

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

## Community Cohesion Policy

**Person Responsible: Miss M Jackson**

**Date: September 2016**

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**St Mary's school aims and values enshrine community cohesion at the heart of everything we do. We work in partnership with our community and other organisations to ensure we do all we can to promote and establish strong, respectful relationships that enhance the outcomes for children and their families.**

The curriculum of our school aims to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional and physical development of our pupils and of society and prepare our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

As migration and economic change alter the shape of our increasingly diverse local communities, it is more important than ever that all schools play a full part in promoting community cohesion. Our school has a thriving, cohesive community but it also has a vital part to play in building a more cohesive society.

Our school has good links with other schools and organisations in order to give our pupils the opportunity to mix with and learn with, from and about those from different backgrounds.

Through our ethos and curriculum, we promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing pupils how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

We 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.

### **What is community cohesion?**

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

### **Community from a school's perspective**

The term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- the **school community** - the pupils it serves, their families and the school's staff;
- the **parish community** of Christchurch
- the **community within which the school is located** - the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area;
- the **community of Britain** - all schools are by definition part of this community;
- The global community - formed by EU and international links.

## How our school contribute towards community cohesion

A central aspect of our work in developing community cohesion is to consider how different aspects of our work already support integration and community harmony; to take stock of what has worked well so far. We also consider where there may be scope to improve our existing work through a more explicit focus on the impact of activities on community cohesion.

Our contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum - to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- Equity and excellence - to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.
- Engagement and ethos - to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally.

## What we consider in promoting community cohesion

We consider the activities that already take place at St Mary's and what might be arranged in cooperation with other schools.

### Teaching, learning and curriculum

At St Mary's we constantly strive to maintain a high standard of teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity are integrated across the curriculum.

We work to ensure that:

- Lessons across the curriculum promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping - for example, opportunities in school for pupils to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.
- There is a programme of curriculum based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through learning about members of different communities and working alongside other schools in Greenwich.
- There is support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- There is an effective voice and involvement of pupils in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.

## **Equity and excellence**

We continually focus on developing strategies that support us in securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that pupils are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential.

The school tracking system enables us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.

We rigorously monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment, acting within agreed policies to ensure that such incidents are not tolerated and that all children and members of our community feel emotionally and physically safe.

## **Engagement and ethos**

**School to school:** \_We continually seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We look locally or further afield as a means of developing the relationships that support us in promoting community cohesion.

Sharing facilities also provides a means for pupils to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and music. St Mary's does much to achieve this.

**School to parents and the community:** Good partnership activities with the local and wider community include:

- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the police and social care and health professionals.
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, curriculum workshops, parent and child courses.
- Provision of extended services, where possible, to respond to and meet the needs of our community.
- Working closely with Fr John and Christchurch.