



Equalities Plan Statement

[Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement for publication]

This has been modelled on the Swindon Borough Council plan adapted to the needs of Crowdys Hill School.

The statement includes:

- Equality Plan Statement
- Ensuring Equality of Opportunity and Participation
- Equality Action Plan – Race, Gender and Disability
- Crowdys Hill School Accessibility Plan
- Crowdys Hill School Accessibility Action Plan
- Community Cohesion Policy

Review

Every four years and publish information annually.

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Signed:

Headteacher

To be reviewed: July 2025

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1. Mission statement

At Crowdys Hill School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion and belief, or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of students will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support students, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Crowdys Hill School we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our students.

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are determined by the local authority. They are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

3. Equal Opportunities for Staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at Crowdys Hill 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.

Employer duties

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 appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or 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;
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

4. Equality and the law

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation from the Disability Equality Duty (2005), Equality Act (2006) and the Equality Act (2010).

Public Sector Equality Duty

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against a student or prospective student by treating them less favourably on the basis of a 'protected characteristic.'

The protected characteristics are:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

A person's age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment, and in regard to the provision for goods and services. It does not however apply to students, and so the school is free to arrange students in classes based on their age group with materials appropriate to them.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty which applies to public bodies, school including both LA maintained and Academies. The school must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the act
- Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a prohibited characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relationships across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard in this context means that when significant decisions are being taken, thought must be given to the equality implications.

4a. Race Equality

The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

4b. Disability

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Strategy.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities.

Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well-recognised”, although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal duties

The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

4c. Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male students and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

4d. Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for students and treatment of students.

4e. Community cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between students from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

5. 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, students and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, parent-school forum meetings or governors' parent-consultation meeting;
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / INSET;
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school (PASS);
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

6. 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 students, and responsive to their needs based on the protected characteristics.

- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of the protected characteristics.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and students.
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability, gender, religion and belief or the fact that they are pregnant or are undergoing gender reassignment.

The role of the headteacher

- It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's Equality Plan and s/he is supported by the governing body in doing so.
- It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching

- All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy and objectives.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the headteacher.
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

7. Tackling discrimination

Harassment or victimisation on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.

Staff and governors should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person"

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably, than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a prohibited act") in connection with the Act. E.g. Making an allegation of discrimination.

Types of discriminatory incident

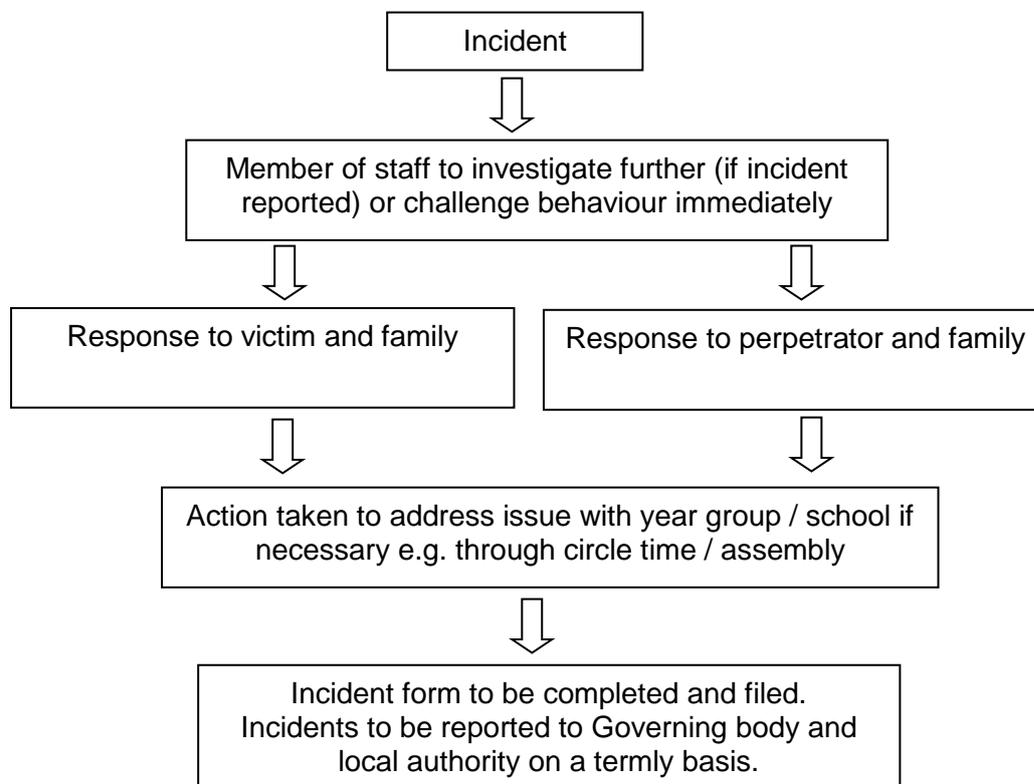
Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and reporting incidents

It should be clear to students and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

A suggested procedure for responding and reporting is outlined below:



8. Review of progress and impact

The objectives have been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality objectives annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on at least a four year cycle.

