

Amherst School (Academy) Trust

Single Equality Scheme 2017 – 2021

PART A: Scheme

Scheme agreed by Governors:

Scheme due for review:

Head Teacher: *Andrew Reid*

Lead Person: Andrew Reid

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1. Our Distinctive Character, priorities and Aims

1.1 Characteristics of our school

Amherst School is a larger than average-sized, three form entry junior school.(Key Stage 2) Majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, the rest representing a wide range of other ethnic groups. The current proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities 5.2%. We have 5 children (1%) with EHCP. These are pupils under the new SEND Code of Practice that are SEN Support or have an EHCP. As a school we also have identified children who are not on the SEN register but still require additional support/provision. We categorise those children as School Provision. A pupil for whom English is an additional language (6%) is below the national average. Pupils come from varied social circumstances; less than the national average receive free school meals (3.4%). The school is over-subscribed with a waiting list in most year groups. The children’s spoken language is good and many children are able to express themselves confidently. However, class sizes are large (32+). The school runs a Breakfast Club providing care from 7.30am – 8.30am which is attended by 24 pupils every day. The school also runs an after school club from 3.30pm – 6.00pm which is attended by a maximum of 24 children daily. . The school runs approx. 50 extracurricular activities each week from 8.00am – 8.45am and 3.30 – 4.30pm. Extra-curricular provision is outstanding and is seen as an extension of our curriculum. Music and PE is a strength of the school. The school is very active in competing in a wide range of inter school competitions throughout the year. Amherst is situated in an area where Kent Test selection takes place in Year 6. The school’s aim is that the children attend the type of secondary school to which they are best suited academically and socially. The school feeds 16+ secondary schools of all categories and a high proportion of children (approx. 60%) move on to grammar schools.

Parental support is exceptional. Parents are welcome to help in school with clubs, hearing readers and assisting with educational visits. There is an active PTA which raises approximately £25,000 per annum and provides a number of social events for staff and parents to socialise together. Amherst Junior Football Club is over 40 years old and is run by 40+ volunteer parents.

1.2 School values

Inspire Every Pupil

Development of good standards of behaviour is a shared responsibility.

All staff and governors are expected to make themselves aware of the content of this policy and to adhere to the agreed statements and procedures.

The staff and governors of Amherst School strive to provide an environment within which children are able to fulfil their potential in all areas. All members of the school are given clear guidelines on what is right and what is wrong, and what is and what is not acceptable behaviour.

Children should be able to regard the school as a place where there is a caring atmosphere and where they are safe. Should they have anxieties over work, relationships with peers or other concerns, they should feel that they are able to approach a member of staff to express their concerns. At Amherst School we have six values and six simple school rules attached to each value:

The six Amherst values and rules:

Trust	We will act responsibly and honestly to earn the trust of each other at Amherst School.
Kindness	We will treat everybody and everything with care and respect at Amherst School.
Determination	We will work hard to do our best even when things are difficult.
Politeness	We will be well-mannered and courteous towards everyone at Amherst School.
Fairness	We will treat everyone as our equal (s) at Amherst School.
Cooperation	We will all work together to include each other as a team at Amherst School.

Amherst's purpose is to Inspire Every Pupil to:

- Be their best
- Develop individual talents and passions

- Explore, innovate, enjoy and excel inside and outside the classroom
- Make a positive contribution for themselves, family, friends, school, community and the wider world
- Be healthy and stay safe

Amherst is a caring, nurturing environment to enable every pupil to develop into a rounded, confident individual, well prepared for secondary education and beyond. We foster excellent relationships with Riverhead Infants' School (our feeder school) and local secondary schools.

Amherst's values guide the achievement of the twin goals of educating each child to a high academic standard and providing opportunities to flourish outside the classroom:

- Mutual respect, honesty and trust
- Nurture the desire to excel and experiment
- Celebrate individual talents

The principle of mutual respect is fundamental to the ethos of life at Amherst and is the common moral thread linking all we do. We enlighten pupils to develop their self-worth and individual skills to the maximum while remaining strong team players and being understanding and respectful in their communication and attitudes with others.

To nurture in every child the instinct to experiment and excel, we remove the barriers of peer pressure that may discourage children from trying something new. We inspire pupils to overcome their fears and encourage them to participate in a range of activities and clubs. Our culture of opportunity and participation is constant throughout our pupils' Amherst years.

