

Equality Policy

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THE GARDEN



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Context

The Garden is an outstanding school in the London Borough of Hackney offering education for 4-16 year-olds with highly specialised provisions for learners with autism.

Our pupils come from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds from across the borough with some from other local boroughs.

The school is in the London Borough of Hackney and compared to national figures our intake shows high levels of deprivation with a large percentage entitled to pupil premium.

The school is bigger than average for a special school. There are 129 pupils on roll, 69 pupils in primary and 60 in secondary. Currently the school caters for pupils aged 4-16. The school is expanding as the new building has increased capacity. Pupils are admitted throughout the year. Pupils at the school are predominantly drawn from Hackney. 16 pupils come from other London boroughs; Islington, Haringey, Tower Hamlets, Thurrock and City of London. There are 26 girls in the school. There are currently 8 early years/foundation stage pupils on roll.

All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need or an EHCP. Currently 70 pupils have EHCPs

(54%) and the transfer process is continuing. All out of borough pupils will have had conversion meetings by the end of the Academic year.

The school has significantly changed its cohort from one with a predominantly SLD/MLD population in 2013. In the academic year 2016-17 5 Year 11 pupils did not have a diagnosis of ASD and 1 year 8 pupil. In primary all pupils have a diagnosis apart from 1 year 6 pupil who is transferring to another secondary school in September 2017. All pupils have learning difficulties, the majority would be classed as severe. Most pupils are non-verbal or have little functional speech. In addition there are associated secondary needs such as behavioural, emotional or sensory difficulties. Attainment on entry for pupils is low, typically assessments show between P4 and P6. Although it is higher for pupils joining the school at secondary transfer as they are coming from mainstream schools. Our admission criteria reflects that the school has now become a specialist provision for ASD pupils. In academic year 2017-18 all pupils on roll will have a diagnosis and the school roll is set to increase to 139 (not including Early Years).



There are 2 LAC. There is recent or current social care involvement with many pupils and their families. 1 child has a current CP plan and a number have CIN plans. Most children have a care package. 93 pupils, a much larger than average proportion, qualify for additional government funding through pupil premium.

A larger than average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, 27 in all. The majority are of black African origin, followed by Bangladeshi, white English and then Indian and other Asian communities.

Schools vision and values

The Garden School: Planting the seeds of success

The Garden School is dedicated to providing the highest standard of education for all our students in a safe and inclusive environment where each child is recognised and respected as being unique and special. We will ensure our children, young people and their families receive the highly specialist support which is their entitlement.

We are ambitious about our students' achievements. We work in partnership with parents and in close collaboration with our multi-disciplinary colleagues to secure the best possible outcomes for our students, both now and in future.

We set out to achieve our aims by:

- developing a bespoke, child centred, needs-led curriculum which provides optimal opportunities to develop communication, learning and independence and emotional regulation
- ensuring professional development of all staff is a priority
- reflecting on and evaluating our practice, using current evidence based research to guide us
- being solution focused, sharing responsibility for improving our effectiveness and tackling challenges collectively
- requiring the highest professional standards from all staff
- adhering to a clear and consistent code of ethics



Core Values

At The Garden, our support for pupils with learning disabilities is based on the core values of social justice, equity and access, inclusion and participation. We view our pupils as equal members of society.

This means that:

- They should have the same rights as other people to live in the community and enjoy a good quality of life.
- They should be treated with dignity and respect.
- They should be supported to exercise choice and control over their own lives.

Disability support professionals who understand their own motives for working with people with a disability are less likely to be cynical and pessimistic about providing positive behaviour support. Often cynicism, pessimism and other destructive staff attitudes can contribute to people with a disability needing to show behaviours that challenge. (Positive Behaviour Support/Getting It Right From The Start/Version 2/September 2009/Department of Human Services/Victorian Government)

Values drive our actions. At The Garden, we endorse the following key elements of Active Support best practice: (Every Moment Has Potential/Commonwealth of Australia/2015/p.20)

- **Being responsive** to the unique needs of each person we work with. Always think about how to provide just the right amount of support.
- **Seeing every person as an individual.**
- **Supporting and respecting the choices** of the people we work with. Always think about how the preferences of the people we work with might differ from our own.
- **Actively listening**-really paying attention to what a person is communicating to us through their words, or actions. Give people the best help possible to get their message across.
- **Being flexible**, while recognising the value of routine-not allowing routines to dominate the lives of the people we work with.
- **Using positive language**-always framing communication in a positive rather than negative way. Adjusting our communication to enable the people we support to succeed in everything they do.
- **Acknowledging and responding to difference positively.**
- **Paying attention to the here and now**-seeing that in every moment the quality of our work affects the lives of people we work with.



