

# Southwark Council

## Schools' Single Equality Scheme

**2022 - 2025**

*Riverside Primary School*

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## 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), and
  - 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.

## **Section 1 - Introduction**

This Schools Equality Scheme (SES) is a combined scheme designed to meet the Race, Disability, and Gender Equality Duties, as well as the requirements of the law for Religion and Belief and Sexual Orientation. Our School Equality Scheme also includes how we will meet requirements under the ***Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003***; ***Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003*** and ***Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006***. There is also a need to address bullying and discriminatory incidents, as these issues are prevalent in race, disability, gender, and homophobic incidents.

In the implementation of this Scheme we have moved from a focus on an individual response to an approach that builds on race, disability and gender considerations from the start and at every level of the school, at strategic, policy, management and classroom level. We need to be able to demonstrate what we have done and what we plan to do to improve opportunities and outcomes for pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school. This scheme will be monitored and delivered through the governors' role, School Improvement and Self Evaluation process.

We will ensure that every pupil irrespective of race, disability, gender, religion and belief or sexual orientation is able to achieve high standards and that strategies are in place to tackle under-achievement. We will ensure that every pupil has access to the necessary support required to enable them to achieve their highest potential. We will ensure that the school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair, effective and equitable.

Our intention is to ensure that the adults working or volunteering in the school include as much as possible a balanced gender mix, appropriate representation of diverse ethnic groups and disabled people. We believe that this will provide good role models for pupils from all backgrounds.

We will involve pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and all other stakeholders in the development of our Scheme. They need to be involved from the very start and their involvement will inform the preparation, development, publication, review and reporting of the Scheme. The aim is to ensure that we meet the needs of people from different ethnic backgrounds, boys and girls, and children and adults with disabilities.

### **Our Vision and Aims for Equality and Diversity:**

**To have a diverse community that is built on respect and trust.**

## Section 2 - School profile and values

### Your school context:

Riverside School is in Bermondsey, located in the north of Southwark. Our community come from streets which are in Southwark and neighbouring boroughs. This area is home to some/many members of London's diverse ethnic minority communities. Young people from many minority ethnic communities attend our school.

- Our pupil population is as follows (at January 2023):  
**29% White British pupils; 11% Any other White Background; 7% Black (African) pupils;**  
**Many other ethnic minorities are represented at Riverside but with a smaller percentage of pupils.**
- Our staff (at January 2023) includes representatives of:  
**Male and female staff and a small percentage are from ethnic minority communities.**
- Our Governing Body (at January 2023) includes representatives of:  
**Male and female governors and a percentage are from ethnic minority communities.**

### ***Roles and responsibilities, commitment and accountability***

- The CSSES will mainstream equality issues by:
- Integrating equality issues into all our key policies, service planning arrangements and performance management framework;
- Ensuring that the School's short, medium and long term planning contributes towards this scheme;
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to monitor and report on our progress against our action plans as well as our progress on integrating equality issues; and
- Ensuring that we engage effectively with stakeholders and local communities in delivering and monitoring the scheme.

### **Section 3 - The Race Duty and Community Cohesion**

**Riverside School** recognises and welcomes its responsibilities under the ***Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRA)***. Since the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2002 we have had in place a written statement of our ***Race Equality Policy***, and we have implemented the arrangements for developing a Race Equality Policy to meet the General Duty.

The purpose of our ***Race Equality Policy*** (REP) is to help us to:

- Prevent racial discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between members of different racial, cultural and religious groups.
- Expand access across all communities and in all areas of school activity.
- Eliminate unlawful racial harassment.
- Ensure the policy is also part of planning arrangements that the school already makes, and our actions and objectives are met through our Race Equality Action Plan (REAP).

We have developed our (REAP) for putting our REP into practice, and it is part of the School Development Plan. The REAP has clearly defined roles and explains what the school will do if the policy is not followed.

Our Race Equality Policy will form part of the School Equality Scheme, and a review will commence each year to meet the requirements of the scheme.

We will report on progress annually and the review of our race equality policy will be brought in line with the review for the ***School Equality Scheme***.

**The review in 2023 agreed that the school's priorities to be to encourage applications from ethnic minority communities when advertising and appointing new staff.**

## Community Cohesion

From September 2007 we understand our duty to Promote Community Cohesion as part of the response to the duties contained in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Our school already considers this to be a fundamental part of our role.

We understand that Community Cohesion is the process that should happen in all communities to ensure that different groups and individual people get on well together. It should also allow for new residents and existing residents to adapt to one another.

