



Work, play, pray - together

St Mary's RC Primary School

Community Cohesion Policy

Introduction

This policy document should be considered in the light of our School Mission Statement which outlines all that underpins our work at St Mary's.

At St Mary's we would like the children :-

- To recognise and value every member of our school community as a uniquely gifted creation of God, so that each is led to a sense of their own worth and that of each other.
- To provide every child with opportunities and support for spiritual, moral, social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth and development.

Legal Duties

We recognise our duties under the Race Relations Act 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 2010. We recognise our duty under the Education and Inspectors Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

Context

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a single form entry primary school situated in Jarrow, South Tyneside.

Definition of 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 the wider community.

For St Mary's Catholic Primary School, the term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- the school community – the pupils it serves, their families and all the staff. This includes the link with our parish church. The school community consists of the children and young people it serves,
- their parents, carers and families, the staff, Governing Body and the
- community users of the school's facilities and services. It is intrinsically linked with the church and parish of St Mary's.
- the local community – Jarrow and the people who live or work in the town
- the community of Britain
- the global community

St Mary's is an active member of local cluster, Diocesan and county networks of schools. This includes working closely with schools in South Tyneside. Through a wide range of charity fundraising, we support worldwide agencies including Cafod, as well as local charities and responding to global emergencies.

Aims and Objectives

The school will continue to build upon its good practice and look at the impact of our activities. Our school builds community cohesion by promoting equality of opportunity and inclusion for different groups of children within the school. There is a strong respect for diversity and inequalities by sharing values and encouraging pupils to actively engage with others to understand what they have in common to equip them to live and thrive alongside people from different backgrounds.

How does St Mary's Catholic School contribute towards community cohesion?

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we consider ourselves responsible, alongside parents/carers, for equipping our pupils to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds. The school's contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

Teaching, learning and curriculum – teaching pupils to understand others, promoting common values, valuing diversity, promoting awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them. Developing the skills of participation and responsible action.

Equal opportunities – 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.

Where are we now?

Promoting Community Cohesion is already strongly embedded in our existing practice as detailed below, but we are committed to developing this aspect further. Our school focus team (comprising of staff, pupils, parents and governors) meet every half term to review the impact of actions and plan further activities.

We have strong reciprocal links with the parish welcoming parishioners volunteers into our school.

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

At St Mary's Primary School we all aspire to have high standards 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 whole curriculum (including assemblies; extra-curricular opportunities especially in the arts and sports; visits and visitors).

We will promote a school curriculum and culture where our pupils can:

- recognise diversity across the school, local and national community as well as within the wider community and celebrate and value that diversity
- understand the idea of shared values and what that means to us as individuals
- have an understanding of human rights and how they apply to everyone and the need to defend the human rights of all individuals
- engage in lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help them to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- have a greater understanding of community and diversity through enrichment activities such as through visits and meetings with members of different communities (e.g. assemblies, community arts events, fundraising activities)
- there are opportunities across the curriculum to promote shared values and to challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. (particularly evident in our R.E, SEAL, PSHE and Citizenship)
- collective Worship and Circle Time activities
- an extensive programme of curriculum and extra curricular activities
- enrich pupils understanding of community and diversity through residential visits, visits to places of worship and opportunities to meet with members of different communities.
- have an effective voice and involvement 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 (e.g. School Council, area pupil council, School Community Cohesion team).
- a comprehensive programme of collective worship which includes themed assemblies and inputs from members of the local and wider community. This promotes a sense of identity and shared understanding of their beliefs.
- support is provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language and specific support for the teaching staff to remove barriers to effective learning, enable the pupils to be integrated and achieve the highest possible level in English.

Equity and Excellence

Everyone at St Mary's Catholic Primary School believes in full inclusion of all members of society in a fair and equal way in order to bring out the best in each and every child. To this end the school has robust policies and schemes for equality of opportunity and disability equality as well as ensuring that all policies adhere to latest government laws and guidelines. Our school already has a focus on securing a high standard of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic and socio economic backgrounds, abilities and interests. We ensure that all pupils are treated with respect and are supported to achieve their full potential. Admission arrangements are in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Practice.

