



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1. Our commitment

The Acorn School is committed to being a school for all, where differences are recognised, respected and supported.

We understand inclusion as more than a child simply being present within a school. It means being seen, known and valued, experiencing a sense of belonging, and being able to participate meaningfully in the learning, relationships and wider life of the school.

We recognise that children bring different strengths, needs, backgrounds, experiences and ways of learning. We seek to understand the individual child, maintain high expectations for every pupil, identify barriers to learning and wellbeing, and provide appropriate support so that each child has the opportunity to participate, make progress and flourish.

We seek to create a school community in which difference does not diminish belonging.

2. Equality and diversity

The Acorn School is committed to equality of opportunity and to treating pupils, staff, parents, carers and members of our wider school community with dignity and respect.

We oppose unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and have regard to our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These characteristics apply differently within different aspects of education and employment. The school will meet its legal responsibilities as they apply within the school context.

We recognise that equality does not always mean treating everybody in exactly the same way. Some pupils may require different or additional provision, adaptations or reasonable adjustments in order to participate fully in school life.

3. Inclusion at The Acorn School

Inclusion is a whole-school responsibility. It is woven through our curriculum, teaching, relationships, pastoral care, behaviour and attendance approaches and our work with families.

Our approach begins with knowing the individual child. We seek to identify pupils' strengths as well as areas in which they may experience difficulty and to understand the barriers that may affect their learning, participation or wellbeing.

3.1 In practice, we aim to

- maintain high expectations for all pupils while recognising different starting points and individual needs;
- identify emerging needs and barriers as early and accurately as possible;
- adapt teaching, resources, curriculum and the learning environment where appropriate;
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils;
- provide additional or different support where a pupil requires it;
- review whether provision is having the intended effect;
- listen to pupils and involve them appropriately in decisions affecting them;



- work collaboratively with parents and carers;
- seek specialist advice and support where appropriate; and
- enable pupils to participate as fully as possible in the curriculum and wider life of the school.

4. SEND and additional needs

This policy should be read alongside the school's SEND Policy, which sets out in greater detail how special educational needs are identified, supported and reviewed.

The school's SEND provision follows a graduated approach, including Assess, Plan, Do, Review. Support is based upon the needs of the individual child and the outcomes sought.

Individual Student Profiles are used across the school. Where additional planning is required, provision may include a list of strategies, an Individual Learning Plan, Wellbeing Plan, My Plan+ or EHCP, according to the level and nature of need. The effectiveness and impact of support are reviewed through the school's assessment and review processes.

Teachers remain responsible and accountable for the progress and development of pupils in their classes. The class teacher or Upper School sponsor, subject teachers and Learning Support Coordinator (LSCO) work together to understand needs, plan provision and review its impact. Pupils and parents or carers are involved appropriately, and external professional advice may be sought where required.

5. Accessibility and reasonable adjustments

This policy should also be read alongside the school's Accessibility Plan.

The school seeks to identify and reduce barriers to the curriculum, the physical environment, and information and communication. Accessibility is understood as an ongoing process of knowing the individual child, noticing barriers, planning appropriate support and reasonable adjustments, and reviewing provision as needs change.

The school recognises that its older buildings present some physical accessibility challenges. Where reasonably practicable, teaching and activities will be organised or adapted to reduce physical barriers for an individual pupil. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are put in place where an individual's needs require specific arrangements for safe evacuation.

Accessible information and appropriate resources will be considered according to individual need. The school will avoid assuming that one format or approach is suitable for everyone.

6. An accessible curriculum

We aim for every pupil to have meaningful access to a broad educational experience.

At The Acorn School, accessibility does not simply mean access to academic lessons. Practical work, craft, painting, movement, rhythm, outdoor learning, trips, plays, festivals and the social and cultural life of the school form important parts of pupils' education.

We therefore consider how pupils with SEND, disabilities or other additional needs can participate meaningfully in these experiences and make adaptations and reasonable adjustments where required. Teaching may be adapted through different approaches, resources, pacing, grouping, movement or sensory opportunities and additional adult support according to the needs of the child.



