ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Equality Objectives

2026-2029

“Let Your Light Shine”

NURTURE	ASPIRE	COMPASSION	EMPOWER
Every child known, supported and ready to flourish.	Every child developing curiosity, confidence and ambition.	A community that notices, includes, serves and acts.	Children, staff and families developing agency, voice and capacity.

Everyone is precious and loved by God.

Our commitment to equality

At St Mary’s, equality is rooted in our Christian vision: everyone is precious and loved by God. We believe that every member of our community has inherent dignity and should be able to belong, participate, learn and flourish. Our equality work therefore goes beyond compliance. It is expressed through the way we know and support children, the ambition of our curriculum, the compassion with which we respond to need, and the agency and voice we develop in pupils, staff and families.

Our objectives are informed by what we know about our pupils, families and community. They are intended to remove barriers, challenge stereotypes and discrimination, strengthen belonging and ensure that pupils who may be more vulnerable to inequality are deliberately supported.

Objective 1: Equality, safety and healthy relationships

Over the next three years, we will strengthen pupils’ understanding of healthy, respectful relationships, with particular attention to ensuring that girls develop a strong sense of personal agency, equality and the right to feel safe.

Linked values: NURTURE • COMPASSION • EMPOWER

Nurture means that every child is known and supported. We recognise that children do not leave their experiences at the school gate. Some pupils may have witnessed or been exposed to conflict, aggression or physical violence, and this can influence their understanding of relationships and what they perceive to be normal or acceptable.

Compassion calls us to notice, include, serve and act. We want pupils to recognise the dignity of others, understand that violence, coercion and controlling behaviour are not acceptable, and know that seeking help for themselves or another person is a positive action.

Empower is particularly important for girls. We want girls to develop agency, voice and confidence in their own worth and rights. They should understand that healthy relationships are based on equality and respect, be able to recognise behaviour that is unsafe or controlling, and know that their voice will be heard when they speak.

Why we have chosen this objective

Our knowledge of our pupils and families tells us that some children have experience of, or exposure to, relationships in which conflict and physical violence may be present. We are mindful that witnessing violence can influence children's understanding of relationships, power, gender and what behaviour they come to regard as normal. We are particularly attentive to the experiences of girls and to our responsibility to challenge gender stereotypes, misogyny, controlling behaviour and the normalisation of violence, while ensuring that support is sensitive to individual children and does not define them by their experiences.

To achieve this objective we will

- Ensure the curriculum explicitly teaches healthy and respectful relationships, appropriate boundaries, consent, equality and personal safety at an age-appropriate level.
- Challenge gender stereotypes and attitudes that excuse, minimise or normalise aggression, coercion or violence.
- Use literature, PSHE/RSHE, collective worship and wider curriculum opportunities to provide positive models of relationships and female agency.
- Ensure girls have meaningful opportunities for leadership, voice and decision-making across school life.
- Develop pupils' vocabulary for recognising and communicating when relationships or behaviour make them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Ensure staff understand the potential impact on children of witnessing domestic abuse and other forms of violence and respond sensitively and consistently.
- Maintain effective pastoral and safeguarding pathways and work appropriately with families and external agencies where additional support is required.

We will know we are making progress when

- Pupil voice demonstrates increasingly secure understanding of respectful and healthy relationships.
- Girls report feeling safe, listened to and able to seek help.
- Pupils can identify inappropriate or controlling behaviour and know trusted adults to whom they can speak.
- Curriculum monitoring demonstrates that equality, healthy relationships and positive female representation are deliberately and progressively taught.
- Safeguarding and pastoral monitoring shows that pupils affected by violence or harmful relationships are identified and supported appropriately.

Objective 2: Representation, identity and belonging

Over the next three years, we will continue to develop a curriculum in which pupils encounter a rich and authentic range of people, cultures, histories, experiences and perspectives, enabling every child to see themselves represented while learning about lives beyond their own.

Linked values: NURTURE • ASPIRE • COMPASSION

Nurture means that children experience a genuine sense of belonging. Seeing their heritage, culture, family and identity treated with dignity within school communicates that they are known and valued.

