

ST VINCENT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



RACIAL JUSTICE, EQUALITY and DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Policy Date: January 2024
Review Date: January 2025

Mission Statement

Caritas Christi Urget Nos

The love of Christ urges us to care for each other and strive for excellence in everything we do.

The Aims of the Policy:

- to enable us to systematically establish, implement, monitor and evaluate racial equality good practice across all areas of school life.
- to help to promote racial equality and good race relations and to tackle and avoid racial discrimination.

Section 1: Statement about the school's composition and context

St Vincent's is a 1.5 form entry school with 286 children ranging from 4 -11. Children come predominantly from the parishes of Sacred Heart in Mill Hill and St Anthony's in Edgware. Numbers on roll have fluctuated but have remained at the same level for the past two years. We are not currently at capacity with approximately 30 places to be filled, mainly in Reception and KS1. The cost of living and building of higher end housing in the area has meant that we have been affected by some families moving away and new families choosing to send their children to private schools. In recent months there have been some lower cost and social housing options in the new developments and we have seen a small influx of families from this group enrolling their children into reception. It is likely this will continue.

Children currently come from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds, speak 29 different languages (including: English 63%, Polish 12%, Chinese 3%, Italian 2%, Spanish 2%, French 1%, Farsi 1%, Slovak 1%) and hail from 23 different ethnic groups (including: White British 34%, White Eastern European 8%, Black Nigerian 7%, White other - 5%, White and Black African 4%, Any other mixed background 4%, White and Black African 4%, White and Black Caribbean 4%, White Irish 3%, Black African 3%, Any other Black background 3%, Chinese 2%, Other Black African 2%). While predominantly Catholic (81%), we also have families who are from other world faiths or none. (Christian 6%, no religion 3%, other religion 3% Muslim 2%, Hindu 1%)

The curriculum we present, and promote, to the children is an endeavour to reflect these differences by providing opportunities to explore the different countries, languages and customs our children are part of through the projects they investigate. We have looked closely at the context of our school, the backgrounds of the children and how life is for a child growing up in North London today. We have used the underlying principles of our Catholic Faith and the example of our namesake St Vincent to create a set of values which lie at the heart of our curriculum.

With the diverse range of families in our school community we are working to ensure that all children feel represented in the curriculum and have opportunities to share of themselves, their backgrounds, traditions and history.

It is our intent to enable ALL children to thrive through the opportunities we provide them with, in order to:

- Live their lives by the Gospel and Vincentian values instilled in them at school.
- Understand that everyone has the right and responsibility to live in our world constructively and ensure that we leave it in a better state than when we entered it by living and working through the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in line with the UNCRC (United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child)
- Experience creativity across the curriculum through specialist art and dance lessons and opportunities to take part in art, music, dance and creative writing competitions.
- Know the joy of outdoor learning, the rich biodiversity within our school grounds and locality and develop a responsibility for the environment we share as stewards.
- Understand their place in the world, globally and locally, knowing the history of our school, Mill Hill and the Daughters of Charity and knowing where our diverse community members have their roots across the world.
- Be ready and well-prepared for their next steps in life, having high aspirations for themselves and for others because they have experienced success and a belief in learning from mistakes.
- Have a life-long curiosity, stimulated by the driving questions of Project Based Learning approach to the curriculum fostering inquiry and independent learning skills, which give confidence to ask big questions about the world.
- Be literate and numerate having experienced a rich variety of texts to stimulate and excite the mind while developing skills in investigating and problem solving to enable them to excel in their future passions.
- Be confident and happy young people that have a broad understanding and tolerance of the world and others around them with excellent communication skills honed by their experience of Restorative Justice and respect of the dignity and wishes of the individual.

We are currently seeking feedback from the parents, staff, governors and pupils regarding their views on issues relating to race equality and cultural diversity at St. Vincent's which will directly feed into our action plan for the next twelve months.

Section 2: Auditing, review and action plan

We are in the process of completing an audit to assess the impact of current policies. The results from this audit will be reported to the governing body and made available to other interested parties. This will then feed into the school development plan in due course.

We have an established cultural working party who incorporate the aims of the RJED initiative into their action plan and are working towards ensuring our school is an inclusive environment for all.

Section 3: Leadership and Management

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented. The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination. All staff are expected to deal with racist incidents that may occur; to know how to identify and challenge racial and cultural bias and stereotyping; to support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language; and to incorporate principles of equality and diversity into all aspects of their work.