We seek to preserve the richness of the educational experience while finding appropriate ways for individual children to access it.

7. Belonging and participation

We recognise that physical presence alone does not constitute inclusion. Children should experience meaningful participation, positive relationships and a sense that they belong within their school community.

Staff seek to know pupils well and to notice changes in their learning, participation, relationships and wellbeing. Pupil voice is an important part of understanding whether support is working and how a child experiences school.

We seek to ensure that children receiving additional support remain members of their class and wider school community and participate meaningfully in school life wherever possible.

8. Equality and the curriculum

The curriculum and wider educational experience at The Acorn School seek to broaden pupils' understanding of themselves, other people and the world around them.

Pupils are given age-appropriate opportunities to encounter different cultures, beliefs, perspectives and experiences and to develop respect for people whose lives may be different from their own.

The school promotes respect for others, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. Curriculum planning and teaching take account of different needs and seek to reduce barriers to participation and learning.

9. Behaviour, attendance and wellbeing

We recognise that behaviour and attendance can sometimes be affected by SEND, disability, emotional or developmental needs or other barriers experienced by a pupil.

Where difficulties arise, the school seeks to understand the individual child and the circumstances contributing to them while maintaining appropriate expectations and boundaries. Reasonable adjustments and additional support will be considered where appropriate.

This does not mean that all behaviour is accepted. Expectations and responses should take account of individual circumstances and the school's responsibilities towards all pupils.

10. Working with pupils and families

Parents and carers have important knowledge about their children and are partners in supporting their education.

The school seeks to communicate openly with families where needs or barriers are identified and to involve parents and carers in planning and reviewing significant additional provision.

Children should also be involved in an age-appropriate way. Their views, experiences and aspirations should contribute to our understanding of what helps them learn, participate and experience a sense of belonging.

Where specialist knowledge is needed, the school may work with appropriate external professionals and services.



11. Admissions and participation in school life

The school seeks to operate its admissions arrangements fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

As part of the admissions process, the school may use visits and experience sessions to develop an understanding of a prospective pupil's needs and to consider the provision and reasonable adjustments that may be required.

Equality and inclusion extend beyond classroom teaching. Pupils should, wherever reasonably possible, be enabled to participate in school trips, outdoor learning, performances, festivals and other aspects of school life. Where a pupil has a disability or additional need, the school will consider reasonable adjustments and appropriate risk management to support participation.

12. Discrimination, prejudice and bullying

The Acorn School does not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Concerns involving discriminatory language, prejudice-related behaviour or bullying will be taken seriously and addressed in accordance with the school's relevant policies and procedures.

Our educational response seeks not only to address inappropriate behaviour but also to develop understanding, responsibility and respect for others.

13. Responsibilities

Governors have overall responsibility for ensuring that the school's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion meets its legal responsibilities and is reflected appropriately in school strategy and oversight.

The Headteacher and school leadership are responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring that equality and inclusion are reflected across the school's provision and practice.

The LSCO has a particular role in coordinating provision for pupils with SEND and supporting the graduated response described in the SEND Policy.

Teachers and other staff are responsible for knowing their pupils, maintaining high expectations, identifying emerging needs or barriers, making appropriate adaptations and raising concerns where further support may be required.

All members of the school community share responsibility for contributing to a culture of dignity, respect and belonging.

14. Monitoring and review

The school will keep its equality and inclusion practice under review. This includes considering the experiences and progress of individual pupils and whether particular pupils or groups experience barriers to learning, participation, attendance or wellbeing.

Information from assessment, observation, Student Profiles and learning plans, attendance, behaviour, pupil voice and conversations with families may contribute to this understanding.

Where provision is in place, the school considers whether it is having the intended effect and adapts its response where necessary.



The Governors and school leadership will review this policy regularly and in response to significant changes in legislation, statutory guidance or the needs of the school community.

15. Related policies and documents

- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Curriculum Policy