



# **St Thomas More Catholic Primary School**

## **Equality Statement 2023-2026**

This is a working document which will be monitored and reviewed annually.

## 1. Policy statement

- a) In accordance with our School Mission Statement and Core Values we pledge:
- to respect the equal human rights of all our pupils;
  - to educate them about equality; and
  - to respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of the school community.
- b) We will assess our current school practices (“Equality Impact Assessment”) and implement all necessary resulting actions in relation to:
- ethnicity,
  - religion or belief,
  - socio-economic background,
  - gender and gender identity,
  - disability,
  - sexual orientation, and
  - age.
- c) We will promote community cohesion at school, local, national and global levels, comparing our school community to its local and national context and implementing all necessary actions in relation to:
- ethnicity,
  - religion or belief, and
  - socio-economic background.

*(See Appendix A for bank of equality statements).*

## 2. Statutory requirements

The equality objectives in Section 10 below address our duties under current equality legislation, up to and including the Equality Act 2010. They also relate to the Essex Council procedure for recording incidents involving pupils in schools.

The access plan in Section 11 below addresses our duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001.

The community cohesion plan in Section 12 below addresses our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006

## 3. Community cohesion

The following statement outlines both the data and current issues relating to ethnicity, religion/belief and socio-economic factors. In examining the school’s context, it relates closely to the beginning of the SEF. It demonstrates the awareness of the governors and their community partners of how the school community

compares with the wider community, both locally and nationally. It therefore forms the basis for planning the actions in Section 12 below to promote community cohesion.

- Ethnicity/culture context of the school (local and national)

The majority of pupils are of a white, British background. 8% percent of children in the school are EAL.

- Religion/belief context of the school (local and national)

The vast majority of our children are Christian, though there are families who are of a different faith.

- Socio-economic context of the school (local and national)

The school has a very mixed picture – there are many affluent families but also some deprived families.

- Current issues affecting cohesion at school, local and national level

The cost of living crisis due to Brexit and the Ukraine war.

## 4. Responsibilities

The governors as a whole are responsible for:

- drawing up, publishing and implementing the school's equality objectives
- making sure the school complies with the relevant equality legislation; and
- making sure the school Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed
- monitoring progress towards the equality objectives and reporting annually

The head teacher is responsible for:

- making sure steps are taken to address the school's stated equality objectives;
- making sure the equality, access and community cohesion plans are readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils, and their parents and guardians know about them;
- producing regular information for staff and governors about the plans and how they are working;
- making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out; and
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including prejudice-related incidents.
- enabling reasonable adjustments to be made, in relation to disability, in regard to students, staff, parents / carers and visitors to the school.

All staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality and community cohesion in their work;
- avoiding unlawful discrimination against anyone;
- fostering good relations between groups; and

- dealing with prejudice-related incidents;
- being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- taking up training and learning opportunities.

The Head is responsible overall for dealing with reports of prejudice-related incidents.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for following relevant school policy.

## **5. Staff development**

This section outlines our process for training and development in relation to equality and cohesion in terms of professional responsibilities as well as statutory requirements.

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## **6. Publication and review**

This Equality Scheme fulfils statutory requirements under the terms of legislation referred to above. As it is a public document, the school governors publish it by making it available on request.

The scheme will be kept under regular review for three years and then replaced in September 2026.

## **7. Impact of Equality Policy**

There have only been three derogatory statements made by children in the last 10 years with regards to race. The equality education and ethos of the school has meant that children in the school see all members regardless of race, culture and sexuality, all are treated equally and accepted.

## **8. How we conduct equality impact assessment**

This section outlines our process for monitoring the potential impact of school practice in terms of

- ethnicity,
- religion or belief,
- socio-economic background,
- gender and gender identity,
- disability,
- sexual orientation, and
- age.

Equality objectives identified by this process should be included in the three-year plan in Section 10 below, or in the School Improvement Plan as appropriate.

Evidence of this process can be found in School Improvement Plans.

## **9. How we chose our equality objectives**

Our equality objective-setting process has involved gathering evidence as follows:

- i. from the equality impact assessments listed in Section 8 above,
- ii. from the following data and plans

- Our discrimination records
- Our behaviour book
- Our playground incidents records
- Our accident record sheets
- Our vision evenings for all staff/governors
- Our PSHE and RE School Improvement plans
- Our Assembly Schemes of work

- iii. and from involving relevant people (including disabled people) from the start in the following way:

- Our vision evenings for all staff/governors
- Views of parents/carers of disabled pupils

The evidence was then analysed in order to choose objectives that will:

- i. promote equality of opportunity for members of identified groups
- ii. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and
- iii. foster good relations between different groups in terms of
  - ethnicity,
  - religion or belief,
  - socio-economic background,
  - gender and gender identity,
  - disability,
  - sexual orientation and
  - age.