RJED Governor - Phillippa Weekes (Chair of Governors)

RJED Co-ordinator - Emily Julian (RE Co-ordinator)

Cultural Group Working Party - Kerry Malone (SEND/CO, Acting Deputy Head, Literacy Lead); Emily Julian (RE - Co-ordinator); Elaine Regan (Humanities Lead); Darcie Inglis (Creative Arts Lead); Sr. Ann Byrne (Foundation Governor).

3.2 Governance

The Governing Body has the responsibility of ensuring the school is run in accordance with the terms of the Trust Deed.

In practice they are there to support, and encourage the whole school community, and work with the Head teacher to ensure school improvement, safeguarding of all members and preserving the distinct Catholic ethos.

It is not the job of the governors to manage the school but to be a critical friend. They try to know and understand:

- How the school is run.
- Current educational issues.
- The challenges and achievements.

They do this through meetings, participating in school events, seeing the school at work and asking questions.

We have a culturally diverse governing body, broadly representative of our school community.

This policy will be circulated amongst all stake-holders in draft form to allow for consultation.

The Governing Body are in the Haringey Education Partnership who provide a wide range of resources relating to racial equality and cultural diversity. As well as having access to the CPD materials from Barnet (BELS) and other areas such as Anna Freud online training, the leadership team of the school ensures that staff have regular CPD opportunities and access to appropriate resources for training purposes.

The RJED strategy is included in termly reports to governors via the curriculum committee from the RJED Co-ordinator.

3.3 Staff recruitment, retention and progression

Currently, we advertise for any teaching and non-teaching jobs within the local community and on the DFE website; we use local agencies for supply. We are also investigating how to broaden our search to ensure that our staff body is more representative of our community as we recognise that this is an area of need. We will have as standard the following sentence on all of our job adverts from 2024. "We are committed to Racial Justice, Equality and Diversity, and we welcome applicants from a range of diverse backgrounds."

All SLT members have received safer recruitment training and all staff have received Anti-racism training including unconscious bias avoidance.

We regularly monitor the composition of our staff by ethnicity, gender and seniority or grade.

Staff from Black and Minority Ethnic groups are not yet representative of the diversity of the school community, we are working hard to tackle this.

Through our robust appraisal processes, we recognise the achievements of all our staff and support their progression.

3.4 Continuing Professional Development

Since early 2022, the leadership team has been committed to the RJED initiative and regular staff meetings have been dedicated to sharing updates and training staff on RJED and Catholic Social Teaching. All staff will receive anti-racism training annually as part of our commitment to tackle race equality and cultural diversity issues in our school community; this includes training on unconscious bias. All new staff will be expected to attend in-house anti-racism training as part of their induction and be expected to read the school's RJED policy, Equality Policy, communication policy and all related policies before commencing their role. We have also committed to a three year programme on Trauma Informed Schools which includes the effects of racism as a form of trauma for pupils. The SLT are in the process of looking at all school policies through a race equality and diversity lens.

Section: 4 Curriculum and quality of education

4.1 Curriculum

In St Vincent's we follow a Project Based Learning approach which links our Vincentian Values and Catholic Social Teaching strands to a driving question. It is these questions that the children explore throughout each term at age appropriate levels. At each stage, children are exposed to different issues related to identity, racial justice, prejudice and negative stereotypes. Our curriculum map can be found on our school website which shows the learning opportunities at each term and stage over a two year cycle. During the planning of the projects, teachers make every effort to identify opportunities to promote literature, creative artists, historical people and events which are culturally diverse. Before beginning a new project, teaching staff will examine the planning to ensure that it is still relevant and representative of the community and world events and then modify it if necessary.

Driving Questions

How can we show care, compassion and love to those in need?

Why should we show respect for others and how can we do this?

How can we be stewards of our environment and of one another?

In what practical ways can we learn from our mistakes?

Why should we not judge others?

How can we build trusting relationships?

The school's Cultural Working Party will monitor and evaluate termly our effectiveness in providing a curriculum that reflects and respects the backgrounds of all pupils present within our school and wider community.

4.2 Representation

To increase diversity in the school and class libraries, our cultural group audited the reading materials and purchased books from a range of diverse authors including dual language texts. The group selected materials that contained images of people from a range of backgrounds to ensure that our pupils feel represented.

The humanities lead created a list of significant individuals from a range of cultural groups to support teachers in building a range of people, both historical and modern, into their planning.

Our Advent display last year used art from around the world to portray the nativity story.

Parents were asked to share their own images of the Holy Family during Advent 2023 to ensure that all children feel represented in the images shared in RE lessons.

