

## Equality Information 2022-23

### Introduction

St Michael's CE Aided School is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and with respect as we want our school to be a safe and inspiring learning environment for all our pupils. St Michael's School recognises that people have different needs and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating everyone the same. St Michael's School creates inclusive processes and practices where the varying needs of individuals can be identified and met.

This document explains how we show our commitment to equality<sup>1</sup> for our school population and how we plan to tackle inequalities that may have impact at school.

### Celebrating our Successes

St Michael's School recognises that from time to time pupils need additional support to manage the impact of life's up and downs and so has two trained Emotional Literacy Support assistants (ELSAs) who receive regular training and provide invaluable support to vulnerable pupils. We respond rapidly to emerging situations to ensure children feel safe and valued. We also have a play therapist and a children's counsellor who work with individual children in school.

Our Forest School programme is available to all children. In Reception, children attend weekly sessions whilst, in KS1, children attend a weekly afternoon session, three out of six terms. In KS2, children attend a weekly afternoon session for six weeks. We also provide two smaller, weekly Forest School sessions for our most vulnerable children, led by a trained forest school leader with an ELSA qualification as well as further training in counselling and mental health first aid.

To further promote healthy minds and healthy bodies, all children in KS1 and KS2 run a daily mile. Furthermore, the physical well-being of pupils is encouraged through high-quality PE provision.

### Priorities for the Year 2022/23

During the pandemic, most external national assessment has been paused, and as a result, we are still drawing on 2019 data.

### Sex (Gender) – Boys and Girls

The underachievement of boys compared with girls persists both nationally and in Wiltshire. In Wiltshire, the attainment gap was marginally under 8 percentage points in 2019, with 68% of girls achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined, compared to 60% of boys.

In Wiltshire, the sex (girls/boys) attainment gap for the 'major' ethnic category 'All Black Pupils' was larger at 10 percentage points with 62.7% of girls and 52.6% of boys achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Two thirds of the gender gap in achieving the expected standard in reading at age eleven is attributable to the fact that boys have lower levels of language and attention at age five.

St Michael’s School knows that intervention targeting early language and attention has the potential for improving outcomes for all children. Boys benefit from such interventions because they are more likely to have these problems to begin with. <sup>iii</sup>

In 2019, at the end of key stage 2, the school closed the gender gap with boys and girls performing equally in reading, writing and maths at the expected and above level.

In 2022, at the end of key stage 2, boys and girls performed differently as follows:

	Reading		Writing		Maths	
	School	National	School	National	School	National
Boys	75%	70%	81%	63%	88%	72%
Girls	80%	80%	87%	76%	80%	71%

### Minority Ethnic Pupils

Many minority ethnic groups of pupils do well both in Wiltshire and nationally but there are also groups where underachievement persists. Underachievement for the groups highlighted in this report are a national as well as a Wiltshire concern and have been an ongoing issue since ethnic monitoring was introduced.

Very small numbers of minority ethnic pupils in St Michael’s School mean that individual pupil-targeted approaches must be used to identify both underachievement, and to celebrate successes. LA and national attainment data provides a valuable source of information to identify potential areas of concern.

When and as appropriate, St Michael’s School works closely with the LA to implement proven strategies to raise attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups during the primary school years.

Our curriculum, teaching, policies and practices are regularly reviewed and updated. The Black Lives Matter movement has provided a new impetus to this important work. World events have highlighted issues where a belief in equality may either not be shared or perhaps not passed on to our young people explicitly enough. We use the Jigsaw scheme of work to explicitly teach children about racism. This helps teachers and children realise that they have a role to play in forming a better society for now and in the future.

### Gypsy/Roma/Traveller Pupils

Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller pupils are the lowest achieving ethnic groups.

