

John Ruskin Primary School and Language Classes

Single Equality Scheme

Co-ordinator: Louise Tsergas

Last review: 2024

Next review: 2027



“Be responsible, be fair, stay positive and care”

John Ruskin School and Language classes
Southwark Single Equality Scheme

Forward

Southwark Council's vision for equality, diversity and human rights

Southwark's approach to equality and diversity is to recognise and value difference whilst also holding on to what we all have in common. The council's vision is clearly set out in '*Southwark 2016*'. It describes how our commitment to reducing the inequality gap underpins all our plans. We want to be an example to the whole country of successfully fusing the celebration of diversity with greater social inclusion and cohesion. Success of the school's Single Equality Scheme will require ownership by Governors, senior leaders, all staff, the school community and the young learners, along with their partners.

The Southwark School's Single Equality Scheme (SSSES) serves essentially two purposes:

1. To set out a school's overall commitment to equality and diversity in one central document. The SSSES therefore contains:

- The school's approach to all six Equality Strands: race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, disability, age and gender (including transgender).
- How the school will manage, plan and include its equality and diversity policy within its day to day work.

2. To act as the 'umbrella' document for both our statutory and non-statutory equality schemes. The SSSES therefore contains:

- The school's statutory equality schemes in relation to race, disability and gender
- The school's non-statutory schemes in relation to sexual orientation, religion/belief and age.

The SSSES will help schools to ensure that they focus more on the outcomes that matter to the community and people who use their services; and that their services are more accessible and delivered effectively.

The CSSES incorporates, for the first time, information, issues and potential areas for action in relation to sexual orientation, age and religion/belief. While there is no legal requirement to develop 'schemes' in these areas, broadening the approach to all six recognised equality strands illustrates their commitment to ensuring equality for all.

The Single Equality Scheme brings together the Schools approach for promoting equality in our policies and procedures and, most importantly in our day-to-day practices and interactions with the whole School community.

Our scheme includes pupils, staff, governors, parents, carers and all those within our extended School community.

We acknowledge that it is very important for us all to work together in achieving our aim of being fully inclusive and accessible and ultimately in providing a quality learning experience for our children and young people.”

What is the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan?

Our Single Equality Scheme (SES) and action plan covers a three-year period from **2021 to 2024** It integrates our statutory duties in relation to race, disability and gender and promoting community cohesion. The duties cover staff, pupils and people using the services of the school such as parents.

It also addresses the legislation relating to religion or belief, sexual orientation and age and therefore includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

Our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan enables us to achieve a framework for action which covers all six equality strands and ensures that we meet our responsibilities of the public sector duties in an inclusive way.

We will continue to meet our statutory duties by reporting annually (see section 14) on the progress of the Single Equality Scheme and action plan. This will be reviewed by our Board of Governors and will cover activity undertaken in relation to the six equality strands and promoting community cohesion.

Policy Statement

1. The School acknowledges and welcomes diversity among pupils, staff and visitors.
2. We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff, prospective member of staff, pupil or prospective pupil, on the grounds of their sex, race, age, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic, national origins or physical or mental abilities.
3. We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our School.
4. We ensure that all students have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the School.
5. The School is opposed to all forms of racism and xenophobia, including those forms that are directed towards religious groups and communities.
6. We respect the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils, parents and carers and comply with all reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
7. We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.
8. We will make reasonable adjustments, when required to, in order to: increase access to the curriculum; improve access to the School building; and improve delivery of information.

Meeting our duties

Under the statutory duties all schools have responsibilities to promote race, disability and gender equality.

Race equality

The general duty to promote race equality means that we must have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.
2. Promote equality of opportunity
3. Promote good relations between members of different racial, cultural and religious groups.

Dealing with racist incidents

All racist incidents should be reported immediately, on the day, to the head teacher or deputy head teacher, who will investigate. They will record it on the school racist incident log and appropriate action will be taken; parents, governors and LA informed.

