

Our Lady's Catholic College Equality Analysis October 2015

Our Lady's Catholic College - Context

Our Lady's Catholic College is a co-educational comprehensive school for 11-18 year olds. Students are drawn from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds with more than average numbers of students eligible for pupil premium, average numbers of students with a statement of special needs and below average numbers of students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The school's ethos and atmosphere is wholly founded on the fact that it is a Catholic school and its leadership is passionately determined that every aspect of school life should be conducted with the care and mutual respect taught by Jesus Christ.

The Denominational Inspection Report Feb 2013 assessed Our Lady's to be 'an outstanding Catholic school'.

Single Equality Policy

The school has a Single Equality Policy which was drawn up in March 2012. This took the place of previous separate policies for example Disability Equality, Race Equality, Gender Equality etc.

Equality Information – how it is obtained, stored and used.

Equality information is obtained from the Ofsted RAISEonline and the management information system SISRA. This provides attainment and attendance data on the following groups:- by gender, eligible for free school meals, minority ethnic groups including Travellers, pupils with English as an additional language, pupils with special educational needs and looked after children.

Attendance data on the school management information system is categorised and analysis of the following groups is available:- age, medical condition, gender reassignment/identity, race/ethnicity/nationality, sex/gender, children with special educational needs, children with a protection plan, children in care, children with English as an additional language, children eligible for free school meals, traveller children and gifted and talented children.

Pupils with Additional Needs are monitored and tracked in various ways. Statements and Health Care Plans are reviewed annually; other pupils with additional needs are monitored monthly in accordance with school assessment procedures. Nationally agreed standards are used to measure academic progress as well as progress with social, emotional and behavioural skills. Specifically Lexia is used to measure literacy levels, Read, write inc. to measure reading and spelling and Boxall profiles and the Readiness Re-integration scales for those pupils who have been included in the specialist Nurture group.

Pupils accessing Learning Support and Extraction lessons are asked to complete Pupil Surveys regarding the standard and quality of teaching, learning and provision offered. Results are then discussed in Departmental meetings for improvements to be considered. Pupils with a statement are required to complete a Pupil Advice before an Annual Review and pupils with an IEP or Pen Portrait are involved with current target setting or strategic decisions.

Pupils with English as an Additional Language are monitored and tracked annually and additional support provided as required. This information is available to all staff to inform teaching.

An annual report to the Governors outlines the performance of pupils with a disability and pupils with English as an Additional Language using Family Fisher Trust data, RAISEonline and SISRA.

Identification of any problems or gaps with our present information

We regularly obtain feedback from both pupils and parents on many aspects of school life. At present we do not always seek to identify whether the person giving that feedback belongs to a particular protected group. We will consult as to whether the majority of stakeholders feel it is preferable to obtain that identification. This would provide us with better quality information for the purposes of identifying specific equality problems but we would wish to avoid any danger of such identification itself undermining the feeling of equality that already exists or making an individual feel they are categorised by just one particular aspect of their circumstance.

Although we are passionately determined to be an organisation that values each person equally, we of course recognise that help and support has to be differentiated according to everyone's needs and cannot therefore be equal. That we are successful in this has been attested by successive Ofsted inspections. 'Disabled students and those with special needs make good progress because staff know their needs well.' Ofsted September 2012.

Despite current tracking systems for pupils with additional needs being good, current changes and funding reform require that pupils' needs must be monitored over a period of time to illustrate provision offered by school. Our Lady's has Provision Maps to track progress and intervention.

Examples of where the school has used equality information to develop and change aspects of school life.

- A Pupil Premium champion was appointed in September 2015 to drive forward new / improved strategies to 'close the gap' including additional tuition in English and Maths
- A teacher is employed part time to offer one to one support for children whose first language is not English.
- A taxi was procured by the school to enable a Sixth Form pupil with mobility problems to travel easily to school – ongoing as at October 2015.
- The itinerary of a school trip to Germany Summer 2012 was differentiated to offer alternatives for disabled members of the group who could not access all the normal venues.
- A taxi was procured to enable a disabled pupil to access a school trip Spring 2013 when travel by coach was unsuitable.
- A native Polish speaker has been employed for a number of years in response to the need for additional support for Polish pupils new to this country.
- In 2010 specialist equipment was bought in to allow a pupil with a physical disability more independence in her Food Technology GCSE lessons and this year school has funded teaching assistant support for a pupil with cerebral palsy whose additional funding finished in December 2012.
- The school has made an especial effort to meet the requirements of the local Gypsy Roma Traveller community. Their culture has been brought into the schemes of work within the humanities and art departments and a considerable emphasis has been placed on helping with their requirements on transition from primary school.
- One to one lessons are provided for pupils who have not yet developed a working facility in English.
- Our Lady's is very proud and very aware of its widely socially varied catchment area and has made concerted efforts to ensure that all, regardless of socio-economic background, receive a high quality of education. An Early intervention Panel was established in 2010 to track pupils deemed as vulnerable and for whom social and emotional difficulties were barriers to learning. A range of strategies are then implemented to overcome these.

