Cowick Primary

Equality Policy

(including Accessibility Plan)



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Our Vision

Within our close Christian community, children are encouraged to fulfil their potential, to be enthusiastic, motivated and responsible learners who are challenged through an exciting and creative curriculum. By providing a safe, respectful and challenging environment, we equip them with the necessary skills to become citizens of an ever-changing world.

The Equality Act 2010

The **Equality Act 2010** replaced all existing equality legislation and consolidated many acts such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. It legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society and sets out the nine characteristics which are protected:

Protected Characteristics

- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Pregnancy and Maternity**
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership**
- **Race**
- **Religion or belief (including lack of belief)**
- **Sex**
- **Sexual orientation**

It is therefore, unlawful for Cowick Primary to discriminate against a person, pupil, parent (this includes adoptive, step, foster or anyone who has parental responsibility) or, staff member (teaching and non-teaching) because they have one or more of the characteristics mentioned above. This includes discriminating against pupils in relation to admissions, the way education is provided to pupils, the way pupils are able to access any benefit, facility or service, excluding a pupil, or subjecting them to any other detriment.

Age is a protected characteristic in relation to employment and the provision of goods and services, however, this does not apply to pupils. We are able to admit and organise children in age groups and treat pupils in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Definitions

Cowick Primary recognises the different types of **discrimination, harassment and victimisation** as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and are therefore responsible for eliminating the following:

Direct discrimination – Treating someone less favourably because they have a protected characteristic

Discrimination by perception – Treating someone less favourably because it is believed that they have a protected characteristic, when in fact, they do not

Discrimination by association – Treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic

Indirect discrimination – When a practice, policy or rule, which is applied to everyone in the same way, has a worse effect on some people than others i.e. it puts particular people at a disadvantage

Harassment – Unwanted behaviour which a person finds offensive, or which makes them feel intimidated or humiliated is unlawful under the Act if it is connected to any of the protected characteristics

Victimisation – Someone is treated badly because they have complained about discrimination or helped someone who has been the victim of discrimination

Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

Reasonable Adjustments

Cowick Primary is aware of the need to make **reasonable adjustments** in order to remove barriers faced by people with disabilities. This may involve treating disabled pupils or staff more favourably and taking steps to avoid the substantial disadvantage to a disabled person caused by a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of the school, or by the absence of an auxiliary aid or service.

In the Equality Act 2010, there are three elements to the reasonable adjustments duty that relate to: Provisions, Criteria and Practices, Auxiliary Aids and Services, and also, Physical Features. The physical features element does not apply to schools in relation to disabled pupils; instead we have a duty to plan better access for disabled pupils generally in relation to the physical environment of the school.

Cowick Primary will take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils.

There are various factors to be taken into account when considering reasonable adjustments and these include such things as the resources of the school, the financial cost of making the adjustment, assessing the extent to which the adjustment would be effective in overcoming the disadvantage, the practicability of the adjustment, health and safety requirements, the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards, the effect of the disability on the individual and, the extent to which special educational provision will be provided to the disabled pupil under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

There is a significant overlap between those pupils who are disabled and those who have Special Educational Needs (SEN). Many disabled pupils may receive support in school through the SEN framework and in some cases, the substantial disadvantage that they experience may be overcome by support received under the SEN framework and therefore, there will be no obligation for the school or local authority to make reasonable adjustments. However, in other cases, a disabled pupil may need reasonable adjustments to be made in addition to the special educational provision that they are receiving.

Accessibility Plan

Cowick Primary aims to increase the accessibility of provision for all pupils, staff and visitors to the school and therefore, an **Accessibility Plan** has been developed to ensure that:

- The extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum is increased
- The physical environment of the school is improved to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and the services provided
- The availability of accessible information to disabled pupils is improved.

The plan is also structured to support the school's Equality Objectives and has taken into consideration findings from an Accessibility Audit, which was carried out November 2026, by members of staff. This Accessibility Audit will be undertaken on an annual basis and the Accessibility Plan will be reviewed at least every three years. OFSTED inspections may look at the Accessibility Plan and its implementation as part of their review.

The Accessibility Plan can be found in **Appendix 1**.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

Following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), came into force in April 2011. The PSED sets out the requirements for all public bodies when carrying out their day to day work and has two main parts:

The 'general' equality duty

The general duty requires Cowick Primary to have 'due regard', or think about the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it**
- **Foster good relations across all characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it**

All staff are responsible for having due regard for the three general equality aims.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Details of how Cowick Primary is working with due regard to the general equality duty aims are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

The 'specific duties'

The 'specific duties' require Cowick Primary to do the following:

- Publish information annually to show compliance with the general equality duty.
- Prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least once every four years and publish an update on progress towards these objectives annually.