Amherst recognises that every child is a unique individual and provides group and individualised teaching to encourage all pupils to fulfil their academic potential. Pupils are also given opportunities beyond the curriculum in creative arts, sport, hobbies, drama and music to allow them to experience success and to discover passions and strengths.

Our children are the future and it is vital that we assist them to develop life skills to play their part in caring for people, our communities and the planet. Beyond the school gates, Amherst strives to create opportunities for pupils to work with local and global charities and causes, involving them in a variety of activities. Pupils are also encouraged to join external clubs and organisations to further their participation and development in specific talents and passions e.g. sport, music, drama.

1.3 Setting our priorities

The priorities for the SES are set in the light of:

- Identification summarised in the overview of outcomes;

- views expressed by stakeholders and trade unions that have been involved in the development of the scheme;
- consultation held widely as well as representation through the working party;

Our priorities are:

Children and young people

- Narrowing the attainment gap between different groups of children in the school.
- challenging race and gender stereotypes

Our community

- Improving the involvement of children and young people, parents and carers from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Our school community

- improving the involvement of disabled children and young people, staff and parents and carers;
- tackling bullying based on race, religion, gender, disability, sexuality or poverty;
- considering objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap or differences between groups;
- promoting positive attitudes toward diversity;

1.4 Aims

These are the aims on the action plan for 2017 - 21

- All new and existing policy, procedures and practices to undergo race equality impact assessment on pupils, staff and parents/carers, in particular the attainment levels and progress of pupils from different racial groups.
- To create and then embed a new PSHE scheme of work that is based on our six school values.
- Record racist incidents and to report them to the local authority on a regular basis.
- To ensure the school buildings continue to be accessible for all disabled people.
- All new and existing policy, procedures and practices to undergo disability equality impact assessment on pupils, staff and parents, in particular the attainment levels of disabled pupils.
- All new and existing policy, procedures and practices to undergo gender equality impact assessment on pupils, staff and parents, in particular the attainment levels of girls and boys.
- To track pupil progress of Pupil Premium pupils and compare progress to non Pupil Premium pupils.

2. Principles of Our SES

2.1 Purpose of the SES

We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality for all students, staff, other members of the school community and service users regardless of their ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or beliefs as defined within existing equalities legislation.

The purpose of our **Single Equality Scheme (SES)** is to fulfil the duties to promote equality for members of all these 'equality strand' groups, and embed fairness and equality at the heart of our school community and in all aspects of our **policies, procedures and practices (PPPs)**. We recognise within this Scheme the inequality linked to poverty and socio-economic factors, gender, race, disability and age.

Our SES draws together the **general duties** under existing equalities legislation and, applying the principle of '**levelling up**,' enables us to achieve the following for all groups:

- promote equality of opportunity through vision, strategy and practice;
- eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination;
- eliminate harassment and bullying (schools must keep accurate records of bullying and harassment related to equalities and report as required to the Local Authority);

In addition our SES ensures that we meet the **specific duties** in place to address specific inequalities in society:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- increase participation in public life for disabled people;
- involve disabled people in the development and review of our scheme
- take positive action to meet needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment of disabled people;
- promote good relations between people of different race;
- undertake equality impact assessments of all our policies (as a minimum considering race, gender and disability);
- provide effective and accessible consultation and engagement mechanisms
- ensure equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups, e.g. LAC
- take action based on our personnel provider's current advice about specific duties applying to us as a school.

Through our SES we make links to all our actions and commitments to:

- promote community cohesion;
- narrow the attainment gap in outcome between children of identified vulnerable groups.

2.2 Levelling Up

The principle of 'levelling up' refers to applying the general duties across all equality strands and for all vulnerable groups. We do this in order to aim for a level of equality for all groups while taking into account the need to apply the test of what is **relevant and proportionate**.

2.3 Relevant and Proportionate Equality Impact Assessment and Action

In paying 'due regard' to the legislation, we apply the principles of relevance and proportionality. We aim to ensure that our actions are **proportionate** to the **relevance** of equalities issues within our school and in relation to our PPPs. This means we prioritise those actions that enable us to tackle the most significant issues across the equality strands in order to deliver the best equality outcomes. In doing this we focus on PPPs that have the greatest effect, or potential effect on different stakeholders.

