

# WEST PARK ACADEMY

## Single Equality Scheme



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## Introduction

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.

It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race, disability, sex and sexual orientation have experienced discrimination. We are committed to overcoming barriers and providing a curriculum and learning environment that provides all pupils with equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination.

## Section 1: Contextual Information

### 1: The Borough of Darlington

Darlington is situated in the North East of England and forms part of Tees Valley sub region, which, as a whole, comprises five unitary authorities and has a population of around 650,000 people. Darlington Borough is a compact area of some 76.2 square miles, comprising the town of Darlington and a number of surrounding villages. The Borough has a population of 105,696 people. Almost 90% of the population live in the urban area.

The town is a cultural centre, with a Theatre of regional significance and cinemas. The nightlife of the town centre is vibrant, with large numbers of people visiting the range of pubs and clubs available. The Borough has a rich heritage based on its industrial history, development of the nation's railway and a legacy of fine Victorian architecture. It is surrounded by productive as well as attractive and increasingly accessible countryside which in a number of places is rich in wildlife.

Darlington is served by good transport networks; fast trains to London, Edinburgh and Birmingham; good road networks (A1M/A19/A66 trans-Pennine route) and Teesside International airport 5 miles from the town centre.

At the community level, Darlington has a strong voluntary sector encompassing over 500 voluntary and community groups which involves over 10,000 volunteers contributing to the building of a strong and caring community.

An analysis of Darlington's population shows how diverse the population has become in terms of ethnicity; disability; sexual orientation and age.

- The 2021 Census identified a growing population to 107800 of which 48.9% male and 51.1% female
- Darlington has seen a 15.7% drop in the birth rate over the last 5 years to 2019
- The 2011 Census demonstrated that 96.2% of Darlington's population White and 3.8% from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups, which are defined as everyone who is not White British.
- Darlington has six times the national average for citizens from the gypsy/Roma and Traveller heritage.
- In Darlington's schools over 200 pupils speak English as an additional language; the pupils come from 26 different countries and are spread across 25 schools in the Borough.
- The number of people living with a limiting long term illness living in Darlington is 19.6% (Nat: 17.9%)
- The Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual population is approximately 3% of the population
- The ageing population (over 65s) is 20.5% compared to 10.9% under 10
- 25% of children live in poverty (after housing costs).

## Section 2: Our School

### Our Vision Statement

At West Park Academy we inspire a life-long love of learning where children are valued for their individuality and realise their full potential within a positive enriched learning environment. Curiosity, flexibility of thought and risk taking are at the heart of everything we do.

We aim to rise above the ordinary by developing a creative curriculum that responds to children's individual needs and interests. Through inspiration and enjoyment of learning we promote independence and a sense of self-belief.

A creative curriculum will inspire and help develop resilience, collaboration and a flexibility of thought.

We believe that good teamwork and supportive partnerships with individual children, the whole class, our colleagues, with Trustees, parents and the wider community leads to effective learning and high standards. Our children are responsible citizens, aware of and active within the local and global community.

At West Park Academy we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for pupils, staff and all those receiving services from the school. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their differences and to participate fully in school life.

To improve the involvement of all pupils, staff and parents/carers in the life of the school the Single Equalities Scheme will contribute to the increased involvement of all

pupils across all aspects of school life; encourage current staff and potential staff in their professional development and that all parents and carers of our pupils are able to become actively involved in school life and participate in the education and learning of their children.

The achievement of all pupils will be monitored and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that the school environment is as accessible as possible.

At West Park Academy we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

### **Section 3: National context for equality, diversity and cohesion**

As well as delivering on its commitment to promote equality across all the six strands of diversity - age, disability, faith or belief, gender, race and sexual orientation, the school has a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010. This act provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that have developed over time in the existing legislation, and extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas. As such, the Single Equality Scheme has been devised to ensure that all our policies and practices meet with all the legislative requirements including the following.

#### **The Gender, Race and Disability Equality Duties**

These duties impose broad obligations on public authorities, including schools, to:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment;
- Have due regard to the promotion of equality and opportunity
- Promote positive attitudes
- Encourage participation by minority and under-served groups in public life;
- Take steps to take account of people's specific needs even when this requires treating some individuals more favourably than others

The three duties are broadly similar in their approach and aims, however in order to ensure the school is compliant with all, they are detailed in the following sections.

### **Section 4: The Race Equality**

The general duty to promote race equality means that we must have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
2. Promote equality of opportunity
3. Promote good relations and understanding between people of different racial groups

## Key areas for our Academy

Currently, the ethnic makeup of the Academy is 95% are White British and 5% from other ethnic groups. We aim to ensure that our children explore our rich heritage and the positive contribution others from different countries have made to our country.

### Section 5: The Disability Equality

The general duty to promote disability equality is owed to all disabled people which means that we must have due regard to:

1. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
2. Eliminate unlawful discrimination
3. Eliminate disability related harassment
4. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
5. Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
6. Take steps to take into account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people

Mutually respectful social relationships will be developed and encouraged. This is taught throughout the curriculum but particularly in PSHE and RSE.

