WHICKHAM SCHOOL

Equality Objectives Policy

2026-2027

DRAFT FOR GOVERNOR APPROVAL

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Policy Review

Last reviewed	By whom	Next review
July 2026	P wheatley	July 2027 (monitoring/updates) July 2031 (full review)

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation 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 a relevant protected characteristic;
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: Age; Disability; Gender reassignment; Marriage or civil partnership; Pregnancy and maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex; Sexual orientation;

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- 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, the technical guidance for schools from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and guidance from the Government Equalities Office on meeting the specific duties that support the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association;

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents;
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years;
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Headteacher;
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training and understand the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation;

The Headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils;
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors;
- Have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action to whether it may have particular implications for people with particular protected characteristics;

The People and Performance manager will:

- Support the Headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils;
- Support the Headteacher in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver or arrange training as necessary;

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in section 8.

4. 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;
- Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act – for example, during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting, it is recorded in the meeting minutes;
- New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every year;
- The school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and governors aware of these as appropriate;

5. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or LGBTQ+ pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying);
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. supporting Muslims during Ramadan);

- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies);

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing;
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information;
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying);
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils;

6. Fostering good relations

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/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures;
- Making pupils aware of our behaviour and anti-bullying policies;
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies, and we will also invite external speakers to contribute;
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community;
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures;
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach (e.g. specialist SEND support services);

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. We consider equality implications before and at the time that we develop policy and make decisions and continue to review these on a continuing basis.

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;
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities (applying reasonable adjustments);
- Has equivalent facilities for all pupils;

The school considers equality issues and barriers to participation before every trip. This is formally recorded as part of the risk assessment.

8. Review of previous Equality objectives

We reviewed progress against our equality objectives for 2022-2026 as follows:

Objective 1:	Equality in admissions
Why we have chosen this objective:	● To ensure no discrimination occurs in pupil admissions
To achieve this objective we plan to:	● To continue to retain Gateshead LA to run the school's admissions process on our behalf as part of the LA's coordinated admissions process. The LA consults and amends policies to comply with best practice. ● To work with the SEND panel to ensure we can meet the needs of Y6 pupils with SEND on entry to Year 7.
Update on progress:	● Met & ongoing ● The increasing number of applications from LAC/SEND pupils is an indicator of the perceived inclusivity of the school.

Objective 2:	Equality in curriculum access and pupil experience
Why we have chosen this objective:	● Equality in access to our curriculum and ensuring pupils feel valued are fundamental to school life
To achieve this objective we plan to:	● Review SoL to ensure equality issues are explicitly addressed ● Celebrate diversity through an annual diversity week, and more regularly through pupil leadership and participation in our rainbow society

Update on progress:	● The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to curriculum delivery and not content. Nevertheless we strive to make our curriculum content inclusive and positive about diversity. We hold an annual diversity week and have recently reviewed our curriculum to ensure that it is broadly representative (for example following the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020). ● Equality is a key theme of our citizenship programme. We run a Rainbow Society in school, becoming recognised as a model of good practice across the region promoting both pupil and staff diversity. Strong evidence includes pupils who have transferred into our school via the fair access panel from other schools because they recognise Whickham School's commitment to diversity and inclusion. ● PSHCE programme has been reviewed to ensure all protected characteristics are explicitly taught. Further curriculum time will be given to this from September 2026. ● We employ an Achievement Team to help identify and resolve any visible or hidden barriers to learning. This includes support to remove temporary barriers. ● The school takes all concerns about discrimination and harassment seriously. Incidents are closely monitored (termly) by governors. As a school we seek to embed restorative practice and principles. Over time this has resulted in fewer issues arising. This has helped to foster good relations across all characteristics and between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. ● Within assessment we work hard with our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team to ensure all pupils have equal opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in their examinations. Our exam access arrangements have expanded significantly in the past 5 years. ● Our Rainbow society is working to expand the range of events that are celebrated including a refugee week as well as racism, black history month and a number of other ideas. ● Where necessary we adapt the locations of our teaching to meet access needs. ● Site updates over the summer of 2024 have increased the accessibility of the wider site to a wider range of pupils. Further updates will be planned into the site during the next rebuild phase (Sept 2026-2030).

