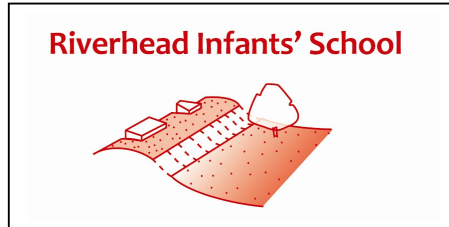


# Riverhead Infants' School

## Single Equality Scheme 2011 - 2014

### PART A: Scheme



Lead Person: Mrs Helene Bligh

Signed:



Headteacher

Scheme Agreed by Governors: July 2011

Scheme Due for Review: July 2014

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*(Completed templates become Parts B,C and D of this scheme)*

## **1. Our Distinctive Character, Priorities and Aims**

### **1.1 Characteristics of our school**

Riverhead is a 3 form entry, mainstream infant school situated in an area where living standards are high and levels of deprivation extremely low. Children join us with a wide range of pre-school experience, from a high number of providers with whom we are continually strengthening communication and developing closer links. At the end of Key Stage 1 almost all pupils transfer to the link junior school, Amherst, with whom we continue to develop collaborative activities and maintain a positive relationship.

Numbers of children receiving Free School Meals are exceptionally low as is the incidence of Looked After Children. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is steadily increasing and falls around the upper percentile nationally. Those for whom English is not their first language remains relatively steady at around 5%. There are a small number of children with complex needs.

Wrap around care is provided in collaboration with others, with breakfast club taking place on site and afterschool club in the neighbouring cricket pavilion. A number of clubs are provided for the pupils and use of the premises maximised.

Supportive and encouraging parents and a strong PTA are positive characteristics of the school which contribute to the pupil's opportunities and achievement. Collaboration with other professionals in health and education provides opportunities to participate within the local schools community and to share expertise and work effectively with other agencies.

### **1.2 School Values**

#### **Mission**

At Riverhead Infants' School we strive to help one another to become rounded, independent and successful so that we maximise our potential, our progression opportunities and our engagement with life. This is education at its best.

#### **Values**

At Riverhead Infants' School we value:

- quality, excellence and progress through encouraging enthusiasm and enjoyment for learning
- the independence and confidence required to become active participants in our individual learning journeys and within our community

- active learning and a creative curriculum within a stimulating and enabling environment.
- equality and appreciation of diversity with active inclusive practice
- care, respect, consideration and responsibility for ourselves, others and our environment
- challenge and risk taking in order to fulfil our potential.

This demonstrates a sense of shared purpose and reflects the rights and responsibilities of all members of our school community. At the heart is a recognition and appreciation of each unique individual and a commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all.

### **1.3 Setting our priorities**

**The priorities for the Single Equality Scheme are set in the light of:**

- identification summarised in the overview of outcomes;
- views expressed by stakeholders that have been involved in the development of the scheme;
- consultation held widely as well as representation through the working party;

**Our priorities are:**

#### **Children and Young People**

- narrowing the attainment gap between different groups of children in the school e.g. gender gaps
- challenging race and gender stereotypes in resources and the media

#### **Our Community**

- improving the involvement of children, parents and carers from minority ethnic backgrounds and all socio-economic groups
- improving access to information e.g. translation and interpretation to inform and engage parents/carers for whom English is an Additional Language; enabling access for both parents/carers where needed separately

#### **Our School Community**

- improving the involvement of disabled children and young people, staff and parents and carers;
- tackling bullying based on race, religion, gender, disability, sexuality or poverty;
- considering objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap or differences between groups;
- promoting positive attitudes toward diversity;

### **1.4 Aims**

- To establish a Working Party to develop a Single Equality Scheme to ensure

the involvement of the widest possible range of stakeholders representing the different equality strands.

