develop a separate action plan to tackle long standing inequalities highlighted by the recent Black Lives Matter movement. In year 4, 5 and 6 there is a yearly focus on Black Lives Matter so that children gain knowledge and understanding of this movement.

Gypsy/Roma/Traveler Pupils

Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller pupils are the lowest achieving ethnic groups.

In Wiltshire, just under 18% of Gypsy/Roma pupils achieved the expected standard. ⁱⁱ While the overwhelming majority of Wiltshire Gypsy/Roma/Traveller pupils choose to attend primary school until the end of Year 6, it remains a concern that a majority of Wiltshire Gypsy and Traveller families choose to home educate their children during the secondary school years. ⁱⁱ

A House of Commons Briefing Paper (September 2017) reported that education issues for Gypsies and Travellers include prejudice, discrimination and discriminatory attitudes. The issues also include the schools' responses to discrimination, and high levels of self-exclusion from mainstream education because of discrimination. ^{iv}

National research published in 2018 suggests there has been a significant increase in the number of Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller children who are being cared for by local councils. The data shows an increase of 900% for the numbers of Gypsy/Roma children and 400% for Irish Traveller children since 2009. One of the reasons suggested is that Gypsy/Roma and Traveller families are less likely to be offered or to access early help and support and this is important as it is an area in which schools are able to help. ^v

English as an Additional Language

In Wiltshire schools, the same proportion, 64%, of pupils for whom English is known to be their first language and those for whom it is an additional language achieved the expected standard in 2019. ⁱⁱ

It should be noted that children with EAL have widely varying levels of English proficiency. Some children are new to English and some are fluently multilingual. Attainment is also affected by first language; for example, there are significant differences between Tamil and Chinese speakers, who, on average, perform better than Pashto and Turkish speakers. In addition, prior education and arrival time in English medium education impacts on attainment. ^{vi} The Wiltshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service advise on best practice for individual pupils to ensure those most vulnerable to poor attainment are to fulfil their academic potential.

At Kennet Valley Primary School we liaise closely, when needed, with the Wiltshire Ethnic Minorities service so that we access the support they offer for children with English as an additional language.

Faith and Belief

Kennet Valley C of E VA Primary School recognises how important faith and belief can be as part of a young person's developing identity, whether this relates to a specific faith or belief, or whether this relates to wider belief systems, morals and ethics.

Kennet Valley is committed to supporting all our young people as they develop a personal relationship with their own values and beliefs, and to supporting, in the context of the Human Rights agenda, the role this plays in the moral and ethical choices they make in life.

This school takes incidents of prejudice-related bullying seriously and is committed to working closely with parents/carers to create a school environment which is nurturing, friendly and supportive for all our children. Our school has established

a procedure for recording all incidents of prejudice-based bullying, and this includes bullying related to religion and belief. Comments from young people about bullying include the following, “Encourage and celebrate difference – don’t single us out if we are different, have difficulties, or have different beliefs and views”, the Wiltshire Anti-Bullying Charter. <https://www.wiltshirehealthyschools.org/core-themes/emotional-health-and-wellbeing/anti-bullying-practice/> This school is vigilant in maintaining an awareness of, and appropriate responses to, this possibility. [Name of school] is aware that negative faith-based media attention can have an impact on all children, and recognises the importance of ensuring that pupils are provided with accurate and appropriate information.

Kennet Valley Primary School ensures that all pupils gain knowledge of and respect for the different faiths in Britain as part of our role to prepare pupils for modern life in a diverse Britain. As part of a whole school activity, pupils celebrate different religious festivals and learn from religious representatives from various communities.

Kennet Valley Primary School recognises that discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief is a global concern. This school is aware that Islamophobia and anti-Semitism (discrimination or prejudice against people because they are Muslim or Jewish) is increasing and that it displays many of the same traits as racism.

This school will continue its work to inform and actively promote acceptance and respect. Nationally, between 2015/6 and 2016/7 there was an increase of 37 per cent in the numbers of faith or belief-based incidents reported to the Police either on school property or near to school property.^{vii}

11% of Islamophobic incidents happen in educational institutions^{viii}, including name-calling, jibes about so-called Islamic State, violence, and victimisation when wearing a hijab^{ix}. Many Muslim young people say abuse is so commonplace it is normalised^x. Childline has recorded a spike in race- and faith-based bullying with victims reporting that they feel isolated, withdrawn and lack self-esteem^{xi}.

This school is benefiting an education resource designed for work with primary school children to educate them about Islamophobia. The development of this resource was funded by the Home Office^{xii}.