Equality Objectives 2026-2030

As stated above, Cowick Primary is required to set specific and measurable equality objectives. The development of these objectives has taken into account pupil data, attainment levels, evidence of any equality issues across all of our functions, issues that may be affecting people with protected characteristics and also acknowledged the three aims of the 'general' equality duty. These objectives have been agreed with the Governing Body, of whom Kay Ray is the Chair. Our objectives are set out below:

1	**To further strengthen adaptive teaching and inclusive classroom practice so that all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs, achieve highly and participate fully in all aspects of school life**
2	**To foster an inclusive culture where every pupil feels safe, valued, respected and able to contribute to school life**
3	**To ensure information, resources, environments and communication systems are accessible and responsive to the needs of pupils, families, staff and visitors**

Progress against these objectives will be reported on annually (please refer to **Appendix 2**).

Publishing Equality Information

The specific duties aim to promote transparency in schools and to increase accountability to parents, carers and regulators. The publication of non-confidential equality-related data and information about Cowick Primary and its pupils will help parents to understand what we are doing to eliminate any potential discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Published information will also be a resource for decision-makers within the school. Details of equality related information that we have published and the location of this data is outlined in the table below:

Document/Data	Published or N/A	Where is it published?
Equality Objectives	✓	Equality Policy
Annual update towards the equality duty and equality objectives	✓	Equality Policy – Appendix 2
Accessibility Plan (including annual progress update)	✓	Equality Policy – Appendix 1
Non-confidential equality data regarding pupil population at the school (gender, race, disabilities, Free School Meals, Children Looked After, language, SEN)	✓	Governing body minutes
School performance data e.g. attainment, absence/attendance	✓	Website
Governing body minutes	✓	Inspection copies in office
Anti-bullying policy	✓	Website
School development plan	✓	Website
Parent and pupil surveys	✓	Website / Class Dojo
Non-confidential equality data regarding staff (if employ more than 150 people)	N/A	

School Responsibilities

The Head Teacher/Head of Centres is responsible for:

- Providing accurate and appropriate information to the Governing Body to enable them to publish and demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Making sure that steps are taken to address the school's stated Equality Objectives
- Ensuring that equality and accessibility plans are readily available and that the Governors, staff, pupils, parents and guardians know about them
- Providing regular information for staff and Governors about progress against the stated Equality Objectives and accessibility plan
- Making sure that all staff understand their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty and receive training and support to carry these out
- Ensuring that all policies and strategies when being developed, implemented and reviewed do not create inequality and have a positive impact by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist
- Taking appropriate action in cases of discrimination, harassment and victimisation

All staff are responsible for promoting equality in the workplace, adhering to the regulations of the Equality Act 2010 and following the Cowick Primary Equality Policy.

References

Department of Education, Equality Act 2010, Advice for School Leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities, September 2012

Equality & Human Rights Commission, Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England, 2014

Equality & Human Rights Commission, Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils Guidance for Schools in England, 2015

GEO, Equality Act 2010: Specific Duties to Support the Equality Duty. What do I need to know? A Quick Start Guide for Public Sector Organisations, 2011, p6

Appendix 1: Cowick Primary Accessibility Plan 2026-2029

An Accessibility Plan has been drawn up in line with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10 (relating to Disability) of the Equality Act 2010. The Accessibility Plan has been developed to cover the three year period until September 2029 and is based on the findings of the recently completed Accessibility Audit.

The Accessibility Audit will be completed by the school every year in order to inform the development or revision of the Accessibility Plan and School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting of progress of the Accessibility Plan on an annual basis.

It may not be feasible to undertake all of the works during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans.

The plan shows the ways in which Cowick Primary intends, over time, to achieve the following three aims:

- *Improve access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers reasonable adjustments to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.*

- *Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, expanding and making reasonable adjustments to the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are other pupils. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.*

- *Improve and make reasonable adjustments to the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.*

The Accessibility Plan is structured to complement and support the school's Equality Objectives, and will similarly be published on the school website. It should be read in conjunction with the following school policies, strategies and documents: Behaviour Management Policy, Curriculum Policies, Emergency Plan, Health & Safety Policy, School Improvement Plan, Special Educational Needs Policy and the Teaching and Learning Policy.

