



## Comet Nursery School and Children's Centre

### Policy for Equalities

Comet Nursery School and Children's Centre is an inclusive organisation where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

We have achieved our Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award and are currently working towards achieving our silver award. We have also achieved the Inclusion Quality Mark in recognition of our inclusive provision.

#### **Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles**

- 1. All learners are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- 2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
- 3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- 4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of the Comet community to feel a sense of belonging both within Comet and the wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in the life of the school and Children's Centre.

5. **We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.
6. **We have the highest expectations of all our children.** We expect that all children can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential
7. **We work to raise standards for all children, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of children raises standards for all.

### **Purpose of the policy**

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against children or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity.

### **We have an overall duty to:-**

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

This policy describes how Comet is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance, and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

**Appendix 1** shows the current **Comet Accessibility and Equality Plan**

### **Development of the policy**

This policy was developed in consultation with staff, governors and parents and carers. It is part of our commitment to promoting equalities and providing an inclusive school and Children's Centre.

When developing the policy we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Ofsted inspection framework 2017, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for children who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

### **Links to other policies and documentation**

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our school and centre development plan (SCCDP), self evaluation review (SEF), the school handbook, the Comet web site and other communications.

There are also references in the behaviour, Teaching and learning and SEN policies as well as minutes of meetings involving governors, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers.

### **What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

- We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils/adults to facilities and services.
- We are aware of the reasonable adjustment duty for disabled pupils/adults – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils/adults and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- The Headteacher ensures that all interview panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day to day life of the Comet.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which has respect for all.
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against children or their families by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

### **Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance**

The school policy on behaviour takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for children with a disability. We monitor absence data (children/staff) for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

### **Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying**

Comet challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously. We keep a record of any prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and (if necessary) would take action to reduce incidents.

### **What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups**

We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.

- We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our settling in and assessment procedures.
- We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils (nursery school) and users (Children's Centre) and use this data to support school and centre improvement. We take action to close any gaps.

We collect and analyse data:

- on the school population by gender, ethnicity and English as an additional Language;
  - on the % of pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability;
  - on inequalities of outcome and participation, related to ethnicity, gender and disability and proficiency in English
- We are aware that the legislation relates mainly to current but also to future pupils.
  - We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able".
  - We use a range of teaching strategies which ensure we meet the needs of all pupils
  - We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving
  - We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys
- EYPP and non-EYPP students

We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

### **Positive Action**

If we find any disadvantage we will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of children, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the school's Equality plan/objectives.

### **What we are doing to foster good relations**

- We prepare our children for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our children.

- We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSED and across the curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of our community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote an ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide opportunities for children to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and promote positive images of people.
- We provide opportunities for children to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, visitors, whole school events e.g. Heritage Week, Chinese New Year, Diwali.

**Other ways we address equality issues:-**

- We maintain records of all training relating to equalities
- We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed
- We have a rolling programme for reviewing all of our school policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and well-being of our pupils.
- The implications for equalities of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole community we:

- review relevant feedback from the annual parent survey, parent information evening, parent-keyperson consultation meeting
- secure and analyse responses from the annual staff and parents survey, staff meetings and training events
- review feedback and responses from the children and groups of children
- analyse issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans
- ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Governing Body meeting and committee meetings

**Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect all members of the Comet community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

**Governing body**

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school and Children’s Centre complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the school’s commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate

the success of the school's Equalities work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys)

### **Headteacher and Senior Leadership team**

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. The Headteacher also has day-to-day responsibility for coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes.

### **Teaching and Support Staff**

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect our principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all children
- support different groups of children through differentiated planning and teaching
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all new staff as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at least once a year and a record of attendance will be kept.

### **Visitors**

All visitors to Comet, including parents/carers and service providers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in the parent's handbook, on noticeboards, and on our website to enable them to do this.

## **Equal Opportunities for staff**

- This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.
- All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law.
- We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of Comet reflects the diversity of our community.
- As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.
- We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, children and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
- We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

## • Key contacts

- **Headteacher:** Lisa Clarke
- **Lead governor:** Fran Paffard

## Monitoring and reviewing the policy

We review the information about equalities in the policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate. Our review involves children, staff, governors and parents and carers.

## Disseminating the policy

This Equality Policy (which includes a current Accessibility and Equality plan) is available:

- on the school website
- in the School and Children's Centre Development Plan
- in the induction procedure for new staff

As well as this we ensure that the whole school community knows about the policy, objectives and data through, staff meetings, meetings with parents, carers and other communications.

**We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour and special educational needs.**

## Complaints

Complaints arising from the operation of this policy will be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure.

## Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor the effective deployment of this policy. This responsibility has been delegated to the Learning and Development Committee. This policy will be reviewed on a three year basis.

Chair of Governors

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Headteacher

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date for Review - Spring 2024