## 10. Equality Objectives 2020-23

(To be kept under regular review)

<b>Equality objectives (focused on outcomes rather than processes)</b>
To minimise the number of reported racist incidents – reduce to zero
To work towards all children feeling empowered and in control of their own identity.
To have a curriculum that appeals to all genders and where outcomes are high and similar for all pupils regardless of their ethnicity, religion or belief, socio-economic background, gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation and age.

## 11. Access Plan 2020-2023

	<b>Actions (focused on outcomes rather than processes)</b>
i. Improvements in access to the curriculum	Improving our technology in order to allow greater access visually and linguistically. Adapting the curriculum to engage all pupils and making it relevant to their lives.
ii. Physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services	To make sure that any disabled pupil, parent, member of staff or visitor has access to the carpark. Wherever possible give the topography of the school site to improve accessibility eg new art / after school club room has a ramp and disabled access toilet.
iii. Improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled pupils	Through our inclusion manager, to work with families to allow them to access to the services to which they are entitled.

## 12. Community Cohesion Plan 2021-23

The choice of appropriate actions to promote community cohesion is based on the needs identified in the contextual statement in Section 3 above, relating to ethnicity, religion or belief and socio-economic background.

For this purpose, the four geographical dimensions of “community” are as follows:

- the school community
- local communities
- communities across the UK
- the global dimension

	<b>Actions (focused on outcomes rather than processes)</b>
i. Teaching, learning and the curriculum	To improve the quality and range of MFL teaching To ensure that clubs allow children to develop their linguistic skills, link with local services.
ii. Equity between groups in school, where appropriate	To monitor standards in core and foundation subjects to identify when groups are not making the same good progress and use pupil progress meetings to support these pupils. iii. Engagement
iii. Engagement with people from different backgrounds, inc. extended services	Link with other local schools, diocesan schools, British Council, Saffron Hall etc.to engage with people from different backgrounds.



## Appendix A

### **Pupils' attainment and progress**

This school expects the highest possible standards. Staff have high expectations of all pupils and continually challenge them to reach higher standards.

The school recognises and values all forms of achievement. We will monitor and analyse pupil performance by ethnicity, gender, disability and special educational need and social background. Any disparities which are identified will be addressed through targeted curriculum planning, teaching and support.

### **The quality of provision - teaching and learning**

All staff ensure the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel all contributions are valued. Positive steps are taken to include pupils who may otherwise be marginalized.

We take account of pupils' experiences and starting points and are responsive to pupils' different learning styles. All pupils are regularly consulted about their learning.

Pupil grouping is planned and varied to reflect the requirements of learners and their social development needs. Allocations to teaching groups will be kept under continual review and analysed by ethnicity, gender and background.

Our teaching styles include collaborative learning. All pupils will be encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem solving tasks. Pupils will be encouraged to be a resource for their peers.

Staff encourage pupils to become independent and assist them in taking responsibility for the management of their own learning and behaviour.

Staff will use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupil progress. Assessments are analysed for gender, cultural and social bias, and take account of access issues, e.g. print size.

This school believes that self-assessment is a teaching-learning strategy, and we will provide all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.

### **The quality of provision - curriculum and other activities**

This school provides an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds. We will monitor and evaluate its effectiveness through target setting and attainment analysis

All pupils participate in the mainstream curriculum of the school.

The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- boys and girls
- pupils learning English as an additional language
- pupils from minority ethnic groups, including Gypsies and Travellers
- pupils who are gifted and talented
- pupils with special educational needs
- pupils with a disability
- pupils who are in public care
- pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion
- lesbian, gay or questioning young people

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of all pupils.

The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

Extra curricular activities and special events e.g. school productions, cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils and take account of parental preferences related to religion and culture.

### **The quality of provision – guidance and support**

We actively promote good personal and community relations and recognise diversity as having a positive role to play within the school.

All staff are expected to foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among boys and girls from all ethnic groups and range of abilities.

Staff challenge stereotypes and foster pupils' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.

Our pastoral support takes account of religious, cultural and ethnic differences, special educational needs, disability and the experiences and needs of Traveller pupils, refugees and asylum seekers' children

The school provides appropriate support for pupils learning English as an additional language and pupils are encouraged to use their home and community languages to enhance their learning

We expect work experience providers to demonstrate their commitment to equality, including disability, gender and race equality.

Victims of harassment and bullying are given appropriate support using external agencies where appropriate. The perpetrators are dealt with in line with school policy and are provided with relevant support to consider and modify their behaviour.

