

## Benfield School

### Equality Information Statement 2023-24

We welcome the general equality duty, which is the overarching legal requirement for schools and means we must consider how our policies, practices and day-to-day activities impact pupils and staff.

As well as delivering high quality services to our pupils, the school is also committed to being a good employer and as such the trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy also outlines our commitment to best equality and inclusion principles in employment. The protected characteristics of age and marriage and civil partnership apply to the trust as an employer, but to our provision for pupils.

We are also committed to be fully inclusive of all community users, including parents and carers.

#### **Our school context:**

Benfield School is very proud of our distinct ethos with its strong sense of mutual support and loyalty, where excellent relationships are evident between students and staff and a purposeful learning environment is evident in lessons and around our modernised site. With this foundation, our students have a strong platform to be confident, happy and are able to achieve their aspiration

- 26% of the pupil population in our school are from ethnic groups other than White British
- 49 languages are spoken, in addition to English
- 29% of our pupil population speak English as an additional language (EAL)
- 61% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding

#### **Disability**

Benfield School's commitment to disabled pupils, their families and staff has four core objectives:

- Promote equality for disabled people by: removing barriers to accessibility, particularly in relation to education, employment and access to the curriculum, information and buildings.
- We recognise the mental and emotional health challenges that many children and young people face, and the urgency with which we need to act to address any challenges affecting our young people.
- Promoting positive perceptions of disabled people;
- Challenging patronising or discriminatory attitudes; making the environment as safe as possible for and challenging antisocial or bullying behaviour against, or harassment of, disabled pupils, staff and families.

#### **School already:**

- Has a current accessibility plan which is reviewed by the school's local governing committee
- Ensures optimal organisation of facilities on an ongoing basis for disabled pupils
- Has acted on advice given to us by specialist advisory teachers and medical staff to support our disabled pupils and enable them to fully participate in the school's curriculum
- Has worked with pupils and their families in supporting the links between home and school

- Raises awareness of curriculum needs of pupils with language communication disorders, severe learning difficulties, physical disability, visual impairment and hearing impairment through staff training and CPD opportunities
- Has trained staff in positive handling
- Has an innovative 'windscreen' and provision mapping tool which have been developed and used across the Trust to help staff and partners to quickly identify interventions, partners and referral routes for emotional health crises.
- Employs a school counsellor for 5 days per week.
- Successfully applied to work with the Anna Freud Centre in 2020 (60 students and 9 staff in Year 9).

**We plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils by:**

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- Increasing the inclusion of positive representation of disabled people across the curriculum;
- Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services
- Improving prompt assessment and diagnosis and continuity of provision for disabled pupils, many of whom have experienced mobility in school placements and disruption to their education.

**We plan to:**

- Consult further with parents of disabled children and other disabled stakeholders to inform our accessibility plan
- Ensure the availability, where appropriate and reasonable, of written material in alternative or accessible forms for example, other language

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 funding on diminishing the differences in outcomes for these pupils compared with their peers. The number of pupils eligible for this funding is well above the national average<sup>3</sup>. We use the funding effectively to offer academic support and guidance

Objectives relating to children eligible for Free School Meals have a significant priority for schools, in spite of financial disadvantage not being a protected characteristic in law.

We represent, discuss and welcome family diversity and the positive aspects of individuality in families. We discuss any perceptions of aspects of diversity that may be uncomfortable for members of the school community to accept; our priority is that every child feels safe and knows that we are committed to our legal duty to keep them safe from discrimination. We audit resources and displays, letters home and the language we use for intentional and unconscious bias and aim to develop the capacity of the entire workforce to embody the school's inclusive ethos based on values of responsibility and caring citizenship.

Staff work supportively with pupils about gender, gender identity or sexual orientation and we challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender equality.

We want all of our pupils to succeed and achieve their full potential, academically, physically and socially in an atmosphere where they can grow and acquire appropriate skills, values and attitudes.

