



Community Cohesion Policy

Introduction

The curriculum for all schools should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. (Education Act 2002, Section 78).

‘Schools have a duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different groups.’ (Race Relations Amendment Act 2000). (Education Act 2002, Section 78).

Elliott Park recognises the importance of these two statements which form part of existing law. From 2007 schools have a duty to promote community cohesion. (The Education and Inspections Act 2006).

The school is responsible for educating its pupils to live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of cultures, religions or beliefs, ethnicities and social backgrounds. Our school, by nature of its location, serves a predominantly monocultural population. We endeavour, therefore, to ensure our children receive an education that offers a broad and diverse reflection on different social and cultural backgrounds.

Children can benefit from meaningful interaction with those from different backgrounds, for example through links with other schools and community organisations. We therefore, promote and support a common sense of identity and show our pupils that whatever the social background, religion or ethnicity, our community can be united with different communities by having shared values and common experiences. Our ethos is that all our pupils will become responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

The Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review published in February 2007 states that:

...we passionately believe that it is the duty of all schools to address issues of ‘how we live together’ and ‘dealing with difference’ however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem. There is a strong sense of an individual’s rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn.

Definition

“Education is the best antidote to prejudice” (Professor Ted Cantle)

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By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community. (Johnson, Local Government Association 2002).

At Elliott Park School the term 'community' has the following dimensions:

- Our school community – the children and young people it serves, their parents, carers and families and the school's staff.
- The community within which our school is located – enriching the curriculum through visits and visitors, exploiting opportunities to work with other local schools, leading and supporting community events in the locality.
- The UK community – developing meaningful relationships with schools in other parts of the UK and enabling our pupils to build knowledge and understanding of the diversity of life in the UK.
- The global community – enabling pupils to learn about and from different countries and cultures and developing links with schools in other countries.

Aims

Our school aims to contribute to community cohesion in the following ways:

- To promote equality of opportunity (see Equalities Policy).
- To understand and respond to the needs of the community.
- To have high expectations of success, raising achievement for all pupils and removing barriers to access and participation.
- To raise awareness of faith, ethnicity, culture and socio-economic factors across the wider community.
- To foster a sense of belonging, not only to the school community but also to the wider community.

Learning, teaching & curriculum

Learning, teaching and a range of curriculum areas such as RE and PSHE ensure our children have an understanding of community diversity and prepare them for a changing society. At our school there are many opportunities for children to learn shared values and have a wide sense of community in their immediate surroundings and those of the UK and globally; these form part of our cohesion plan, which includes:

- School Council
- Healthy Eating Policy reinforced by school nurse visit and talk on healthy eating
- Activity week – Around the World Multi-cultural week
- Special assemblies
- Charity events

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- Visits to places of worship
- Visitors from the wider community: magistrates, police, fire brigade for example.

Evaluation and planning

Progress is evaluated by analysing data assessment; to keep track of the performance of different groups and tackling underperformance of any particular group. We have effective approaches to deal with incidents of prejudice, discrimination, bullying and harassment (see Equalities Policy, Anti-bullying Policy and Positive Behaviour Policy).

The impact that the school is having in implementing community cohesion will be monitored in the following ways:

- Tracking/analysing school data
- Pupil/parent communication and feedback
- Pupil perceptions

Wherever appropriate an action plan will be developed in response to these evaluations. All staff will have a responsibility to identify and ensure links are made within other curricular areas; to plan schemes of work which enable pupils to explore diversity and global dimension issues and to maintain links with other local schools. The action plan will be the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team shared with the school community.