



EQUALITY



Spittal Community First School Published equality information about the context of our school. Equality objectives for the period 2021-2025

This is our published (April 2024) information about our school population and the ways in which we work to eliminate differences of outcome and promote equality for children with protected characteristics. It also explains how we work to eliminate discrimination and inequality. The objectives we have for the next four years reflect the school's context and are at the end of this document.

The school has data on its composition broken down by year group, ethnicity and gender and by proficiency in English. This is available on request.

We are a medium sized first school in the Berwick Partnership in Northumberland. We have our own nursery.

At Spittal we teach children about their rights, about respect for one another and the wider communities to which they belong. We celebrate individuality and the unique talents and characteristics of each child. Equality principles underpin our values and ethos.

A very small minority of pupils do not speak English as their first language. The number of BME (Black and minority ethnic) pupils in our community is smaller than the county and national averages.

Our disadvantaged pupils in respect of whom we receive additional funding are monitored as a discrete group in order to demonstrate that we invest wisely to diminish differences in outcomes for these students compared with their peers. We use the funding effectively to offer academic support and guidance and to subsidise activities and visits. The majority of pupils for whom we obtain additional funding and resources make and often exceed expected levels of progress. The difference in outcomes for this group is cohort dependent but overall has diminished and continues to decrease.

Objectives relating to children eligible for Free School Meals have a high priority, although financial disadvantage is not a protected characteristic in law, it is a significant priority for schools. Evidence shows that disadvantaged children are likely to have suffered the greatest learning loss during school closures due to the global pandemic.

In school, we represent, discuss and welcome family diversity and the positive aspects of individuality in families.

We are purposeful in the way we represent people and use language in resources displays and communication. We consciously use and develop awareness of inclusive language. This is an ongoing piece of work, as language changes constantly.

We respectfully challenge any member of the school community who expresses their prejudice or discomfort towards people with some or any of the protected characteristics; our priority is to protect every member of our community and local and national communities from prejudice, harassment or discrimination.

Our school uniform policy is flexible and the guidance does not discriminate against any child on the basis of gender, race, disability, gender identity or belief. Practical alternatives are acceptable.

The school has data on its composition broken down by types of disability and special educational need. This is available on request.

Our school has clear protocols and targeted provision to support those pupils who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The school is an accessible building, with ramps, accessible toilets and wheelchair accessible routes.

The school uses a graduated approach to identify anything that affects a child's ability to learn, then we use strategies and interventions to help improve the situation. Learners and their families are always involved in this process.

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The school welcomes and offers a high level of support to a growing number of children with additional needs. We are very committed to ensuring that learners with SEND enjoy the same opportunities as other children.

We think about inequalities of outcome and involvement when setting objectives for achievable and measurable improvements. These are outlined in the school's accessibility plan and action plan.

We record and report instances of discriminatory language or bullying. Our PSHE curriculum is one of the ways in which we reinforce this commitment to anti-discriminatory practice. It also ensures that children learn about safe and respectful relationships.

During Anti-Bullying Week and through other activities throughout the school year the school works to raise awareness and build resilience and confidence in the children.

Staff are aware of the vulnerability of people in our region to messages about far-right extremism, and welcome open discussion and debate with the children in order to dispel myths and misconceptions.

We recognise the limited opportunities for some children to experience the wider UK and urban contexts that exist outside Northumberland. We work to ensure that children are prepared to live in a diverse society in the wider context of modern Britain. We participate annually in activities such as Black History month, LGBT History month, Holocaust Memorial Day and Remembrance Day.

The school records data about religion and belief if it is provided by parents. This enables us to say with confidence that we are inclusive of pupils' religion and beliefs.

Documentation and record-keeping

Our school has a statement of overarching equality policy which is published to the web site.

Responsibilities

All staff have responsibility for promoting equality.
All staff have responsibility for promoting the school's anti-bullying ethos.

Staffing

There are good equal opportunities practice in the recruitment and promotion of staff

Behaviour and safety

There are clear procedures for dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents.

The school annually returns a report on the number of racist incidents to the Local Authority.

Surveys and focus groups show that most pupils feel safe from all kinds of bullying. The mechanisms we have include Parentview, annual parent and pupil surveys and the School Council.

The school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies are available on the school web site.

Curriculum

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There is coverage in the curriculum of equalities issues, particularly with regard to tackling prejudice and promoting community cohesion and mutual understanding. There are activities across the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Consultation and involvement

The school has procedures for consulting and involving parents and carers, and for engaging with local groups and organisations, and has regard in these for the concerns and requirements of the Equality Act. The school has procedures for finding out how pupils think and feel about the school, and has regard in these for the concerns of the Equality Act.

Part Two: Objectives

The Public Sector Equality Duty aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. The duty applies to the public sector and to others carrying out public functions. The duty applies to all nine areas of discrimination listed in the Equality Act 2010.