We believe that global understanding and learning are important to help our children grow and become effective citizens.

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

The school has data on its composition broken down by types of disability and special educational needs.

Our school has clear protocols and targeted provision to support these pupils who are on the SEND register. The SEND local offer and SEND report are accessible from the [school website](#). The school's accessibility plan explains in more detail the ways in which we are working to improve access to the environment, curriculum and information for pupils with disabilities.

We record and report instances of discriminatory language or bullying on our CPOMS system.

All staff recognise the relationship between hate crime and radicalisation or extremism. We are conscious of the vulnerability of people in our region to messages about far-right extremism, and welcome open discussion and debate with the children in order to dispel myths and misconceptions.

The school records data about religion and belief when it is provided by parents through our data collection mechanism. This enables us to state with confidence that we are inclusive and sensitive with regard to pupils' religions and beliefs. The school also has a good relationship with our local church.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

Teenage conception rates in our school are extremely low

No pupil or member of staff will be treated unfairly if they or their partner is pregnant or taking, seeking to take or have taken statutory maternity leave. This statutory protection begins from the moment a worker, pupil or prospective parent tells us that they are pregnant, and lasts until 52 weeks after the birth.

If a member of staff (for example from an agency) is not entitled to statutory maternity leave, the protection from maternity discrimination ends two weeks after their child is born.

### **Documentation and Record-Keeping**

Our school has a statement of overarching equality policy published to the [website](#).

### **Responsibilities**

All members of staff have responsibility for equalities and for meeting equality objectives. All staff take responsibility for anti-bullying good practice.

### **Staffing**

There is good equal opportunities practice in the recruitment and promotion of staff, both teaching and administrative.

### **Behaviour and Attitudes**

There are clear procedures for dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents. Trauma informed approaches underpin our work in supporting and transforming expectations and attitudes about emotions and behaviour. All staff will have opportunities to attend some training about Adverse Childhood Experiences, mindfulness and mental health.

When appropriate, we can engage with Northumbria Police's Community Engagement Team to demonstrate our integrity in supporting those with protected characteristics from vulnerability to hate crime and extremism.

Our Pupil Leadership Team are advocates for their peers, and we know from our meetings that the majority of pupils feel safe from all kinds of bullying. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are available from the [website](#).

### **Curriculum**

There is comprehensive coverage in the curriculum of equalities issues, particularly with regard to tackling prejudice and promoting community cohesion and mutual understanding. The spiral nature of the PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Careers Education) curriculum ensures core equality concepts (such as The Equalities Act, 2010) are revisited with greater depth each year to ensure pupils are prepared for successful adult life in Modern Britain. Activities are mapped against specific articles for the United Nations Rights of the Child Framework (UNRC) to ensure a global understanding of diversity is fostered. Themes are regularly revisited and assessed to ensure key concepts are embedded and retained over time; our purpose is to prepare our pupils to embrace equality and diversity in both the here and now and on into adulthood.

There are activities across the both PSHCE curriculum and focussed assembly themes (such as LGBTQ+ Pride Week) to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to help them to share our pillars and values and develop the concept of global citizenship and responsibility within their community. The Citizenship Studies GCSE Course is now delivered to KS4 teaching groups as a means of further enriching their understanding of equality. The first unit, 'Living Together in Modern Britain' is a detailed analysis of diversity, community cohesion and human rights which consolidates the spiral themes developed in Key Stage 3.

### **Consultation and Involvement**

The school has procedures for consulting and involving parents and carers, and for engaging with local groups and organisations, and has regard in these for the concerns and requirements of the Equality Act. Participation and engagement work with families, such as parental clinics, parents' evenings, coffee mornings and celebration events.

The school has procedures for finding out how pupils think and feel about the school, and has regard to these in respect of the Equality Act.

We consult parents and carers through questionnaires, social media and the school website. We are able to respond quickly to any concern about perceived inequality, unlawful discrimination or harassment.