Racial Justice Sunday, Black History Month, Chinese New Year, Christmas and Easter Traditions from around the world and other cultural themed events are celebrated.

4.3 Monitoring and Assessment

St Vincent's School uses Route Map to collate data on attainment and progress at the start of each academic year as a baseline and at the end of each term in Reading, Writing, Maths, Science, SPAG and RE. Data is analysed as part of the Pupil Progress cycle and action plans are set by year group teachers for the different areas. SLT and teachers will look at what the data is telling us in terms of children who fall into specific groups, i.e. girls, boys, SEND, EAL, Ethnicity, disadvantaged, age. The data is analysed for trends over time and anomalies. Actions are then identified based on need.

Statutory data is compared at the end of key stages with local and national pictures and the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is revised accordingly each year. All information on assessment and data is shared with governors termly at the curriculum committee meetings.

Section 5: Supporting Personal development

5.1 Personal development and pastoral care

5.2 Racism, racial harassment and school ethos

St Vincent's sends a weekly newsletter keeping parents up to date with school life and promoting opportunities for good community relations wherever possible. Through this newsletter we inform parents of the procedures for dealing with any racist incidents and our plans for a more inclusive school.

We encourage all children at whatever stage of their schooling to understand what race, racism and anti-racism are, and to begin to understand the harms that discrimination causes. Lessons and discussions on these topics begin in the EYFS and continue throughout a child's educational journey up until they leave in Year 6. To support teachers, we provide training for staff to ensure that they have the necessary expertise and resources to support our students and address the root causes of these incidents.

We expect all parents to attend one workshop per key stage focusing on race, racism and anti-racism and ways we can collectively support each other. Education and open dialogue are essential in combating ignorance and fostering a culture of inclusivity. If a child is involved in a racist incident, so as to ensure that appropriate learning and restorative practices are embedded, it will be mandatory for them to attend separate 1:1 or group workshops within school.

As training on race, racism and anti-racism is not a mandatory part of initial teacher training, we ensure that all teachers and wider school staff receive training and support to embed anti-racism into their practice.

An Anti-Racism policy has been added to our existing Equalities Policy and parents across the school are invited to contribute to it. The policy reflects our collective values and commitment to eradicating racism within our community.

We recognise the potential lifelong impact of suspension and exclusion for children and therefore are dedicated to restorative justice, instilling lifelong values and working closely with parents and governors to explore alternative approaches which ensure the safety and education of our school community is protected.

How incidents of racism and discrimination are dealt with:

1. Meeting with the Head Teacher and Governors

To address racist incidents, affected children will have the opportunity to meet with the Head Teacher. This forum will allow for open dialogue and a better understanding of the experiences and concerns of the students involved. Parents will also meet with the Head Teacher to discuss the incident. The chair of governors and parish priests will also make themselves available to meet with parents.

2. Restorative Justice Approach

We are committed to a restorative justice approach, which focuses on healing and rebuilding relationships, in line with our Vincentian and Gospel values. Through this process, we aim to foster understanding and empathy among the students involved .

3. Workshops for Parents

Parents of the children involved in racist incidents are required to attend workshops which will provide a platform for discussion, education, and collaborative efforts to address and prevent further occurrences.

4. Ongoing Monitoring and Support

Regular check-ins with both parents and children will be conducted to monitor progress and provide continued support. Our goal is to create a lasting change that positively impacts the entire school community.

In conclusion, addressing discrimination and racism requires a collective, conscientious effort, and we are committed to working together as a school community to create lasting change. Your support, engagement, communication and feedback are crucial in this journey towards a more inclusive and respectful environment for our children.

5.3 Communication, discipline and exclusions

At St Vincent's, we uphold the principles of fairness and equity in managing communication from children by establishing clear and consistent expectations for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. Our procedures are communicated transparently to both students and parents in our communication policy. We ensure the Rights Respecting Ambassadors and Mental Health Champions are able to contribute their ideas and feedback from their classes in regular meetings. We actively promote a positive and inclusive school culture that values diversity and encourages understanding among students. We use a restorative justice approach as it focuses on repairing harm, building relationships and fostering a positive and inclusive school community. Although our communication policy is reviewed biannually alongside our school governors, we continuously review it to ensure it is sensitive to the needs of all our pupils. Changes are then made and adapted when necessary.

All staff members in our school operate under a consistent system of rewards and how to tackle challenges. We provide regular training and professional development sessions to ensure that our educators are familiar with and apply the same principles when reinforcing positive behaviour and addressing challenges. This consistency helps create a unified and supportive learning environment for all students.

