



Houghton School

Equality Policy  
(including Accessibility)

Revised October 2015

<b>Ratifying Committee</b>	<b>Curriculum Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>October 2015</b>
<b>Review</b>	<b>When required</b>

## **The School Context**

Haughton School serves the whole of the Borough of Telford and Wrekin and also has a small number of children from Shropshire. It provides for children from reception age to year 6 and all children in school have a statement/EHC Plan or are subject to statutory assessment. The majority of children have moderate and complex learning difficulties and achieve significantly below age-related expectations. There is also a small group of children within our specialist provision whose needs relate to social, emotional and mental health issues. Many of our children have additional needs, including autism, communication/speech and language difficulties, sensory impairments and/or physical disabilities. Children come from a wide socio-economic spectrum, many from areas of deprivation: currently there are 49.6% eligible to claim free school meals. Inclusion integrated working and extended services and partnership working is a strong feature of the school. The school has gained external benchmark awards including: Basic Skills Award, Arts Mark Gold and Healthy Schools.

In 2010 and 2014 Ofsted judged the school to be good.

## **Introduction**

This policy document sets out Haughton School's commitment to the principles of equality and diversity for all. It is our belief that the fundamental principles of equality whether in race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and sexual orientation are inseparable. To create a fair and just school community that promotes social inclusion, community cohesion and equality, respects diversity and challenges and acts upon discrimination and inequality, is an underpinning tenet of our philosophy. Such an ambition requires a consistent, coherent and systematic approach which all members of the school recognise and commit to. We embrace the Equality Act 2010 which unified all existing equality legislation. This policy therefore replaces the previous separate policies for:

- Racial Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Accessibility Policy

## **General Duty**

The general duty states all public authorities are legally required, when exercising their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under The Equality Act 2010.

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

**Disability Equality\*** – We will actively seek to:

- Promote equality of opportunity for all children regardless of their disability.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination

- Eliminate harassment of someone with a disability that is related to their disability
- Promote positive attitudes towards those with a disability
- Encourage participation in public life.
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable all children to access the curriculum and daily life of the school.

The purpose of the school is to educate children with disabilities. It is characterised by high expectations for all children regardless of learning difficulty or any additional disability.

The co-location with a mainstream school maximises opportunities for inclusion for children. Staff are trained to deliver high quality teaching/care to all children. Job descriptions are detailed and robust because of the challenges of the work. Risk assessments are essential to ensure that staff/children are safe.

Racial Equality\* – We will actively seek to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity for all races
- promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Gender Equality\* – We will actively seek to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between males and females.

Religion or belief\* – We will actively seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity for religious beliefs and other beliefs held by individuals
- support the understanding of a range of religious and other beliefs.

Sexual Orientation\* – We will actively seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity regardless of sexual orientation

Gender Reassignment\* – Due to the level of disability of the children at Haughton School this is unlikely to arise. However this may be an issue relating to staff, in which case we will actively seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity for those who are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.

Pregnancy and maternity\* - Due to the age of the children at Haughton School this is unlikely to arise. However this may be an issue relating to staff, in which case we will actively seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity for those who are pregnant or on maternity leave.

\*refer to appendix A for clarification of definitions

### **Our Approach to Promoting Equality**

The overall objective of the school's Equality Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity, and promote good relations and positive attitudes for all.

Through the Equality Policy, the school seeks to ensure that no member of the school community receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the school community – children, staff, governors and parents/carers.

### **Equality - aims and values**

At Haughton School our vision is to include all pupils, whatever their abilities and needs, in our aim to:

- Help each child develop his/her academic, social and practical abilities to his/her highest standard.
- Help each child achieve self-confidence, initiative and independence
- Develop the children's abilities to enable them to return to their local school and thus immediate surroundings or, if this is not possible, prepare them to become members of a wider society on leaving school.
- Create a school community of caring, sharing and learning with relationships between children, parents, governors and school staff based on mutual trust and respect.
- To create a happy and secure learning environment where all children's needs are met, where achievements and success are recognised and praised
- To ensure the EYFS requirements are delivered to all children from rising 4 to 5 years.
- To ensure that the National Curriculum is delivered to all children aged 5-11.
- To promote all children's spiritual, physical and emotional well-being so that they are secure, confident and well-motivated.
- To develop all children's personal responsibility and encourage decision-making and choices, communicating through whatever means appropriate.
- To provide a wide range of age appropriate learning experiences which are both exciting and challenging.
- To offer opportunities of working co-operatively alongside others, developing friendships and respect for others.
- To provide all children with experiences of their own and other religious and cultural backgrounds and values.

In all our work, we seek to maintain and develop the conditions most likely to achieve these aims through:

- Provision of appropriate information technology hardware, software and peripherals;
- Provision of appropriate seating and use of positioning and mobility aids;

- A total communication environment which features the use of signs, symbols and objects of reference;
- Adherence to benevolent therapeutic regimes – whether based in medical or paramedical fields e.g. speech and language therapy, physiotherapy or medication;
- Implementation of strategies to manage sensory impairments;
- Consistent and sensitive application of programmes based on positive behaviour disciplinary policies developed in consultation with parents;
- A commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration and partnership with parents, fellow professionals, children and the community of which we are a part.

