

# **Marine Park First School Community Cohesion Policy**

## **Legal duties**

1. We welcome our duties under the Race Relations 1976 as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000; the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005; and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 as amended by the Equality Act 2006.

2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

3. We recognise that these four sets of duties are essential for achieving the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework, and that they reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

## **Rationale**

Marine Park First School firmly believes in contributing to a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities. A society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

Marine Park First School provides education for all, acknowledging that the society within which we live is enriched by diversity. We strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school reflects the diversity of all members of the school community, where everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect and fairness. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

We will work towards eliminating all discrimination, on the grounds of race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexuality (including sexual orientation), age, religion and belief. We believe that all pupils, employees, stakeholders and members of our local and global community should be treated with dignity and respect at all times and we will not tolerate bullying, harassment or victimisation of any groups or individuals.

## **Our Values**

- Diversity is strength; having many different groups, cultures, and faiths in our society makes us stronger.
- We should all work for greater respect and equality of opportunity between different groups, cultures, faiths and ages in our society.

- The different groups, cultures, faiths and ages in our society will benefit from meeting each other, listening to one another, and gaining a better understanding of each other.
- We must all work to overcome disadvantage as it is a major barrier between communities, especially where it is experienced more by one group than another.
- Racism and prejudice undermine community cohesion and must be confronted.
- Partnerships with parents, Governors and the wider community are essential to promote equality, diversity and community cohesion.

## **2. What is community cohesion?**

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

### **Community from a school's perspective**

For our school, the term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- the school community – the pupils we serve, their families and the school's staff;
- the community within which the school is located – the school in its geographical community of Whitley Bay, North Tyneside and the people who live or work in this area;
- the community of Britain - all schools are by definition part of this community;
- the global community – formed by EU and international links.

In addition, as a school we create our own communities – for example, the networks formed by school partnerships and cluster meetings.

## **3 What do we need to consider in promoting community cohesion?**

We need to consider what activities already take place within the school and what might be arranged in cooperation with other schools.

In addition, schools will want to consider the duty to promote well-being as some of the work and activities that support community cohesion can also contribute towards the Every Child Matters outcomes of 'making a positive contribution', 'enjoy and achieve' and 'achieving economic well-being'.

### **Teaching, learning and curriculum**

An effective school will have a high standard of teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity will be integrated across the curriculum.

We need to ensure:

- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in citizenship classes for pupils to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.
- A programme of curriculum based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.
- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- An effective voice and involvement of pupils in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.

### **Equity and excellence**

We should continue to focus on securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that pupils are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential.

The school tracking systems will enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.

We need to redouble our efforts to monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment. Monitoring of whether pupils from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others should be accompanied by appropriate behaviour and discipline policies in place to deal with this.

Our school admissions criteria emphasizes the importance of admission arrangements that promote community cohesion and social equity.

### **Engagement and ethos**

School to school: We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We shall look either locally or further afield and the means of developing the relationship may be through exchange visits or more likely through the internet.

Sharing facilities also provides a means for pupils to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama.

School to parents and the community: Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

- Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the pupils, ensuring that the pupil voice is heard and able to effect change.
- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals.
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, curriculum evenings, parent and child courses and family liaison work.
- Provision of extended services, and in particular bringing parents together from different backgrounds through parenting and family support and community use of facilities for activities that take place out of school hours, including adult and family learning, ICT and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes.

#### **4. What do we do to promote community cohesion?**

At Marine Park First School , we believe that we are responsible for equipping our pupils to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds.

Our schools' contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

##### **Promoting Community Cohesion**

Our contribution to community cohesion can be summarised under the following headings:

##### Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum:

Teaching children to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

##### Equity and Excellence

Ensuring equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.

##### Engagement and Ethos

Providing a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally.

## How we promote community cohesion

In the Autumn Term 2009, the Leadership Team conducted an audit of the contribution Marine Park currently makes to community cohesion. The audit identified the following aspects of good practice:

### **Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum:**

Lessons across the curriculum promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping, e.g. in PSHE, Citizenship and Religious Education.

Curriculum based activities enrich children's understanding of community and diversity through visits and meetings with members of different communities, e.g. visits to places of worship and religious leaders and parents/carers from different religious backgrounds coming in to school to support curriculum delivery.

Assemblies involve members of the local and wider community and promote the engagement of learners and shared understanding as well as the school's ethos and values.

Children nominate and raise money for a local, national and international charity each year.

Assemblies and curriculum activities develop children's understanding of these charities and of the people/societies they support.

### **Equity and Excellence:**

Securing high standards of attainment for all children is our key priority. A rigorous tracking and target setting system is in place to ensure that high expectations are set for every individual and that their progress and attainment is monitored on a termly basis. Any underperforming individuals or groups of children are swiftly identified and specific programmes of support implemented. Information from RAISEonline is also used to inform our provision.

All children are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential through the careful deployment of resources and staffing. All children benefit from a curriculum which is well differentiated and personalised programmes of support and extension are used where appropriate.

Through our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies, incidents of bullying, harassment and prejudice are carefully monitored and dealt with thoroughly.

The school is subject to the Local Authority admission arrangements which promote community cohesion and social equity.

### **Engagement and Extended Services:**

#### School to school:

Previously we have formed a partnership with primary schools in a contrasting locality. (Mowlem Primary, Tower Hamlets and Highfield Junior and Infant School, Birmingham) as part of a School Linking Network Project. This provides both sets of children with the opportunity to learn from children from very different backgrounds.

We regularly take part in sporting and singing/drama activities involving other schools, providing opportunities for children to interact.

We have previously been involved in a Comenius Partnership with Schools in Italy, Poland, Spain, Portugal and Bulgaria and have contact with these schools. ( New links are being developed )

We are part of the Whitley Bay Community of schools with links to middle and High schools in the local area.

#### School to parents and the community:

Good partnership activities with the local and wider community include: Working together with community representatives, for example through bringing community representatives into school to work with the pupils.

Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the police and social care and health professionals.

Development of parent partnership activities

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

All staff are expected to:

- o promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- o deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur

- o identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- o support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- o keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

To review good practice we make use of a range of auditing schedules. The school staff and governors will regularly review activity under the key headings to ensure that this is further developed and refined. Evidence of social cohesion activity will be kept on file

### **Areas for development**

2011-2012

- Review schemes of work and embed community/ international projects within the creative curriculum
- Re-develop opportunities for international links
- Promotion and celebration of 2012 Olympics
- More publicity needed of community engagement- local press/ website
- learning platform to be developed and accessed by parents/ children
- Use and promote local facilities more for learning
- Education business partnerships- enterprise work
- Seek Contacts with groups who are not represented in the immediate community (intergenerational/ disability groups)
- School community- peer mentoring.
- Inclusion of multi-faith celebrations through-out the year

Updated by CC Coordinator December 2011