- To ensure all stakeholders are aware of their rights and responsibilities as identified within the Single Equality Scheme.
- To embed the process of undertaking Equality Impact Assessments on policies, procedures and practices and to involve an increasing number of stakeholders in this process.
- To continue to develop effective information sharing to ensure all staff are aware of the vulnerable groups within our school and the role they have in supporting them.

## 2. Principles of Our Single Equality Scheme

### 2.1 Purpose of the Single Equality Scheme

We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality for all children, staff, other members of the school community and service users regardless of their ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or beliefs as defined within existing equalities legislation.

The purpose of our **Single Equality Scheme** is to fulfil the duties to promote equality for people with 'protected characteristics', and embed fairness and equality at the heart of our school community and in all aspects of our **provisions, criteria and practices**. We recognise within this Scheme the inequality linked to poverty and socio-economic factors.

Our Single Equality Scheme enables us to meet the **duties** under equality legislation, and to achieve the following for all groups:

- eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination;
- eliminate harassment and bullying (schools must keep accurate records of bullying and harassment related to equalities and report as required to the Local Authority);
- advance equality of opportunity through vision, strategy and practice;
- foster good relations.

Through our Single Equality Scheme we make links to all our actions and commitments to:

- promote community cohesion;
- narrow the attainment gap in outcomes between children and young people;
- improve outcomes as described within the Kent Children's and Young People's Plan.

### 2.2 A Relevant and Proportionate Approach

In promoting equality and complying with legislation we apply the principles of relevance and proportionality. We aim to ensure that our actions are **proportionate** to the equality issues within our school and **relevant** to our provisions, criteria and

practices. This means we prioritise those actions that enable us to tackle the most significant issues with regard to equality in order to deliver the best equality outcomes. In doing this we focus on provisions, criteria and practices that have the greatest effect, or potential effect on different stakeholders. We also apply proportionality in ensuring that our provisions, criteria and practices are **proportionate means of achieving legitimate aims**.

We do not assume that existing representation alone determines relevance, so we apply the principle of **anticipatory duty** (see 2.4 below) in helping us to identify what is relevant. We also anticipate that there will be 'hidden' disabilities and equality issues so we are thorough in identifying factors that lead, or have the potential to lead, to inequality (such as mental health needs or being young carers)

We ask whether our provisions, criteria and practices affect different groups in different ways and try to implement them in ways that promote equality. This is achieved through systematic **monitoring of outcomes, impact assessment** and **action planning** incorporating the fullest possible **participation of stakeholders**.

### 2.3 Participation

Participation is based on information gained about representation of different groups. We aim to do this as fully as possible while recognising issues of sensitivity in relation to the different protected characteristics. We take particular step to ensure disabled children and young people, parents and carers are involved as is their entitlement.

Our consultative groups and **working party** include representation from the widest range of relevant groups that we can reasonably achieve. They are responsive to the diversity in our school and organised in such a way as to promote direct participation.

The school involves **stakeholders** including children and young people, staff, parents/carers and other users of the school in relation to all equalities duties. We take into account the preferred means of communication for those with whom we are consulting e.g. translated materials or interpretation facilities for disabled people or those for whom English is an additional language or are newly arrived in this country.

The views of stakeholders, trade unions and other equalities related groups are genuinely taken into account when we set priorities.

### 2.4 Anticipation

We apply the principle of the "**Anticipatory Duty**" in all aspects of our Single Equality Scheme which means that we think ahead about how our provisions, criteria and practices may affect different members of our school. This is embodied specifically in the process of risk assessment where we consider not only the impacts but also the potential impacts, whether positive or negative. For example, we recognise the need to ensure that our children are well prepared for diverse

ethnic future experience. We recognise that whilst we have no Looked After Children at present we could in the future.

### **3. Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Governing Body**

The governing body has a duty to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. Functionally, the governing body discharges this responsibility through the Senior Leadership Team.