In our school, we believe in creating a supportive, nurturing and inclusive environment for all students to learn, grow and succeed together. Internal exclusions of any kind, if they were to occur, would be carefully monitored to identify patterns and trends. We put in place:

1. Regular reviews of disciplinary actions and challenges that arose.
2. Analyse data on disciplinary actions to identify any recurring issues or patterns.
3. Open communication channels with teachers, parents, and students to understand underlying concerns.

We believe in the inherent worth of every child. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that embraces diversity and supports all children. Exclusion is not our chosen approach; instead, we strive to understand, guide and nurture each child to ensure their success and well-being. We aim to focus, understand and address any challenges to create a positive and nurturing environment for all students.

Our school is committed to finding constructive and compassionate strategies to reintegrate long-term truants and excluded pupils, ensuring that their unique needs are addressed regardless of their background. Our ultimate goal is to prevent such situations through proactive support and understanding.

We put in place:

1. Individualised support plans tailored to the specific needs of each student.
2. Close working with parents, guardians, and external support services to ensure a holistic approach to the integration process. This may include personal academic support, counselling services, and mentorship programs that consider the diverse backgrounds and circumstances of our students.
3. Positive communication reinforcement programs to encourage and acknowledge positive conduct.

4. Promotion of a culture of understanding and empathy to foster a sense of belonging for every student.

5. Regular reviews of data allow us to identify any emerging patterns and implement targeted interventions or adjustments to our policies to address underlying issues.

The school's commitment to inclusivity and the belief in finding alternative methods to address challenging communication issues rather than exclusion is key. Emphasising positive reinforcement, strong communication, and a supportive network will contribute to creating an environment where every student can thrive. By implementing these measures, we aim to create a learning environment in which all students feel respected, supported, and empowered to thrive academically and personally.

5.4 Links with other policies

We ensure that the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and assessment
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- pupils' personal development and pastoral care
- teaching and learning
- admissions and attendance
- the content of the curriculum
- staff recruitment and professional development
- partnerships with parents and communities

We are currently reviewing all our policies through an anti-racist lens to ensure that they are fair and equitable to all members of the school community. We include the statement below at the end of all policies to ensure that we have taken all needs into account when reviewing them.

Equal Opportunities

In making decisions about (this policy) all staff will take into account any special educational needs, disabilities, gender, and cultural differences that may be relevant to the case and ensure that the physical environment of the school enables all students to have equal access to continuity of education.

Section 6: Parental Partnerships and the community

6.1 Parental Partnerships

We value the involvement and participation of our parents and aim to keep them fully up to date with what is happening in school, including regarding the curriculum and wider school issues. We do this by sending home termly curriculum letters to parents; sending emails when 'sensitive topics' arise that may require further discussion at home; as well as weekly newsletters from the Head Teacher. On admission, new parents will be asked whether they require correspondence in their home language and this will then be arranged.

In addition, parental attendance is always welcome at class assemblies and when classes visit the local church as well as at some whole school events. The Head Teacher meets termly with our group of 'Parent Reps' from across the school who open channels of communication between home and school in a more informal manner.

6.2 Wider Community

As of Autumn 2023, our school facilities have been opened up to the wider community for hire by local groups and to host events. Our school premises are fully accessible for use by all and provide both indoor and outdoor facilities.

Our school recognises that in these challenging times, families may find it difficult to pay for school trips, lunches, resources required for learning etc. We ensure that families are made aware of the support available in school and are always willing to help financially where possible, or offer payment plans where appropriate. We also have good links with local charities and support groups including BICS, SENDIASS, Raphael House and Grief Encounter. Parents can speak in confidence with our office staff to gain food vouchers at times of difficulty and in urgent circumstances, we can seek support from Caritas Westminster and their crisis grant.

In addition, we have good relationships with local charities who we support throughout the year in our fundraising efforts related to our work on Catholic Social Teaching. We regularly invite members from these charities into school to share their good work with our children and show them how their fundraising efforts directly impact the lives of others.

Equal Opportunities

In making decisions about Racial Justice, Equality and Diversity, all staff will take into account any special educational needs, disabilities, gender, and cultural differences that may be relevant to the case and ensure that the physical environment of the school enables all students to have equal access to continuity of education.

Monitoring and Evaluation of this policy

The Governing Body and Cultural Working Party will, in consultation with the Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy. It will be reviewed at least every 2 years to ensure it reflects current practice.

Member of staff with Lead Responsibility for this policy:	Head teacher
Date of Policy:	January 2024
Date for Review:	January 2025