We make regular assessments of students' learning and use this information to track student progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of students are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

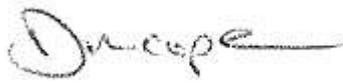
9. Publishing the objectives and demonstrating compliance

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to prepare and publish objectives, we will.

- Publish our information and objectives on the school website;
- Raise awareness of the objectives through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available.

Publication of information in future years should include evidence of the progress made against the objectives set. The information released does not simply have to be statistical data but can for example include minutes from governing body meetings that demonstrates progress.

Signed:



Chair of Governors



Headteacher

To be reviewed on: every four years

Appendix A

ENSURING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

The school will ensure that:

- Student achievement is monitored by race, gender and disability and any trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action to narrow the gap are addressed;
- All staff are aware of the school's Equality Plan;
- The talents of disabled students are recognised and represented in Gifted and Talented programmes, and representation on the programmes fully reflects the school population in terms of race and gender;
- There is an inclusive approach to ensuring all students are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the School Council (by election or co-option); class assemblies; fund raising etc;
- Disabled children can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits and journeys; lunchtime activities; PE and dance and assemblies (with the obvious proviso that their health and safety is also given due regard);
- Extended school activities such as breakfast and after-school clubs take into account student needs and access issues and students attending reflect the diversity of the school population in terms of race, gender, disability and socio-economic status;
- Staff, students, parents and carers will continue to be involved in the future development of the Equality Plan through input and feedback from surveys, staff meetings, school council meetings, parents evenings etc.

The school will provide:

- Extra and additional support for students;
- Additional support for parents of under-achieving children (e.g. reporting progress; discussing needs);

- Additional support for disabled parents/carers and staff to help them to play a full part in the life of the school (e.g. ensuring that meetings are held in the most accessible parts of the school to support wheelchair users).

PROMOTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND MEETING NEEDS

The school will:

- Promote positive images which reflect the diversity of the school and community in terms of race, gender and disability, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials and in classroom/corridor display.
- Actively seek to recruit disabled people to the school and support them in their work and career development, and try to reflect the diversity of the school community in its workforce;
- Actively seek to recruit disabled people to the governing body and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can fully participate and contribute;
- Provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools and communities;
- Provide extended services, with opportunities for students, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups;
- Supporting disabled students in the period of transition between primary and secondary school to ease the stress of moving and increase familiarity with new surroundings;
- Helping children and young people to understand others and value diversity;
- Promoting shared values, awareness of human rights and how to apply and defend them;
- Developing skills of participation and responsible action – for example through the new ‘Identity and Diversity: living together in the UK’ strand of citizenship education.

ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The school will:

- Develop and adapt its procedures on anti-bullying to include equality perspectives;
- Support staff to challenge and address any bullying and harassment that is based on a person's race, gender or ethnicity;
- Keep a record and report how these incidents are dealt with to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis;
- Review its approach to race, gender and disability bullying and harassment whenever it reviews its policy on behaviour.

MONITORING IMPACT

- The school will collect and analyse evidence and data on children's achievement, attendance and participation by race, gender and disability, and use this to inform strategies to raise achievement;
- The governing body will report annually on the effectiveness and success of its Equality Plan. We will place the report alongside the plan on our website.

Racial Equality

Target	Action	Person/s Responsible	Success Criteria
To continue to develop our approach towards enhancing and supporting racial equality issues.	To review, develop and monitor the Equality Scheme to meet the requirements of legislation (1, 2 & 3)	HT/DH, EMA team & Goves	New reviewed scheme produced and monitored in July 2013. <i>(Gove's Curriculum Student and Staffing c'tee)</i>
	To monitor incidents of racial harassment by:		
	i) Completing the LA reporting system when incidents occur. (1)	HT & all staff	Incidents of racial harassment are managed in line with the school's racial harassment policy. Monitoring of data shows that incidents of racial harassment reduce. <i>(Gove's Curriculum, Student and Staffing c'tee)</i>
	ii) Completing monthly data returns. (1)	HT	Evidence of EMA students making good progress. <i>(HT)</i>
	To include within our annual assessment data pack date on G students academic progress. (2)	DH	Increased evidence of resources from the local ethnic minority community being used. <i>(HT)</i>
	To make fuller use of the resources available within the local ethnic minority community. (3)	All staff	DH has the opportunity to benefit from training being offered by EMA team <i>(HT)</i>
	Offer training opportunities to the member of staff co-ordinating EMA issues. (1, 2 & 3)	DH + DH	

