



## **POLICY OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

One of our fundamental aims as a school is as follows:

**‘Actively to promote the principle of equality for all people  
whatever their abilities, background, race, religion or sex.’**

In establishing an effective policy for equal opportunities for all throughout the school, seven contributory aims have been identified:

1. To ensure that all our pupils have equal opportunities for learning and developing their full potential.
2. Actively to promote awareness and support for the principle of equal opportunity throughout the school community and to strive to create a climate in which all people are valued for the contribution which they can make to the life of the school and to society at large.
3. To ensure that all young people have access to accurate information on issues relating to equality of opportunity in respect of courses, careers, further education, employment and other aspects of their future lives.
4. To promote positive images of disadvantaged and/or minority groups and to combat the ignorance which leads to prejudice and discrimination.
5. To seek the co-operation and support of parents/guardians as prejudice is sometimes inherent in the home.
6. To demonstrate our commitment to equality of opportunity through our own staff practice in order to influence by example.
7. To monitor the progress and development of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **Achieving the Aims**

The following specific objectives are the ways we intend achieving these aims:

### **Section 1**

1. To ensure that the spirit of equal entitlement which is central to the **National Curriculum** informs all of the school's curriculum policy.
2. To develop differentiation across the curriculum in ways which facilitate individual learning opportunities. Where this involves setting, sufficient flexibility allowing movement where progress indicates this to be necessary, is an essential aspect of equality of opportunity.
3. To ensure that policy and practice for Learning Support across the whole school is managed as equitably as possible. In particular, pupils with support needs should continue to benefit from *all* the opportunities available to all children in the school.
4. To do whatever is possible to mitigate the effects of the disadvantageous home circumstances on pupils progress and opportunities. This will involve:
  - A well planned and managed pastoral system with a general sensitivity and awareness of specific circumstances on the part of teaching staff – particularly the Form Teacher, the Pastoral Leader and Assistant Pastoral Leader.
  - Budget planning and the monitoring of such within the limited resources available to support financially disadvantaged children with school activities e.g. The 'Arthog' week and in the subsidising of instrumental lessons within the Music Department.
  - A well implemented school uniform policy (supported occasionally by finance as above to minimise the effects of financial deprivation) combined with the constant monitoring of uniform to ensure that dress is appropriate and modest.
5. To implement and maintain a coherent policy on bullying within the school and to deal constructively with its harmful effects when prevention has proven impossible. To always fully involve the parents/guardians of all pupils involved in any such incidents.
6. To ensure that extra curricula activities provide for the needs of all children whatever their abilities.
7. To promote opportunities for pupils with specific talents, both within the curriculum and in extra curriculum activities.
8. To encourage and promote opportunities for intellectual challenge for all pupils in addition to the curriculum.

## **Section 2**

1. To value the contribution of boys and girls equally in all areas of school life.
2. Actively to promote the potential for positive achievements of both girls and boys across the whole curriculum, thus combating traditional stereotyping.
3. To promote a positive self image and achievement in and for all pupils whose background is other than local.
4. To provide opportunities for discussing and promoting issues relating to equality of opportunity whenever this is relevant to the curriculum - PSD, English, Drama, Humanities and Careers provide obvious examples but potential exists in all curriculum areas.
5. To ensure that all curriculum materials are consistent with the principle of equal opportunities for all.
6. To ensure that Department Curricula plans show an awareness of Equal Opportunities.
7. To promote equality of opportunity in Assemblies and other formal occasions. Implicit messages are likely to be more powerful than exhortation so that positive images should predominate.

## **Section 3**

1. Actively to promote the principle of open access and the equality of the sexes in courses at Key Stage 4 wherever choice is available.
2. To ensure that Equal Opportunities Policies are reflected in all aspects of Careers education and guidance by both teaching staff and advisory visitors to the school.
3. To work positively with post 16 educational institutions, specifically Walford and North Shropshire College, in promoting equality of opportunity for all courses beyond age 16.

