



Birchington Church of England Primary School

Accessibility & Equality Policy

Learning and Growing; Safe in God's Love

Policy Reviewed: September 2025

Headteacher: Mrs Louise Wilson

Lead Persons: Ms Loraine Bant (Chair of Governors) and Mrs Katie Downs (Inclusion Leader)

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1. Our Distinctive Character, Values, Priorities and Aims

1.1 Characteristics of our School

Birchington is a Church of England school. We firmly believe in a holistic approach to the whole child. We promote positive relationships between everyone. Our school has a population of 417 pupils that include: 3 form entry in Year 6 2025-26 and 2 form entry for EYFS, Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 2025-26.

We have: -

- pupils that have Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND Need)
- Pupils who use English as an Additional Language, including, pupils whose parents or carers use British Sign Language
- Looked after Children (Children in Care-CICs from Kent and LACs from other counties/ Post LAC pupils)
- Services children
- Pupil Premium children
- A range of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds

Our school offers all pupils an enriching and enjoyable education. Everyone within our school has an equal opportunity to progress to the best of their ability, no matter their starting point. Our ethos is underpinned by our Christian Vision and our School Values of Peace, Hope, Forgiveness, Love and Respect

1.2 School Mission, Christian Vision, Aims and Values

Christian Vision:

To strive to ensure everyone in our happy, inclusive school flourishes and feels valued and safe. Our peaceful learning environment and aspirational curriculum enables everyone to grow from their unique starting point, giving them a hopeful future. Following Jesus' example, we forgive, respect, love and care for everyone.

School Vision:

For every child to develop the skills and values they need to become a successful fulfilled member of society and have the confidence to make a difference.

The Aims of Birchington Church of England Primary School:

- To focus on learning, progress and the 'whole' child within a Christian environment
- To have strong, positive leadership which challenges and motivates
- To provide a stimulating, creative tailored curriculum that allows all children to succeed

The Values of Birchington Church of England Primary School:

Our School Values are:

Peace
Hope
Forgiveness
Love
Respect

We will tackle any cases of bullying based on SEND, race, religion, gender, sexuality, (LGBTQ+) or poverty and continue to promote positive attitudes toward diversity through our School Aims and Christian and School Values. We will seek to explore and develop 'the whole child' ethos through high quality classroom practice and various staff training, curriculum and extra-curricular experiences which are open to all. It is expected that children, staff, visitors and Governing Body will uphold our Christian Values, including British Values, while on our school site.

1.3 Setting our Priorities

The Priorities for the Accessibility & Equality Plan are set through:

- Our Annual Accessibility Audit
- Equality Impact Assessments when reviewing school policies
- Views expressed by stakeholders
- Representative voice through our working party
- School Council & Pupil Voice gathered through surveys and interviews

The working party consists of:

- Ms Loraine Bant - Inclusion Governor
- Mrs Katie Downs - Inclusion Leader
- Mrs Sarah Cooper - Representative from non-teaching staff/pastoral team
- Parent/Carer Representative(s)

Our Priorities are also taken from our School Plan. Our 2025-2026 School Plan sets out a framework for the areas we have chosen to improve over the next two years.

Safeguarding

- ✓ The school establishes an open, positive and child-centred safeguarding culture with Leaders taking effective, whole-school approach to keeping children safe.

Achievement

- ✓ To maximise attainment across the school for every pupil no matter their unique starting point.

Curriculum and Teaching

- ✓ The curriculum is implemented consistently well so that barriers to learning/well-being are identified quickly and removed allowing all children, no matter their starting point, achieve more than they thought possible.

Inclusion

- ✓ Barriers to learning and/or well-being for all disadvantaged children are swiftly and effectively addressed to enable them to access a wide range of opportunities and experiences.

Leadership & Governance

- ✓ To develop a highly effective culture of professional learning and expertise in which staff take responsibility for their own learning and are keen to continually improve their expertise.

Attendance and Behaviour

- ✓ Children to have highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education showing respect and tolerance towards others all of the time.

Personal Development and wellbeing

- ✓ To maximise pupils and adults' confidence, resilience and independence preparing them for life beyond school.

Early Years

- ✓ Barriers to learning and/or wellbeing for all disadvantaged children are quickly identified and removed to ensure that all children have a broad vocabulary and detailed understanding across curriculum ensuring they are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

RE and Spirituality

- ✓ To embed the school's approach to spiritual development so that it is incorporated across the curriculum.

2. Principles of our Accessibility & Equality Policy and Plan

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of our Accessibility & Equality Policy and Plan 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 pupils who are in receipt of Pupil Premium.

Our Accessibility & Equality Policy and Plan enables us to meet the duties under equality legislation, and to achieve the following for all groups:

- the elimination of all forms of unlawful discrimination
- the elimination of harassment and bullying (BCEPS will keep accurate records of bullying and harassment cases related to equalities - Bullying, Homophobic, Racial and SEND, and if needed will report them to the Local Authority, these derogatory incident reports are undertaken by all staff as needed, reviewed and filed by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and reported on to the Safeguarding Governor and FGB)
- to advance equality of opportunity through vision, strategy and practice
- to foster good relations with all stake holders within the school community and beyond

We make links to all our actions and commitments to:

- narrow the attainment gap in outcomes between all Vulnerable Groups
- promote our Christian Vision and School Values
- promote Community Cohesion
- improve outcomes as directed by Kent County Council

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 provision, criteria and practices that have the greatest effect, or potential effect on different stakeholders, for example, supporting Pupil Premium children to attend trips and activities across the curriculum.