Our school has defined three main areas of equality to address

Objective 1: Advance Equality of Opportunity: Lost Learning

What we plan to do;

The impact of the Covid 19 crisis on our school has impacted disadvantaged pupils more than other pupils in the amount of lost learning that they have experienced. Although contact was maintained, work sent home and government funded devices were distributed to families, not every pupil has returned to full time school with the same level of learning having been sustained.

Addressing the lost learning for all of the pupils who are in this position will be a key priority for the school over the next three years. Using any additional government funding, such as the Catch-Up premium, the devices we obtained to facilitate home learning and targeted interventions, we will be working to eliminate the disadvantage experienced by any children who had limited access to home learning during the school closures or significant loss of learning because of absence due to isolation periods. Most of this will be done in-house, making the most of the expertise of staff who know the children well.

Expected evidence of impact:

The school will regularly review and define which strategies are our most effective in terms of cohort, characteristic and identified need. Pupil progress and achievement from their current academic levels will be closely monitored and this information will inform next steps.

Objective 2. Fostering Good Relations: Life in Modern Britain

What we plan to do:

We recognise the context of Berwick and North Northumberland and the relative lack of opportunity our pupils experience to engage with role models from diverse communities. We recognise the important role that the school can play in broadening the children's awareness of the wider context of their local community and the UK beyond Northumberland, in preparing them for adult life and an appreciation of the wider diversity of the UK and beyond. Through the curriculum, PSHE and the wider Personal Development curriculum we will continue to extend the range of opportunities the children have to engage with themes such as family diversity, anti-racism, global learning, human rights, disability equality, anti-discriminatory language and behaviour, tolerance and mutual respect and the role of the bystander.

Expected evidence of impact:

Increased awareness of local, national and global inequalities and challenges articulated by pupils. Pupil and staff's ability to challenge discriminatory thoughts and practices. Children acting as allies and advocates, respecting and protecting the rights of others. Continued commitment to helping, fundraising and learning about disadvantaged people who need help and support.

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Objective 3. Eliminate discrimination./Advance Equality of Opportunity: Emotional resilience and mental health

What we plan to do:

We have recently introduced the new PSHE and RSHE curriculums and their implementation will support the children's understanding of healthy relationships and how to manage their emotions through the Jigsaw curriculum. We will teach them of the impact of others' actions on their mental wellbeing and the impact of their actions on others. We will set up a staff/pupil wellbeing team to address mental health issues in school.

Expected evidence of impact:

Pupils will be able to articulate their feelings and recognise when they are being positively and negatively impacted and will demonstrate this through Jigsaw curriculum and discussion feedback.

Pupils will demonstrate resilience in their response to schoolwork, friendships and relationships with adults. They will take risks and tackle challenges with a positive outlook and determination.

Children and young people have trusted adults in school to whom they can refer when pressures and concerns overwhelm them.

We seek prompt diagnosis for children and young people who may require this and make prompt referrals into specialist cycles of support if needed.

Progress against the objectives will be reviewed annually, and they will remain our objectives until April 2025, when they are due to be refreshed

The Northumberland Inequalities Lens

People in the most deprived communities in Northumberland have shorter healthy lives than those in our least deprived. A plan has been developed to reduce inequalities to enable people to live healthy, happy lives for longer. One of the ways we are all working towards this is in 'creating a system, including communities and residents in which everyone has responsibility for making change happen'. In Berwick, residents frequently feel that access is limited to many of the services, resources and facilities that are more readily available in other parts of the county, so knowing how to make the most of local, community-based assets becomes even more significant.

Our school plays its part as an essential community-based asset; we are the first point of contact for many of our families when challenges affect them, and we are a partner that they trust.

Our curriculum, visits and the experiences children have while they are pupils at Spittal First School set them up for life by developing the building blocks of social capital which children will need throughout their lives.

Cultural capital is the gathering of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that a child can draw upon and which demonstrates their cultural awareness, knowledge and competence; it is one of the key ingredients a child will draw upon to be successful in society, their career and the adult world.

Cultural capital is promoted as the essential knowledge, and standard reference points, that we want all children to have. Research indicates that children will find life more challenging without adequate cultural capital, from everyday social interactions to future job interviews.

As a school, we make the best use we can of our resources, community contacts and sources of support to enable families to overcome the challenges that periods of financial hardship and a seasonal economy can present. We strive to build and nurture resilience, creativity and knowledge.

Cultural capital gives our pupils power. It helps them achieve goals, become successful, and rise up the social ladder without necessarily acquiring wealth or financial capital. Cultural capital is also having assets that give children the desire to aspire and achieve social mobility whatever their starting point. As we transition from a first to a primary school in 2025, the opportunities we have to influence and support our families for longer is an opportunity we welcome.