Ways in which Our Lady's consults and involves people in developing and running aspects of school life.

We consult, inform and engage people in developing, changing and running all aspects of school life in the following ways:-

- Regular pupil and parent questionnaires.
- Specific pupil and parent surveys regarding a proposed change eg. change of uniform.

- A well-developed school council system that represents the views of the wider pupil cohort and represents them in meetings with the senior leadership team and governing body.
- Regular Union meetings where the Union representatives put forward the views / concerns / suggestions of their members.
- Multiple means of communicating complaints, compliments and comments both purely internal and from outside sources in order that all staff can remain informed, involved and able to respond.
- Partnership with three other secondary schools to provide better post-sixteen education in the district enabling us to seek views from educators and learners across a wider area.
- Headteacher meeting regularly with primary Headteachers specifically to seek their views and those of their pupils and parents.
- Headteacher meeting regularly with representatives of the Diocese and parishes to give and receive feedback from both the clergy and their parishioners.
- Headteacher meeting regularly with other secondary Headteachers and with representatives of the local Council to give and receive feedback.
- Information from the above meetings is then passed to staff and governors.
- Feedback from pupils is sought by all members of staff but particularly by the Headteacher and those in senior leadership positions by proactively talking to pupils throughout the school day. The Headteacher in particular operates an open door policy and a very significant proportion of his time is spent talking to pupils and staff who readily seek him out with problems, suggestions and information.
- The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and her assistant attend Year 6 annual reviews to ensure that pupils transferring with additional needs or a disability are well supported. For those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder extra transition visits are arranged to ensure that pupils are well prepared and that key staff have been met.

Room for improvement in our consultation and involvement.

Despite our extensive systems of consultation and feedback, we do not have a structure to seek out feedback from all specifically identified protected groups. We are now starting to look at the specific needs of the disabled members of our community by means of a forum consisting of one disabled student from each year group meeting once a half term to discuss specific issues with senior leaders of the school.

Pupil feedback is gained via Learning Support and Extraction lessons but only represents that specific curriculum area. Feedback for pupils with any form of additional need will be collated in the Spring Term of 2016 to reflect their whole school experience. This will then be issued to senior leaders and staff.

How we will improve

We will now consider/consult on which other groups might benefit from this and then consult them or their parents on the best way to do this in future.

How we obtain, store and use our present information and feedback

Paper questionnaires are still used extensively which are then collated. The collated results are kept electronically so that comparisons can easily be made over time. Some surveys, particularly regular ones from pupils, are also conducted purely electronically.

Minutes from forum meetings are kept and referred to for verbal feedback.

Such data is used to identify and address specific problems. It is used to help the school leadership take a strategic decision or a decision that directly affects the pupils and parents where various possible alternatives exist. It is also used to identify priority areas for improvement by comparison of satisfaction of one aspect of school life with another.

All special educational needs data is stored on the school network or saved on the management information system to allow staff easy access and use. At the moment the Learning Support area folder is being reorganised so that each pupil with an additional need has their own folder, tracking data and information from Year 7 through to Year 11 or 13.

Are there any potential negative impacts on any of the groups protected under the Single Equality Act from present school activities?

We do not believe there are any potential negative impacts of current school activities on any protected group.

Could there be any individuals or groups presently disadvantaged by any specific aspect of school life?

We are not aware from our extensive and very open systems of communication and feedback of any groups that are presently disadvantaged by any aspect of school life. The school works hard to address / overcome any such problem immediately they become apparent but we acknowledge we could be more proactive in seeking views from members of the various protected groups. We are aware of one example of an improvement that we have not been able to effect because of funding restraints – namely that ideally there would be an automatic door opening system that would prevent other persons having to open doors for our wheelchair users.

Improvement in feedback from specific protected groups is now our main requirement for improvement with regard to Equality. A forum of wheelchair users for example would be ideal to ascertain the impact of not having automatic doors and help us to prioritise this appropriately.

There is one exception to the above in that the school cannot repair the lift to Music as it is obsolete. Replacement would cost between £50,000 and £100,000 and require LCVAP monies. At the time of writing (October 2015) there is no pupil unable to access Music except temporarily after breaking / casting a lower limb.

What steps has the school already taken to impact positively on equality?