We do not assume that existing representation alone determines relevance, so we apply the principle of **anticipatory duty** (see 2.5 below) in helping us to identify what is relevant. We also anticipate that there will be 'hidden' disabilities and equality issues so we are thorough in identifying factors that lead, or have the potential to lead, to inequality. An area of concern is children's mental and emotional well being and also children who are child carers.

We ask whether our PPPs affect different groups in different ways and try to implement them in ways that promote equality. This is achieved through systematic **monitoring of outcomes, impact assessment** and **action planning** incorporating the fullest possible **participation of stakeholders**.

2.4 Participation

We apply the principle of '**Nothing about us without us**' as far as is reasonably achievable within the context of a school community. Participation is based on information gained about representation of different groups. We aim to do this as fully as possible while recognising issues of sensitivity in relation to the different equality strands. We take particular step to ensure disabled children and young people, parents and carers are involved as is their entitlement.

Our consultative groups and **working party (Staff and Pupil Welfare Committee)** include representation from the widest range of relevant groups that we can reasonably achieve. They are responsive to the diversity in our school and organised in such a way as to promote direct participation.

The school involves **stakeholders** including children and young people, staff, parents/carers and other users of the school in relation to all equalities duties. We take into account the preferred means of communication for those with whom we are consulting e.g. translated materials or interpretation facilities for disabled people or those for whom English is an additional language or are newly arrived in this country.

The views of stakeholders, trade unions and other equalities related groups are genuinely taken into account when we set priorities.

2.5 Anticipation

We apply the principle of the '**Anticipatory Duty**' in all aspects of our SES which means that we think ahead about how our PPPs may affect different members of our school. This is embodied specifically in the process of risk assessment where we consider not only the impacts but also the potential impacts, whether positive or negative. As a school with currently very little ethnic and racial diversity we seek learning opportunities to prepare our pupils for a multi-cultural society.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Governing Body

The governing body has a duty to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. Functionally, the governing body discharges this responsibility through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

3.2 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) promotes equality and eliminates discrimination by:

- raising awareness of all the duties within the whole school community;
- referring to relevant and up-to-date documentation from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC);
- ensuring understanding of the broad definition of disability within the DDA;
- sensitively encouraging declaration of equality strand identity by children and young people, parents/carers, staff and other users of the school;
- working with trade unions to implement the gender and age duties in employment functions;
- ensuring that action plans are undertaken for all equality strands and that they meet the specific requirements in relation to ethnicity, gender and disability while 'levelling-up' expectations in the other strands;
- ensuring that the principles of relevance, proportionality and reasonable action are applied appropriately;
- providing appropriate training for staff, Governors and other members of the school community;
- Monitor the outcomes and impact of policies, procedures and practice on all groups, and respond with appropriate actions;
- In the event of expectations not being met, ensuring action is taken in accordance with the status of those involved.

3.3 All Members of the School Community

The school regards equality for all as a responsibility for all. All members of our community (staff, contractors, volunteers, children and young people etc) contribute to ensuring that our school is a fair, just and cohesive community by:

- contributing to the SES implementation and review process
- raising issues with line managers which have an impact or potential impact on the school's PPPs;
- maintaining an awareness of, and professional interest in, the school's current SES and the PPPs to which it relates;
- implementing PPPs in accordance with agreed protocols and standards;
- behaving with respect and fairness to all members of the school community

4. The working party

Our working party is the Staff and Pupil Welfare Committee and is involved throughout the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the SES. The Key Functions of the Working Party are:

- to ensure the involvement of the widest possible range of people representing the different equality strands;
- to ensure the involvement of trade unions regarding the equalities duties;
- to arrange for the gathering of information relating to all equality strands;
- to consider arrangements for impact assessments;
- to report to the leadership team on outcomes of information gathering and impact assessment;

5. Information gathering

5.1 Purpose and process

The collection of information is crucial to supporting us in deciding what actions to take to improve equality and eliminate discrimination within the school community. The information also subsequently helps us to review our performance so it needs to be detailed enough to enable us to measure how we are delivering on equality duties. The information also helps us to do accurate impact assessment and identify which of the school's aims have been achieved and what we need to do better.