### Accessibility

There is specific legislation in relations to disabled pupils and accessibility which we must plan strategically over time to:

1. Increase access to the curriculum
2. Make improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access

## Key areas for our Academy

Darlington has a higher percentage of people with a limiting long term illness than the national average.

14% of the children on role at West Park Academy are on the SEND register.

A number of our pupils are identified as young carers, caring for a parent or family member who has a disability

A Higher than National Percentage of people from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community (GRT)

Tracking is in place to monitor all pupils. Our teaching and support staff monitor achievement of all pupils on a termly basis. Children are tracked as to progress and all tracking is updated after summer assessments.

The school has a proactive and inclusive approach to all pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors. We ensure that we celebrate difference through recognising events such as National Autism Day, our curriculum, our resources and who we choose to study.

## **Section 6: The Gender Equality**

The general duty to promote gender equality means that we must have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination
2. Promote equality of opportunity between men and women, boys and girl
3. Eliminate harassment of people based on their gender or transgender status

The duty also includes the need to consider actions to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

Staff in the academy will challenge gender stereotyping and promote positive role models. Mutually respectful social relationships will be developed and encouraged. This is taught throughout the curriculum but particularly in PSHE and RSE.

### **Transgender**

Transgender people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty. The term transgendered refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender. The academy will respect the dignity and privacy of transgender people and will provide a supportive environment within its school community.

## **Section 7: Age, Faith & Belief and Sexual Orientation**

### **Age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity**

We must ensure that we do not discriminate on these grounds. This Scheme includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

The school is implementing these regulations through its Human Resources function and employment practices to ensure no current or potential employee experiences discrimination as a result of their age. We are also committed to ensuring that no members of the school community face any such discrimination in all aspects of their lives and have equal access to all the services provided by the School.

We respect the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Also we will work to further develop our understanding of the issues surrounding belief. Appropriate actions for faith and belief will be developed through the implementation of this scheme and through celebration events such as interfaith week, visiting places of worship and hosting visitors from other faiths

The school is committed to creating a community where everyone has equal access to its services and feel accepted and valued. As such renewed efforts will be made to consult and involve gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the development of school services as well as ensure that all relationships within the school community and beyond are valued.

## **Section 8: Equality Impact Assessments**

Equality Impact Assessments are a crucial mechanism for ensuring the embedding of equalities and diversity. Impact assessments will be carried out covering all six equality and diversity strands (race, religion, disability, age, gender and sexual orientation) and will identify both good practice as well as areas where our performance in ensuring diversity could be improved.

In line with statutory requirements our equality impact assessment process will be applied to new policies as well as existing policies and functions on an agreed programme.

## **Section 9: Roles and responsibilities for implementing and monitoring the Single Equality Scheme**

**All members of the school community are expected to:**

- Give support to others within the school in promoting the principles of the policy
- Improve the involvement of disabled children and young people, staff, parents and carers
- Challenge discriminatory practice based on race, religion, gender, disability, sexuality or poverty
- Promote positive attitudes towards diversity
- Report any bullying incidents based on race, religion, disability, gender, sexuality or poverty

**Teachers and support staff are expected to:**

- Respect and celebrate diversity through the curriculum offer
- Implement the aims of this policy to promote community cohesion within their classrooms
- Narrow the attainment gap in outcomes between children and young people
- Record any incidents of discriminatory behaviour on Cpoms and log it appropriately



### **The Principal and all members of the SLT are also expected to:**

- Raise awareness of all the duties within the whole school community
- Ensure understanding of the broad legal definition of disability
- Sensitively encourage declaration of protected characteristics by children/young people, parents/carers, staff and other users of the school
- Ensure that the principles of relevance, proportionality, reasonable adjustment and positive action are applied appropriately
- Provide appropriate training for staff, Trustees and other members of the school community
- Ensure all appointments and appointment panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated when it comes to employment and training opportunities
- Monitor the outcomes and impact of provisions, criteria and practices on all groups, and respond with appropriate actions
- In the event of outcomes not being met, ensuring action is taken in accordance with the status of those involved
- Promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, promotes respect for others in all aspects of school life for example through regular assembly themes and in the texts we study
- Ensure that any racist or homophobic incidents or incidents of unfair treatment are treated with due seriousness.

### **The Trustees**

The Trustees have a duty to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination.

- Designate a Trustee with specific responsibility for the championing Equalities and specifically the implementation and review of the Single Equality Scheme. Currently this Trustee is Nick Holmes
- Support the Principal in implementing any actions necessary
- Inform and consult with parents about the scheme
- Evaluate and review this scheme every year

Functionally, the governing body discharges this responsibility through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

## **Section 11: Annual Review of Progress**

We will continue to review the actions we have taken in the development of our Single Equality Scheme which include:

- The results of any information gathering activities for race, disability and gender and how we have used this information towards improvement

- The outcomes of involvement activities from minority groups within our community
- A summary from equality impact assessments undertaken
- An update of the progress made against priorities
- Celebrating what we have achieved in relation to promoting community cohesion

We will review our Single Equality Scheme annually.