



# **Equality Policy & Objectives**

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Lead Governor	John Forgan
Governor Committee Responsibility:	FGB
Statutory document:	Yes

# MAPLE INFANTS' SCHOOL EQUALITY POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

~ TOGETHER WE LEARN AND GROW ~

**This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.**

**We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.**

## EQUALITY POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

Maple Infants' is a community infants' school, which also has a nursery. It provides for children between the ages of 3 and 7 years and is able to cater for 322 children in total. It is situated in the heart of Surbiton, in the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames and serves the vibrant community of Surbiton. It is a highly regarded school and is well-established in the locality.

School numbers on roll remained relatively static since the school permanently expanded to 3 forms of entry in 2016, although a dip in national birth rates is starting to impact numbers on roll in relevant year groups for children born in 2019-2021. Those identified eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant have continued to fluctuate slightly each year, however, the figure continues to remain well below national averages

- Dec 2022: 7% Maple, National 20.8%
- Dec 2023: 7.5% Maple, National 22.5%
- Dec 2024: 5.3% Maple, National tbc

Two thirds of the school community identify as being from a minority ethnic group (not white British).

There are currently 33 different languages spoken across the school and 36% of children speak another language other than English as their first language (Dec 2024).

Numbers of pupils identified as having special educational needs or a disability (SEND) continue to be lower than the national average (Dec 2024: 7.5% SEN register, 1.8% EHCP. National: 13.6% SEN Support & 4.8% EHCP).

Maple Infants' is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of the community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children.

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles:

- **All children are of equal value**, whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- **We recognise, respect and value differences and recognise diversity as a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
- **We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- **We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
- **We have the highest expectations of all our children.** We expect that all children can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
- **We work to raise standards for all our pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

- **We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.

## 2. Purpose of the policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics).

The following characteristics are protected characteristics:

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

This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils or treat them less favourably because of their sex/gender, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

Age and marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity are also “protected characteristics” but are not part of the school provisions related to pupils.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties:

- The **Public Sector Equality Duty** or “general duty”. This requires all public organisations, including schools to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
  - Foster good relations between different groups
- Two “specific duties”. This requires all public organisations, including schools to:
  - Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty.
  - Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

**Appendix 1** is a checklist of key equality considerations for school staff and governors

**Appendix 2** shows our latest available equality performance statistics

**Appendix 3** shows the school's Equality Objectives for 2025-2029

**Appendix 4** shares Achieving for Children's Inclusion Charter

**Appendix 5** outlines the school's inclusion ethos communicated through 'The Maple Way'

### **3. Development of the policy**

This policy was developed by Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Governor with specific responsibility for equalities. Our equality objective setting process has involved gathering evidence through a variety of ways, including performance data, data on ethnicity, religion or belief, socio-economic background, gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation and age, and seeking the views of stakeholders.

### **4. Links to other policies and documentation**

Although this is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act is also included in our school development plan, self-evaluation review and school website.

There are also references to equality issues in other plans and policies e.g. the Accessibility Plan, SEND Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy as well as in minutes of meetings involving governors, whole staff, senior leadership team and School Parliament.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the way we comply with this is found in our recruitment policy.

This Equality Policy links to Achieving for Children's Inclusion Charter and our shared commitment to making sure every child or young person receives high quality first inclusive provision which meets their needs, gives appropriate support and helps them to achieve. (See appendix 5)

### **5. How we promote equality and value diversity**

#### **What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

- All staff and governors are provided with information and training (equality matters and safeguarding)
- We challenge all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying
- We keep a record of prejudice-based incidents and report to governors termly on any such incidents and how they were dealt with. This record is regularly reviewed by the Headteacher and governors, to check whether any action is needed.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils and strive to ensure children with a disability are not placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers
- We have created a statement called The Maple Way which explains to our stakeholders our vision for embracing inclusion and diversity in our school. (See Appendix 6)
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent
- The school policies related to behaviour take full account of our duties under the Equality Act
- We consider equality implications whenever we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day-to-day life of the school
- The Headteacher ensures that all decisions about appointments, promotion or training opportunities are made in accordance with the Equality Act

## **What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups**

- We know the needs of our pupils very well. We collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements
- We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils (e.g. ethnicity, gender, PPG, SEN, EAL), and we take action to close any gaps, e.g. for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills
- We also collect, analyse and use data about attendance to support equality of opportunity
- We use a range of teaching strategies to ensure we meet the needs of all pupils
- We provide targeted support for pupils with particular needs, and for those at risk of underachieving