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation (LGBT)

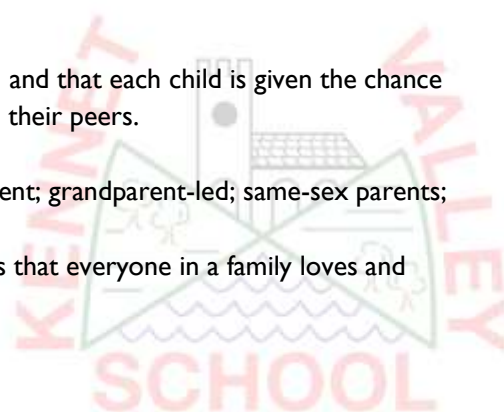
Gender Identity remains a new area for schools, but this Protected Characteristic identifies a small section of society as vulnerable to discrimination and inequality. Gender Identity was included in equality legislation for the first time in 2010, and many schools, parents, as well as wider society, are learning about the issues for the first time.

Schools in Wiltshire access expert advice and support from the LA, as well as exchanging best practice with other schools. Kennet Valley Primary School recognises that Gender Identity is a complex area and that children, young people and their families are navigating an equality area where best practice is not fixed, and where the central advice is to be ‘led by the child’.

This school is committed to ensuring that all our children feel safe while at school and that each child is given the chance to develop their unique identity with support from teaching and support staff, and their peers.

Pupils are taught that families come in many different forms and include single-parent; grandparent-led; same-sex parents; step-families; foster families; families who have adopted children; etc.

Our pupils understand that although families can be very different, what matters is that everyone in a family loves and cares for each other.



To ensure that our pupils develop a positive view of people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, this school celebrates LGBT^{xiii} History Month in February each year with a series of age-appropriate assemblies marking the contribution of significant figures (e.g. Alan Turing; Lily and Lana Wachowski; Gok Wan; Jackie Kay).

This school recognises that negative views within wider society about LGBT+^{xiv} people can have a detrimental effect on pupil wellbeing. Data from Childline and anecdotal information from CAMHS (serving Wiltshire children) show that increasing numbers of children in primary schools are raising issues relating to gender identity and sexual orientation. Gender Identity and sexual orientation are not mental health concerns but many of the referrals received by CAMHS for young people with issues related to their gender identity or sexual orientation are linked to bullying, isolation and internalised negative views about LGBT+ people, that in turn impacts on their emotional and mental health. This school recognises that pupils with these issues will need support from school-based counsellors/school support groups and national websites such as Young Minds. CAMHS is encouraging of primary schools who can provide such support to their pupils, as dealing effectively with these issues at a younger age appears to reduce the more serious mental health issues presented by some LGBT+ secondary school pupils.

There are many charitable organisations providing support on gender identity to young people, their families and to their schools. There are also organisations able to provide advice and support where a pupil has a parent who is transgender. The LA has up to date information about the different organisations, the services they provide and how to contact them and is available to advise.

This school has benefited from the work undertaken by the Church of England and published in the document “*Valuing All God’s Children*”.^{xv} This excellent document provides a framework that helps our school to address all issues of bullying behaviour and discriminatory language, and includes homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Disability (Special Educational Needs and Disability)

SEN pupils are categorised as 'SEN with a statement or Education, health and care (EHC) plan' and 'SEN support'. In Wiltshire in 2019, 16% of pupils at the end of key stage 2 had a special educational need and 4% had a statement or education, health and care plan.ⁱⁱ

Of all reported characteristics, pupils with SEN have the largest attainment gap when compared to those without any identified SEN.ⁱⁱ In 2019, 25.6% of Wiltshire pupils with SEN support reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, compared with 75% of Wiltshire pupils with no identified SEN, resulting in an attainment gap of 49 percentage points.ⁱⁱ

Kennet Valley Primary School is required to publish information on the attainment of SEN pupils. The focus of this section of this Equality Information document is disability. The disability areas being highlighted in this report have been adapted to reflect our current pupil profile. *Please note that as schools must adhere to data protection protocols in order not to breach the confidentiality of individual or small groups of pupils, this may mean that our school is limited in the data it is able to publish in this section.*

In the UK, 8% of children are disabled as defined under the Equality Act 2010. Shockingly, but unsurprisingly, a disabled person with a degree is still no more likely to be in work than a non-disabled person whose highest qualification is at GCSE. Societal attitude and stereotyping are likely to be a factor. This warrants a bespoke Equality Objective to begin to tackle societal perceptions and understanding of disabled people.

SEND pupils and the link with poverty

This school is aware that there is a strong link between poverty and disabilities that negatively impact on educational attainment.^{xvi} Children from low-income families are more likely than their peers to be born with inherited special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), are more likely to develop some forms of SEND in childhood. Also, children with SEND are more likely than their peers to be born into poverty, and, in addition, more likely to experience poverty as they grow up.