Disability equality

The general duty to promote disability equality means that we must have due regard to:

1. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
2. Eliminate unlawful discrimination
3. Eliminate disability- related harassment
4. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
5. Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
6. Take steps to take account of disabled peoples' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

Accessibility

There is specific disability legislation in relation to disabled pupils and accessibility which means we must plan strategically over time to:

1. Increase access to the curriculum
2. Make improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access;
3. Make written information accessible to pupils in a range of different ways

We must ensure that disabled pupils do not receive less favourable treatment and to do this the school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Gender equality

The general duty to promote gender equality means that we must have due regard to:

1. eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment and
2. promoting equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys.

The duty also includes the need to consider actions to address the causes of any gender pay gap. John Ruskin School completes an annual equalities monitoring workforce audit

every year. The results are used to inform any priorities for equalities action plan that year.

Transgender

Transgendered people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty. The term transgendered refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender. The school will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within its school community.

Community cohesion

We also have a responsibility to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across different cultures, ethnic, religious and non religious and socioeconomic groups. We have incorporated our priorities into our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan to make it easier to monitor our progress and performance in meeting our objectives.

Strand 1 – Teaching, learning and the curriculum – with emphasis across the curriculum on the ‘promotion of common values and valuing diversity’, promotion of awareness of human rights and the responsibility to uphold and defend them, developing skills of participation and responsible actions

Strand 2 – Equity and excellence – equality for all to succeed, removing barriers to access, eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups

Strand 3 – Engagement and extended services – enabling the means for children and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and to build positive relations and links with different schools and communities – locally and more widely.

We recognise that our school has a responsibility for educating children who will live and work in a borough which is diverse in terms of culture, religions or beliefs, ethnicities and social backgrounds.

We understand that there are different types of schools in different communities and will promote the interaction of students with those in other schools.

We understand that we already have a duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different groups.

Age, sexual orientation, religion and belief

We must ensure that we do not discriminate on these grounds. This Scheme includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

Our school values and visions

Meeting the duties described above will mean that all our actions will embody our

School's key principles and values, which includes that:

- We believe all should have equal access to opportunities, regardless of ability, age, gender, disabilities, racial or ethnic group.
- We celebrate the diversity of our world.
- To respect the religious, spiritual, cultural, and moral values of others and to consider thoughtfully their own attitudes, values and beliefs.
- To provide an atmosphere of harmony and respect and safety within an educational environment.
- We strive to make the best possible provision for all pupils/students, regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious belief, national origin or status, gender or sexual orientation.

We respect diversity. We know that treating people equally is not simply a matter of treating everyone the same. We adopt the Southwark Inclusion Statement's view that inclusion is: "One of the key objectives of Southwark Children's Services is to support high levels of sustainable educational inclusion for all our pupils. Inclusive education is delivered by provision that enables pupils to learn and make good progress. It is not specific to any particular type of setting or school." This means that we do our best to make reasonable adjustments for disability, recognise and celebrate cultural differences, and understand the different needs and experiences of boys and girls.

- We know that equalities is not simply about protecting the potentially vulnerable. We believe that all children may be disadvantaged by the holding of prejudicial views, and seek to promote good relationships between all groups, and positive attitudes towards disabled people, people from different ethnic or cultural groups or faith backgrounds and people of different gender or sexual orientation.
- We value staff for their ability and potential to help us make the best possible provision for the children in our school, regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious belief.

Children at John Ruskin School are well behaved, positive, caring and polite. They have developed good learning skills and are keen to work hard. They make outstanding progress at school. Their parents are supportive of the school and also want their children to do well. We have many high attaining pupils in the school and all the children enjoy helping others and getting involved in school life. There is a real feeling of community within the school and pupils of John Ruskin are highly regarded in the local area. We are very proud of the great successes our children achieve but must acknowledge that they have overcome a number of barriers to achievement.

John Ruskin School is situated in an area of very high deprivation with many social problems, high levels of knife crime and gang involvement. Many families are involved with social care. Many children live in homes of multiple occupancy. 59% of pupils come from the most deprived deprivation band [IDACI band 1], 96% are from band 1 or 2.s. The proportions of children who speak English as an additional language, who are eligible for pupil premium funding, or who have identified special educational needs or disabilities are well above the national picture. 70 different languages are spoken in the school.