## **Section 4**

1. To monitor teaching materials in the context of their presentation of disadvantaged and/or minority groups. Where there are sound reasons for continuing to use such materials - e.g. the Anti Semitism of 'The Merchant of Venice' or 'Oliver Twist' - the Equal Opportunities Policy emphasises the need to explain and discuss the context of such works.
2. Accepting that 'The Marches' is an almost exclusively white school and of a largely homogenous local community, to promote through the curriculum an awareness and positive appreciation of cultural, religious and racial diversity in other parts of Britain and the world.
3. Specifically to promote respect for those with different skin colour and thus combat racial prejudice.

4. Actively to challenge racial prejudice in all forms whenever it occurs. When directed against an individual or individuals; school Bullying Policy will be applicable. Counselling through the school's pastoral system will be given to both victim(s) and aggressor(s). The parents/guardians of all pupils involved will be informed.
5. To promote Equal Opportunities through the presentation of displays which reflect the achievements of minority groups, women and the disabled and which reflect, where possible, spiritual and cultural diversity.
6. To promote the difficulties and needs of both physically and mentally disabled people. This will also involve doing whatever possible to make the school environment as accommodating as possible for the disabled. This aspect of Equal Opportunities Policy will be reviewed when appropriate by the Governors' BES committee.
7. To support and promote respect for the travelling community and to actively challenge any prejudice shown against that community. When directed against an individual or individuals, the school Bullying Policy will be applicable. Counselling through the school's pastoral system will be given to both victim(s) and aggressor(s). The parents/guardians of all pupils involved will be informed.
8. To support and encourage linguistic achievements (including at public examinations) for pupils whose first language is not English.

## **Section 5**

1. To include information about the Equal Opportunities Policy and practice in relevant school communications e.g. The School Brochure and various leaflets for parents. To promote the principles of equality of opportunity both directly and implicitly in relevant communications with parents/guardians.
2. To ensure that parents/guardians are aware of Equal Opportunities implications and issues in the various courses and careers choices open to their children (e.g. Year 9 and Post 16 Parents' Information evenings).
3. To encourage parents to communicate with the school when they believe equality of opportunity has been denied to their child.
4. Actively to promote Equal Opportunities principles within the community at large.
5. To liaise with our feeder Primary Schools to ensure a continuity of the principles of equal opportunity both in practical matters and in general awareness.

## **Section 6**

1. To ensure that school staffing policy explicitly and actively promotes the principles of equality of opportunity. Through time, therefore, the school staffing should demonstrate equal opportunity in action and as a role model for pupils.

2. To ensure that all staff are fully aware of the school policy for Equal Opportunities, support the aims and work towards achieving them in practice in their interactions both with children and with each other. To highlight to staff as an annual reminder of the policy, a statement of Equal Opportunities will be placed in the Staff Workroom and will be available to all via the 'T' and 'W' drives: the practice of this policy is the responsibility of all.
3. To ensure that a member of the Leadership Group is responsible for the monitoring of the policy for Equal Opportunities. This person is currently: **D L Sheppard.**
4. To encourage an equality of opportunity for all staff, via the '**Investing in People**' programme, to progress professionally whilst acknowledging the needs of the school as stated annually in the School Development Plan.
5. To establish the full support of the full Governing Body for the policy of Equal Opportunities and to ensure that through the Governors' Staffing Committee the principles remain in awareness and are actively monitored.

### **Section 7**

1. To ensure that the criteria used in recognising publicly the achievements of pupils are wide ranging so that they acknowledge the successes of all – please see the MSTC REWARDS POLICY 2003.
2. To monitor the progress of all pupils to ensure appropriate individual development is achieved.

### **Section 8**

Where possible to continue the policy of visiting 'Artists in Residence' during 'Technology College Week' and extensive visits to points of excellence to promote a wider educational context and appreciation for our pupils.

To continue to endeavour to make all extra curricula opportunities available to all pupils. Where this is not possible, e.g. in sports teams - to endeavour to ensure that the spirit of the equal opportunities policy is acknowledged by the inclusion of any conscientious pupil who demonstrates commitment by the attending of all practice sessions.

To continue to support and promote the learning of all instruments for all pupils who wish to pursue musical interests.

To provide access to the School's Information Technology rooms at lunchtimes and after school for all pupils thereby combating any disadvantage felt by pupils without home computers.