- **Being sensitive to the environment**-being aware of, and responsive to, the effect of the immediate and wider social and physical context on people's lives.

At The Garden, we believe that these values, when put into action, can have a dramatic and immediate effect. Pupils will be more engaged, happier and have a greater sense of well-being, and because of this, they will be much less likely to display challenging behaviour

Consultation and involvement

This policy was originally written by a working group comprising staff, parents and governors. Responses were given to it by staff, students and parents and governors through feedback questionnaires, school council and staff and parent meetings. It is updated annually

Our Aim

We aim to:

- Value everyone in our community as individuals in their own right
- Ensure equal access for all to the curriculum
- Understand the multi-cultural nature of our community
- Foster inclusive attitudes
- Ensure our staff feel valued



The Law

Our legal duties are set out in the Equality Act 2010. This Act brings together lots of different equality laws, many of which have existed for a long time. By doing this, the Act makes equality law simpler and easier to understand.

As a school we have duties under the Act towards people with 7 out of the 9 “protected characteristics”. For pupils these are;

- 1 Age
- 2 Disability
- 3 Gender reassignment
- 4 Race
- 5 Religion or belief
- 6 Sex
- 7 Sexual orientation

For staff these include;

- 8 Marriage and civil partnership
- 9 Pregnancy and maternity

And for our most vulnerable female students we also include pregnancy and maternity.

Our legal duties are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people from different backgrounds

We can also take positive action to tackle pupils’ different needs or disproportionately low participation of a particular pupil group. Such action could include targeted provision, resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged pupil group.



Implementation

We want equality to be at the heart of all our school policies so we will assess the impact of policies on equality in the school's policy review cycle.

It is important that all staff and governors fully understand equality issues so that they put them into practice daily in all areas of school life. We will provide necessary training to ensure they are clear about their responsibilities on diversity and equality related issues.

We have policies relating to disability, gender and race equality, harassment and bullying. We also have formal procedures for dealing with a discriminatory incident.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of discriminatory incidents

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their race, colour, religion, nationality, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Use of derogatory names/terms, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges, insignia or clothing
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Incitement of others to discriminate against or bully a person due to race, colour, religion, nationality, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for any other personal characteristic e.g. food, clothing, personal appearance etc;
- Refusal to co-operate or associate with those who possess one of the 9 characteristics or other personal characteristic



- Refusal to cooperate or associate with others who do cooperate or associate with those who possess one of the 9 characteristics or other personal characteristic

How do we eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

- Ensuring that all staff read and understand the Code of Conduct for Schools
- Ensuring that all staff know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping and to support the full range of diverse needs according to pupils' individual circumstances.
- Expecting staff to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur
- Ensuring in the event of any incident in school relating to discrimination, harassment and victimisation that procedures are followed and incidents are recorded and dealt with through the appropriate channels
- Monitoring and reporting such incidents to the Head teacher and reporting racist incidents to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis monitored through the harassment book.
- Supporting students and families who encounter harassment in the community, understanding that children who live in fear cannot learn. Using opportunities in school and assemblies to deal with issues of prejudice and discrimination.
- Supporting staff, students and their families who encounter harassment on school premises by people who are not employees of the school,
- Encouraging staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning.
- Exploring opportunities throughout the curriculum to promote anti-racism and inclusion, e.g. visits to community organisations, places of religious worship, use of the media, visiting speakers from local minority ethnic communities and disabled people's organisations.
- Purchasing and reviewing resources, such as books, posters and ICT software to ensure they are inclusive.
- Ensuring our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.
- Ensuring at the admission interview that all parents are aware and support our policy



How do we promote equality of opportunity?