### **At Riverside:**

- The curriculum aims to tackle issues such as discrimination in a way that allows pupils and teachers to discuss opinions and listen to the views of others.
- The ethos of the school reflects the importance of respect.
- There is a School Council in place with representatives from each Key Stage 2 class.
- We have a prefect system whereby Y6 pupils take on additional responsibilities.
- The first week of every school year is dedicated to PHSE+C and the shared values of the school community.
- The Humanities curriculum aims to address historical inequalities
- Assemblies are held regularly that celebrate achievement for all pupils.
- All school based after school clubs are accessible to all.
- Black History Month principles that focus on community strengths and diversity are celebrated in Heritage Week but are not wholly dedicated in one month; these principles and relative celebrations/lessons are continuous throughout the year.
- Interpreters are booked for all Parents' meetings, as available.

We will evidence our effectiveness by demonstrating:

- Widely shared sense of the contribution of different communities to a shared vision.
- Strong sense of individual rights and responsibilities within the school community.
- All children and parents feel they are being treated fairly and have the same opportunities.
- Children trust the school to act fairly.
- Strong and positive relationships.

## Section 4 - The Disability Equality Duties

We welcome the requirements of the Disability Equality Duty and this section sets out our commitment to meeting the Duty. Our Scheme shows how we promote disability equality across all areas of the school, to disabled pupils, staff, parents, carers and other school users.

When carrying out our functions, we will have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act (1995).
- Eliminate disability related harassment.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation of disabled people in public life.
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.
- Monitor staff and pupils by disability.
- Have a Disability Equality Scheme (DES).

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

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum.
- Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services.
- Improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils, to the standard of which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

### **At Riverside:**

- Key strategies and improvement plans are agreed in line with the requirements of our duties under the DDA.
- The building as far as is practically possible (and in liaison with English Heritage) has been adapted to support personnel with disabilities.
- Access to swimming lessons for all abilities, including pupils with disabilities.
- Special arrangements are in place at playtimes/lunchtimes to monitor and support pupils with disabilities.
- Building adaptations are planned in liaison with external agencies to support personnel with disabilities.
- Measures are in place and reviewed to support all personnel (including staff and parents) with short or long term disabilities.

### Advice

*The guidance states that schools are not required to do anything under the scheme that is unreasonable or impracticable.*



## **Section 5 - The Gender Equality Duties**

We welcome the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty and this section sets out our commitment to meeting the duty. We will give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex, including domestic violence, sexual violence, bullying and exploitation.
- Promote equality of opportunity between women and men in all of our functions.

### **At Riverside:**

- All data is monitored by gender, including pupil progress and achievement data. Progress is scrutinised to monitor pupils achieving less than 2 sub levels of progress each year.
- Reading texts/non-fiction library books are purchased with specific gender interests in mind.
- Designated staff have received training on supporting victims of DV (both adults and children).
- Place2Be is integrated into school to provide 1:1 counselling and group/class support as well as family support.
- Some aspects of SRE are tackled in single sex groups when appropriate. Questions in SRE are anonymous to encourage full participation.
- All texts/media used in school are monitored to ensure they reflect positive images of relationships.

## **Section 6 - Religion and Belief**

Our school recognises the need to consider the actions outlined by the Equality Act 2009 (Religion & Belief) which requires us to assess the impacts of our policies, functions and procedures have on promoting equality for people based on their religion, belief and non-belief.

### **At Riverside:**

- A wide and eclectic range of beliefs are promoted with in the school in both RE studies and assemblies.
- The positive ethos of all beliefs is promoted.
- We are sensitive to the religious beliefs of all pupils/staff and make adjustments where appropriate.

## **Section 7 - Sexual Orientation**

Our school recognises the need to protect students from unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation as required by the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007. We are committed to taking a pro-active approach to preventing all forms of homophobia within the school and will assess the impacts of our policies, functions and procedures on promoting sexual orientation equality as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

### **At Riverside:**

- We signpost to staff information available online that gives appropriate advice (e.g. Stonewall).
- All forms of bullying and name calling, including homophobic, are taken seriously and challenged.
- SRE lessons may include aspects related to LGBTQ lifestyles as appropriate.

## **Section 8 Age**

The School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for younger and older people. We recognise that society has negative attitudes, stereotypes and myths about youth, ageing, younger and older people. These attitudes and beliefs can lead to both younger and older people being socially and economically disadvantaged, excluded and marginalised. We believe that younger and older people have the right to equality of opportunity and that they make a significant and valuable contribution to the community at large.

Age equality means securing the equal participation in society of people of every age, securing a balance between equal citizenship, equality of opportunity, equality of outcome and respect for difference

### **At Riverside:**

- We ensure recruitment procedures give equality of opportunity to all ages.
- We recognise that all staff, regardless of age, have skills, ideas and enthusiasm that is an asset to the school.
- We are aware that individuals will have, at different times of their career, a range of health and well being needs that will be addressed with equal consideration.

## **Section 9 - Anti-bullying and Positive Behaviour Policy Framework**

Our School states clearly that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We have set out the measures that our school will take to address bullying in our Anti-Bullying Policy. We submit data regarding incidents of racism to the Children and Young People's Service in Southwark Council.