#### **3.2 Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team promotes equality and eliminates discrimination by:

- raising awareness of all the duties within the whole school community;
- referring to relevant and up-to-date documentation from the Equality and Human Rights Commission;
- ensuring understanding of the broad legal definition of disability;
- sensitively encouraging declaration of protected characteristics by children, parents/carers, staff and other users of the school;
- working with trade unions to implement the relevant duties in employment functions;
- ensuring that action plans are undertaken for all protected characteristics;
- setting up the working party, with membership to include:
  - Senior Leadership Team member
  - Governor
  - Parent/carer
  - Staff representative
  - Special Educational Needs Coordinator
  - Trade union representative(s)
  - Associate members e.g. disabled children, school council reps, community/voluntary groups and minority ethnic groups;
- ensuring that the principles of relevance, proportionality, reasonable adjustment and positive action are applied appropriately;
- providing appropriate training for staff, Governors and other members of the school community;
- monitoring the outcomes and impact of provisions, criteria and practices on all groups, and responding with appropriate actions;
- in the event of expectations not being met, ensuring action is taken in accordance with the status of those involved.

#### **3.3 All Members of the School Community**

The school regards equality for all as a responsibility for all. All members of our community (staff, contractors, volunteers and children) contribute to ensuring that our school is a fair, just and cohesive community by:

- contributing to the Single Equality Scheme implementation and review process
- raising issues with line managers which have an impact or potential impact on the school's provisions, criteria and practices;
- maintaining an awareness of, and professional interest in, the school's current Single Equality Scheme and the provisions, criteria and practices to which it relates;
- implementing provisions, criteria and practices in accordance with agreed protocols and standards;
- behaving with respect and fairness to all members of the school community

#### **4. The Working Party**

Our working party is involved throughout the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Single Equality Scheme. The membership of the working party at the time of writing is as follows:

- Senior Leadership Team member (Heather Powell - Headteacher)
- Governor (Jane Gillhouley - SENCO governor)
- Parents with interest or experience of equality issues (Mrs Elgar, Mr Duncan, Mrs Ravens)
- Staff representatives (Kirsty Simmons - teacher, Ruth Johnson - teaching assistant, Karin Neeleman - Midday Supervisor)
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator (Helene Bligh)
- Trade union representative (union members: Heather Powell, Helene Bligh, Kirsty Simmons)
- Associate members (Anne Vitoria - School Business Manager)
- School Council representatives (to be involved at appropriate points)

The Key Functions of the Working Party are:

- to ensure the involvement of the widest possible range of people representing the different protected characteristics;
- to ensure the involvement of trade unions regarding the equalities duties;
- to arrange for the gathering of information relating to all protected characteristics;
- to consider arrangements for impact assessments;
- to report to the leadership team on outcomes of information gathering and impact assessment;

#### **5. Information Gathering**

##### **5.1 Purpose and process**

The collection of information is crucial to supporting us in deciding what actions to take to improve equality and eliminate discrimination within the school community. The information also subsequently helps us to review our performance so it needs to be detailed enough to enable us to measure how we are delivering on equality duties.

The information also helps us to do accurate impact assessment and identify which of the school's aims have been achieved and what we need to do better.

## 5.2 Types of information gathered

The wide range of information gathered to support our planning and action to promote equality and eliminate discrimination includes the following:

- identification of children and young people, parents, carers, staff and other users of the school representing the different protected characteristics. This helps us develop and monitor the scheme. Comprehensive and sensitive efforts are made to collect accurate information and meet security of information requirements, in addition to our duty to secure accurate information relating to ethnicity and first language;
- pupil attainment and progress data relating to different groups;
- children and young people views actively sought and incorporated in a way that values their contribution;
- information about how different groups access the whole curriculum
- sports and activities choices of all groups;
- uptake of the extended school offer by group;
- exclusions data analysed by group;
- records of bullying and harassment on the grounds of any equality issue;
- data on the recruitment, development and retention of employees;
- outcomes of activities promoting community engagement and community cohesion;
- outcomes of actions taken to secure the involvement of parents and others who have been identified as difficult to engage;

## 6. Outcomes

Of all the information we collect, the most important indicators of how successful we are in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination are the outcomes for various individuals and groups. We record our outcomes using a wide range of criteria, both academic and experiential, for the various protected characteristics and other vulnerable groups, mindful of the principles of proportionality, relevance and potential impacts (whether positive or adverse). Our outcomes are recorded in summary form on Part B of our Single Equality Scheme: the **Overview of Outcomes**. Where a robust analysis of outcomes reveals poorer outcomes for any particular group it triggers the equality impact assessment process.