General Duty to promote Racial Equality

1 = Meets part 1: Eliminating unlawful discrimination; 2 = Meets part 2: Promoting equality of opportunity & 3 = Meets part 3: Promoting good relations between people of different racial groups

Racial Equality

Target	Action	Person/s Responsible	Success Criteria
<p>To continue to develop our approach towards enhancing and supporting racial equality issues.</p>	<p>To ensure that appointment and recruitment procedures pay due regard in a non discriminatory way to the issue of racial equality. (1 & 2)</p> <p>To ensure that any incident of racist bullying is dealt with promptly and the outcomes of actions shared with student and parents – or staff if an incident of staff bullying. (1 & 3)</p>	<p>Govs + HT</p> <p>All staff, HT + DH EMA team + Govs + Professional Associations</p> <p>DH + EMA team + Other staff</p>	<p>The school fulfils the LA monitoring requirements for appointments. Applicants are not discriminated on the basis of their race or cultural background.</p> <p>HT reports on racist incident trends via the Headteacher’s report to governors in terms 2, 4 & 6. If trends were a cause of concern additional expert advice is sought. (<i>Governing Body</i>)</p>

Disability Equality

Target	Action	Person/s Responsible	Success Criteria
<p>To continue to develop our approach towards enhancing and supporting disability equality issues.</p>	<p>To review, develop and monitor the Equality Scheme to meet the requirements of the legislation</p>	<p>HT, DH, DH & Govs</p>	<p>A new reviewed scheme produced and monitored in July 2013. <i>(Govs Curriculum, Student and Staffing c'tee)</i></p>
	<p>To undertake an accessibility plan identifying the deficits in the school's existing building for those with physical impairments.</p>	<p>HT + DH</p>	<p>Audit completed with suggestions shared with LA and Governors. <i>(Gov Finance and Premises C'tee)</i></p>
	<p>To ensure appointment and recruitment procedures pay due regard in a non discriminatory way to the issue of disability.</p>	<p>HT & Govs</p>	<p>The school fulfils the LA monitoring requirements for appointments. Applicants are not discriminated on the basis of their disability. <i>(Govs Staffing and Students C'tee)</i></p>
	<p>To offer students access to role models who promote positive images of disability</p>	<p>All Staff</p>	<p>Role models with disabilities seen in school via theatre groups and other opportunities. <i>(HT)</i></p>
	<p>To ensure that special arrangements are made available in accreditation situations for those students whose disability would warrant such provision</p>	<p>All staff, Exam Officer, Exam Boards & EP</p>	<p>Special arrangements operate successfully allowing students to access accreditation opportunities. <i>(HT)</i></p>

Target	Action	Person/s Responsible	Success Criteria
<p>To continue to develop our approach towards enhancing and supporting gender equality issues.</p>	<p>To review, develop and monitor the Equality Scheme to meet the requirements of legislation</p>	<p>HT, DH, DH & Govs</p>	<p>New reviewed scheme produced and monitored in July 2012. <i>(Govs Curriculum, Student and Staffing c'tee)</i></p>
	<p>To ensure that appointment and recruitment procedures pay due regard in a non discriminatory way to the issue of gender equality.</p>	<p>HT & Govs</p>	<p>The school fulfils the LA monitoring requirements for appointments. Applicants are not discriminated on the basis of their gender or sexual orientation. <i>(Govs Curriculum, Staffing and Students C'tee)</i></p>
	<p>To include within our annual assessment data pack a breakdown of academic progress by gender. Using this to analyse why differences might be occurring.</p>	<p>DH</p>	<p>Data identifies trends by gender. This data in turn shaping future action plan design. <i>(HT)</i></p>
	<p>To termly monitor incidents of behaviour and exclusion to ensure that there is no evidence of gender discrimination.</p>	<p>DH</p>	<p>No evidence of gender discrimination in the management of behaviour. If there were interventions put in place to address. <i>(HT)</i></p>

Target	Action	Person/s Responsible	Success Criteria
<p>To continue to develop our approach towards enhancing and supporting racial equality issues</p>	<p>To ensure that any incident of bullying that stems from gender differences or is of a homophobic nature is dealt with promptly and the outcomes of actions shared with student and parents – or staff if it is an instance of staff bullying.</p> <p>To clarify support procedures for students who have issues around gender identity or sexual orientation. This should include identifying local support groups and devising a guidance sheet for staff. (This has been done via pastoral support but clearer guidelines would clearly assist.)</p>	<p>HT, DH, DH + all staff + Professional Associations+ Governors</p> <p>HT/DH + TAMHS where appropriate</p>	<p>No incidents of gender or sexual orientation based bullying recorded or evidence of successful interventions where these occur. <i>(HT)</i></p> <p>A guidance leaflet on supporting students with gender identity or sexual orientation issues is produced. <i>(HT)</i></p>