In Wiltshire, just under 18% of Gypsy/Roma pupils achieved the expected standard. <sup>ii</sup> While the overwhelming majority of Wiltshire Gypsy/Roma/Traveller pupils choose to attend primary school until the end of Year 6, it remains a concern that a majority of Wiltshire Gypsy and Traveller families choose to home educate their children during the secondary school years. <sup>ii</sup>

A House of Commons Briefing Paper (September 2017) reported that education issues for Gypsies and Travellers include prejudice, discrimination and discriminatory attitudes. The issues also include the schools’ responses to discrimination, and high levels of self-exclusion from mainstream education because of discrimination. <sup>iv</sup>

National research published in 2018 suggests there has been a significant increase in the number of Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller children who are being cared for by local councils. The data shows an increase of 900% for the numbers of Gypsy/Roma children and 400% for Irish Traveller children since 2009. One of the reasons suggested is that Gypsy/Roma and Traveller families are less likely to be offered or to access early help and support and this is important as it is an area in which schools are able to help. <sup>v</sup>

### **English as an Additional Language**

In Wiltshire schools, the same proportion, 64%, of pupils for whom English is known to be their first language and those for whom it is an additional language achieved the expected standard in 2019. <sup>ii</sup>

It should be noted that children with EAL have widely varying levels of English proficiency. Some children are new to English and some are fluently multilingual. Attainment is also affected by first language; for example, there are significant differences between Tamil and Chinese speakers, who, on average, perform better than Pashto and Turkish speakers.

In addition, prior education and arrival time in English medium education impacts on attainment. <sup>vi</sup> The Wiltshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service advise on best practice for individual pupils to ensure those most vulnerable to poor attainment are to fulfil their academic potential.

### **Faith and Belief**

St Michael's School recognises how important faith and belief can be as part of a young person's developing identity, whether this relates to a specific faith or belief, or whether this relates to wider belief systems, morals and ethics.

St Michael's School is committed to supporting all our young people as they develop a personal relationship with their own values and beliefs, and to supporting, in the context of the Human Rights agenda, the role this plays in the moral and ethical choices they make in life.

St Michael's School takes incidents of prejudice-related bullying seriously and is committed to working closely with parents/carers to create a school environment which is nurturing, friendly and supportive for all our children. Our school has established a procedure for recording all incidents of prejudice-based bullying, and this includes bullying related to religion and belief. Comments from young people about bullying include the following, "Encourage and celebrate difference – don't single us out if we are different, have difficulties, or have different beliefs and views", the Wiltshire Anti-Bullying Charter. <https://www.wiltshirehealthyschools.org/core-themes/emotional-health-and-wellbeing/anti-bullying-practice/> St Michael's School is vigilant in maintaining an awareness of, and appropriate responses to, this possibility. St Michael's School is aware that negative faith-based media attention can have an impact on all children, and recognises the importance of ensuring that pupils are provided with accurate and appropriate information.

St Michael's School ensures that all pupils gain knowledge of and respect for different faiths as part of our role to prepare pupils for modern life in a diverse Britain. As part of our RE curriculum, pupils learn about different faiths, religious festivals and learn from religious representatives from various communities.

St Michael's School recognises that discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief is a global concern. We are aware that Islamophobia and anti-Semitism (discrimination or prejudice against people because they are Muslim or Jewish) is increasing and that it displays many of the same traits as racism.

St Michael's School will continue its work to inform and actively promote acceptance and respect. Nationally, between 2015/6 and 2016/7 there was an increase of 37 per cent in the numbers of faith or belief-based incidents reported to the Police either on school property or near to school property. <sup>vii</sup> 11% of Islamophobic incidents happen in educational institutions <sup>viii</sup>, including name-calling, jibes about so-called Islamic State, violence, and victimisation when wearing a hijab <sup>ix</sup>. Many Muslim young people say abuse is so commonplace and it is normalised <sup>x</sup>. Childline has recorded a spike in race- and faith-based bullying with victims reporting that they feel isolated, withdrawn and lack self-esteem <sup>xi</sup>.

## Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation (LGBT)

Gender Identity remains a relatively new area for schools but this Protected Characteristic identifies a small section of society as vulnerable to discrimination and inequality. Gender Identity was included in equality legislation for the first time in 2010, and many schools, parents, as well as wider society, are learning about the issues for the first time.

Schools in Wiltshire access expert advice and support from the LA, as well as exchanging best practice with other schools. St Michael's School recognises that Gender Identity is a complex area and that children, young people and their families are navigating an equality area where best practice is not fixed, and where the central advice is to be 'led by the child'.