## 7. Equality Impact Assessment

Impact assessment refers to the review of all current and proposed provisions, criteria and practices in order to help us act to promote equality and to ensure no person is disadvantaged by school activities through discrimination. Impact assessments are an on-going process to ensure that the school's provisions, criteria and practices are developed in an increasingly inclusive and equitable way.

We undertake our impact assessment in a relevant, proportionate and systematic way. In addition to using the **Overview of Outcomes** as a focused starting point, impact assessments are incorporated into the school's planned review and revision of every policy and are also undertaken when provision and practice is reviewed, according to other **established criteria** through a **screening process**.

Screening provisions, criteria and practices helps us know how much each one promotes, or has the potential to promote equality, and whether or not a full equality impact assessment is necessary. Screening is not a substitute for full equality impact assessment but an aid to managing the impact assessment process. We are aware that many provisions, criteria and practices have the potential to affect different groups in different ways and this is factored into the screening process.

Every new provision, criteria and practice is drawn up with regard to the school's duties as described in this Single Equality Scheme and the appendices, and is subject to the process of impact assessment in relation to potential positive or adverse impacts.

## **8. Action Plans**

We have an action plan covering all relevant protected characteristics (*see Part D*). This describes how we are taking action to fulfil both the general and specific duties.

Our action plan is incorporated into the School Improvement Plan, which ensures that it is checked, monitored and evaluated systematically.

The action plan shows:

- objectives and specific actions;
- expected impact and indicators of achievement (success criteria);
- clear timescales;
- who has lead responsibility;
- resource implications;
- specified dates for impact assessment and review.

Our Single Equality Scheme relates to a range of other policies and plans, and will be implemented through them and the procedures and practices that relate to them. These policies are listed in the appendices and significantly include our Accessibility Plan, Safeguarding Policy and Community Cohesion Policy.

The school evaluates the effectiveness of the Single Equality Scheme through its self-evaluation procedures and with Ofsted when the school is inspected.

## **9. Publication and reporting**

The working party decides how best to publish the Single Equality Scheme. The school provides a copy in a range of formats and actively makes it available to

parents/carers and others, including those identified as difficult to engage. *The school prospectus includes a reference to the Single Equality Scheme and the values underpinning it.*

The school reports annually on the progress made on the action plans and the impact of the Single Equality Scheme itself on school ethos and practice within the school in addition to the impact assessments done on the full range of provisions, criteria and practices.

## **10. Review**

As part of the review of the Single Equality Scheme, the school commits to:

- revisiting and analysing the information and data used to identify priorities for the Single Equality Scheme and action plans. This incorporates use of the overview of outcomes;
- using the impact assessments to ensure that actions taken have a positive impact across all protected characteristics, that the promotion of equality is at the heart of school planning and that discrimination is being eliminated effectively.

The review of the Single Equality Scheme informs its revision, the setting of new priorities and action plans. This process continues to:

- involve the participation of a full range of stakeholders;
- be evidenced based - using information and data that the school has gathered and analysed;
- use the evidence to do accurate impact assessments which inform priorities.

## **11. Summary of our most recent review**

A meeting took place in term 6 (2010) between the Headteacher and SENCO to share information from recent training and identify priorities and next steps. It was agreed that the development of a revised Single Equality Scheme should be identified as a priority on the School Improvement Plan. Key Priority 3.4 from the School Improvement Plan (attached) forms the Action Plan for the year 2010/11, along with Key Priority 1 Overview (attached).