## **What we are doing to foster good relations between different groups**

- We promote a whole school ethos that promotes positive self-esteem and respect for others
- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences
- We use materials and resources that reflect and celebrate diversity
- We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors and other enrichment activities, and whole school events

## **Other ways we address equality issues**

- We seek opportunities for training relating to the Equalities Act
- We ensure equality issues are discussed in staff meetings
- We review relevant feedback e.g. from parents' and pupils' surveys, the School Parliament

## **6. Disseminating the policy and publishing Equality Objectives (see our Equality Action Plan at Appendix 3)**

This **Equality Policy** along with the Equality Objectives and data is available:

- on the school website
- as part of induction for new staff

We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and SEND.

The **Equality Objectives** we identify represent our school's priorities and are based on an analysis of data and other evidence. We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we **achieve improved outcomes** for the different groups. We produce an analysis of Equality data which informs our discussions about Equality Objectives.

Our Equality Objectives for 2025-2029 are:

- to increase pupil and parental awareness of diversity in need across the school community through sharing The Maple Way to increase understanding and value of difference

- to monitor and improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils within identified groups to meet the school target of 97% for all pupils
- to narrow the gap between the achievement of vulnerable\* children and their peers
- to ensure that the school website is accessible to all and promotes equality to all stakeholders

\*At Maple Infants' School the term *vulnerable* is used to refer to all children who are at risk of under-achieving, including those who may be affected by discrimination and unequal opportunity, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and who therefore have one or more of the protected characteristics listed in the Act, in addition to those who are supported within and beyond the school context by relevant multi services.

These equality objectives are considered alongside our school development plan.

## **7. Monitoring and reviewing the policy and equality objectives**

We review the information about equalities in the policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate.

We review and update our equality objectives at least every four years and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, pupils, governors and parents.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

### **Governing body**

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's Equalities work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys)

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

In addition, the Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. S/he will have expert and informed knowledge of the Equality Act.

### **Teaching and support staff**

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur

- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

### **Visitors**

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers, are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in school newsletters to enable them to do this.

### **9. Key Contacts**

- **Staff responsible for equalities:** Claire Barwell, Headteacher
- **Lead governor for equalities:** John Forgan

## Appendix 1 - Checklist of key equality considerations for staff and governors

- The school collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, eg, pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides
- The Equality Policy and Plan and Objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, governors, pupils and other stakeholders
- The school publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties
- The school analyses pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when these trends or patterns indicate a need
- The school sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes
- The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The school ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference
- All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, eg, through class assemblies and the School Parliament
- The school monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (ie, different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern
- Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the school community
- Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and class assemblies
- The school takes part in annual events to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender
- The school environment is increasingly accessible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school – including the acoustic environment
- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school and issues such as language barriers are considered
- The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information
- The Governing Body is increasingly representative of the community it serves
- Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled

## **Appendix 2 – Latest available equality performance statistics for Maple Infants' - 2024**

Information is taken from the *SP[ARK] 2024 Outcome Report for Governors – Maple Infants' School and national data sets*.

### **Outcome Data for EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) 2024:**

- In 2023, 78% of pupils achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD). This stands above the national average which is 67.7%.
- There were five disadvantaged pupils in Reception in 2024. Of these 80% achieved a GLD which compares to an average of 51.5% for disadvantaged pupils nationally (Not known to be disadvantaged nationally was 72%).
- When compared to national averages, a higher percentage of boys and girls achieved GLD than nationally.

### **Year 1 Phonics 2024:**

- In 2024, 69% of pupils achieved the expected standard in Year 1. This was below the national average of 81%.
- There were 8 disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 in 2024. Of these 50% achieved the expected standard.
- Performance in the phonic screening check was below the respective national averages for all other sizeable pupil groups considered in the report.

NB: KS1 SATs were made non-statutory in 2023-2024 and therefore results are no longer used for school accountability purposes.

