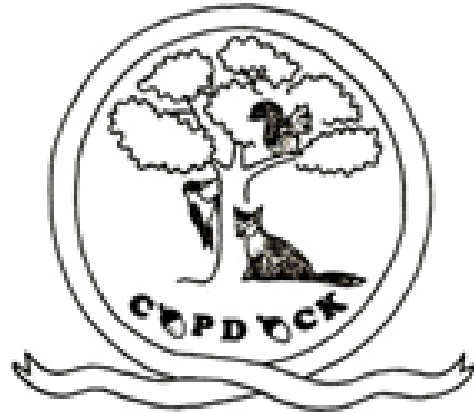
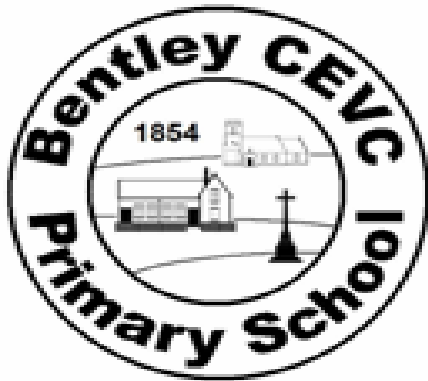


# Bentley CEVC & Copdock Primary Schools

## Equalities Policy and Objectives



|                            |               |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Date approved by Governors | Spring 24     |
| Date for review            | Spring 2025   |
| Staff Lead                 | Joanne Austin |
| Responsible Governor       | Luisa Brennan |

## **Introduction**

### **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**

The PSED was introduced by the Equality Act, 2010 and applies to all schools. The Act introduced three core elements from 5.1 of guidance published by the DfE:

- eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a prohibited characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership

Age is the missing protected characteristic from the list above as it does not apply to pupils in schools, so pupils can be treated in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development without risk of legal challenge.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the PSED and publish equality objectives. This information must be reviewed annually. This document also takes account of the DfE guidance The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

Schools must have 'due regard' to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are being made, considering their impact on particular groups. Considerations may include, for example when planning a school trip; religious holidays, access for pupils with disabilities, equivalent facilities available for girls and boys. The schools keep a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is done at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities.

Our schools engage with parents, pupils, staff, the local community and those with specialist knowledge, to discuss how best to tackle equality issues across all elements.

Our Equality Policy sets out how we address equality issues on a daily basis and our Equality & Diversity Annual Review notes how we meet our equality and diversity objectives.

Equality information and objectives as set out in this policy are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents, and they are reviewed and updated annually and, reviewed by the Governing Board at least once every four years.

## **Statement/Principles**

The policy outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors to promote equality and diversity and eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

This involves tackling the barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes so there is equality of access and the diversity within the school community is celebrated and valued.

We believe that equality within our schools should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth and discrimination will not be tolerated.

In our schools, equality is a key principle for ensuring nobody is disadvantaged irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs/faith tradition, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership or any other of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act of 2010.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The staff member responsible for co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation of this policy is the Headteacher, Joanne Austin, who is responsible for:

- Monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis.
- Providing updates on equalities legislation and the schools' responsibilities in this regard.
- Working closely with the Equalities Link Governor, Luisa Brennan
- Ensuring appropriate policies are reviewed in line with this policy.
- Supporting positively the evaluation activities that monitor the impact and success of the policy on pupils from different groups in the following recommended areas:
  - Pupils' progress and attainment
  - Learning and teaching
  - Behaviour discipline and exclusions
  - Attendance
  - Admissions
  - Incidents of prejudice-related bullying and all forms of bullying
  - Parental involvement
  - Participation in extra-curricular and extended school activities
  - Staff recruitment and retention
  - Visits and visitors
  - Pupils with special educational needs and/or disability
  - Pupils from disadvantaged groups

### **Policy Commitments**

Our schools have a commitment to celebrating diversity, which is about:

- Recognising and valuing difference.
- Recognising diversity as a positive, rich resource for teaching, learning and the curriculum.
- Recognising and seeking to redress inequality and disadvantage
- Treating all in a fair, open and honest manner
- Recognising the right of all children, parents, visitors and staff to be treated with dignity and respect. We strive to achieve a cohesive community and

expect that children and adults will respect one another and behave with respect to one another.

