

Gender Equality Scheme

Vision and values

The Equality Act 2006 places on all schools a duty to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender. Barnes Primary School's commitment to gender equality is rooted in our ethos of promoting equalities and valuing the individuality of every child and adult in our school. This includes a determination to challenge discrimination in all its forms.

School context

Barnes Primary School is committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest standards. This includes recognising, where appropriate, the different needs of girls, boys, women and men, and ensuring that these are addressed. Within this ethos of achievement, the school does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment and homophobic bullying.

Gender balance in classes

When children join the school in reception class care is given when class allocations are made to ensure an appropriate balance between boys and girls, whilst at the same time considering friendship requests from parents pre-entry. In our school the gender balance is also considered when pupils are organised into groups.

Gender balance in the workforce

Whilst the majority of the workforce at the school are female, we are pleased to have a reasonable number of men on the staff. We believe that children benefit from having a reasonable mix of male and female role models.

Other school policies

The Gender Equality Scheme fits in with the school's core values and ethos, and with other school policies. A number of policies potentially impact on areas relating to gender, for example the anti-bullying policy, the behaviour policy and the sex and relationships education policy. As school policies are revised and updated, or new policies introduced, they will be reviewed to consider if there are any gender equality considerations that should be incorporated.

Aims of the Scheme

Barnes Primary School seeks to promote gender equality in all aspects of its work, including

- teaching and learning
- policy development
- school ethos
- partnership with parents, carers and the community

- curriculum

The school also aims to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination in its role as an employer, including

- recruitment, retention and promotion
- training and career advancement
- equal pay
- challenging sexual harassment and homophobia

Key Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Gender Equality Scheme is implemented

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- implementing the Scheme
- analysing pupil performance data and looking carefully for any disparities between the performance of boys and girls
- sharing findings from data with the school's Leadership Team and looking for proactive ways to address any findings that require action
- ensuring all staff have access to appropriate training on gender equality issues and are provided with strategies to narrow any achievement gaps that are identified
- raising the achievement of lower performing boys and girls

The Head Teacher has responsibility for gender equality and will consult with stakeholders by

- ensuring Key Stage teams review school policy and practice and form a gender equality perspective in all practice
- communicating clearly to all members of the school community about any gender equality issues that are identified. For example: through phase meetings and school newsletters

Teachers are expected to:

- have high expectations of both genders in terms of behaviour, standards of work and presentation
- refrain from making inappropriate comments that might lower pupils' expectations or become self-fulfilling prophecies (for example, '*boys will be boys*')
- avoid gender bias in, for example:
 - allocation of groups for practical activities and rotas for classroom duties
 - teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction
- Promote gender equality in the classroom, for example by:

- consideration of size and composition of pairings and groups according to task, including mixed or single sex groups within subject areas for a specific educational purpose
- refraining from having 'bottom groups' that consist predominantly of one gender
- positively involving quiet and less confident girls and boys
- involving pupils in discussions about gender
- challenging stereotypes and promoting positive gender images.

Teaching and Learning

Barnes Primary School encourages a flexible range of learning and teaching styles, including those that are known to be key features of all children's achievement, regardless of gender, by:

- providing a broad and varied diet of stimulating activities within lessons
- making it clear that work is relevant to children's current and future lives; it has a clear purpose and is meaningful
- ensuring there is good pace, and an element of challenge is included
- encouraging classroom talk and cross gender learning
- encouraging risk-taking
- giving feedback to pupils on their performance and being succinct about what they need to do next to improve
- allowing time for reflection and review
- assisting children, through practical experience and discussion, to learn about the self-improvement process

Curriculum

Gender equality will be promoted through the curriculum by:

- incorporating into the curriculum positive role models demonstrating the achievements of men and women in non stereotypical contexts (e.g. women scientists and engineers, men in caring roles)
- work on combating stereotypical views, for example using drama to counter gender stereotypes, and provide both sexes with opportunities to empathise with problems the other may face. A PHCSE unit will focus on stereotypes
- highlighting bias found in books for discussion with children and young people.
- learning outcomes being clear and shared with pupils (research indicates that boys need to know the purpose of tasks)

School ethos

The school culture and environment will promote equality by

- celebrating the achievement of boys and girls throughout the school
- actively raising issues pertinent to gender equality in school assemblies. There will be a particular focus on actively promoting thinking about

gender issues, whilst also dealing with equalities issues that arise during the day-to-day running of the school

Gender will be considered in assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements by:

- setting challenging, but achievable, short and long term performance targets
- staff identifying, through their assessment for learning, disparities in pupils' performance and establishing action plans to address them.

Partnership with parents and carers

The school's Gender Equality Scheme will actively promote a pro-active understanding in parents and carers through effective communication of ethos and policy in the wide range of home / school communications and meetings. All staff will be mindful of this practice.

Children

Each year we monitor the results of national and school data to determine any inequalities

based on gender. These results are reported to governors and inform the priorities for the school in the following academic year

- The school uses the results, which will include information about the gender of each child, to inform planning.
- We are committed to ensuring that all children reach the highest standards possible and are not held back by any form of gender discrimination.

After school clubs

The school recognises the need for all children to have both male and female role models in school where possible. We aim to ensure that after school clubs are led by both men and women.

The School's Governing Body

- Any issues relating to sexual harassment are taken seriously and dealt with swiftly.
- We ensure that we are an employer in which pay gaps based on gender do not arise.
- We aim to hold an appropriate balanced ratio of male and female governors. Where possible, and within our power, we will aim to ensure that this remains the case.