## **Appendix 3 – Equality Objectives for Maple Infants' School 2025-2029**

### **Objective 1: to increase pupil and parental awareness of diversity in need across the school community through sharing The Maple Way to increase understanding and value of difference**

To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Promote school ethos of inclusion using 'The Maple Way' statement of intent, through any school communication with wider stakeholders e.g. website, parent meetings, newsletters, displays, assemblies, prospective parent tours, prospectus etc.
- Ensure reference is made to 'The Maple Way' in relevant policies, procedures and school documentation so that our ethos is consciously embedded
- Ensure staff are well equipped in their understanding of our community profile and needs, and can access relevant CPD and support from within the staff team and wider professionals to enhance this
- Ensure the curriculum and teaching resources/environment reflects the diversity of our community and realities of our families' lived experiences
- Support children's growing awareness and understanding of difference in a positive manner that equips them to be respectful and compassionate to others in their community, both now and as citizens of the future
- Support parents in also developing their own understanding, respect and compassion for others in our school community, so that they feel equipped to support their child's growing awareness of difference
- Celebrate the inclusive practices that our school provides in order to meet the needs of our children and promotes aspiration for all

### **Objective 2: to monitor and improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils within identified groups to meet the school target of 97% for all pupils**

To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Undertake an analysis of attendance and punctuality data and trends (via SIMS) with regard to ethnicity, gender, PPG status and disability on a termly basis
- Report to the Safeguarding Committee of the governing board in order to identify actions for improvement, including meeting regularly with the named linked governor for attendance
- Communicate with parents the importance of good school attendance and punctuality, meeting with those where attendance is of a concern
- Increase staff awareness
- Review attendance with staff during pupil progress review meetings
- Seek support, where necessary, from Education Welfare Team, making use of the full range of potential sanctions to tackle persistent absence

### **Objective 3: to narrow the gap between the achievement of vulnerable children and their peers**

To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Ensure that progress data is accurate for all groups and therefore can be analysed to establish clear progress measures
- Ensure that all staff accurately identify the profile of the class they teach, delivering appropriate provision to their needs which promotes independence for all children

- Senior Leaders to assist staff in identifying vulnerable pupils and facilitate discussion around support available in school or through wider networks
- Aspirational targets to be set for ALL pupils
- 'Good' progress measures set for all
- Ensure that additional support is deployed well and is maximizing impact on pupil progress
- Monitor Quality First Teaching to ensure all pupils have consistent high quality learning experiences

**Objective 4: to ensure that the school website is accessible to all and promotes equality to all stakeholders**

To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Regularly review content to ensure that it is relevant and clear
- Explore ways to promote equality through our website
- Explore translation tools which will enhance our website accessibility for those where English is not their first language
- Use available guidance, including DfE Accessibility Requirements for Public Sector Bodies, to audit our website and aim for WCAG 2.2 AA Standard compliance

## Inclusion Charter

Our school welcomes all children and young people

- ✓ We value that everyone is unique
- ✓ We value everyone’s different strengths and different needs
- ✓ We will get to know you and respect you as an individual
- ✓ We will listen to you and make sure your voice is heard
- ✓ We will support you to take responsibility for your learning and your wellbeing
- ✓ We will include you

Our school understands that children and young people learn in different ways

- ✓ We will teach you and support you in a way that suits you and helps you make good progress
- ✓ We will explain things clearly and give you information you understand
- ✓ We will provide activities and experiences that make learning interesting and exciting
- ✓ We will be ambitious with you
- ✓ We will help you to be as independent as possible

We will keep learning and listening so that we can teach and support you better

If something is not going well for you, please talk to us so we can help to make things better

## Appendix 5 – The Maple Way



### Embracing Inclusion & Diversity

#### ‘The Maple Way’

‘The Maple Way’ describes our vision for inclusion at Maple Infants’ and our commitment to the following beliefs:

- We unconditionally accept all children and families into the life of our school – all children are unique which brings wonderful diversity to our community
- We want everyone to feel the freedom to be themselves, value each other with kindness and respect, enabling all children to grow and develop in confidence
- We take every opportunity to celebrate learning together and welcome children and families from all backgrounds and traditions
- We will work together to ensure all children have a sense of belonging with happy memories of their time in our school
- We want children and families to learn from one another, recognising that we all learn and communicate in different ways, have different strengths and needs, and at times need different types of support
- We want all children to be ‘the best version of themselves’ and will ensure that high quality inclusive teaching and provision is ‘ordinarily available’
- We value everyone’s views and ideas to gain a shared understanding of a child’s holistic needs
- All leaders in our school are leaders of SEND, and all teachers are teachers of SEND