We want all parents to:

- Feel welcomed in school.
- Work in partnership with staff.
- Be consulted and have their views acted upon where practicable.
- Be well informed.

We want all Governors to:

- Work as friends and partners of the school.
- Know the school and its work well.
- Offer constructive advice and challenge.
- Promote the school in the wider community.

We want the wider community to:

- Develop understanding of our children and respect their abilities.
- Broaden horizons for children and support life-skill development.

All work in the school is focused on meeting the needs of all, taking account of all the protected characteristics.

We strive to include and engage all children and to prepare them for inclusion in a diverse society. This school will always take steps to:

- Promote equality of opportunity and access for all
- Oppose all forms of prejudice and negative discrimination
- Ensure that whatever the level of disability all children will have access to the curriculum.

### **Equal Opportunities for Staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff and Haughton School. 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. However we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

## **Accessibility**

### **The definition of disability**

*'A person suffers a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'*

At Houghton all our pupils come under this definition and as such all of our curriculum, staffing and buildings are focussed on improving access.

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives.

The school is fully accessible for all children with SEND. The curriculum has been planned to be broad and balanced and personalised for all children in our provision. The personalisation ensures the curriculum is fully accessible for each child.

The self-review process is rigorous to ensure that all the needs of all children with SEND are fully met.

Central to all our work is equality of opportunity and accessibility which permeates every aspect of school life. Our school improvement plan has accessibility and equality aims embedded within every area as they are integral to our work.

Information in school is presented in a variety of formats according to children' needs. We continue to improve the delivery of all our information to ensure it is accessible to children, staff, parents and visitors.

### **Employer duties**

As employers we have obligations under protected characteristics of age, marriage and civil partnerships. A separate policy is available covering recruitment and employment.

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when approaching staff and/or when re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff

- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff
- Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

### **Consultation and involvement**

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, children and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape a plan:

- Feedback from the annual parent questionnaire and parents' evening, parent-school forum meetings or governors' parent-consultation meeting
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings/training days
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons
- Issues raised in annual reviews or Education Health Care Plans
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **The role of governors**

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to children, and responsive to their needs based on all areas under the protected characteristics.

All who work in the school have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

#### **Governors are responsible for:**

- Ensuring the school complies with all current equality legislation.
- Ensuring that this policy and its procedures are followed.

#### **The Head Teacher is responsible for:**

- Making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying them out.
- Making sure that procedures are followed.
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.
- Producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working.

#### **All staff are responsible for:**

- Dealing with racist, sexist and homophobic incidents and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping.
- Promoting equality and good community relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for any reasons related to the protected characteristics

#### **Responsibility for overseeing equality practices:**

### **Leadership Team**

- Co-ordinating and monitoring work on equality issues.
- Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment.
- Monitoring achievement of all groups.

### **Monitoring, reviewing and assessing impact:**

This policy has been agreed by our Governing body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing school policies and their impact of all elements of promoting equality and actions to achieve. This will be an intrinsic part of our annual school improvement planning and will form part of that process.

We make regular assessments of children learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure all groups of children are making the best possible progress and take appropriate action to address any gaps. Requirement to publish data on an annual basis will be fulfilled through the school improvement process and reports to Governors.

### **Specific Duty - Publishing Information**

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish the policy, we will:

- Publish the Equality policy on the School Website
- Raise awareness/provide training at staff meetings
- Make sure hard copies are available on request.

### **Breaches of the Policy**

Any breaches of the policy will be dealt with in the same way as other breaches of policy as determined by the Head Teacher and Governors

If a member of the public feels they have been treated unfairly by school under the protected characteristics or suffered harassment then they will have equal access to the complaints procedure as in the School's Complaints Procedure.

Any complaints by staff about unfair treatment in relation to the protected characteristics will be dealt with through the Local Authority Grievances/Dignity at Work Policies as appropriate.

We will report termly to Governors on complaints as a standard agenda item.

## **Appendix A**

### **Definitions of the Protected Characteristics in relation to Equality**

#### **What do we mean by Disability Equality?**

We recognise that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

#### **What do we mean by Gender Equality?**

We recognise that a person's gender refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or to boys or girls.

#### **What do we mean by gender reassignment equality?**

We recognise that a person may express their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical gender that they were born with.

#### **What do we mean by pregnancy and maternity equality?**

Treating a woman less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger.

#### **What do we mean by Race Equality?**

The school adopts the definition of Race as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 as one of the protected characteristics which refer to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

#### **What do we mean by Religion or Belief Equality?**

A Religion or belief refers to a religious and/or philosophical belief including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). A religion must be identifiable and have a clear structure or belief system. A belief need not include faith or worship of a god or gods, but must affect how a person lives their lives or perceives the world (e.g. Humanism)

#### **What do we mean by Sexual Orientation Equality?**

The school uses the definition as outlined in legislation as sexual orientation meaning a person's sexual orientation towards:

- persons of the same sex
- persons of the opposite sex, or
- persons of either sex

The school extends the definition of this protected characteristic of sexual orientation to include:

- references to a person who is of a particular sexual orientation, or
- references to persons who share the same sexual orientation

## **Accessibility Plan**

### **Scope of the Plan**

This plan covers all three main strands of the planning duty:

#### **1 Improving the physical environment of school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services.**

This strand of the planning duty covers aids to improve the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education. The physical environment includes things such as steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs and furniture.