We also apply proportionality in ensuring that our provision, 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 will affect different groups in different ways and try to implement them in ways that promote equality. This is achieved through systematic monitoring of Equality Impact Assessments which are undertaken when policies are reviewed. Any issues are reported to the A & EP Working Party to review and any relevant changes made as necessary.

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 steps to ensure disabled children and their parents/carers are involved as is their entitlement.

Our A & EP Working Party will include representation from different relevant groups that we can reasonably achieve. They will be responsive to the diversity in our school and organised in such a way as to promote direct participation in person or online. Confidential minutes will be available to all participants of the A & EP Working Party as required.

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 consider 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/BSL or are newly arrived in this country.

The views of stakeholders are genuinely considered when we set priorities.

2.4 Anticipation

We apply the principle of the 'Anticipatory Duty' in all aspects of our Accessibility & Equality Plan and Policy which means that we think ahead about how our provisions, criteria and practices (PCPs) 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.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body has a duty to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. The Inclusion Governor has regular meetings with the Inclusion Leader to discuss outcomes of the Accessibility & Equality Plan and Policy and to assist in monitoring provisions, criteria and practices (PCPs). Functionally, the Governing Body discharges this responsibility through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Phase Leaders (PLs).

3.2 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Phase Leaders (PLs)

The School Leadership Team (SLT and PLs) promotes equality and eliminates discrimination by:

- raising awareness of all the duties within the whole school community
- referring to relevant and up-to-date advice from county
- ensuring understanding of the broad legal definition of disability
- sensitively encouraging declaration of protected characteristics by children and young people, parents/carers, staff and other users of the school
- working with trade unions to implement the relevant duties in employment functions
- ensuring that an action plan is undertaken for all protected characteristics
- setting up the working party, with membership to include at least one (where practicable) - Inclusion Leader/SLT
 - Governor
 - Parent/carer (s)
 - Staff representative
 - Associate members e.g. School Council representatives
- 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 respond with appropriate actions
- ensuring that in the event of expectations not being met, ensure 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 contribute to ensuring that our school is a fair, just and cohesive community by:

- contributing to the implementation and review process
- raising issues with SLT and Phase Leaders which have an impact or potential impact on the school's provision, criteria and practices
- maintaining an awareness of, and professional interest in, the school's current Accessibility & Equality Plan and Policy 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 therefore upholding our Christian Vision and School Values

4. The Working Party

Our working party will be involved throughout the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Accessibility & Equality Plan and Policy.

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 arrange for the gathering of information relating to all protected characteristics
- to consider arrangements for impact assessments
- to report to the SLT and Phase Leaders 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 our 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 that may be gathered to support our planning and action to promote equality and eliminate discrimination includes the following:

- the accessibility of the school site and buildings, learning and information materials via an Annual Accessibility Audit
- identification of those representing 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's views actively sought and incorporated in a way that values their contribution; regular School Council meetings are held and any relevant points are fed back to the A & EP Working Party
- sports, activities and responsibility choices of all groups
- analysis of part-time schooling data by group
- analysis of exclusion data by group
- records of bullying and harassment
- data on the recruitment, development and retention of employees
- outcomes of activities promoting community engagement and community cohesion- including opportunities to engage with the wider community
- outcomes of actions taken to secure the involvement of parents and carers 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 accessibility and equality for all 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). Where a robust analysis of outcomes reveals poorer outcomes for any particular group it triggers further investigation through follow up by the A & EP Working Party.

7. Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments assist the school in ensuring no person is disadvantaged or discriminated against through school policy. They are an on-going process to ensure that the school's practices are developed in an inclusive and equitable way. They are carried out by Senior Leaders, Phase Leaders, Hub Drivers/Hubs, Subject Leaders and other key staff. Any action points will then be recorded and addressed by the Leadership Team and Governors as necessary.

8. Action Plans

Our Accessibility & Equality Action Plan will describe how we are going to fulfil both general and specific duties. It is a working document which can have additions made during the year in reaction to any A & EP issue that arises in school. Our Action Plans will also be cross referenced with the annual School Plan when needed.

The Accessibility & Equality Action Plan shows:

- specific actions;
- expected impact and success criteria;
- clear timescales;
- who has lead responsibility;
- resource implications;

- specified dates for review.

Our Accessibility & Equality Plan and Policy 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 include our Safeguarding Policy, Community Cohesion Policy and SEND Policy.

The school evaluates the effectiveness of the Accessibility & Equality Plan and Policy x 3 yearly, through the A & EP Working Party, Governing Body and with Ofsted when the school is inspected.

9. Publication and reporting

The A & EP Working Party published information via the school website but it is also available in a range of formats (email and paper), it can be translated if necessary. The school prospectus includes a reference to the Accessibility & Equality Plan and Policy and the values underpinning it. The Inclusion Leader will report 3x annually to the SEND Governor Ms Loraine Bant, on the progress and impact made via the Accessibility & Equality Plan and Policy.

10. Review

As part of the review of the Accessibility & Equality Plan and Policy, the school commits to:

- revisiting and analysing information and data used to identify priorities and updating new targets;
- using the Equality Impact Assessments and stakeholder views to ensure that actions taken have a positive impact across all protected characteristics, that the promotion of accessibility and equality is at the heart of school planning and that discrimination is being eliminated effectively.

This policy is subject to ratification by the Governing Body.

Reviewed by: - Headteacher/ Inclusion Leader/SEND Governor
Next Review Date: September 2026