

Meridian School Equality Information and Objectives

To be updated annually and objectives published every 4 years.

Last updated and ratified by Governors: Feb 2020

This document meets the requirements under The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination; The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives. This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives set at the end of this document.

Aims

Meridian Primary School aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it (as defined below*)
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

We understand that as a school we cannot delegate responsibility for carrying out our duty to anyone else.

Introduction

Meridian values all children, staff, parents and members of our community regardless of Gender, Gender Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy or Maternity, Race (including Ethnic or National Origin, Nationality), Disability, Sexual Orientation, Age, or Religion or Belief. (Protected Characteristics* taken from Equality Act 2010.)

Equality is fundamental to the ethos of Meridian Primary School. We are an inclusive learning community which values individuality and celebrates differences. Our children come from richly diverse backgrounds, including different socio-economic backgrounds, family structures, ethnic groups and religions and they speak over 30 languages. Our intake is complemented by a designated special provision (DSP) for deaf children and we have a higher proportion of children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) than is the case nationally. Within this diverse learning community, we have high aspirations for each and every child and are determined to deliver the highest possible outcomes for all. We believe that positive relationships and a caring ethos are the basis for great learning. **This vision is articulated through our 5 core values which underpin everyday school life and our decision making:**

Meridian Values

Equality - We value the rich diversity of our school community and our similarities and differences are celebrated. Everyone is treated with respect. We have high expectations for all our children and all our staff, whoever they are and whatever their circumstances or backgrounds. If we believe in our children, they will believe in themselves. If we teach them about the success of others, we can show them the possibilities for themselves.

Nurture - Our children are at the heart of everything we do. We are a small, friendly and caring school that looks after our children and aims to know them and their families well. We know that children cannot learn unless they are happy, safe and secure and we work hard to make this happen. We seek to work in partnership with parents - they are a big part of school life and are very welcome at Meridian.

Aspiration - At Meridian we know that all children respond positively to high expectations. We are ambitious for all our children whatever their circumstances and backgrounds and we want them to make great progress and achieve well during their time with us. We teach them to set their goals high and be resilient in pursuing these goals. We value and seek on-going learning opportunities for all the grown-ups in our community too.

Inclusion - Every child is special and at Meridian we value every child. A deaf aware and dyslexia friendly school, we recognise and value learning differences. We take special educational needs into account when providing appropriate support and structure. We aim to find out how to engage and motivate all our children and enable them to become independent, resilient learners.

Creativity - We believe that everyone has their own special skills, talents and interests and through our varied curriculum and extra-curricular provision we hope that everyone will find and develop his/hers. We seek to make learning fun and purposeful and the great spaces, museums and galleries in London are used as much as possible. We work hard to enrich our curriculum with arts and sports activities and prepare children for a changing and diverse world. Children are taught to think for themselves and tackle problems imaginatively.

Our approach

We have a holistic approach to education. Through our curriculum and ethos, we aim to foster a learning environment in which our children develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities within their community and develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge that will prepare them for life in a pluralist society (a diverse one, where the people in it believe all kinds of different things and tolerate each other's beliefs even when they don't match their own).

In particular we:

- Encourage all children to respect and value themselves and each other;
- Seek to provide a positive and stimulating environment where all children and staff feel safe and secure;
- Nurture excellent behaviours for learning and strive to eliminate all forms of bullying;
- Maintain high quality teaching and learning and provide optimum learning conditions for all our children as set out in our teaching and learning policy;

- Strive to close any gaps which may exist between different groups of children by overcoming barriers to learning, accelerating progress and raising standards;
- Foster a growth mindset in which children feel safe to make mistakes and learn from them;
- Nurture resilient learners who are persistent, curious, resourceful, reflective and focussed.

Eliminating discrimination

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct. For example, our behaviour policy defines racism and other forms of discrimination as serious misbehaviour. Any incidents are reported to the Headteacher and logged. Such incidents would be examined individually and relevant action would be taken.

Staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during staff briefings and development meetings.

The Headteacher and Equality Link Governor regularly liaise regarding any issues in relation to equality and make other staff and governors aware of these as appropriate.

Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity. We aim to challenge any inequalities which may exist and close any achievement gaps which may arise between children who are disadvantaged and those who are not, thereby improving children's life chances. Some examples of the ways in which we tackle potential disadvantage and meet the needs of protected groups are as follows:

- We monitor and analyse pupil achievement by a range of characteristics including ethnicity, gender, SEND, English as an additional language (EAL) and pupil premium (PP) and take action to narrow any gaps which may exist. For example, the school's actions in recent years have resulted in closing the attainment gap between children eligible for the PP grant at Meridian and other non-PP children nationally (see *'Pupil Premium Strategy'*).
- We have high expectations of all our children and seek to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have. For example, our commitment to excellence in the inclusion of pupils with SEND, including those children who are deaf, dyslexic or have ASD, has led to Meridian SEND children achieving more highly than other SEND children nationally and indeed, than 'all children' nationally.
- We take steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim children to pray at prescribed times).
- We seek to raise aspirations through making children aware of role models from protected groups (e.g. through assemblies and the curriculum).
- We offer a range of artistic, cultural and sporting activities and encourage children who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in these (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school clubs; initiating lunchtime clubs to promote increased participation in sport for targeted children including some reluctant girls; adapting curriculum plans to meet the needs of a class with a high proportion of boys).

Fostering good relations

Visitors to Meridian often comment on our welcoming and nurturing environment and observe the children learning and playing together well. The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English, children are introduced to literature from a range of cultures and in Humanities children study different cultures throughout history such as the Ancient Civilisation of Benin. Children in Year 5 are invited to visit our link school All Cannings in Wiltshire each year.
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues and promoting positive role models (e.g. Anti-Bullying week, Black History Month, Deaf Awareness Week).
- Holding school community events which are well attended by the whole school community (e.g. the Summer Fair, Bingo Night).
- Working with our local community. This includes organising school trips and activities based around the local community such as trips to places of worship and taking part in the annual Christmas Carol Concert at the Old Royal Naval College chapel. In addition we facilitate an English for Action class which teaches English to EAL people in the community; have hosted a weekend Chinese School and Brownies and Guides for many years; have a link with Trinity Laban.
- Facilitating regular opportunities for children to design and support fundraising events (e.g. children participate with enthusiasm in events such as the annual Charity Concert for local and international charities and Enterprise Week which contributes to fundraising for the school). In recent years, Jo our Headteacher, rowed down the Thames with other local heads to raise money for The Ahoy Centre, a local charity providing water sport training for disadvantaged children and disabled people.
- Engaging and consulting with the school community through our strong pastoral support, our School Council and active parent teacher association (FROMs) and by creating an open and welcoming ethos (e.g. very well attended daily parent reading time across the Foundation Stage and recent parent workshops on phonics and E-safety).

Equality considerations in decision-making

As a school we are aware of our equality duty in all decision-making:

- We consider equality issues at the time that decisions are made and keep them under review on a continuing basis
- We aim to carry out rigorous analysis of a decision's impact on equality
- We aim to keep records to demonstrate that equality issues have been considered

The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip cuts across any religious holidays and is accessible to pupils with disabilities.

Equality Objectives

The Headteacher and Equality Link Governor are responsible for promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff, pupils and governors. The Senior Leadership Team and Equality Link Governor monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors.

Our current Equality Objectives are based on our analysis of school achievement and attendance data and feedback from members of the school community. By July 2021 we aim to:

1: Deepen children's understanding of their rights and responsibilities as active citizens in their local and global community by:

- *Obtaining Unicef's Rights Respecting Schools Award and using this as a platform to increase parental and child engagement in learning (SIP. 1a)*
- *Refreshing our Dyslexia Friendly Mark and widening this remit to incorporate increased awareness of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Attachment (SIP. 1d)*
- *Auditing the curriculum and assembly themes to ensure full coverage of significant people and protected groups.*

2: Accelerate progress for PP children further so that more of these children achieve the higher standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2.

This objective is linked to both our school improvement plan (SIP) and pupil premium strategy and includes:

- *Embedding the Meridian characteristics of resilient learners across the school (SIP 1b)*
- *Improving attendance and punctuality for PP children (SIP 1e)*

3: Ensure that our staff feel confident in using age appropriate language related to sexuality and gender identity and in responding effectively and consistently to children's use of homophobic and transphobic language, as shown by a staff survey.

- *Facilitate staff training from outside partners; potentially obtaining Stonewall's School Champion Award.*
- *Review our whole school behaviour policy and PSHE/RSE schemes of work.*