The school has always had specific policies to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Fortunately, our staff, pupils and other stakeholders have rarely had to rely on these for protection as we are a Catholic school and equality, mutual care and respect is at the very core of everything we do. Our success at the prevention of such discrimination, our efforts to minimise disadvantage and meet specific needs and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not has been attested repeatedly by external inspectors. The Denomination Inspection February 2013 assessed the school as outstanding which would have been impossible if there had been any evidence of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation or if all groups were not respected equally and supported according to their needs.

‘Staff are very supportive of different needs so that all groups of students make good progress’. Ofsted September 2012

‘The college tracks progress of all groups and individuals very closely and well-targeted support is provided for those at risk of falling behind. In this way the principles and practice of equality of opportunity are well established.’ Ofsted September 2012

‘Relationships between teachers and students are very supportive, based on mutual respect and a very high level of commitment from staff to support learning. Students appreciate the support teachers give them lesson-by-lesson but also when they need extra support outside lesson time to help them catch up or understand difficult concepts.’ Ofsted September 2012

‘Students say there is no bullying in the college and that they have confidence that staff will help sort out any problems they might face.’ Ofsted September 2012 Our Lady’s Catholic College Equality Analysis April 2013

'The school is a haven for the pupils it serves. Care and guidance are of the highest order and pupils pay tribute to the support they receive. They are articulate and enthusiastic about their school, its caring community, and the belief that each is valued and supported to achieve their best in a Christian Environment.' Denominational Inspection Report February 2013

'The school has worked hard to develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services....The school links well with external agencies to provide excellent support for the most vulnerable students....Leaders and managers have worked tirelessly to ensure the best possible opportunities for pupils and students to collaborate with people from different backgrounds and promote effective inclusion provision.' Denominational Inspection Report February 2013

Local, regional, national and global contexts, decision and policies that combined with school life can have an impact on protected groups and the actions school has taken and will take to mitigate their effect.

General socio-economic problems are perceived as the most significant Equality of Opportunity issue facing the school. We address this with determination and rigour with additional significant support available for those pupils who may not have ideal support outside school. Much more resource than simply Pupil Premium and more recently Year Seven Literacy and Numeracy 'Catch up' money is being used to mitigate this disadvantage.

The school also proactively seeks out alternative sources of funding to boost confidence and ability for those pupils who are disadvantaged in this way. The school is also extremely fortunate and would like to pay tribute to those members of staff who give of their time freely to help combat this disadvantage.

National education strategy to set general academic benchmarks for example 5A* - C grades at GCSE including English and Maths which are then adopted as a minimum standard by employers would tend to disadvantage some racial and national groups. The school recognises the disadvantage to pupils for whom English is an additional language and is continually improving its support for this group of pupils including one to one tuition.

How the school will help to address priority areas for improvement in equality.

Social exclusion.

The school provides additional support, activities and programmes specifically targeted at pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged groups. A Pupil Premium Champion was appointed in September 2015 and additional tutoring is being provided for disadvantaged pupils in English and Maths as well as a wide range of additional resources. (Further details can be found under the Pupil Premium document on this website).

Additional assistance extends well beyond curriculum requirements. We also use funds including Private School Funds whenever we can to support/pay for such activities provided by external providers after assessment of their effectiveness.

The school makes its facilities available at a fraction of recommended rates for external providers of holiday schemes etc. which are targeted specifically at young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We employ four Pastoral Support Officers, an Attendance Officer, one Independent Advice and Guidance Co-ordinator, two counsellors, one Nurture Group Manager and assistant whose roles are specifically to minimise any restrictions or negative influences on our pupils' ability to thrive and learn. Their time is predominantly occupied with tackling problems associated with social exclusion.

Health and wellbeing

The school organises extensive sport and physical activity for all its pupils regardless of natural ability. Our caterers are subject to rigorous standards of nutrition. The school incorporates education regarding health and wellbeing both specifically and within the curriculum. The school has also been awarded the Healthy Schools Award.

The school also employs one member of staff part of whose role is to counsel young people and help them with any problems that could damage psychological health and part funds an additional external counsellor. The chaplaincy team is also specifically trained and directed to provide spiritual and moral support for a very wide range of problems that could be experienced by young people including bereavement, living with parents who have health problems etc.

Supporting the county council's role as a corporate parent

Termly meetings are held with the County consultant to discuss the progress of each looked after child in school. Each looked after child has their own mentor in school with whom they are encouraged to discuss issues as they arise so that they can be tackled quickly. The school also liaises with their carers and social workers on a regular basis to discuss how the student is getting on in school. Practical assistance includes additional resources such as their own personal laptops and additional tuition in essential subjects that they may find a challenge.

Equalities Action Plan 2015/2016

We will consider more proactive ways of consulting with representatives and parents / carers of various 'protected groups'. We will prioritise these groups according to Our Lady's particular mix of pupils and staff.

We will then identify the best system for obtaining regular feedback in order to monitor progress over time.