Aids to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops and way-finding systems.

Physical aids to access education cover things such as ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept key boards, switches, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills, such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils

In maintained schools the provision of a special piece of equipment or extra assistance will be made through the SEN framework and to a lesser extent through the planning duty which applies to all schools. The distinction between auxiliary aids and services provided through the SEN route and those provided under the planning duty is that the SEN duties relate to the individual, whereas the planning duty relates to the provision of aids or services in terms of the population (and future population) of the school. For example, a pupil with visual impairment might have low vision aids provided through the statement of SEN but the school might as a general measure provide blinds and adjustable lighting through the planning duty.

#### **2. Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in schools' curriculum.**

This strand of the planning duty will help to improve access to a full, broad and balanced curriculum. It covers a range of elements including ensuring that teaching and learning is accessible through school and classroom organisation and support, especially deployment of staff, timetabling, curriculum options and staff information and training.

Schools will be expected to plan to improve progressively access to the curriculum for all disabled pupils although many adjustments to access will be dependent on individual needs and may be provided through the SEN framework. The accessibility strategies and plans will help to ensure that schools are planning and preparing to respond to the particular needs of individual pupils.

### **3 Improving the delivery of information to pupils with disabilities**

1. This part of the duty covers planning to make information normally provided by the school in writing to its pupils - such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events - available to disabled pupils. This will include alternative formats such as Braille, audio tape and large print and also the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or sign language, through a recognised symbol system or ICT. This information should also be made available within a reasonable time frame and take account of the pupils' disabilities and pupils' and parents' preferred formats.

#### **Monitoring**

At Haughton School we recognise that monitoring is essential to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning.

We will monitor:

- Attainment
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Selection & recruitment of staff
- Governing body representation

As part of the refurbishment in 2006 the school building complies with all the DDA building regulations of 2003. The school was further extended in 2015 in order to give greater access to all children through the provision of larger classrooms. Wheelchair access is provided for the main entrance and the playground is ramped to allow access to the top play areas, the reception/year 1 class, the rear entrance, external exit doors from classrooms and the demountables.

There is an adult disabled toilet facility and a child sized disabled toilet which has two differing sizes of toilet and a hi-riser bed to facilitate changing of pupils. We also have a child sized disabled toilet and a shower with a hi-riser bed within the Badgers area.

Planned Developments

Area to be developed	Change required	Planned impact of change	Time Scale	Approximate Costing
Equipment	Replacement of IWB with height adjustable Sahara Boards with touch screens	All children to be able to access the computer and class based learning	September 2015	£50,000
	OT Assessment of physical aids needed to ensure access to learning opportunities	All children will be able to access the classroom learning opportunities to their full potential	Ongoing throughout the year	No cost to the school, additional Occupational Therapist to be based at Haughton 2 days/week
Health & Safety	Update Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans	All children who require 1 have an up to date PEEP	Ongoing throughout the year taking account of any significant changes within the child.	N/A
	Moving & Handling Assessments	Ensure dignity is maintained for all children where moving & handling is essential, all staff appropriately trained in order to undertake moving & handling	Ongoing throughout the year taking account of any significant changes within the child.	N/A – school based Moving & Handling Trainer.  Refresher training costs not applicable for this period.

<p><b>Continuing Professional Development</b></p>	<p>Makaton Refresher/Enhancement</p>	<p>Improved understanding of all staff re total communication approach – improved inclusion of children with Speech Language and Communication needs</p> <p>Enhancement Training for Makaton Tutor to disseminate practice and extend knowledge and skill base</p>	<p>Ongoing in Friday Briefings</p> <p>March 2016</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>£180</p>
	<p>ELKLAN (ASD) for whole staff</p>	<p>Improved understanding of targeted staff re communication – improved inclusion of children with Speech Language and Communication needs associated with a diagnosis of ASD</p>	<p>November 2015</p>	
	<p>Splint competency/ use of standing frame/ hoisting</p>	<p>Competency training for specific staff to ensure new children to the school have their physical needs fully met</p>	<p>September 2015</p>	

Planned Developments

Area to be developed	Change required	Planned impact of change	Time Scale	Approximate Costing	Notes
<b>School Grounds</b>	Provision of wheelchair accessible play equipment	To provide greater play opportunities for wheelchair users	Summer 2016	Quotes to be obtained	Potential access to LA accessibility funding to keep school based costs manageable given in year deficit budget situation
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	Update Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans	All children who require 1 have an up to date PEEP	Ongoing throughout the year taking account of any significant changes within the child.	N/A	
	Moving & Handling Assessments	Ensure dignity is maintained for all children where moving & handling is essential, all staff appropriately trained in order to undertake	Ongoing throughout the year taking account of any significant changes within the child.	N/A – school based Moving & Handling Trainer.  Refresher training costs not applicable for this period.	

		moving & handling			