4. The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum
- Equal Opportunities
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Staff Development
- Health & Safety (including off-site safety)
- Special Needs
- Behaviour Management
- School Improvement Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- School Brochure and Mission Statement

- Teaching and Learning

5. The Action Plan for physical accessibility relates to the Access Audit of the School. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this first Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The audit will need to be revisited prior to the end of each first three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for the following period.
6. The School's complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.
7. The Plan will be monitored by both governing body committees – each committee focusing on issues pertinent to their brief. Additionally, a governors strategic working party may also monitor progress with issues of a more strategic nature.
8. The school will work in partnership with the local authority in developing and implementing this plan.
9. The Plan will be monitored by Ofsted as part of their inspection cycle.

Crowdys Hill School Accessibility Plan
Improving Curriculum Access

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement
School Self Evaluation processes to monitor that the curriculum is accessible to all	Lesson observations, student pursuits, learning walk and work scrutiny.	Evidence that students are accessing the curriculum in a way that caters for their individual needs.	Throughout the year	Evidence that students with a range of learning needs are having appropriate curriculum experiences.
All out-of-school activities are planned to ensure the participation of the whole range of students	Review all out-of-school provision to ensure compliance with legislation	All out-of-school activities will be conducted in an inclusive environment with providers that comply with all current and future legislative requirements	Throughout the year	Increase in access to all school activities for all disabled students
Classrooms are optimally organised to promote the participation and independence of all students	Review and implement a preferred layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning process in individual class bases	Lessons start on time without the need to make adjustments to accommodate the needs of individual students	Ongoing	All pupils have access.
Ensure a range of learning aids are available that support students with disabilities to access the curriculum	Seek advice from key borough advisers, consultants and therapists on learning aids to support curriculum access	Students whose needs determine that extra learning aids are available receive such a provision.	Ongoing	Students with disabilities enhance their curriculum access as a result of having appropriate learning aids.

Improving the accessibility of information

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME	ACHIEVEMENT
Availability of written material in alternative formats	The school will make itself aware of the services available through the LA for converting written information into alternative formats.	The school will be able to provide written information in different formats when required for individual purposes	Ongoing	Delivery of information to disabled students improved
Make available school brochures, school newsletters and other information for parents in alternative formats – particularly the website which enables parents to increase screen and font size	Review all current school publications and promote the availability in different formats for those that require it	All school information available for all	Updated as required	Delivery of school information to parents and the local community improved

Appendix E – Community Cohesion Policy

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

1. Introduction

The curriculum of our school should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our students and of society and prepare our students 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 student populations of some schools reflect this diversity, allowing students to mix with those from different backgrounds. Our school population does not reflect the cultural diversity of many urban communities and we will need to establish a range of additional opportunities in order to give our students the chance to mix with and learn with, from and about those from different backgrounds.

We wish to show that through their ethos and curriculum schools can promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing students how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

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

2. 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 students it serves, their families and the school's 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.

In addition, schools themselves create communities – for example, the networks formed we make as part of the borough's network of special schools.

3. What can we do to promote community cohesion?

3.1 How does our school contribute towards community cohesion?

All schools, whatever the mix of students they serve, are responsible for equipping those students to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds. However schools that are riven by divisions are less likely to perform well.

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

In the light of the new duty we need to consider how different aspects of our work already support integration and community harmony; to take stock of what has worked well so far. We also need to consider where there may be scope to improve their existing work through a more explicit focus on the impact of their activities on community cohesion.

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

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – to teach students 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.

3.2 What do we need to consider in promoting community cohesion?

We need to consider what activities already take place within the school and what might be arranged in cooperation with other schools.

In addition, we will want to consider the duty to promote well-being as some of the work and activities that support community cohesion can also contribute towards improving life chance outcomes

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 students' 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.

We need to ensure:

- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help students to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in PSHCE classes for students to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.
- A programme of curriculum based activities whereby students' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.
- Support for students who come from cultural backgrounds that are under-represented within the school's student population.
- An effective voice and involvement of students 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 students from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that students are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential.

The school tracking systems will enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.

We need to maintain our efforts to monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment. Monitoring of whether students from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others should be accompanied by appropriate behaviour and discipline policies in place to deal with this.

Engagement and ethos

School to school: We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We shall look either locally or further afield and the means of developing the relationship may be through exchange visits or more likely through the internet.

Sharing facilities also provides a means for students to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama.

School to parents and the community: Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

- Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the students, ensuring that the student voice is heard and able to effect change.
- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals.
- Engagement with parents through social events, curriculum evenings, parents evenings, annual reviews and other contact as appropriate.
- Provision of extended services, and in particular bringing parents together from different backgrounds through parenting and family support and community use of facilities.