

St. James the Great Roman Catholic Primary and Nursery School



Community Cohesion Policy

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There is a duty for schools to promote community cohesion under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Introduction

The curriculum of our school should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils and of society and prepare our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

We already consider this part of our role, and already work in ways which promote community cohesion. As migration and economic change alter the shape of our increasingly diverse local communities, it is more important than ever that all schools play a full part in promoting community cohesion. Our school should be a thriving, cohesive community, but it also has a vital part to play in building a more cohesive society.

Every school - whatever its intake and wherever it is located - is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, ethnicity and social backgrounds. The staff and pupil populations of some schools reflect this diversity, allowing pupils to mix with those from different backgrounds.

We believe that it is the duty of our school to address issues of 'how we live together' and 'dealing with difference' however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem.

What is Community Cohesion?

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

Community from a School's Perspective

For schools, the term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- The school community – the pupils it serves, their families and the school's staff.
- The parish community – the families it serves, their children and staff.
- The community within which the school is located – the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area.
- The community of Britain - all schools are by definition part of this community.
- The global community – formed by EU and international links.

How does a School contribute towards Community Cohesion?

All schools, whatever the mix of pupils they serve, are responsible for equipping those pupils to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds.

For some schools with diverse pupil populations, existing activities and work aimed at supporting pupils from different ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other, will already be contributing towards community cohesion. For other schools where the pupil population is less diverse or predominantly of one faith, socioeconomic or ethnic group more will need to be done to provide opportunities for interaction between pupils from different backgrounds.

Just as each school is different, each school's contribution to community cohesion will be different and will need to develop by reflecting:

- The nature of the school's population – whether it serves pupils drawn predominantly from one or a small number of faiths, ethnic or socio-economic groups or from a broader cross-section of the population, or whether it selects by ability from across a wider area.
- The location of the school – for instance whether it serves a rural or urban area and the level of ethnic, faith and socio-economic diversity in that area.

Broadly, schools' contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.
- Engagement and ethos – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally.

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

An effective school will have a high standard of teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity will be integrated across the curriculum.

At St. James the Great School we ensure that:

- The PSHCE curriculum promotes common values and helps pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities for pupils to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.
- Opportunities exist across the curriculum whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.

- External visitors are arranged to provide workshops and assemblies on the topic of difference e.g. Just Different, Changing Faces, and on the topic of supporting our global family e.g. Mission Together, SightSavers.
- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is given a high priority to enable them to achieve their potential.
- All cultures and backgrounds are celebrated through assemblies and displays.
- Pupils are involved in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.

Equity and Excellence

We should continue to focus on securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that pupils are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential.

At St. James the Great School we ensure that:

- Incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment are monitored and dealt with according to school policy.
- The progress of all groups of pupils is tracked closely in order to tackle any underperformance by any particular group.
- Intervention programmes are in place for targeted children.
- The Inclusion Manager is provided with the resources needed, including provision of additional adults to support identified children early on.
- The school remains committed to the high standards of inclusive practice, evidenced through the school's Inclusion Mark accreditation.

Engagement and Ethos

School to school: We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools, locally or further afield. Sharing resources provides a means for pupils to interact and gain a variety of new experiences to enrich their learning.

At St. James the Great School we ensure that:

- Partnerships with schools are maintained through the Croydon Catholic Schools Cluster, Local Authority Cluster and other formal partnerships with secondary schools and colleges.
- Learning in the classroom is supported by joint ventures with other schools, for example, Croydon Catholic Schools Sports Day, quizzes, gifted and talented days etc.
- Support is offered to other school in the form of sharing good practice.

School to parents and the community:

At St James the Great we ensure that:

- Strong links are maintained with the two parishes the school serves. The two parish priests form part of the Governing Body and are involved in celebrating masses and services in the school as well as making frequent informal visits.
- The school works closely with multi-agencies, such as social care, health professionals, speech and language etc. to ensure the well being of all children.
- The school works in unison with parents to support the children. Parents are encouraged to participate in the life of the school through attendance at assemblies and other special celebrations, volunteering, parent's evenings, drop in sessions with the Inclusion Manger and the school operates an open door policy.
- A wide variety of extended services operate such as a before and after school club, staff led clubs and clubs run by external providers. The school is used as a venue for many community led clubs included those for adults as well as children.

Responsibilities

In keeping with the school ethos, all members of staff at St. James the Great have a responsibility for promoting community cohesion.

Date of Next Review: Spring 2019