Accessibility Plan 2026-2029					
Aim 1 - Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum					
Outcome	**Action**	**Timescale**	**Responsible person**	**Resource implication costs/source of funding**	**Progress/evaluation**
To ensure that the Accessibility Plan continues to be an annual item at the FGB meeting	Clerk to the Governors to add to list for FGB meetings annually.	Annually	Clerk	N/A	
To improve staff awareness of disability issues Whole school community aware	Staff training on Benedicts law and neurodivergence.	Ongoing	EHT/HOS/SENCO	Training	
To ensure that all policies continue to consider the implications of disability access Policies reflect current legislation	Review of policies and introduction of allergy safety policy, school food policy.	Ongoing	EHT/HOS/SBM	Cost of time to write/update policies	

Aim 2 - Improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided					
Outcome	**Action**	**Timescale**	**Responsible person**	**Resource implication costs/source of funding**	**Progress/evaluation**
To ensure that, where possible, the school buildings and grounds are accessible for all children and adults and continue to improve access to the school's physical environment for all Modifications will be made to the school building to improve access	Audit of accessibility of school buildings and grounds by Governors. New boiler fitted to improve physical environment. Environmental Sustainability Policy and Climate Action Plan implemented. Suggest actions and implement as budget allows.	Ongoing	SBM/EHT	Support from LA – funding streams and devolved capital	
Aim 3 - Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils					
Outcome	**Action**	**Timescale**	**Responsible person**	**Resource implication costs/source of funding**	**Progress/evaluation**
To ensure that all parents and other members of the community can access information	Website has accessibility options. Information can be in alternative formats such as Braille and large font. Messaging app allows for translation. Model publication scheme in place.	As needed	SBM/EHT/Admin	Cost of photocopies	
To ensure that parents who are unable to attend school because of a disability can attend parents' evenings	Staff to hold parent's evenings by phone, via Teams, or send home written information.	Autumn and Spring Term	Class teachers	N/A	

Parents are informed of childrens' progress					
To ensure that parents who are unable to attend school because of a disability and have children of SEND can attend SEN meetings and reviews	Staff to hold meetings by phone, via Teams or send home written information/TSPs.	Termly and as required	Class teachers/SENCO	Cost of photocopying	
Parents who are unable to complete forms due to reading difficulties/dyslexia supported to complete these in school to enable access to appropriate resources	Staff to support with completion of forms.	As requested	All staff	time	

Appendix 2: Cowick Primary's Annual Update on Progress towards the Equality Duty and the Equality Objectives (2025-26)

Compliance with the Equality Duty

As set out within the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), all public sector bodies are subject to the three aims of the 'general' equality duty, when exercising their functions, and must have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Further to the general duties of the PSED, as above, public bodies are subject to 'specific duties'. One of which, is to publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty and how the three aims of the general equality duty have been considered as part of the decision-making process.

Please see the table below which shows how Cowick Primary has paid due regard to the three aims:

General Equality Duty Aims	Examples/Evidence for 2025-26
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act	There have been no fixed term exclusions. Ofsted March 2023: 'Pupils are happy and feel safe in school. Adults consistently use the 'High Five behaviour rules.' As a result, pupils behave well; they are kind and honest. Pupils consistently follow the rules to stay safe. In lessons, pupils work hard. They are respectful to adults and each other. If there are disagreements, pupils have approaches that they can use to solve them before they go to an adult. Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is and know that if it happens, adults help to quickly resolve it.' Parent code of conduct adopted and recently revised.
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it	A Diversity week was held in June 2026. Children learned about physical and hidden disabilities. Black History month RSHE lessons which focus on inclusion and diversity. Safer Recruitment procedures.
Foster good relations across all characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it	Ofsted, March 2023: 'There is a carefully considered personal, social, health and education curriculum in place to support pupils' well-being. Through student elections, pupils have learned the importance of voting. They consider and compare different faiths, for example, through studying the rules that different religions have. Pupils understand difference and know to treat everyone equally' Good links / relationships with external agencies. Pupil Voice.

Cowick Primary collect information relating to pupils, or any other people who are affected by the schools policies and practices, who share a protected characteristic. This is used as a resource for decision-makers within the school.

Non-confidential equality-related data and information about Cowick Primary and our pupils, is published in order to help parents understand what we are doing towards the three aims *(please refer to the 'Publishing Equality Information' section of the policy for details of the information the school has and where it is published).*

Progress against the Equality Objectives

The other 'specific' duty is to develop and publish measurable equality objectives that are needed to further the three aims of the 'general' equality duty and to publish an update on progress towards these on an annual basis. The table below provides an update on Cowick Primary's equality objectives for 2025-26.

Equality Objective	Progress in the last school year 2025-26
To further strengthen adaptive teaching and inclusive classroom practice so that all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs, achieve highly and participate fully in all aspects of school life	New objective.
To foster an inclusive culture where every pupil feels safe, valued, respected and able to contribute to school life	New objective.
To ensure information, resources, environments and communication systems are accessible and responsive to the needs of pupils, families, staff and visitors	New objective.