The Statutory Duties

The Equality Act 2010 created the Gender Equality Duty for all public sector bodies including schools. The Gender Equality Duty has two parts to it, the "general" duty and the "specific" duty.

At Barnes Primary School, we will actively seek to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women
- assess the impact of our current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality and monitor and review our progress, reporting on our progress annually
- review and revise this Scheme every two years

Mark Hartley
November 2010

Appendix – ‘How fair is Britain?’ Key educational findings from The Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010

A wealth of evidence shows that education is a key determinant of life chances. As well as being a right in itself, education is an enabling right, allowing individuals to develop the skills, capacity and confidence to secure other rights and economic opportunities.

Educational attainment has been transformed in recent years. Around half of young people are now getting good qualifications at 16 (5+ A*-C GCSEs or equivalent including English and Maths), and in 2008/09, 2.4 million students enrolled in higher education in the UK – a considerable change from a time when educational opportunities were only available to a minority of young people. The indicators examined in this chapter demonstrate this success, but also show that there remain a number of areas where further progress needs to be made.

The evidence from these indicators shows that educational attainment continues to be strongly associated with socio-economic background, despite some signs that social differences in examination results may have started to reduce. At the same time, the gap in attainment between ethnic groups has narrowed more clearly, with some previously low-performing groups catching up with the average. Whereas a generation ago almost all the students on the university campus were White British, today 1 in 5 are from ethnic minority groups and an increasing number of disabled students are also attending. Women are now ahead of men in many aspects of educational success.

However, in terms of both subjects studied, and in the obtaining of good degrees, differences persist. Women remain less likely than men to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects, making up 48% of first degree students in STEM despite comprising 55% of first degree students overall. Gender differences in first degree subject choice appear to be declining over time, but extremely high gender segregation in vocational training remains. The proportion of Black students getting first or upper second class degrees is still only at two-thirds of the level of White students.

This chapter also notes that some groups are still not getting a fair deal out of the education system. Young people with special Educational Needs (SEN) account for 7 in 10 permanent exclusions from school in England, and continue to have low educational attainment. A growing number of disabled students are going to university, but this group is still not achieving its potential. Calls to our helpline related to disability and education also indicate that this is an area of concern.

For lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) and transgender young people, attainment trends are harder to measure, but there are signs that they are being penalised by unfair treatment and bullying in the education system, at school and beyond.

Education-related inequalities have an impact over the life-span, not just in childhood. Differences in participation in education persist throughout life. Adults with more prior education are much more likely to access learning opportunities in later life. Tools such as the internet are used to varying degrees by different groups to access information and other resources.

Educational outcomes - significant findings

Educational outcomes differ markedly by gender, socio-economic group, ethnicity and disability. Boys, pupils from some ethnic minority groups, and those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) are performing less well as early as age 5.

For students from lower socio-economic groups, the gap widens during the school years. The gap in students' GCSE results according to their family backgrounds remains wider than most other educational inequalities, although tentative evidence indicates that it has started to narrow since 2006.

This gap is accentuated when combined with other factors associated with educational underperformance, such as gender and disability.

Headline data

- Girls outperform boys routinely at aged 5, at age 16 and at degree level throughout Britain.
- In the early years boys slip behind girls in the areas of problem solving and reasoning, and then in social and emotional development. By the age of 5, 53% of boys have reached the nationally expected level in writing compared to 72% of girls.
- Free School Meals (FSM) are available in England and Wales to children who come from households with relatively low income. Students eligible for FSM are less than half as likely to achieve 5 good GCSEs including English and Maths.
- Ethnic differences at GCSE are narrowing except for the top where the two highest performing groups are Chinese and Indian students.

- In England, the best performing group are Chinese girls; even those on FSM outperform all other ethnic groups whether on FSM or not. The worst performing group is Gypsy and Traveller children. Their performance is declining. Less than 1 in 6 obtain at least five good GCSEs.
- The performance of Chinese children is scarcely affected by whether or not they are eligible for FSM, whilst by contrast that of Indian children is strongly diminished if they are eligible for FSM.
- In England, 17% of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) get five good GCSEs including English and Maths, compared to 61% of children without identified SEN. This does not just apply to people with learning disabilities: only 33% of children whose primary need related to visual impairment attained this level.
- When SEN is combined with those eligible for FSM, outcomes drop even further. Of children with SEN and who are eligible for FSM, only 10% of girls and 8% of boys in England obtain 5 good GCSEs including English and Maths.
- Across Britain, disabled adults are three times as likely as others to have no qualifications.

Experiences of school life – significant findings

The experience of school life can be traumatic for some. The new phenomenon of cyberbullying is joining homophobic bullying as a serious issue. It appears that those who are bullied are more likely to be outside of education, employment or training at 16 years of age.

Headline data

- Cyberbullying is now estimated to affect around a third of secondary age young people.
- Two-thirds of lesbian, gay and bisexual students in Britain and four-fifths of disabled young people in England report being bullied. Almost a quarter (23%) of young people questioned who practiced any religion in England reported being bullied because of their faith.
- Homophobic bullying is widespread in British secondary schools. Nearly half of all secondary schoolteachers in England acknowledge that such bullying is common, and just 1 in 6 believe that their school is very active in promoting respect for LGB students.
- Figures indicate that children in England who reported being bullied did 15% worse at GCSE and were twice as likely to be NEET at aged 16.
- In England, Asian children are excluded at a rate of 5 per 10,000 students compared to Black Caribbean children at 30 per 10,000 and Gypsies and Traveller children at 38 per 10,000.
- Almost three-quarters (71%) of permanent exclusions in England involved pupils with some form of SEN in 2008/09. This is equivalent to a rate of 30 out of every 10,000 pupils.