Children enter John Ruskin with very low levels of attainment. Children's average attainment on entry to our nursery is well below average. The percentage of children with an Education, Health and Care plan (SEND) is well above average at 8.8% (national is 4.8%). The school achieves outstanding progress for its children so that by year 6 attainment is above average. Different groups within the school all progress well. The school has a resourced unit for children with specific language impairment or disorder. 24+ children attend. All have EHCPs and integrate into the main school. The school works in partnership with a local hospital trust and the LA who provide a high level of speech therapy for this specialist provision.

Collecting and analysing equality information for pupils at John Ruskin School and Language Classes.

John Ruskin School and Language Classes is an inclusive school. We use the curriculum and teaching to enhance the self-esteem of all those it serves, with high priority on wellbeing and to provide a learning environment in which each individual is encouraged to fulfil her or his potential.

Information Gathering (Pupils). Areas for analysis with regard to equality information include:

- Attainment levels
- Attendance levels
- Rewards for academic progress
- Rewards for behavioural progress
- Exclusions
- Attendance at external provision Extended School activities/extracurricular activities
- Complaints of bullying and harassment
- Complaints of racialism
- Participation in School Council
- Pupil questionnaire

Actions required/highlighted from the above will be prioritised over the three-year life span of our scheme and will be included in the Action Plan

Collecting and analysing equality information for employment and governance at John Ruskin School and Language Classes.

The School is committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment.

It aims to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and Management Committee members that is representative of all sections of the community in order to provide a service that respects and responds to the diverse needs of our local population.

We collect and analyse the following information for our staff and governors:

- Applicants for employment

- Staff profile
- Attendance on staff training events
- Disciplinary and grievance cases
- Staff Appraisals/performance management

Actions required/high lighted from the above will be prioritised over the three year life span of our scheme and will be included in the Action Plan.

Consultation and involving people

We involved pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers, and our wider School community in creating the Single Equality Scheme and action plan, either directly with the School community or through previous policy documents that have contributed to this development. This helped to ensure that the views of potentially disadvantaged groups were fully incorporated in the development of this Scheme and action plan.

Examples include:

- Discussions at school council
- Individual pupil questionnaires
- Contact with parent/carers (meetings, questionnaires)
- All staff through dedicated staff meeting time
- Discussions at governing bodies
- Involvement within local community activities
- Focus groups for parents/carers and staff
- Local authority by taking the views of the school SIP/CDA

Other School Policies

We have used our existing School policies to inform our Single Equality Scheme.

These include:

- School Development & Improvement Plan
- Behaviour Policy (School Code)
- SEND Policy

Roles and Responsibilities (See also Appendix B)

The School Equality Scheme will be aligned with the School Development Plan. Its implementation will be monitored within the School's self-evaluation and other review processes as well as being updated at least annually. Following this regular impact assessment, the whole equality scheme will be reviewed at least every three years.

- The Governors will ensure that the School complies with statutory requirements in respect of this Scheme and Action Plan.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for the implementation of this Scheme, and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and report progress to the Governors.

- The equalities coordinator has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of this scheme.
- Staff are expected to promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the School, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for children with additional needs, and maintain a good level of awareness of equalities issues.
- Our pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to treat each other with respect, to feel valued, and to speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour.
- We will take steps to ensure all visitors to the School, including parents/carers are adhering to our commitment to equality.

Commissioning and Procurement

The School as required by law will ensure that when we buy services from another organisation to help us provide our services, that organisation will comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in selection during any tendering process.

Publicising our scheme

The Single Equality Scheme will be available to all persons on request and be Published on the school website.

We will continue to involve people from all aspects of our School community in the ongoing evolution of our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan. This includes:

- A slot at School Council meetings to discuss equality and diversity issues where appropriate
- Having staff able to discuss equality and diversity matters during parent consultation meetings

Annual Review of Progress

We will continue to review annually the actions we have taken in the development of our Single Equality Scheme which include:

- The results of your information gathering activities for race, disability and gender and what you have done with this information
- An update of the progress made against priorities
- Celebrating what you have achieved in relation to promoting community cohesion, often through the weekly newsletter

1. The Governors will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this Scheme.

2. The equalities coordinator will review and revise this scheme every three years or as appropriate in line with legislation.
3. The Governors agreed this scheme to take effect immediately.