Kennet Valley Primary School, as part of its support for disadvantaged pupils, has made the achievement of pupils with SEND a whole school priority and is supported with expert advice from our SEND education specialists. {Name of school] also knows that a strong partnership with parents/carers is important, and will continue to work collaboratively to support parents/carers as they seek to provide their children with a stimulating home-learning environment.

Pupils with Mental Health Concerns

There is an increasing understanding of the negative impact of social, emotional, and mental health difficulties (SEMH) on the educational attainment of pupils. The incorporation of mental health into the Equality Act 2010 has helped to highlight this important issue.ⁱ

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated pressures on young people that can lead to poorer mental health. We are aware that worries about the virus, the effect of illness and bereavement within families and isolation caused by lock downs and partial school closures will have negatively impacted the mental health of some of our pupils over the past two years. As a school, we are working hard to support pupil's wellbeing and to understand and address their mental health needs.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Equality Objective One: Disability/SEND

In terms of the individual, Kennet Valley Primary School is aware that considering disability from an equality perspective as well as a needs/aids/adaptations approach brings out different thoughts and ideas. When developing a support plan with parents/carer and professional, we will consider equality as a distinct category. This might include curriculum development ideas, as well as CPD to gain a greater understanding of the impact of societally negative disability bias, the impact on young people and how to combat that within school. For example, we might consider the introduction of disability-inclusive sports within our curriculum.

Equality Objective Two: Disability/SEND

Objective 2 will address pupil mental health and wellbeing as part of our commitment to preventing mental health difficulties that may start in childhood but have a greater impact in adult life.

This school is committed to addressing all issues of bullying behaviour and discriminatory language. This school is aware that social media and on-line gaming exposes children to language that describes people with disabilities in a negative way. This school understands the impact of these words and has therefore decided that one of our new Equality Objectives will be to educate our pupils about disability-related discriminatory language to ensure all our pupils understand why some words should not be used.

Equality Objective Three: Gender

This school is committed to helping every child develop into self-confident young people able to access all opportunities available to them. This school recognises that a small minority of children do not feel they fit neatly into society's views of boy-gender and girl-gender. This school will:

- Work with children on an individual basis to provide relevant support and to make appropriate adaptations to meet their needs

- Ensure all our children thrive and achieve to the best of their ability and that gender stereotypes are minimised e.g. in the case of activities, toys, musical instruments or subjects that may be considered more girl or boy appropriate (an example of this might be that girls might be considered better at literacy and boys at maths)
- Ensure that all our children can be who they are without the introduction of unnecessary gender constraints or limitations
- Educate our children about negative language that may isolate and demean vulnerable pupils e.g. transphobic language
- Continue to ensure that our pupils feel able to wear a school uniform that best reflects them i.e. the choice of a skirt, trousers or shorts

ⁱ The Equality Act 2010 and Schools

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/key-stage-2-and-multi-academy-trust-performance-2019-revised>

ⁱⁱⁱ Understanding the Gender Gap in Literacy and Language Development: Professor Gemma Moss and Dr Liz Washbrook, University of Bristol 2016 <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/education/documents/bristol-working-papers-in-education/Understanding%20the%20Gender%20Gap%20working%20paper.pdf>

^{iv} Gypsies and Travellers, House of Commons Briefing Paper Number 08083, 28 September 2017

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8083/CBP-8083.pdf>

^v The Fragility of Professional Competence, A Preliminary Account of Child Protection Practice with Romani and Traveller Children in England, January 2018, University of Salford, Manchester <http://usir.salford.ac.uk/46146/1/the-fragility-of-professional-competence-january-2018.pdf>

^{vi} Educational Outcomes for Pupils who have English as an Additional Language: The Education Policy Institute, The Bell Foundation, Unbound Philanthropy by Jo Hutchinson, Director for Social Mobility and Vulnerable Learners (February 2018) <https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/research-report/educational-outcomes-of-children-with-english-as-an-additional-language/>

^{vii} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf

^{viii} Tell Mama, 2017

^{ix} NSPCC, 2018

^x British Youth Council, 2016

^{xi} NSPCC, 2018

^{xii} <https://www.equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/FAITH-IN-US.pdf>

Funded by the Home Office Hate Crime Communities Project Fund

^{xiii} LGBT History Month, <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-history-month-education> celebrated in February each year.

^{xiv} Stonewall School Report, 2017, The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans Pupils in Britain's Schools <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>

^{xv} Valuing All God's Children, 2017, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%27s%20Report_0.pdf



^{xvi} Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Special Education Needs and their Links to Poverty, 26 February 2016
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/special-educational-needs-and-their-links-poverty>



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