

Holmleigh School Community Cohesion Policy 2019

Rationale

We passionately believe that it is the duty of all schools to address issues of ‘how we live together’ and ‘dealing with difference,’ however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem.’

(The Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review 2007)

There is a duty for schools to promote community cohesion under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Community cohesion lies at the heart of what makes a strong and safe community. It must be delivered locally through creating strong networks, based on principles of trust, and respect for local diversity, and nurturing a sense of belonging and confidence in local people. Effectively delivering community cohesion also tackles the fractures in society which may lead to conflict and ensures that the gains that communities bring are a source of strength to local areas.

Our Vision

Our vision recognises and celebrates the diversity within our area and welcomes the contributions which different groups and individuals make to the community. Differences between groups of people can cause misunderstanding and friction. A key commitment of Holmleigh Primary School is to build and promote community cohesion within the school and wider community.

Community cohesion incorporates and goes beyond the concept of race equality and social inclusion. A cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.
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Holmleigh Primary School provides education for all, acknowledging that the society within which we live is enriched by diversity. We strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school reflects the diversity of all members of the school community, where everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect and fairness. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

We will work towards eliminating all discrimination, on the grounds of race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexuality (including sexual orientation), age, religion and belief. We believe that all pupils, employees, stakeholders and members of our local and global community should be treated with dignity and respect at all times and we will not tolerate bullying, harassment or victimisation of any groups or individuals.

Values

- Diversity is a strength; having many different groups, cultures, and faiths in our society makes us stronger.
- We should all work for greater respect and equality of opportunity between different groups, cultures, faiths and ages in our society.
- The different groups, cultures, faiths and ages in our society will benefit from meeting each other, listening to one another, and getting to understand each other more.
- We must all work to overcome disadvantage as it is a major barrier between communities, especially where it is experienced more by one group than another.
- Racism and prejudice undermine community cohesion and must be confronted.
- Partnerships with parents, Governors and the wider community are essential to promote equality, diversity and community cohesion.

The health, well-being and cohesion of our local community are important to us. By valuing and championing diversity, we lead the way in good practice and set an example for others to join us. That is why we have developed this policy to ensure that we create an environment where everyone is respected and treated equally.

Our strategic aims and objectives

- Our Community Cohesion Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- Our Equality Scheme will include actions linked to promoting community cohesion.
- We will involve stakeholders in action planning for effective community cohesion.
- The Governing Body will take positive steps to promote good community relations.
- We will work towards challenging any forms of prejudice towards groups and individuals.
- All teachers will be trained in promoting community cohesion through a diverse curriculum.
- We will assess the impact of our community cohesion programme to determine adverse or differential impact on groups or individuals.

Our practice

There are three areas where our practice can contribute most to Community Cohesion.

1. Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum

Promoting community cohesion through teaching, learning and the curriculum is clearly at the heart of our duty. The Guidance describes this as “helping children and young people to learn to understand others, to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values, to promote awareness of human rights and to apply and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action”

Many subjects, including Citizenship, RE, History and Geography have direct relevance to promoting community cohesion and the following areas may be useful when considering the role of the curriculum in meeting the new duty.

Curriculum areas:

- Religious education
- PSHE
 - SEAL

Ethos of the School:

- Equality Scheme
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Race Equality Policy
- Gender Equality Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Peer projects
- Volunteering & mentoring

Access & Inclusion:

- Admission arrangements
 - Evaluating progress/attainment of different groups
 - Tackling underperformance
- Bullying, discrimination, racial incidents & behaviour monitoring

Student Voice:

- School Council
- Pupil surveys and interviews
- Pupils becoming active citizens

Teacher Frameworks:

- Sustainable schools
- Healthy schools
- Fair-trade schools
- Home/school agreement
- Extended schools & services
- Workforce Development
- International Schools Programme

Special Events:

- Black history month
 - Citizenship week
- Visit a place of worship week
- Peace week
- Refuge week, etc.

2. Equity and Excellence

Striving to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential, irrespective of ethnic, socio-economic or other differences, is already a clear focus for our school and is another important aspect of promoting community cohesion. We are committed to narrowing, and ultimately closing, the gap between the progress and attainment of children from different backgrounds and their peers.

3. Engagement and Extended Services

This is the area which is less familiar than their work on curriculum or equity and excellence and which will benefit most from the involvement of local partners and other organisations.

The Guidance states that schools can promote community cohesion through their work to “provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including: links with different schools and communities; the provision of extended services; and opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups.”

Implementation

This scheme is supported by actions described within the School Improvement Plan which outlines the action the school will be taking to meet the general duty and make practical improvements for community cohesion.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

There will be internal evaluation of this policy and the Equality Scheme.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Equality Scheme. Together, they are intrinsic to:

- the School Improvement Plan
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Gender Policy
- Race Equality Policy
- Disability Equality Scheme