

## **Bellingham Middle School**

### **Published equality information about the context of our school.**

#### **Equality objectives for the period 2020-2024**

This is our published information (February 2021) about our school population and the ways in which we work to eliminate differences of outcome and promote equality for groups with protected characteristics. It also explains how we promote good equalities practice and work to eliminate discrimination or inequality. The objectives we have set for the current reporting cycle are based on this context and are at the end of this document.

#### **The school has data on its composition broken down by year group, ethnicity and gender and by proficiency in English. This is available on request**

Bellingham Middle School is in a rural location in the West of the county, North of Hexham.

Children have been recently consulted and involved in defining the school's values of Kindness, Respect and Resilience as principles they choose to live by and embody. Equality principles are key to how we articulate these values in practice.

The school teaches children about their rights, about respect for one another and the wider communities to which they belong. We celebrate individuality and the unique talents and characteristics of each child.

Bellingham is not a culturally diverse area, and it is rare that we have pupils who speak a first language other than English.

Objectives relating to children eligible for Free School Meals have a high priority for schools, in spite of financial disadvantage not being a protected characteristic in law, it is a significant priority for every school. Our disadvantaged pupils in respect of whom we receive the Pupil Premium Grant are reported on as a discrete group in order to demonstrate the effect of the the funding on diminishing the differences in outcomes for these students compared with their peers. We use the funding effectively to offer small group interventions and to purchase additional resources to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

We represent, discuss and welcome family diversity and the positive aspects of individuality in families.

We challenge any perception that family diversity may be uncomfortable for some members of the community to accept; our priority is that every child should feel safe and be secure that the school recognises our legal duty to protect every member of the school community from discrimination.

We continuously reflect on the language used in resources and displays, letters home and the language of the classroom to ensure that we consciously use and develop awareness of inclusive language. This is an ongoing piece of work; language changes all of the time.

Our school uniform policy is flexible and the guidance does not discriminate against any child on the basis of gender, race, disability, gender identity or belief. Practical alternatives are acceptable.

**The school has data on its composition broken down by types of disability and special educational need. This is available on request.**

Our school has clear protocols and targeted provision to support these pupils who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The school is an accessible building, with a ramp, lifts, hoists accessible toilets and wheelchair accessible routes.

The school uses a graduated approach by identifying anything that is affecting an ability to learn, and then strategies or interventions which will help to improve the situation. Learners and their families are always involved in this process. The basis of this approach begins with high quality teaching differentiated for need.

The school has developed Additionally Resourced Provision which helps us to meet the needs of children with more complex needs and this includes space for smaller group work, a sensory room, tents, a traverse climbing wall and a space for resting. The introduction of a sensory diet also supports children to feel ready to learn and socialise.

We are very committed to ensuring that SEN learners enjoy the same opportunities as their peers wherever possible and are fully included within their school and local community.

We have set objectives and strategies to help us to better meet the needs of children with SEND. These are outlined in the school's accessibility plan which can be found on our web site. The school's accessibility plan has more specific detail about the ways in which we are working to improve access to the environment, curriculum and printed information for pupils with disabilities.

The school records and report instances of discriminatory language or bullying. We ensure that school is a safe environment and that the features of good, safe relationships and safe friendships are regularly promoted and discussed as part of the school's culture. PSHE lessons are timetabled for 1 hour a week and are the focus of a carefully planned curriculum to help prepare children for life in modern Britain.

We recognise the limited opportunities many of our children have to experience the wider UK and urban contexts that exist outside Northumberland and prioritise a programme of learning including visits and visitors to broaden understanding of the

wider multicultural, multi-faith context of Britain. When there are fewer restrictions on travelling, groups visit places of worship and travel to contrasting localities such as Newcastle or London.

The school records data about religion and belief if it is provided by parents when we collect data. This enables us to say with confidence that we are inclusive of pupils' religion and beliefs. The RE curriculum has been recently updated to extend the range of religions and beliefs children will experience as they encounter more pluralistic and diverse UK contexts.

### **Documentation and record-keeping**

Our school has a statement of overarching equality policy which is published to the web site.

### **Responsibilities**

All staff have responsibility for promoting equality.

All staff have responsibility for promoting the school's anti-bullying and anti-discriminatory ethos.

### **Staffing**

There is good equal opportunities practice in the recruitment and promotion of staff.

### **Behaviour and safety**

There are clear procedures for dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents.

Pupil surveys create an opportunity for children to be open about any worries or concerns they have about bullying, discrimination or perceptions of inequality.

### **Curriculum**

There is coverage in the curriculum of equalities issues, particularly with regard to tackling prejudice and promoting community cohesion and mutual understanding. This is embedded through texts, discussions and focusing on current events.

There are activities across the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Equality partners and campaigns**

We collaborate with local and national programmes and make links to established cultural, religious and statutory partners which support our ambitions for equality.

## Part Two: Objectives

The Public Sector Equality Duty aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. The duty applies to the public sector and also to others carrying out public functions. The duty applies to all nine areas of discrimination listed in the Equality Act 2010.

Our school has defined two main areas of equality to address during the 4-year cycle 2020-2024.

### Objective 1: Disability equality: advance equality of opportunity

What we plan to do:

In setting up our Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) the school has responded to our context (we are a very rural school, and local children with SEND have a long distance to travel to access the nearest Special School. The SEND Code of Practice 2015 states that a school must *'...make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage'*.

The ARP and additional adjustments being made to the facilities and strategies in school are an example of this best practice in action. The school has set itself the objective of incorporating the highest standards of best inclusive practice in a mainstream setting. This is an ongoing process of training, understanding cycles of specialist support, building works, consultation with learners and their families and making adaptations to a mainstream school that could eventually make it an asset for the wider community.

Our objective over the next 4 years is to continue to develop this provision. To share and celebrate our good practice to help other mainstream settings to develop similar high expectations and specialist facilities and to develop and extend our inclusive practice.

Areas we have identified for further development:

- Sensory distractions and high-level anxiety: Strategies and adjustments
- Ensuring that we make best use of the new spaces and equipment we have in school.
- Developing the SENCo role to further enhance the strategies in place throughout the school.
- Wider inclusive good practice including the language we use about gender and identity.

## **Fostering Good Relations: Protected characteristics of gender, age, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, and gender identity**

What we plan to do:

We recognise the geographical and social context of Bellingham and the relative lack of opportunity our pupils experience to engage with role models from minority communities (LGBT, BAME, people of different faiths). We recognise the important role that the school can play in opening-up the children's lives to the wider context of the UK beyond rural Northumberland, in preparing them for adult life and an appreciation of the wider diversity of the UK and beyond.

Through the curriculum, PSHE and assemblies we will continue to extend the range of opportunities the children have to engage with themes such as family diversity, global learning, human rights, disability equality, anti-discriminatory language and behaviour, tolerance and mutual respect and the role of the bystander.

Expected evidence of impact:

- Increased awareness of equality and justice articulated by staff and pupils.
- Greater resilience and an awareness of national, local and global issues articulated by children.
- Willingness to challenge discriminatory thoughts and practices.
- Children acting as allies and advocates, respecting and protecting the rights of others.
- Pupils will understand why Northumberland and society is changing; about their own personal responsibility and how they can be supportive and involved in social action and campaigns.

**3** *These objectives replace the previous equality objectives set in April 2016.*