

Equality Objectives Annual Report 2024

- **Ensure children understand their rights and responsibilities to equality.**

Rights and responsibilities are concept words used across the curriculum. The children are specifically taught this vocabulary in context to support their understanding and use of the language. We ensure the children experience them in the context of real situations. Repetition and continuous modelling is key in aiding the children's understanding.

The 'living in the wider world' strand of the PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) curriculum is where this threads through our lessons. It focuses on valuing diversity within the community, strategies to challenge stereotypes and highlights how to recognise prejudice and how to respond to it.

Throughout the month of October the children learn about and celebrate Black History Month. However, it doesn't stop there. Our curriculum supports this learning all year round.

PSHE and social curriculum is focused on the children's understanding of self-regulation and how to relate to others, and includes equality and understanding of different needs. For example, autism, ADHD and anxiety.

Class assemblies regularly focus on equality and celebrating differences. In particular, last year a Year 6 child led a discussion on autism from his own personal experience.

Class trips took place to Safety Works. These visits have a focus on rights and responsibilities in society and understanding the law.

We are also an official School of Sanctuary. Exactly what this means can be found on our website at <https://www.bridgewater.newcastle.sch.uk/our-school/school-of-sanctuary/>

- **Narrowing the achievement gap for pupils who share a characteristic historically correlated with lower achievement.**

The percentage of vulnerable groups remain well above the national average 52% Pupil Premium, 53% English as an Additional Language, 35% Special Educational Need and Disability. In 2023/24, 56.5% of the school's population are disadvantaged. 47.3% of disadvantaged pupils have a SEND need, 42.5% are Minority Ethnic and 24.6% have a first language other than English, all are above the national figures.

While gaps remain, in 2024 gaps narrowed and reading for Pupil Premium children was above the national figure. In 2023 attainment and progress in all statutory year groups was in line or above national averages except in Key Stage Two maths for progress. In 2024 attainment in all statutory year groups was in line or above national averages. There was no score for progress in 2024.

Early Years Good Level of Development, Key Stage One Phonics and Y2 results were above the national average again in 2023 and despite caution around 2022 results nationally due to the impact of COVID 19, this is in line with the improving trend for Bridgewater that was happening prior to the pandemic. In 2024 these results were in line with national average.

In 2024 KS2 progress was in line with the national average for the whole cohort except in Maths. Average scaled scores were above 100 (107 for Reading, 106 for Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling, 108 for Maths). 54.2% of the Y6 cohort were defined as disadvantaged, 53.1% of these met the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths compared to 61% of the whole cohort and 3.1% achieved greater depth compared to 3.4% for the whole cohort.

Attendance for disadvantaged remains a priority particularly unauthorised absences and continuing to reduce exclusions.

Being a Newcastle City Council school we now have access to Challenging Education's online professional learning programme 'Thinking Differently for Disadvantaged Learners©' until July 2031. This is a tried and tested online learning resource appropriate for all phases of education, designed to help all school staff to 'Think Differently' about working with our most disadvantaged learners. We have also signed up to their Raising Attainment for Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) programme. RADY is a long-term hearts and minds approach, helping schools to become equitable in all aspects of the education they provide, and making sure that those learners who need it most, get the extra that helps them to get there. This begins in school with the RADY catalyst – quite simply, at the start of a Key Stage, flagging up a pupil as having untapped potential and ensuring everything is done to close that gap as early as possible. This means the pupil is set the same expectations as their non-disadvantaged peer. Because the catalyst is applied at the start of a phase of education, schools have a number of years to ensure the extra makes life-changing differences.

Pupil Progress Meetings look at groups of learners and which interventions to put in place to narrow any identified gaps. A number of interventions exist, including (but not limited to) Lexia, Direct Phonics, bought-in professional speech & language support, counselling and occupational therapy.

As a school, we set aside a pot of money and identify children for catch-up tuition. This was developed further with the delivery of the National Tutoring Programme and grants to support further one-to-one and small group tuition.

We were part of a Zone West Project, which identified children with lower achievement and helped raise aspirations through regular sessions with the child and contact with parents / carers.

From the Governors perspective, they have responsibility for providing oversight in areas such as quality of teaching, pupil achievement and curriculum. In providing scrutiny, Governors actively request progress on the equality objectives, either in full governing body meetings or in the curriculum and finance committee meetings to ensure the school continues to deliver on the equality objectives.

- **Workforce development, including a focus on recruitment to ensure staff better reflects the communities we serve.**

Within the last 2 years, we have appointed twenty new members of staff across a range of different positions. Of these, ten live in the immediate community we serve.

Colleagues who live in the community and / or share similar beliefs to those in our community have shared their knowledge and experience with the children (and staff). It has been particularly beneficial in aiding the delivery of RE, including the bringing in of relevant artefacts to share and discuss. These colleagues have also arranged visits to local places of worship.

During the autumn 2023 term we were in the position of electing a new Parent Governor. We were delighted to receive 5 nominations, obviously all for individuals who reflect and represent the community we serve.

Classes are also giving conscious thought and consideration to how people are represented in their class readers. The English Lead has worked with our volunteer Librarians to source books which are representative, such as those where the main character has a disability, and have a focus on all protected characteristics.