

# Viking Academy Trust



## Single Equalities Statement

Approved by the Trust: Term 5 2023

Reviewed every 4 years: Term 5

Next review date: Term 5 2027

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roby', is written over a faint rectangular stamp.

Chair of Trustees

# Single Equalities Statement

## The Viking Academy Trust

‘Empowering children through education: One Childhood One Chance’

Schools in the Viking Academy Trust (VAT)

Chilton Primary School  
Ramsgate Arts Primary School  
Upton Junior School

This Single Equalities Statement is for the aforementioned schools.

### Introduction

Viking Academy Trust is an inclusive group of schools where we focus on the well-being and progress of every young person and where all members of our 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 recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

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

- 1. All learners 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 economic/class, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- 2. We recognize, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, work and visit here.

- 3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- 4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our community to feel a sense of belonging within the Trust and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in the Trust schools life.
- 5. 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 in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.
- 6. We have the highest expectations of all our pupils.** We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
- 7. We work to raise standards for all 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 Trust.

### **The 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). This means that Academies 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 pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership are also 'protected characteristics' but are not part of the Trusts provisions related to pupils.

The Act requires all public organisations, including Academies, 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 Academies, to:*

- *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;*
- *Advance equality of opportunity between different groups;*
- *Foster good relations between different groups.*

### **Two 'specific duties'**

*This requires all public organisations, including academies to:*

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by April 6th 2012;
- Publish Equality objectives at least every four years which are specific and measurable by April 6th 2012.

This policy describes how the Trust is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the Trust 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**

### **Development of the Policy**

When developing the policy we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Ofsted Inspection Framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have Special Educational Needs (SEND).

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

We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.

- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
- The Trust's policy on Behaviour (Rewards, Sanctions and Exclusions) takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act.
- We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from the Trust for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.
- The Executive Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day to day life of the Trust.

## **Addressing prejudice and prejudice based on bullying**

The Trust challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- Prejudices around disability and special educational needs. Prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;
- Prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes.

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and include data regarding the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents in our reports to Viking governance. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents.

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

- We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions meetings.
- We know the needs of our pupils very well and use 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. Use of this data supports Trust improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills.

Each school within the Trust collects and analyse data on:

- the school population by gender and ethnicity;
- the proportion of pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability;
- standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage:
- Free School Meals and non-Free School Meals & Pupil Premium
- English as an Additional Language • Special Educational Needs
- Looked after Children (ChiC).
- Bullying incidents including bullying theme of Racism, Homophobia, Religion, and disability

We also collect, analyse, and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.

- We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners. We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality. We challenge the use of such language among pupils, parents/carers and visitors to the Trust.
- We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils.

- We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving. We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the Trust's Equality Objectives.
- We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.
- We implement an Accessibility Plan designed to increase the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum; improve the physical environment and improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

### **What we are doing to foster good relations**

We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils

- We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE, Values weeks and across the curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the Academy Trust, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote a whole Trust ethos and values that challenge prejudice based on discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We include the contribution of different cultures to world history.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole school events e.g. Black History Month, Autism Awareness Week etc.
- Positive Action: we will take positive and proportionate action (such as targeted support) to address the disadvantage faced by a particular group of pupils with particular protected characteristics. The actions will be designed to meet the School's Equality Objectives.

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

- We maintain records of all training relating to equalities.
- Our monitoring records include evaluations of aspects of equalities.
- We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed.
- We have a rolling programme for reviewing all our Trust policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and wellbeing of our pupils.

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole Trust community we:

- review relevant feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, Parent Council
- secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events.

review feedback and responses from pupils, from the school council, PSHE lessons and whole Trust surveys.

- analyse issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on Personalised Provision Maps, Support Plans/Pastoral Support Plans.
- ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Trust meetings and from the Trusts Body's working groups.
- Publishing Equality Objectives: The objectives which we identify represent the Trust's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.
- We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we **achieve improved outcomes** for the different groups.

### **Publishing information and disseminating the policy**

- This Single Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives are available on each of the Trust's schools' website or as a paper copy in each of the offices.

### **Our Equality Objectives for 2023-2027 are:**

- Ensure that all staff are given clear progressions for leadership and professional development, so that the VAT Trust-wide & individual school Leadership Teams are representative of the wider school teams.
- To ensure children with SEND continue to make good rates of progress.
- Identify and reduce barriers to learning and participation for vulnerable groups.
- Educate all about discrimination and prejudice and promote a harmonious environment.
- Strive for all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender to achieve the highest possible standards in their learning and make good progress.
- Seek new & innovative ways to consult and involve those affected by inequality in the decisions taken by Viking Academy Trust to promote equality and equity and eliminate discrimination.

We review and update our equality objectives every two years and report annually to the Board of Trustees on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, pupils, all members of Governance and parents and carers.

We publish an evaluation of the success in meeting these objectives for parents and carers, on each of the Trust schools websites as part of School Improvement Plan review.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

We expect all members of the Trust 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.

## **The Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that the Trust complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

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

## **Executive Headteacher and Senior Leadership team**

The Executive 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.

Heads of schools or senior member of staff have day-to-day responsibility for co-coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. S/he will have expert and informed knowledge of the Equality Act.

## **Teaching, Support and Operational Staff**

All teaching, support and operational 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 Trust'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 Trust schools learning difficult;
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on equalities for all staff new to the Trust as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the Academic year.

## **Visitors, including parents**

All visitors to the Trust, 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 newsletters to enable them to do this.

## **Pupils**

All pupils are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and support to enable them to do this.



## **Equal Opportunities for Staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

- All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law.
- We ensure that wherever possible the staffing of the Trust reflects the diversity of our community.
- As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.
- We respect the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
- We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receives appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

## **Complaints**

Complaints arising from the operation of this policy will be dealt with in line with the Trust's Complaints Policy.

## Appendix One

### Check list for Trust staff and governors

- Each school within the Trust collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, e.g. student achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training.
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the Trust provides. The Equality Policy and Plan and Objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, Trustees, pupils and other stakeholders.
- Each school within the Trust analyses pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when their trends or patterns indicate a need.
- The Trust 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 Trust ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy.
- The Academy ensures that visitors to the Trust 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 Trust life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and the Pupil Council.
- The Trust monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern.
- Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the Trust 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 Trust takes part in annual events such as Black History Month, Autism Awareness Week, to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender.
- The Trust environment is increasingly accessible to pupils, staff and visitors to the Trust schools.
- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of each Trust 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 Board of trustees is increasingly representative of the community it serves.