



*What I learn today, prepares me for tomorrow.*

# Published Equality Information & Equality Objectives 2025-2029

Policy Location:	Written:	Review Due:	Person Responsible:
Staff Share -> Policy Library	September 2024	September 2029	Mark Phillips, Headteacher Sarah Dickson & Martin Gray Deputy Headteachers All staff

This is our published information about our school and the ways in which we work to eliminate differences of outcome for groups with protected characteristics. It includes information about the work we do to promote equality and challenge discrimination.

The school has data on its composition broken down by year group, ethnicity, sex and by first language. This is available on request.

The school is a relatively small 2-19 special school in the centre of Alnwick, a market town in the north of Northumberland. The school has recently admitted a significant number of new pupils, increasing over the last reporting cycle from 45 to 89 pupils. There is residential provision on site where up to 6 pupils per night are offered a 24-hour curriculum Monday-Thursday. Our school will also extend to open a new second provision in Amble in 2024. Children who attend Barndale House represent all of the diverse communities of Northumberland; from the most isolated rural settings to the busier towns in the North Northumberland region. They also represent all of the different socio-economic groups found in the county, and we are aware of the different opportunities and life chances our pupils will face unless school enables and equips them with the skills and independence they will need to lead fulfilling adult lives.

The school has a strategic plan which outlines our ambitions for the children, the communities we support (children attend from Morpeth to Berwick and the far west of the county) and our vision for learning. Part of that vision is to increase the availability of residential places to offer more children and young people aged 7 and above the opportunity to benefit from the 24-hour curriculum and the important role it plays in Preparing for Adulthood.

We teach children about their rights and the school's values, about respect for one another and the wider communities to which they belong. We recognise and support the unique personalities and characteristics of each child.

Our school promotes and teaches the children to understand pluralistic British values; concepts such as mutual respect, acceptance of different viewpoints, support to make decisions democratically and respecting boundaries are all developed and integral to the daily life of the school.

A very small number of pupils speak community languages in addition to English. The proportion of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant is more than twice the national average.

### **The Northumberland Inequalities Lens**

People in the most deprived communities in Northumberland have shorter healthy lives than those in our least deprived.

A plan has been developed to reduce inequalities to enable people to live healthy, happy lives for longer.

One of the ways we are all working towards this is in 'creating a system, including communities and residents in which everyone has responsibility for making change happen'.

Ensuring people have fair access to the building blocks for a good life such as a decent income, a good quality job, safe, affordable and warm housing as well as good quality education and training opportunities is a corporate priority across Northumberland. In tackling inequalities, there should be fewer gaps in the experiences residents have across health, education, employment and social outcomes.

As a school, we make the best use we can of our resources, community contacts and sources of support to enable families to overcome the challenges that periods of financial hardship and a semi-rural economy can present. We strive to build and nurture resilience, creativity and knowledge. The school is situated in an area of deprivation; in order to give all pupils the best start to the day, we partner with sustainable food providers to provide breakfast. We also have a family support worker who can signpost and support families who experience periods of hardship regarding food insecurity, benefits and practical support.

In investing in opportunities for our pupils to integrate into and explore communities and have new experiences, we develop social and cultural capital. Cultural capital gives our pupils power. It helps them

achieve goals, become successful, and rise up the social ladder without necessarily acquiring wealth or financial capital.

In addition to using the Pupil Premium effectively to offer academic support and guidance using evidence-based approaches to developing literacy and numeracy, we have improved and modernised learning environments; food technology, the small cafe in the horsebox and workshop spaces, for example.

The school privately funds a school nurse to overcome the lack of specialist school nurses in the county, and the grant helps to pay for and run the 3 vehicles which provide transport so that students have opportunities to experience life and activities in the local and wider community.

There is a Family Hub on the site the school shares with another school. There is a community centre close by. We all work in partnership to develop diversionary and engaging activities for young people in the local community to improve the security and safety of our sites for the vulnerable people who use them. There is an ongoing partnership with the emergency services and other community partners.

We represent, discuss and welcome family diversity and the positive aspects of individuality in families. We establish safe spaces for changing and using toilet facilities and make sensitive adaptations when a child or young person needs to discuss or obtain emotional support or education regarding the protected characteristics of sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Our school uniform policy is flexible and the guidance does not discriminate against any child on the basis of sex, race, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief.

The school has data on its population by types of disability and special educational need. There are bespoke pathways for learning, and these all incorporate physical, social and emotional support. All staff have completed Mental Health First Aid training. The role of Mental Health Lead in school is being developed and all staff help to promote emotional health and wellbeing and a range of strategies to support resilience and mental health.

Specialist support from other agencies is requested as needed. Children and young people in school use Zones of Regulation to communicate the way that they feel; it provides a common language which staff can attune to and help those children who need more support to regulate their feelings and readiness to learn.

The school is as accessible a building as can be achieved given the open aspects of some of the site, the different buildings, the age of the listed buildings and the challenges of the ongoing adaptations that need to be made.

We record and report instances of discriminatory language or bullying.

There is an Intimate Care Plan and all pupils who receive medical and intimate care are treated with dignity and respect. Opportunities are used to integrate PSHE, sensory support and mental health support into the intimate care routines.