5.2 Types of information gathered

The wide range of information gathered to support our planning and action to promote equality and eliminate discrimination includes the following:

- identification of children and young people, parents, carers, staff and other users of the school representing the different equality strands. This helps us develop and monitor the scheme. Comprehensive and sensitive efforts are made to collect accurate information and meet security of information requirements, in addition to our duty to secure accurate information relating to ethnicity and first language;
- pupil attainment and progress data relating to different groups;
- children and young people views actively sought and incorporated in a way that values their contribution;
- information about how different groups access the whole curriculum
- sports and activities choices of all groups;
- uptake of the extended school offer by group;
- exclusions data analysed by group;
- records of bullying and harassment on the grounds of any equality issue;
- data on the recruitment, development and retention of employees;
- outcomes of activities promoting community engagement and community cohesion;
- outcomes of actions taken to secure the involvement of parents and others who have been identified as difficult to engage;

6. Outcomes

Of all the information we collect, the most important indicators of how successful we are in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination are the outcomes for various individuals and groups. We record our outcomes using a wide range of criteria, both academic and experiential, for the various equality strands and other vulnerable groups, mindful of the principles of proportionality, relevance and potential impacts (whether positive or adverse). Our outcomes are recorded when we complete termly teacher assessments comparing the pupil progress of all vulnerable groups as identified in Part E. Where a robust analysis of outcomes reveals poorer outcomes for any particular group it triggers the equality impact assessment process.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

Impact assessment refers to the review of all-current and proposed PPPs in order to help us act to promote equality and to ensure no person is disadvantaged by school activities through discrimination. Impact assessments are an on-going process to ensure that the school's PPPs are developed in an increasingly inclusive and equitable way.

We undertake our impact assessment in a relevant, proportionate and systematic way. In addition to using the **Overview of Outcomes** as a focused starting point, impact assessments are incorporated into the school's planned review and revision of every policy and are also undertaken according to other **established criteria** through a **screening process**.

Screening PPPs helps us know how much each one promotes, or has the potential to promote equality, and whether or not a full equality impact assessment is necessary. Screening is not a substitute for full equality impact assessment but an aid to managing the impact assessment process. We are aware that many PPPs have the potential to affect different groups in different ways and this is factored into the screening process.

Every new PPP is drawn up with regard to the school's duties as described in this SES and the appendices, and is subject to the process of impact assessment in relation to potential positive or adverse impacts.

8. Action Plans

We have action plans covering all relevant equality strands. These describe how we are taking action to fulfil both the general and specific duties of the relevant legislation and how we are extending our practice through 'levelling-up' as described above. We have also identified age as a potential vulnerable group in our community. We have created an action plan to address this group.

Our action plans are reviewed and updated annually by the Staff and Pupil Welfare Committee, which ensures that they are checked, monitored and evaluated systematically.

The action plans show:

- objectives and specific actions;
- expected impact and indicators of achievement (success criteria);
- clear timescales;
- who has lead responsibility;
- resource implications;
- specified dates for impact assessment and review.

Our SES relates to a range of other policies and plans, and will be implemented through them and the procedures and practices that relate to them. These policies are listed in the appendices and significantly include our Accessibility Plan and Safeguarding Policy.

The school evaluates the effectiveness of the SES with its School Improvement Partner on a regular basis, through the governing body and with Ofsted when the school is inspected.

9. Publication and reporting

The working party decides how best to publish the SES. The school provides a copy in a range of formats and actively makes it available to parents/carers and others, including those identified as difficult to engage. A copy is also on the school website for everyone to access.

The school reports annually to the FGB on the progress made on the action plans and the impact of the SES itself on school ethos and practice within the school in addition to the impact assessments done on the full range of PPPs.

10. Review

As part of the review of the SES, the school commits to:

- Revisiting and analysing the information and data used to identify priorities for the SES and action plans. This incorporates use of the overview of outcomes;
- Using the impact assessments to ensure that actions taken have a positive impact across all equality strands, that the promotion of equality is at the heart of school planning and that discrimination is being eliminated effectively.

The review of the SES informs its revision, the setting of new priorities and action plans. This process continues to:

- involve the participation of a full range of stakeholders;
- be evidenced based - using information and data that the school has gathered and analysed;
- Use the evidence to do accurate impact assessments which inform priorities.