St Michael's School is committed to ensuring that all our children feel safe while at school and that each child is given the chance to develop their unique identity with support from teaching and support staff, and their peers. Pupils are taught that families come in many different forms and include single-parent; grandparent-led; same-sex parents; step-families; foster families; families who have adopted children; etc.

Our pupils understand that although families can be very different, what matters is that everyone in a family loves and cares for each other.

St Michael's School recognises that negative views within wider society about LGBT+ <sup>xiv</sup> people can have a detrimental effect on pupil wellbeing. Data from Childline and anecdotal information from CAMHS (serving Wiltshire children) show that increasing numbers of children in primary schools are raising issues relating to gender identity and sexual orientation. Gender Identity and sexual orientation are not mental health concerns but many of the referrals received by CAMHS for young people with issues related to their gender identity or sexual orientation are linked to bullying, isolation and internalised negative views about LGBT+ people, that in turn impacts on their emotional and mental health. St Michael's School recognises that pupils with these issues will need support from school-based counsellors/school support groups and national websites such as Young Minds. CAMHS is encouraging of primary schools who can provide such support to their pupils, as dealing effectively with these issues at a younger age appears to reduce the more serious mental health issues presented by some LGBT+ secondary school pupils.

There are many charitable organisations providing support on gender identity to young people, their families and to their schools. There are also organisations able to provide advice and support where a pupil has a parent who is transgender. The LA has up to date information about the different organisations, the services they provide and how to contact them and is available to advise.

St Michael's School has benefited from the work undertaken by the Church of England and published in the document "*Valuing All God's Children*".<sup>xv</sup> This excellent document provides a framework that helps our school to address all issues of bullying behaviour and discriminatory language, and includes homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

When discussing similarity and difference in Jigsaw lessons, children learn about a whole range of differences, such as difference in physical appearance and personality, likes and dislikes, and that people can have differences of opinion. This helps them to understand that we are all unique human beings. Within the context of these lessons they will also be introduced to different cultures and ethnicities, people with different religions and beliefs, and about people with disability or special needs. They will also be aware that some people are LGBTQ. When discussing any differences between people, Jigsaw helps teach children to form opinions about others based on whether they are kind, law-abiding, respectful, trustworthy, and responsible people, rather than judging them on appearance or whether a particular aspect of their lifestyle is different to their own.

Children also learn about discrimination and prejudice including racism, sexism, and ageism. The Jigsaw Puzzle (unit), 'Celebrating Difference' helps children to understand that difference does not need to be feared but can be a source of celebration. This supports schools with their obligation to align with the Equality Act 2010.

### **Disability (Special Educational Needs and Disability)**

SEN pupils are categorised as 'SEN with a statement or Education, health and care (EHC) plan' and 'SEN support'. In Wiltshire in 2019, 16% of pupils at the end of key stage 2 had a special educational need and 4% had a statement or education, health and care plan. <sup>ii</sup>

Of all reported characteristics, pupils with SEN have the largest attainment gap when compared to those without any identified SEN. <sup>ii</sup> In 2019, 25.6% of Wiltshire pupils with SEN support reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, compared with 75% of Wiltshire pupils with no identified SEN, resulting in an attainment gap of 49 percentage points. <sup>ii</sup>

St Michael's School is required to publish information on the attainment of SEN pupils. The focus of this section of this Equality Information document is disability.

In the UK, 8% of children are disabled as defined under the Equality Act 2010. Shockingly, but unsurprisingly, a disabled person with a degree is still no more likely to be in work than a non-disabled person whose highest qualification is at GCSE. Societal attitude and stereotyping are likely to be a factor.

At St Michael's School, we welcome all children including children with disabilities. Our approach is to be fully inclusive and to build strong relationships with the families to enable children to fully enjoy the life of the school.

### **SEND pupils and the link with poverty**

St Michael's School is aware that there is a strong link between poverty and disabilities that negatively impact on educational attainment. <sup>xvi</sup> Children from low-income families are more likely than their peers to be born with inherited special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), are more likely to develop some forms of SEND in childhood. Also, children with SEND are more likely than their peers to be born into poverty, and, in addition, more likely to experience poverty as they grow up.