We work to employ strategies to ensure that the cross-curricular dimension of equal opportunity permeates all of the life and work of our schools. We recognise that a child's self-perception can be influenced by their environment and so we aim to enhance our children's self-esteem and self-confidence by positively working to reduce any bias or stereotyping and promote equality of opportunity.

### **Promoting Equality: Curriculum**

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To achieve this aim we will ensure:

- Curriculum planning reflects a commitment to the promotion of equality.
- The curriculum prepares pupils for life in a diverse society and uses opportunities to reflect the background and experience of pupils and families in the school.
- There will be opportunities in the curriculum to explore concepts and issues related to identity and equality; regular assemblies highlight festivals from different cultures and traditions and much of this work is embedded naturally across all curriculum areas.
- The promotion of attitudes and values that celebrate and respect diversity and challenge discriminatory behaviour and language whenever it occurs,
- The use of images and materials which positively reflect a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles, including books available in the library collections.

### **Promoting Equality: Opportunity and Achievement**

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of certain types of bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils

We consistently promote high expectations for all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability and social background. To secure the best possible outcomes for children of all abilities we recognise that:

- Adults in the school will be expected to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity.
- It is important to identify the particular needs of individuals and groups within the school and use targeted interventions to narrow gaps in achievement or encourage further growth and challenge in areas of strength.
- A range of teaching methods is used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils. All pupils are actively encouraged to engage fully in their own learning.
- The schools place a high emphasis on those with special educational needs and/or disability.
- The curriculum design actively breaks down barriers by offering pupils opportunities to participate in social and cultural activities.

### **Promoting Equality: Ethos and Atmosphere**

- At Bentley and Copdock schools, we are aware that those involved in the leadership of the school community are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community.
- We strive to achieve a feeling of openness and acceptance which welcomes everyone to the schools.
- The children are encouraged to greet visitors to their school with friendliness and respect.
- The displays around the schools are of a high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality and are frequently monitored;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure access for pupils and visitors, (including parents) with disabilities. (This not only includes physical access, but takes account of wider access to school information and activities)
- Provision is made to cater for the cultural, moral and spiritual needs of all children at both schools, through planning of assemblies, classroom based and off-site activities. Bentley is a church school and its Christian Vision, 'Know that I am with you always,' Matthew 28:20, is explicitly developed throughout Bentley school.
- Children can have access to knowing that God is with them at every step on life's journey. Pupils' views are actively encouraged and respected. Pupils are given an effective voice, for example through the School Council, Head Pupils and pupil perception surveys, which regularly seek views about learning and life of the school.
- Assemblies are held covering relevant issues and pupils are encouraged and do take the lead in such assemblies.
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils feel welcomed and included.

### **Promoting Equality: Staff Recruitment and Professional Development**

- All posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants.
- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity.
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds.
- Equalities policy and practice and training on the Equality Act is covered in all staff inductions. Staff receive refresher training as appropriate.
- All supply staff and contractors are made aware of the Equalities Policy and practice through a welcome statement when signing in.

- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and impact.

### **Promoting Equality: Countering and Challenging Harassment and Bullying**

- The schools counter and challenge all types of discriminatory behaviour and this is made clear to staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- Our schools have clear, agreed policies for anti-bullying, behaviour, whistleblowing and safeguarding; these policies are designed to counter and challenge harassment and bullying.
- The schools have a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with prejudice-related bullying incidents and have a nominated member of staff responsible for recording and monitoring incidents.
- The schools report to the Governing Board, parents and LA on an annual basis the number of prejudice-related incidents recorded in the schools.

### **Promoting Equality: Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community**

Our schools aim to work in partnership with parents/carers. We:

- Take action to ensure parents/carers from all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in the full life of their child's school.
- Ensure that there are good channels of communication, e.g. parent newsletter, website and questionnaires, to ensure parents views are captured and acted upon.
- Encourage members of the local community to join in school activities and celebrations.
- Ensure that the parents/carers of newly arrived pupils are made to feel welcome.

### **Responsibility for the Policy**

In our schools, all members of the school community have a responsibility for the promotion of equalities.

