



## Woodford Valley Primary Academy

This school is committed to creating the ethos in which children can grow towards Christian life, learning and love.

*And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.”*

*John 13 34-35*

## Equality Information Template 2024-25

### Introduction

Woodford Valley Primary Academy 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. This school recognises that people have different needs and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating everyone the same. Woodford Valley Primary Academy 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>i</sup> for our school population and how we plan to tackle inequalities that may impact at school.

### Celebrating our Successes

**Children feel safe, they know how to ensure each other's safety and who to go to if they have any worries.**

**All pupils have quality access to sports provision**

**Increasing the confidence and understanding of staff and pupils in recognising poor mental health and providing opportunities to support this**

**We have a robust PSHE scheme across the school that complies with new statutory requirements of September 2021.**

### Priorities for the Year 2024/25

**To build on the emotional well-being and mental health of all pupils with a focus on building confidence.**

**To have a focus on good attendance across the school for all of our pupils, in particular our vulnerable groups.**

## **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 all of reading, writing and mathematics 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.

This school knows that intervention targeting early language and attention have 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>

At Woodford Valley, we identify pupils early and provide recovery interventions for them with a recovery champion teacher. We use the school grounds and our broad and balanced curriculum to inspire our pupils and to engage them in their reading and writing. We continue to use a class text to promote reading and writing in classes.

## **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 Woodford Valley Primary Academy 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.

### **All Black Pupils Major Ethnic Monitoring Category**

LA data has highlighted concerns about the attainment of the All Black Pupils major ethnic monitoring category and for the Black Caribbean minor ethnic monitoring category.<sup>ii</sup>

Wiltshire Key Stage 2 data for 2019 showed attainment was lower for pupils in the All Black Pupil major ethnic monitoring category compared with the White British pupils minor ethnic monitoring category. Fewer boys (8 percentage points lower) in the All Black Pupil category achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths compared with boys in the White British ethnic category. Attainment for Black Caribbean pupils was 14 percentage points lower than the attainment of White British pupils.

A lower proportion of Wiltshire pupils in the All Black Pupil major ethnic monitoring category achieved a Higher Standard in the Reading, Writing and Maths assessments compared with White British pupils. Pupils in the All Black Pupil were 3.7 less likely to have achieved the Higher Standard compared to White British Pupils.

When and as appropriate Woodford Valley Primary Academy 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 reviewed annually or bi-annually and updated. The Black Lives Matter movement has provided a new impetus to this

important work. This school is able to receive regular guidance and information from the LA as well as sharing best practice with other Wiltshire schools.

### **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.

At Woodford Valley Primary Academy, we have 7.7% of our pupils who English is an additional language. When and as appropriate, Woodford Valley Primary Academy works closely with the LA to raise attainment of EAL pupils.

### **Faith and Belief**

Woodford Valley Primary Academy 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.

Woodford Valley Primary Academy 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.

This 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/> This school is vigilant in maintaining an awareness of, and appropriate responses to, this possibility. Woodford Valley Primary Academy 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.

Woodford Valley Primary Academy ensures that all pupils gain knowledge of and respect for the different faiths in Britain as part of our role to prepare pupils for modern life in a diverse Britain. As part of a whole school activity, pupils celebrate different religious festivals and learn from religious representatives from various communities.

Woodford Valley Primary Academy recognises that discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief is a global concern. This school is 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.

This 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 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>.

This school is benefiting an education resource designed for work with primary school children to educate them about Islamophobia. The development of this resource was funded by the Home Office<sup>xii</sup>.

At Woodford Valley Primary Academy we are focussing on World Views so that all our pupils realise the importance of each other’s faiths and show respect and understanding.

## **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. Woodford Valley Primary Academy 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’.

This 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.

This 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. This 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.

This 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.

Woodford Valley Primary Academy uses the SCARF PSHE/RSHE resources which enable us to ensure that pupils can discuss and understand different relationships and it promotes loving and caring for all.

### **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>

Woodford Valley Primary Academy is required to publish information on the attainment of SEN pupils. The focus of this section of this Equality Information document is disability. The disability areas being highlighted in this report have been adapted to reflect our current pupil profile. *Please note that as schools must adhere to data protection protocols in order not to breach the confidentiality of individual or small groups of pupils, this may mean that our school is limited in the data it is able to publish in this section.*

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. This warrants a bespoke Equality Objective to begin to tackle societal perceptions and understanding of disabled people.

At Woodford Valley Primary Academy, we have 15.2 % of pupils with SEND needs. These pupils are tracked to ensure that they receive the appropriate support and make progress in their learning.

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

This 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. Woodford Valley Primary Academy, 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. Woodford Valley Primary Academy 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 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.

At Woodford Valley Primary Academy we have a qualified ELSA who will work with individual pupils or small groups who have been referred by teachers/professionals. We have a Senior Mental health lead on SMT who disseminates training and information to staff across the school. We use our broad and balanced curriculum to help pupils with SEMH needs. We invest in a school counsellor who works with individual pupils.

## **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. Below are some *suggested* Equality Objectives that you may wish to pursue. The suggested objectives have been developed to reflect current priorities, *however*, schools can choose an equality objective that meets the needs of their particular school community.

**Equality Objective:**

To embed the importance of good attendance within the culture of the whole school community to secure equality of opportunity for pupil engagement, attainment and progress.

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