All other events of discrimination, peer-on-peer abuse or perceived harassment are recorded using CPOMS which helps to build a full picture around a child. Staff recognise the relationship between hate crime and radicalisation or extremism.

We challenge and respond quickly to establish any concerning influences that may be present in pupils' lives. We do experience that some pupils may have few opportunities to experience the wider UK and urban contexts outside Northumberland and when possible and accessible, develop a programme of learning with visits and visitors to broaden understanding of the wider multicultural, multi-faith context of modern Britain.

The school records data about religion and belief when it is provided by parents through our data collection mechanism. This enables us to state with confidence that we are inclusive and sensitive with regard to pupils' religions and beliefs.

## **Documentation and record-keeping**

Our school has a statement of equality policy and principles published on the web site. The school aims to extend children's understanding of fostering good relations and challenging discrimination in a practical context through the work we do on promoting friendship, dealing with feelings and feeling safe to share concerns with adults. The ethos of the school supports and underpins our commitment to the values of democracy, tolerance and mutual respect.

## **Responsibilities**

All members of staff have responsibility for equality and for meeting equality objectives. All staff take responsibility for anti-bullying.

## **Staffing**

There is good equal opportunities practice in the recruitment and promotion of all staff.

**Behaviour, safety and personal development** The Jigsaw PSHE curriculum and the wider focus on learning in school ensures that pupils learn about fair and equal relationships, respect, values and consent.

School council representatives are advocates for their fellow pupils and tell us that pupils feel safe in school.

The school's anti-bullying policy is available from the school web site.

## **Curriculum**

There is coverage in the curriculum of equalities issues, for example tackling prejudice, promoting community cohesion and safe and respectful relationships.

The school ensures that children learn in an age-appropriate way to value and access their rights.

There are activities across the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to help them to develop their character.

## **Consultation and involvement**

We consult and involve parents, carers, and pupils and respond to any concerns related to the Equality Act. We consult parents and carers through online surveys and a parent social media site. The school has an open-door policy and communicates half-termly with parents and carers about the learning that is taking place. We respond promptly to any concern about perceived inequality, unlawful discrimination, or harassment.

## **Part Two: Objectives**

Schools and other public sector organisations subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

### **1. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not**

#### **Theme: Enabling environments**

Barndale House School will open a new 50-place satellite site - Barndale-by-the-Sea - for pupils with a range of neurodiverse needs in 2024.

Together with the continued impetus to develop and improve the main site in Alnwick, this development will take us further towards meeting our ambitions of supporting young people in surroundings that are

purpose built for their needs, and which enable us to safeguard, empower and prepare our young people for independence and adulthood.

Strategies we will continue to develop to ensure that the school environments are providing optimal opportunities for our pupils to achieve equality of opportunity include:

- Three Thrive practitioners in school. This supports our trauma-informed, whole school approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Therapies and emotional help support self-regulation and independence
- A diverse staffing structure helps us match adults to children's needs.
- School works proactively to be bridge between school community and local communities
- A focus on physical activity, play and enrichment to contrast with the digital lives many of our young people might be drawn towards
- A focus on digital safety
- Access to services through partnership working with agencies to support families affected by: DV, financial hardship, CYPS, discrimination etc.

## **2: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.**

### **Theme: The language of equality and inclusion**

We are passionate about the correct use of the language of equality diversity and inclusion.

As a setting championing best practice in the inclusion of people with SEND, it is our professional mission to model and campaign for the use of de-stigmatising, appropriate language.

This is never straightforward. The language, terminology and identities we work with are always changing.

Inevitably, language which is acceptable or in use now, may not be current by the time the 4 year cycle comes to an end; this is an evolving and changing aspect of EDI.

The aspects of language we are conscious we need to be clear and consistent are:

- The language of neurodiversity and describing neurodiverse people.
- The language of disability
- LGBTQ+ identities and family diversity
- Language describing inequalities and financial hardship.
- Language that describes the wider cultural and religious contexts that people in Northumberland sometimes only experience rarely.

As we address this objective, we expect to see a culture of inclusion and equality develop as part of the fabric of our schools.

## **3: Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

### **Theme: Preparing for Adulthood: stepping over the threshold**

We will continue to work with partners and vocational pathways to ensure that children and young people at Barndale School are progressing towards having the best life chances in adulthood throughout the time they are with us. One of the key barriers we must work consistently to address is a parental reluctance to encourage their child to take the next steps. We are consistent in continuing to progress towards ensuring

the best outcomes for every young person who transitions from Barndale into the wider world of adulthood, supported or independent living and work, volunteering or further education.

Our strategies will include:

- Qualifications and raising aspirations through a varied and accessible menu of accreditation options.
- Life experiences and opportunities
- RSE and PSHE that give pupils access to appropriate life skills when it is developmentally appropriate for them.
- Work and work experiences
- Vocational opportunities in purpose-built settings on the school site
- FE opportunities
- Transport options and independence
- Overcoming barriers such as parental protectiveness and fear of the unknown

*These objectives replace the previous equality objectives set in 2021. Progress towards the objectives will be reviewed annually, and they will remain our objectives until April 2029 when they are due to be refreshed*