Objective 3:	Equality in personnel decisions
Why we have chosen this objective:	● Ensuring equality in personnel matters will help to ensure we retain a strong and motivated workforce
To achieve this objective we	● Use EO data post recruitment to monitor recruitment for hidden

plan to:	biases ● Ensure our commitment to equality is clear in job advertisements ● Review flexible working questions positively ● Consult staff regularly on dietary requirements prior to inset days / evening events
Update on progress:	● The school has a larger than average number of part-time teaching staff (28%, NA: 17%) ● The school is increasingly open to trialling part-time leadership roles. ● Inclusivity is mentioned in our adverts and increasingly mentioned by candidates during interviews ● Dietary requirements are regularly consulted upon

Objective 4:	Equality for SEND pupils
Why we have chosen this objective:	● Historical SEND provision has been variable
To achieve this objective we plan to:	● Restructure and train our SEND team to focus on the 4 key strands of SEND ● Minimise pupil withdrawal from the curriculum and move away from practices which include withdrawal from a whole subject ● Provide CPDL to school staff, formalising the role of the TA and ensuring written agreements are in place to maximise their value and avoid “learned helplessness” ● Improve the SEND referral process ● Refocus SEND intervention on numeracy, literacy, communication and SEMH. ● Improve our physical and sensory related SEND support ● Introduce person-centred planning and TA understanding of MITA processes
Update on progress:	● Ofsted last inspected the school in January 2025. SEND was identified as an area of strength: “The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. It provides staff with clear guidance about how to support these pupils effectively through the use of pupil passports. Staff use this information to ensure that these pupils can learn successfully alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND therefore achieve well.” ● A head of inclusion (Assistant Headteacher) has been appointed for September 2026 to further strengthen this provision.

9. Equality Objectives (cycle: Sept 2026 - August 2030)

Objective 1:	Further reduce the barriers faced by neurodivergent pupils with SEND
Why we have chosen this objective:	● We have an ARMS specialism. This results in an increase in pupils with ASD and other neurodiversity traits - both directly as a result of pupils who are placed in the ARMS and through a wider halo effect. ● A variety of pupils with undiagnosed SEND needs are also likely to benefit from more neurodiverse aware practice. ● Potential for a spill-over effect into improving wellbeing for staff with neurodiverse traits.
To achieve this objective we plan to:	● Appoint an AHT with responsibility for Inclusion to provide a greater strategic oversight of support for key pupils. ● Ensure SEND is central to the whole school improvement process. ● Dedicate staff training time to upskill all staff in overcoming the barriers faced by neurodivergent pupils. ● Review curriculum resources to reduce cognitive load ● Rewrite ISPs to ensure that the key strategies are clear and as simple as possible in order to promote clarity of understanding and delivery. ● Remove barriers to participating in wider school life; promoting the uptake of a wide variety of enrichment opportunities ● Strengthen the "universal" quality first teaching offer (ongoing work across the period) ● Regularly monitor the impact of training through lesson visits, pupil voice and work scrutiny ● Consider other actions as a result of forthcoming guidance and changes as part of the DfE inclusion white paper.
Update on progress:	●

Objective 2:	Further work on protected characteristics in the curriculum
Why we have chosen this objective:	● Young people are exposed to a wide range of examples of unhealthy attitudes and relationships through social media. ● The positive role played by some protected groups is not currently fully reflected in our curriculum ● Pupils need to recognise role models across a range of protected characteristics ● Aligns with the fundamental values of the school
To achieve this objective we	● Review the History curriculum to more fully reflect the role

plan to:	played by females in key historical events ● Extend the time allocated to PSHCE and review the curriculum to more fully embed protected characteristics and Fundamental British Values (fBv) such as tolerance into the curriculum. ● Review the reading canon and texts within English to ensure a wide range of authors are reflected.
Update on progress:	●

Objective 3:	Improve access to the curriculum for pupils with Hearing and Visual Impairments
Why we have chosen this objective:	● We wish to view our curriculum through the lens of pupils with impairments to ensure that they can fully access all opportunities
To achieve this objective we plan to:	● During 2026/27 we will meet with students with hearing impairments to discuss their understanding of barriers affecting them ● Understand where barriers are and put in place an action plan for the 2027-2030 cycle to remove these barriers.
Update on progress:	●

10. Monitoring arrangements

- The school will update annually the equality information we publish on the website
- This document will be reviewed by the FAR sub-committee at least every 4 years.
- Staff and pupils will be asked to meet to discuss the equality objectives and progress towards them at least every 4 years.