### **At Riverside:**

- We have a very strong anti-bullying policy that is updated annually and is shared with all stakeholders.
- The school has well established monitoring forms for all aspects of bullying.
- We use LA procedures to monitor and inform Southwark of any bullying/discriminatory incidents.
- All staff receive training in relation to anti-bullying incidents as well as training to identify possible victims of bullying.

## **Section 10 - Employment Practices**

In our School we ensure that we observe the principles of equal opportunities in how we employ, develop and treat our staff.

### **At Riverside:**

Our policies have been agreed by the governing body with reference to LA model policies. They are reviewed and amended as required annually and shared with all stakeholders to ensure they are the best fit for our school. Governors discuss and agree policies both in sub-committees and full governors' meetings.

*All policies are available on request or through our website.*

## **Section 11 - Equality Impact Assessments**

We are reviewing key policies, functions or procedures that have been assessed as relevant to meeting the duties set out under race, gender, disability and religion or belief legislation. In line with best practice we will also assess the impact of our key policies, functions and procedures on promoting sexual orientation equality.

The main system by which we will assess the impact of our current policies, functions or procedures will be through carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.

### **At Riverside:**

**Following our EI assessments the following have been put in place:**

- Gender specific books bought
- Mixed gender teams compete in sports (in school and in tournaments)
- Visitors coming to school reflect a range of race/gender
- Specific equipment purchased for SEND pupils
- Review of assembly content to actively promote equality
- A member of Southwark's FSM initiative (was initially a pilot school)
- Disabled access to a school area and plans in place for additional disabled access
- Yellow strips on stairs and matt finish varnish in halls
- Coloured screens are used wherever possible
- Translator available on website.

## Section 12 - Consultation and Information

### **At Riverside:**

- Discussions are held at various times with involved stakeholders
- We book interpreters to give more parents a voice in school.
- We have a School Council to give pupils a voice in school.
- We provide crèche facilities as required
- We hold regular meetings with parents to review progress, set targets and discuss concerns. External agencies are involved as appropriate.
- We offer rooms for professionals to meet on the school site to facilitate access for parents

### Advice

*The extent of consultation should be appropriate to the size, remit and resources that are available. The focus of the consultation must be on equal opportunities and the consultation process must give adequate attention to issues of gender, disability race, religion and sexual orientation issues. Questions should be structured in such a way as to bring out any potential differences in views between different equality target groups.*

*The school needs to take into account the preferred means of communication for those whom they are consulting. The school will need to ensure it involves a range of disabled people and hears a range of views. You may need to set priorities that will help to improve the involvement of disabled people.*

*Schools need to ensure that they consult with pupils, staff, governors, parents and the unions.*

## Section 13 - Equality Scheme Objectives

This section sets out the objectives we have identified in order to eliminate discrimination and harassment and promotion of equality in relation to gender, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

### **At Riverside:**

- All policies refer to equal opportunities
- Website content is relevant, informative and more widely available. It fulfils all legal requirements
- A large budget is allocated for EAL/SEND support, counselling, SALT, Occupational Therapy, training and resources
- Plans for building works aim to improve disability access

### Advice

*In making your final selection of priorities you need to show how you have:*

- *Addressed all areas of the general duty in relation to Race, Gender and Disability, as outlined in the sections for each strand.*
- *Priorities you have identified in relation to religion or belief and sexual orientation.*
- *What you can realistically deliver in a three year period.*
- *Outstanding actions from your Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan, Access Plan (where free-standing) and REAP.*

## Section 14 - Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body accepts their responsibility to promote equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment, as outlined in the scheme.

### **At Riverside:**

The governing body has overall responsibility for ensuring the school meets the requirements of the **Race, Disability and Gender Equality Duties**, the **Equality Act 2009** **Religion and Belief** and the **Equality Act (sexual orientation) Regulations 2007**.

They do this through:

- Headteacher's Report
- Governor training
- Visits
- Membership of sub-committees
- Panel membership

## **Section 15 - Contracting and Procurement**

### **At Riverside:**

- The governing body will ensure the agreed policies are rigorously adhered to including the use of Southwark's recommended providers.
- A member of staff escorts all contractors on site during term time and closely monitors at other times.

## **Section 16 - Action Plan**

### **At Riverside:**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the action plan (as set out in the School Improvement Plan) is completed and report to the Governing Body.

#### Advice

*The actions contained in the action plan should be the steps that you need to take to achieve the tasks throughout this document, under the sections "For your school set out."*

## **Section 17 - Reporting and reviewing the scheme**

### **At Riverside:**

In line with the requirements of the Scheme we will produce an annual report on progress and review through the Headteacher's Report and revise the Schools Equality Scheme every three years.

#### Advice

*The report on the scheme may be in a separate document, or as part of another document. The review of the Scheme will inform how the school sets new priorities and new action plans for the next Scheme.*

## **Section 18 - Publication**

***This Equality Scheme is available on request.***