We will ensure that all pupils and staff:

- are treated fairly and equally and given equal opportunities in all that the school has to offer
- work towards removing any barriers against access and participation in all that the school has to offer, both during curriculum time as well as during extended schools activities
- will identify at the earliest possible opportunity any areas of concern which need to be dealt with as part of our community cohesion approach
- work together to eliminate any variations of expectation for any groups/individuals within the school (School tracking system, monitoring of progress and intervention strategies)

These outcomes are fully supported by the school's overall ethos and pastoral systems. In our dealings with members of the school community we aim to uphold these principles (e.g. the way we resolve conflicts and deal with behavioural issues) in line with our mission statement.

Engagement and Extended Services

St Mary's Catholic Primary School pupils already take an active part within the local community and we aim to progress this action further to the benefit of the pupils themselves together with the wider community's understanding of the school.

We will therefore continue to:

- provide opportunities for our pupils and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds, enabling the building of positive relationships between all community members
- enhance existing links with other schools and different communities both locally as well as nationally
- provide signposting to the wide variety of extended services on offer in the school and elsewhere locally through weekly newsletters, parish newsletters and school website
- develop stronger links with the local community organisations with which we already have links (e.g. Adult Education)
- work closely with a range of local agencies to provide greater opportunities for pupils, together with their families, to take part in activities and receive services to improve outcomes
- Pupils have a strong voice and have opportunities to take responsibility through our School Council, through input into reviews and target setting and via questionnaires and informal talks. We engage with parents through a range of activities including special curriculum meetings, parent consultation evenings, targeted questionnaires, home visits for new parents and Open Afternoons. We have regular whole school Masses, class Assemblies and Key Stage Performances. These events are very well supported by parents and the wider community. We have strong links with work based learning providers, colleges and employers and readily provide placements for a wide variety of students and volunteers. We already have in place: Childcare – before and after school provision. Swift and easy referral e.g.: good links with external agencies. Parenting support e.g.: specialist training and excellent pastoral support.

We work closely with the Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, South Tyneside Cluster and other local nursery, pre-schools and secondary schools.

Our children participate in local and county sporting events, interschool netball, swimming and football included. Our gifted year 5 pupils are invited to take part in an interschool spelling bee group lead by the local authority. Celebrations of success and participation are included in Whole School assemblies.

Where would we like to be?

We are committed to developing this aspect of our work further in the following areas:-

- Teaching and Learning Continuing to strive to ensure that every student achieves their potential by setting challenging targets, monitoring progress and regularly revisiting intervention needs and support mechanisms.
- Continuing to develop opportunities for our students to interact with other students particularly from different backgrounds and cultures.
- To increase the range of Literature used for learning so that it reflects the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds of children living in the UK.
- Equity and Excellence Continuing to track and monitor the performance of particular groups and individuals in school.
- Using this to adapt intervention and support according to need.
- Continuing to develop our pastoral systems, to promote a caring supportive ethos free from prejudice, discrimination and bullying.
- Engagement and Extended Services to continue to develop our international links particularly the use of electronic communication methods.
- To involve more staff in international and link school projects for the children.
- To involve Governors and parents more closely in links with our partner schools.
- School, parents and the community to continue to develop our links with the local parishes.
- To continue our links with community groups and organizations.
- To continue to develop student voice in relation to community issues.
- To continue to develop parental links through parent governors, parent council, parent questionnaires and parental involvement in the life of the school.
- To strengthen our links with voluntary community based activities and clubs.
- To celebrate the diversity of the members of our school community.

Monitoring, reviewing, assessing impact

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed by staff and governors (along with the relevant section within the school development plan) to ensure that it is effective in securing positive relations between different groups and shared communities, and that it does not disadvantage any particular sections of the community