Curriculum, teaching and learning and behaviour

- Promoting an inclusive curriculum that reflects the needs of all the students.
- Using materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping.
- Recognising and providing for the individual learning styles of our pupils through the use of appropriate methods in lessons.
- Displaying work from all pupils with achievements in any areas of the curriculum in and outside the school.
- Running a programme of cultural enrichment both on and off site tailored to include participation by all pupils.
- Taking active steps to ensure that resources in all areas of the curriculum are inclusive. (see objective and objective action plan 1)
- Ensuring equality and diversity are promoted and discrimination challenged in all areas of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the allocation of students to teaching groups and after school activities is fair and equitable.
- Ensuring all staff are skilled to engage and support students and challenge stereotypes.
- In the School Behaviour Policy and behaviour support strategies developed, recognising and addressing the individual needs of students and aiming to develop students' ability to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour as much as possible.
- Liaison with relevant outside agencies to support parents/carers particularly those of our highly vulnerable pupils or those who themselves have learning difficulties or mental health issues.

Assessment

- Using contextual data to monitor and improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students.
- Monitoring achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps.
- Taking account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets.
- Ensuring all parents/carers are regularly informed of their child's progress and achievement
- Using contextual data to monitor the opinions of parents/carers on the quality of provision their child receives and how we may improve this



Attendance

- Monitoring attendance by all students and using the data to develop strategies to identify, address and resolve any issues
- Making reasonable provision for students and staff to authorise absence for religious observance

Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

- Ensuring all our staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit, ability and in compliance with the law.
- Wherever possible considering positive action in our recruitment to ensure our staff group reflects the cultural diversity of our community as well as meets the challenges of our most vulnerable pupils.
- Monitoring and reviewing the recruitment and retention process to ensure discrimination is not taking place.
- Considering equality aspects when promoting staff or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.
- Proactively taking steps to identify, support and provide opportunities for the professional development of staff from all groups.
- Providing information and training on the needs of our pupils for non-teaching staff such as the administration, premises and catering staff
- As far as is possible by adapting our school environment to meet the cultural and faith practices of our staff
- Facilitating access to the school for vulnerable parents, (such as those with learning difficulties or mental health issues), through the use of the Parent Support Adviser, translators and where appropriate, representatives from outside agencies, at Parents' Evenings, Annual Reviews and other meetings.
- Welcoming and respecting parents into the school seeking their views and involvement.
- The presentation of a website designed to allow access for parents with learning difficulties
- Facilitating access to off site visits and residential trips by encouraging the attendance of parents and carers where appropriate



How do we promote good relations between people from different backgrounds?

- Providing opportunities for students to can participate in and celebrate their own culture as well as the richness and diversity of those of others, e.g. Black History Month, Travellers' Week, Refugee Week, Eid, AUTISM Awareness week
- Encouraging parents from different groups to become school governors.
- Adapting information giving (eg school newsletter) to meet the needs of our pupils and their parents/carers where they themselves may have learning difficulties

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of governors

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

The role of the Executive Principal/Head of School

- It is the head teacher's role to implement the school's Equality Plan and s/he is supported by the governing body in doing so.
- It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.



- The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching

All staff will;

- ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Plan.
- strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the headteacher

Monitoring

- To enact the content of the objectives set
- To monitor annually the action plans to see if all actions have taken place
- To hold annual SLT (Senior Leadership Team) discussion on the content of the policy
- To feedback to Governors at Full Governing Body meetings

Evaluation

- To check if the objectives have had a positive impact
- To review and amend the set objectives
- To set new objectives as appropriate
- To include feedback in the annual report to Governors
- To review the policy every 4 years



Equality Objectives

From September 2017

- To establish a curriculum which addresses the core deficits of pupils with autism and learning difficulties and ensures progression across Key stages and challenges the more able.
- Ensure that parental representation on the governing body reflects the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in the school.
- Ensure that staff in roles throughout the school reflect the ethnic, cultural religious and any other diversity of the student body.