St Michael's School, as part of its support for disadvantaged pupils, has made the achievement of pupils with SEND a whole school priority and is supported with expert advice from our SEND education specialists. St Michael's School also knows that a strong partnership with parents/carers is important, and will continue to work collaboratively to support parents/carers as they seek to provide their children with a stimulating home-learning environment.

### **Pupils with Mental Health Concerns**

There is an increasing understanding of the negative impact of social, emotional, and mental health difficulties (SEMH) on the educational attainment of pupils. The incorporation of mental health into the Equality Act 2010 has helped to highlight this important issue. <sup>i</sup>

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated pressures on young people that can lead to poorer mental health. We are aware that worries about the virus, the affect of illness and bereavement within families and isolation caused by lock downs and partial school closures will have negatively impacted the mental health of some of our pupils over the past two years. As a school, we are working hard to support pupil's wellbeing and to understand and address their mental health needs.

## EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Schools are required to update their published Equality Information each year, and in addition, must have at least one Equality Objective that the school can focus and work on for a period of up to four years.

Our objectives are

### 1. Equality Objective: Gender

- St Michael's School is committed to helping every child develop into self-confident young people able to access all opportunities available to them. St Michael's School recognises that a small minority of children do not feel they fit neatly into society's views of boy-gender and girl-gender.
- St Michael's School will:
  - Ensure all our children thrive and achieve to the best of their ability and that gender stereotypes are minimised e.g. in the case of activities, toys, musical instruments or subjects that may be considered more girl or boy appropriate (an example of this might be that girls might be considered better at literacy and boys at maths)
  - Ensure that all our children can be who they are without the introduction of unnecessary gender constraints or limitations
  - Educate our children about negative language that may isolate and demean vulnerable pupils e.g. transphobic language
  - Continue to ensure that our pupils feel able to wear a school uniform that best reflects them i.e. the choice of a dress, skirt, trousers, leggings, jogging bottoms or shorts

### 2. Equality Objective: Disability/SEND

- St Michael's School recognises the importance of addressing pupil mental health and wellbeing as part of our commitment to preventing mental health difficulties that may start in childhood but have a greater impact in adult life.
- St Michael's School is committed to addressing all issues of bullying behaviour and discriminatory language. We are aware that social media and on-line gaming exposes children to language that describes people in a negative way. St Michael's School understands the impact of these words and has therefore decided that one of our new Equality Objectives will be to educate our pupils about discriminatory language, whether face-to-face or over social media, to ensure all our pupils understand why some words should not be used.

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<sup>i</sup> The Equality Act 2010 and Schools

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315587/Equality\\_Act\\_Advice\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/key-stage-2-and-multi-academy-trust-performance-2019-revised>

<sup>iii</sup> Understanding the Gender Gap in Literacy and Language Development: Professor Gemma Moss and Dr Liz Washbrook, University of Bristol 2016 <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/education/documents/bristol-working-papers-in-education/Understanding%20the%20Gender%20Gap%20working%20paper.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Gypsies and Travellers, House of Commons Briefing Paper Number 08083, 28 September 2017 <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8083/CBP-8083.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> The Fragility of Professional Competence, A Preliminary Account of Child Protection Practice with Romani and Traveller Children in England, January 2018, University of Salford, Manchester <http://usir.salford.ac.uk/46146/1/the-fragility-of-professional-competence-january-2018.pdf>

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<sup>vi</sup> Educational Outcomes for Pupils who have English as an Additional Language: The Education Policy Institute, The Bell Foundation, Unbound Philanthropy by Jo Hutchinson, Director for Social Mobility and Vulnerable Learners (February 2018) <https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/research-report/educational-outcomes-of-children-with-english-as-an-additional-language/>

<sup>vii</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> Tell Mama, 2017

<sup>ix</sup> NSPCC, 2018

<sup>x</sup> British Youth Council, 2016

<sup>xi</sup> NSPCC, 2018

<sup>xiv</sup> Stonewall School Report, 2017, The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans Pupils in Britain's Schools <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>

<sup>xv</sup> Valuing All God's Children, 2017, [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%27s%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%27s%20Report_0.pdf)

<sup>xvi</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Special Education Needs and their Links to Poverty, 26 February 2016 <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/special-educational-needs-and-their-links-poverty>