

Academies Trust

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Review of equality objectives

February 2023

Introduction

Our equality objectives have been in place since April 2021, and are published on our Trust's website as part of our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Under the PSED we are required to review our equality objectives at least every four years, and to report on progress towards them annually.

We are content that the objectives remain 'fit for purpose'; this is our latest report on progress.

Following publication of the equality objectives, a comprehensive action plan was put in place for the 2021/22 academic year.

Objective 1: to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into the curriculum and teaching & learning practices

Objective

The Trust and its academies will work towards a curriculum and teaching & learning practices which:

- are inclusive - all pupils and staff are welcomed and valued
- show respect for and appreciation of one another as individuals
- prepare pupils for life in a diverse society by encouraging respect for linguistic, cultural and religious diversity that exists in local communities and the wider world
- develop personal and cultural identity in all pupils
- widen educational and personal horizons of all pupils if limited by factors that compromise equality
- are proactive in tackling discrimination
- promote benefits of diversity

We will work with our sponsor, the Co-op, to develop a new curriculum on anti-racism so that the next generation knows what it means to be anti-racist.

Review

We have set out a clear intent to make long-term sustainable changes, ensuring the curriculum is truly inclusive. We are working in partnership with the Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality (CRED) at Leeds Beckett University, who have been delivering a series of workshops to staff, Trustees and Governors. These are providing the grounding for our academies to commence work on updating their curriculums.

The continuation of this programme is that all academies will be offered to sign up to the Anti Racist Schools Award funded by the Co-op. This is a 2 year programme which will enable academies to embed the earlier training within their academy.

Further information is at Annex 1.

Objective 2: to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into the wider organisation

Objective

The Trust and its academies will work towards this objective by:

- a. each academy monitoring and analysing pupil achievement and progress by ethnicity, gender and disability, and acting on any trends or patterns in this data which identify the need for additional support for pupils with the aim of narrowing the gap for equality groups.
- b. each academy publishing a statement setting out the actions they intend taking to advance equality, diversity & inclusion during the forthcoming academic year (or from their date of joining the Trust). A report will be provided by the Headteacher / Principal, on request annually, to enable Trust-wide reporting.
- c. ensuring, as we adopt a Trust-wide HR information system, that this incorporates the ability to provide robust reporting on and monitoring of equalities data.
- d. further developing reporting on our gender pay gap and – in future – other pay gaps (e.g. ethnicity), and taking positive action to reduce these gaps where possible.
- e. taking steps to address the risk of bias and discriminatory behaviour, initially by raising awareness of this facet of equality and diversity through leadership training; and ensuring that ‘blind recruitment’ takes place for all roles across the Trust.
- f. creating and promoting opportunities for staff voice, and debate & dialogue, within the Trust around these key issues.

Review

In addition to academy level monitoring and analysis (a) we have a comprehensive trust-wide data dashboard which gives an overview of achievement and progress, and also other indicators such as student attendance and exclusions. This is continually being improved to include more information.

Academies established their own Equality Statements / Objectives which were moderated by the E&D Network Group in summer 2021. These were reviewed (& updated if necessary) in Autumn 2022, and the majority of academies have also reported on progress during the 2021/22 academic year (b). Links to the reports on individual academy websites are at Annex 2.

Over the last 12 months we have continued to increase the functionality of our integrated HR & Payroll System and worked hard to get ethnicity data inputted (c). The system can now be used to report on gender, age and ethnicity - with data being shared at our recent annual Governor Conference, which focused on EDI. As we start to roll out Employee Self Service, colleagues will be encouraged to review and complete / update all of their equalities data.

In 2022 we were able to report our ethnicity pay gap (d) for the first time, alongside our gender pay gap. This was discussed at our Trust Board's Remuneration Committee, alongside future actions.

In addition to the training delivered under objective (1), from September 2021 each academy identified an SLT EDI Lead and an EDI Link Governor. An external provider was used to deliver training to this cohort (e). EDI training was provided for our Trust's central team; and Trans Awareness training was also delivered to the extended HR team during 2021/22 to support the launch of our Trans Equality Policy. Blind shortlisting continues to be 'the norm' in our recruitment processes.

We have established an Equality & Diversity Network Group, which comprises staff and Governor colleagues from across our academies who are able to raise matters and provide a 'sounding board' for senior leaders (f) - for example, advice on our special leave policy in relation to religious observance. Some academies also have similar forums for colleagues and/or students. EDI was the theme of our 2023 Annual Governor Conference. A year-round calendar of events & activities takes place to celebrate diversity.

Annex1 - Development of an Anti Racist Curriculum

Achievements to Date

In partnership with the Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality (CRED) at Leeds Beckett University, Trust colleagues and Trust Board & Governors have attended a 'Let's Talk About Race' session. This session looked at the representation of people of colour within education and why representation is one step to developing race equity, aiming to encourage both personal and institutional reflection.

This session was followed by a 'Developing an Anti-Racist Masterclass' which empowered senior leaders across the Trust to explore the development of an effective anti-racist school policy, with due regard to other statutory and advisory policies.

Developments for Academic Year 2022/23

From the Autumn Term 2022 CRED have been delivering a series of training workshops on 'Racial Literacy' and 'Race Conversations identifying milestones on the journey to becoming racially literate.

Colleagues have been exploring key themes around Power, Allyship, Saviourism, and White Fragility as well as practical discussions on how unconscious and conscious biases/stereotypes impact how we think and talk about issues of race. Through these workshops staff are gaining confidence and vocabulary around anti racism, including understanding microaggressions, micro-insults and microinvalidations.

The aim will be to review and decolonise the curriculum and will be supported by Subject and Regional Directors. All sessions will use our scheme of delegation and Principles of Curriculum Statement, which sets the expectations and intent of our curriculum, and enable our academies to design and implement their own full inclusive curriculum.

By the end of the academic year, we expect all schools to have developed their curriculum in line with their Equality and Diversity objectives. Our academies are at different stages in their development in this area, so we will target some academies with additional support where required.

What's Next?

All academies will be offered the opportunity to work towards the Anti Racist School Award delivered by Leeds Beckett CRED and funded by the Co-op.

By working towards this award, academies will be able to maintain the momentum achieved to date, as well as ensuring the embedding of the curriculum and overall culture with the academy.

The Anti-Racist School Award provides an evidence-based framework to support academies on this continued journey. The Award framework focuses on the following areas:

- Governance, Leadership & Management
- School Environment
- Professional Learning & Development
- Hidden Curriculum
- Pedagogy & Curriculum
- Parents/Carers & Community Partnerships

Each academy will have up to 2 years to achieve the award, following the initial coaching call and the status lasts for 3 years from completion.

Annex 2 - Academy E&D objectives & reviews

Co-op Academy Bebington
Co-op Academy Beckfield
Co-op Academy Broadhurst
Co-op Academy Brownhill
Co-op Academy Clarice Cliff Review
Co-op Academy Delius Review
Co-op Academy Failsworth
Co-op Academy Friarswood
Co-op Academy Grange
Co-op Academy Leeds
Co-op Academy Manchester
Co-op Academy Nightingale
Co-op Academy North Manchester
Co-op Academy Oakwood
Co-op Academy Parkland
Co-op Academy Portland
Co-op Academy Priesthorpe
Co-op Academy Princeville
Co-op Academy Smithies Moor
Co-op Academy Southfield
Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent
Co-op Academy Swinton
Co-op Academy Walkden
Co-op Academy Woodlands
Co-op Academy Woodslee
Connell Co-op College