## **Behaviour and Attendance**

This school expects high standards of behaviour from all pupils, appropriate for their developmental level.

We have procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour that are fair and applied equally to all. All staff are expected to operate consistent systems of rewards and discipline

It is recognised that cultural background and disability may affect behaviour. Our school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

Clear procedures are in place so that all forms of bullying and harassment, including racism and harassment related to disability, sexism and homophobia, are dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently and are in line with relevant Essex LA policies and guidance such as those for anti-bullying and dealing with racist incidents. All forms of harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with relevant school policies.

All staff are trained to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice and are offered support in handling such matters

We encourage staff to explore their own views and attitudes to difference and to monitor their practice in relation to this policy. Adults in school take care to lead through example, demonstrating high expectations of all pupils.

We monitor exclusions by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Background is also considered. Action is taken in order to address any disparities between different groups of pupils.

This school will take all reasonable steps to prevent the exclusion of a pupil for a reason related to any disability they may have.

Pupils, staff and parents are aware of policies and procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour, which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any minority group, is always unacceptable.

Information and advice on attendance and exclusion is made available to parents/carers in accessible formats such as relevant community languages and large print.

There are strategies to reintegrate long-term non-attenders and excluded pupils, which address the needs of all pupils.

Families are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to pupil attendance and absence is always followed up in a way that takes account of cultural issues or matters relating to a child's disability.

We make provision for leave of absence for religious observance, for staff as well as pupils.

We monitor attendance by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Background is also considered. Action is taken in order to address any disparities between different groups of pupils.

The school will fully support children with long-term medical needs who may have an erratic attendance because they are in and out of hospital.

We expect full-time attendance of Traveller and Gypsy pupils.

### **Partnership with pupils, parents, carers and the wider community**

We monitor parental involvement and have strategies to raise participation of under represented groups of parents and sections of the community. Information and meetings for parents are made accessible for all.

Progress reports to parents/carers are clearly written and free from jargon to encourage parents to participate in their child's education. Where necessary information is available in languages and formats other than English. Parents with a disability or with learning difficulties will be able to access school's information.

Parents are fully involved in the school-based response for their child with special educational needs, understand the purpose of any intervention or programme of action and are told about the parent partnership service when SEN is identified.

This school encourages participation of under represented groups in areas of employment . e.g: through work experience placements

Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalised groups.

This school works in partnership with parents and the community to address specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to difference.

The school's premises and facilities are equally available and accessible for use by all groups within the community.

### **Leadership and management**

Steps are taken to ensure the school's admission process is fair and equitable to all pupils, including short-stay Traveller and Refugee pupils and those with English as an additional language.

This school will not discriminate against a disabled pupil in the arrangements it makes for determining admission.

We will admit pupils with already identified special educational needs. Pupils with statements of special educational needs will always be admitted unless, through the statutory assessment process, it is demonstrated that the pupil's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children.

Comprehensive information about pupils' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet etc. is included in admissions forms OR gathered at admissions interview.

The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equitable and in line with statutory duties and Essex County Council guidelines.

We will take steps to encourage people from under represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school and ensure recruitment and selection processes are monitored.

Equality and diversity issues are reflected in our school's employment practices

Everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this policy. All staff and visitors must support the ethos of the school, promoting equality and challenging bias and stereotyping wherever they observe it.

We will ensure that staff training continually highlights equality issues. Equality is incorporated in the induction programme for new staff.

The skills of all staff, including non-teaching and part-time staff are recognised and valued. All staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge.

Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this policy.

Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and the school strives to reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

This school opposes all forms of racism, homophobia, prejudice and discrimination.

Resources and displays in our school reflect the experience and backgrounds of pupils, promote diversity and challenge stereotypes. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school, e.g. the inclusion of images relating to minority ethnic and Gypsy and Traveller children; displays to be positioned at eye level, etc.

## Linguistic Diversity

We welcome the diversity of languages in our school and we give them all status and value. We look for opportunities to use our languages to enrich the curricular experience of all our pupils and we draw upon the expertise of our school community wherever possible.

Resources and displays reflect the multilingual nature of our community.

We recognise the positive role the home language has to play in the development of English language learning and in pupils' cognitive development. Pupils who speak languages other than English are encouraged to use them in school, and wherever possible, we offer bilingual support for pupils who are in the earlier stages of learning English.

We recognise and celebrate the linguistic diversity in British society. We look for opportunities to enrich the curricular experience of all our pupils by:

- highlighting how English has borrowed from other languages
- raising awareness of the similarities and differences between English and other languages
- reflecting the multilingual nature of wider society in our resources and displays