



ST. MARY'S

Community Cohesion Policy and Plan

St Mary's CE (A) Primary School

2017-2018

Introduction

The curriculum of our school should and does promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our learners and society, and prepare our students for the wider opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life after their school career with us has ended.

We have a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relationships between people of different groups.

We already consider this part of our role, and we at St Mary's work in ways which promote community cohesion. As migration and economic change alter the shape of our local and national communities, it is more important than ever that all schools play a full part in promoting community cohesion. St Mary's CE (A) Primary School will continue to be a thriving, cohesive community whilst continuing to impact on a wider scale to build a more cohesive society.

This policy supports the work of, and is supported by, other school policies, such as Race Equality, Equal Opportunities, Disability Equality Duty, and also our developing policy on Gender Equality.

It is our belief that every school, irrespective of its intake and location, is responsible for educating young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, ethnicity and social backgrounds. We wish to show that, through our ethos, curriculum, actions and relationships, we promote a common sense of identity, and support diversity. This is linked very closely to our efforts to ensure that "Every Child Matters," as well as encouraging well-being.

In order to prepare our learners for living in a diverse and cohesive society, we strive to work in partnership to:

- Encourage the development of a secure sense of their own identity, as individuals and within the many communities to which they belong.
- Encourage open and positive attitudes towards diversity and the development of the skills, understanding and confidence to challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping.
- Support the children in becoming active citizens who recognise their rights and responsibilities, enabling them to make informed judgements.
- Ensure equality of opportunity, and remove barriers to access and eliminate discrimination.
- Ensure they receive a broad and balanced education and succeed in reaching their potential.
- Provide opportunities for positive interaction with people from a variety of backgrounds in the local and wider community.

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 the School's Perspective

From the school's perspective, the term "community" has a number of meanings:

- The school community – the students we serve, their families and the school's staff
- The community within which the school is located – in its geographical community, and the people who live and / or work in that area
- The community of Britain – all schools by definition are part of it
- The global community – formed by EU and international links

How Does Our School Contribute To Community Cohesion?

All Schools, whatever the mix of students they serve, are responsible for equipping their learners to live alongside people from many different backgrounds.

For some schools where the pupil population is diverse, existing activities and work aimed at supporting pupils from different social, ethnic or economic backgrounds to learn from, will already be contributing towards community cohesion. For our school, where the student population is diverse (according to our annual school census and local data), we work to provide opportunities for our learners to work with a range of people from different age groups, backgrounds, religious, ethnic and cultural groups.

Our work as a Healthy School, and through our existing partnerships in the local and wider community, supports community cohesion to a great extent, and the promotion of community cohesion permeates our aims as outlined in the School Development Plan.

The school's contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under three headings:

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

Our teaching and the curriculum provision supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values, and helps students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them. Lessons across the taught curriculum e.g. in PSHE, RE provide opportunities for students to develop their understanding and empathy; helping them to value differences and challenge prejudice and stereotyping. The taught and wider curricula help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and also to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

Equity and Excellence

In school, there is a focus on securing high standards of attainment for all pupils, removing barriers to learning and wider activities and eliminating a variance in outcomes for different groups of pupils. Effective procedures exist to deal with prejudice, bullying and harassment. The school's admission arrangements promote community cohesion and social equality. Our tracking and monitoring systems enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to minimise the risk of underachievement by members of any particular group who may be vulnerable.

Engagement and Ethos

We provide different opportunities for young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools and communities locally, nationally and on a wider basis where possible.

The school works in partnership with a wide variety of agencies and organisations to support the learners' education. Engagement with parents through an open door ethos, parents' evening, curriculum meetings, parent and child classes, festivals and other celebrations is considered a priority at the school. The School Council and our Ambassadors involve the children in the decision making and organisation of the school, teaching the children the importance of participation and making a difference to the school, local community and beyond.

We have a number of community cohesion activities that take place within our school already:

Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum	Equity and Excellence	Engagement and Ethos
Sporting festivals	Anti-bullying policy	Sporting festivals
Musical Festivals	Race equality policy	Collective worship/reflection
Visits from life skills educators e.g. alcohol and drugs	Disability equality duty	Developing links through schools linking network
Transition and link work with secondary schools	Play leading systems on the playground	Community events e.g. music performance, drama performances, young enterprise scheme
Visits to Keele University	First Aid training for staff	Celebration of historical events e.g. Remembrance day
Immersion of the children in MFL (French)	Road safety events e.g. cycle training for Yr. 5/6	Link to church magazine
Visits from Game on, Power of One, visits from Iftikar	Data tracked	More able enterprise venture and newspaper
Special curriculum days and weeks e.g. multicultural week, media week, bible study week	School council	Parents forum/ Parent voice volunteers
Policies reflect the cultural, disability, gender diversity within school and community	After school clubs	Links with local businesses
Close links and visits from and to the local church (Christ Church)	Holiday club each half term and end of term breaks	Healthy life style groups
Visitors from outside agencies delivering worship	Early bird reading	Sports day /concerts / celebration assembly
Children are taught explicitly the Law of the Land and the British values - PSHE	Extracurricular activities	Breakfast celebrations e.g. mother's day and father day
	Cultural events – Christian festivals/Chinese new year/other elements taught through curriculum	Whole school/individual fund raising events
		Parent help PTFA

Community Cohesion Action Plan for St Mary's CE Primary School

Teaching and Learning and Engagement and Ethos

Summary of ideas

Broaden links with local and wider community
School placed on Linking Schools Network to develop children's understanding of life of different ethnic, social and religious groups in UK.

How does it fit into Our School?

Fits into overarching ethos of school as laid out in Mission Statement, particularly preparation for the future / taking place in the community.

Strengths

Ethos of school
Good existing partnerships with other schools in local community
Good contacts exist in wider community already
All staff aware of the impact of the school in the community

How would it be used in context?

Teaching and learning of similarities and differences of religious beliefs.
Visits working in partnerships with others in similarities and differences, different circumstances and contexts.
Develop an awareness of different family contexts within the community.

Measuring Impact

Increased awareness of others visible through observations / discussions with children.
Feedback / assessments of children made through taught curriculum.
Increased number of partnerships in community.

A child's place in the community and world