**The Governing Board** has responsibility for ensuring that:

- Equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the schools, including to staff, pupils and parents. The schools' Equalities Policy is maintained and updated at least annually and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years.
- Governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, for example during meetings, and these discussions, as well as actions, procedures and strategies related to the policy are duly recorded in the meetings minutes.
- The Equality Link Governor, is a member of the Personnel and Communications Committee and will have an overview, on behalf of the Governing Board, on all prejudice-related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to these incidents. They will:

- Meet with the designated member of staff for equality every term? And any other relevant members of staff, to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed.
- Ensure they are familiar with all relevant legislation and this policy.
- Attend any appropriate equality and diversity training.
- Report back to the full Governing Board regarding any issues.

**The Headteacher and Senior Leadership**, in partnership with the Governing Board, have responsibility for:

- Providing leadership and vision in respect of equality.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils.
- Overseeing the implementation of the Equalities Policy and objectives.
- Co-ordinating the activities related to equality and evaluating impact.
- Ensuring that all who enter the school are aware of, and comply with, the Equalities Policy.
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support.
- Taking appropriate action in response to any prejudice-related incidents.

**All school staff** have responsibility for:

- The implementation of the school equalities policy and to work to achieve the objectives identified in this document;
- Dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- Ensuring they do not discriminate on grounds of any identified characteristics identified in the Equality Act.
- Keeping up to date with equalities legislation.

### **Measuring the Impact of the Policy**

The Equalities Policy and all other relevant policies will be evaluated and monitored for their equality impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our schools. The main findings from any equality impact assessments will be published for the school community on the school website.

## **Equality & Diversity Annual Review 2024**

### **How our schools meet equality and diversity objectives**

- Everyone is treated equally. Any child who is identified as struggling to meet the expected standard is supported irrespective of gender, race, disability (or any other protected characteristic).
- We include all children in all activities as fully as possible and adjust the environment and available activities as needed to ensure equality of access.
- The school supports staff where there is a responsibility for a dependent – in line with our staff absence management policies.
- Health – all staff, teaching and support staff, undertake a health assessment before starting work – if there is a change in a member of staff's health, support would be provided as needed.
- It is extremely rare to have any prejudice related incidents within our school communities.

In reviewing our Statement of Objectives

- PHSE scheme of work continues to be embedded into the long-term curriculum planning and identifies what should be taught each half term. This academic year has focused on Rights, Rules and Responsibilities and Diversity and Communities. This continues to support an awareness of self and others, ensuring children develop positive relationships with those around them and in the wider community, enabling awareness of difference and diversity in individual identity and within families.
- Positive emotional and mental wellbeing continues to be developed through our close partnership with the local Mental Health team who have delivered workshops for families and provided support for staff. Our Senior Lead Mental Health leads continue to implement the action plan to support both children and staff mental health and updates are shared with the Governing Board.
- Curriculum continues to be developed through Unity Cusp materials to foster confidence and resilience in learning. Implementation of this ambitious and richly diverse curriculum offer has led to the purchase of new reading materials and wider resources across all age ranges, which positively reflect the diversity in and beyond our school community.
- Objectives specifically targeted to meet the needs of those with SEND are included in the Accessibility Plan and evidence of impact has been seen through our recent OFSTED and SIAMs inspections, SES support and reviews, alongside professionals' feedback on how provision has a positive impact on promoting equality and inclusion.
- Vulnerable groups such as children with SEND and those experiencing disadvantage, continue to make progress from their starting points. Our implementation of the Essential Toolkit has allowed us to profile our children in further detail using the identified areas of need from VSEND and set targets. This has shown evidence of impact against objectives specifically targeted to meet the needs of those with SEND.



- Throughout 2023, effective, evidence based CPD has been implemented as part of the Walkthru approach. This has enabled all staff to identify strategies and approaches to have the biggest impact on pupil engagement in learning. Professional teaching practice is consistently good or better which promotes good progress and outcomes for ALL children
- Our PSHE scheme of work continues to promote respectful relationships with particular reference to the diversity of friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults (in line with the new statutory Relationships Education).
- Federation commitment to listening to the views, wishes and experiences of all children has continued to be actioned with Head Pupils, surveys and an active School Council.

#### Objectives for 2024

- Continue implementation of the new CUSP reading and writing curriculum to further embed access to a range of texts that have been mapped carefully to ensure a breadth of experiences, authors, texts and themes across the Primary years. These include heritage texts, BAME authors or protagonists, strong female role models and specific social, ethical, moral issues for exploration.
- Consult with parents and families about current provision to meet the needs of all pupils, with a particular focus on equality and Special Educational Needs (summer 2024). Use this information to inform our provision and Accessibility Plan for 2024-25.