Aspire means broadening horizons. An ambitious curriculum should take children beyond what they already know, introducing them to people, ideas, achievements and experiences that challenge assumptions, build curiosity and expand their understanding of what is possible.

Compassion requires children to learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own. Representation is therefore not only about seeing oneself in the curriculum; it is also about encountering difference, developing empathy, challenging stereotypes and learning to live well alongside others.

Why we have chosen this objective

The school has already undertaken significant work to improve the diversity of core texts and curriculum content. Our next stage is to ensure that representation is embedded across subjects and year groups rather than dependent upon individual texts or isolated events, and that pupils encounter both mirrors of their own lives and windows into the experiences of others.

To achieve this objective we will

- Review curriculum content and core texts across subjects for representation, balance and authenticity.
- Ensure pupils encounter people of different races, cultures, religions and beliefs, sexes, disabilities and family experiences as an integral part of the curriculum.
- Continue to invest intentionally in high-quality literature by a diverse range of authors and illustrators.
- Identify and challenge stereotypes, including gender stereotypes, through curriculum planning and classroom discussion.
- Use pupil voice to explore whether children feel represented, respected and able to belong.
- Ensure displays, resources, visitors and wider school experiences reinforce the diversity and dignity of our community and wider society.

We will know we are making progress when

- Curriculum reviews show deliberate and coherent representation across subjects and year groups.
- Pupils can talk confidently and respectfully about difference and demonstrate curiosity about experiences beyond their own.
- Pupil voice indicates that children recognise themselves and their communities within school life and the curriculum.
- Monitoring identifies fewer gaps or stereotypical patterns in texts, examples, resources and wider opportunities.

Objective 3: Equitable participation, opportunity and voice

Over the next three years, we will identify and reduce barriers that prevent pupils from participating fully in the academic, social and wider life of the school, with particular attention to pupils experiencing disadvantage and those with additional needs.

Linked values: NURTURE • ASPIRE • EMPOWER

Nurture requires us to know children well enough to recognise the barriers they face. These may be financial, social, emotional, physical, linguistic or connected with SEND. Support should therefore respond to individual need rather than assuming that every child starts from the same position.

Aspire means that disadvantage or additional need must not lead to diminished expectations. All pupils should experience an ambitious curriculum and have access to the wider experiences of school life, including trips, clubs, leadership, sport, music and enrichment.

Empower means ensuring that children and families are not simply recipients of support. Their voices should influence decisions affecting them. We want pupils to develop increasing confidence, independence and agency, while families are enabled to participate fully in their children's education.

Why we have chosen this objective

We know that equal treatment does not always result in equal access. Pupils and families may experience different barriers to participation, and these can affect access to learning, enrichment, leadership and wider school life. Our aim is to identify those barriers early and respond deliberately so that background, disadvantage or additional need does not unnecessarily restrict participation or ambition.

To achieve this objective we will

- Monitor participation in clubs, trips, music, sport, leadership and enrichment to identify groups that are under-represented.
- Use reasonable adjustments and targeted support so pupils with SEND can participate as fully as possible in curriculum and wider opportunities.
- Identify financial and practical barriers for families and use school resources, external support and signposting appropriately.
- Ensure pupil and parent voice informs decisions about barriers, access and the support offered.
- Maintain high expectations for pupils experiencing disadvantage and those with additional needs, while providing the support needed to access those expectations.
- Review access to digital resources, home learning and communication so that families are not excluded by technology, language or confidence.

We will know we are making progress when

- Participation data shows increasingly equitable access to wider school opportunities.
- Pupil voice indicates that pupils with additional needs and those experiencing disadvantage feel included and able to contribute.
- Reasonable adjustments are evident in planning and practice and enable pupils to participate rather than simply be present.
- Families report that communication and support are accessible and help them engage with school life.
- School monitoring shows that identified barriers lead to timely action and review.

Our statutory duty

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, schools must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In the school context, the relevance of individual characteristics varies according to the duty and the age of pupils, but our commitment is to dignity, fairness and belonging for all members of our community.

We will publish these objectives and review progress regularly. Evidence will include curriculum and safeguarding monitoring, participation information, pupil and family voice, and evaluation through the School Development Plan and governing body oversight.