



Brook Learning Trust

# Equality and Diversity Objectives: Review 2019-2020

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## Equality and Diversity Objectives: Review 2019-2020

Brook Learning Trust (BLT) is committed to equality and values diversity as an employer and a provider of education. We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims and they are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who have a shared characteristic and those who do not.

BLT annually reviews how well we achieve these aims with regard to the protected groups under the Equality Act, and as listed in the scope of the Equality and Diversity Policy, and this report reviews progress against the 2017–2021 equality objectives, which were published in October 2017. This report covers the academic year 2019–2020 and is intended to act as a benchmark against which we will measure our progress on the objectives over the coming years. The equality objectives relate to our practice as an employer and provider of education within the school sector.

We set ourselves six objectives for annual review:

Objective	Review
To ensure that staff and those within BLT's governance structure are aware of current legislation surrounding equality and diversity and understand the academy's responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Equality and Diversity policy sits with the highest level of accountability within our Trust, reflecting the importance we give to equality and diversity.</li> <li>• Our scheme of delegation enables those involved in governance to understand their responsibility for equality: the section 'Principles underlying the operation of governance' is explicit about this responsibility. The public sector equality duty has been incorporated into the job description of the Trust Clerk.</li> <li>• Reporting to Academy Councillors includes information on equalities issues including racist and homophobic bullying.</li> <li>• We promote equality of opportunity and take positive steps to prevent any form of discrimination, either direct or indirect, against those with protected characteristics in all aspects of employees' work and students' experience.</li> <li>• We promote equality of opportunity within all of our recruitment activity and monitoring by: promoting the policy and Trust commitment within job information and at the point of application; seeking applicant monitoring information to allow analysis on fairness of opportunity</li> </ul>

	<p>and potential discrimination during recruitment and selection campaigns; enquiring consistently about reasonable adjustments to be made at interview stage; enquiring consistently during medical assessments and Occupational Health (OH) referrals for existing staff where the Equality Act is likely to apply and taking action as appropriate to support staff within the workplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of available candidate monitoring data for 2019/20 shows that BLT promotes vacancies and attracts candidates from both national and local recruitment campaigns. Limited data is available on the protected characteristics of candidates and appointments other than age. Regarding age, there is even distribution of job offers. There has been an increase in job offers to younger people as a result of Teach First trainees at one of our academies.</li> <li>• The induction process refers to the Equality and Diversity Policy and staff are made aware of this during onboarding and induction processes. Induction training for all staff was refreshed during the academic year 2018-19 and focuses on equalities issues, alerting employees and volunteers to our policy.</li> <li>• BLT's employment policies refer to fairness and equity wherever appropriate. The Bullying and Harassment Policy is based on the ACAS Code of Practice and makes it clear for staff how to outline concerns using the published guidance and templates for raising complaints.</li> <li>• Allegations of bullying and harassment are investigated quickly, action is taken and incidents are resolved informally under relevant procedures if possible. Training is put in place to improve knowledge of awareness where applicable.</li> <li>• Exit questionnaires have been revised to ask specific questions around discrimination and whether, in the view of the employee, this was handled effectively. Of all leavers across the academic year, one exit questionnaire highlighted concerns about how to raise issues of harassment from male pupils to a female member of staff. This has been further investigated and fed back to the Principal to consider lessons learned. The latest Bullying and Harassment policy, and accompanying template for</li> </ul>
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	<p>raising complaints, has been circulated to all existing and new staff. One outstanding Employment Tribunal claim regarding discrimination is being defended by BLT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each OH referral continues to ask whether employees are covered by the Equality Act and recommendations are taken into account regarding reasonable adjustments to support a return to work when this applies, and in many cases where the act does not apply.</li> <li>• One complaint was received during the reporting period around time delay in the provision of reasonable adjustments. Work is being undertaken to simplify and improve the process of the supply of equipment following risk assessments / DSE assessments and OH recommendations.</li> <li>• Mental Health at Work training has been made available for managers supporting employees with mental health conditions.</li> <li>• Staff groups highlighted as vulnerable due to disability, ill health, pregnancy, protected characteristics or for other reasons during the pandemic have each undertaken individual risk assessments with their managers. Action has been taken to recognise vulnerability and sensitive conversations have happened to ensure that staff are protected and risk is mitigated. Staff and unions continue to report very positively on the approach taken by the Trust to ensure the respect and dignity for groups of more vulnerable staff.</li> </ul>
<p>To promote cultural understanding and awareness and tolerance of different religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The taught curriculum in all academies promotes cultural understanding, religious tolerance and multiculturalism. Visiting speakers, trips, visits and non-timetable days are planned to promote cultural understanding, awareness and tolerance of different religious beliefs. All form tutors have weekly discussions based around cultural understanding with tutor groups through using 'Thought for the Day' and SMSC discussions. Any incidents of student intolerance due to religious beliefs are reported to the safeguarding team using school procedures. The assembly rota is planned to include regular topics relating to cultural understanding and awareness and tolerance of different religious beliefs.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracking systems to monitor incidents of student intolerance due to religious belief are in place.</li> </ul>
Actively close gaps in attainment and achievement between students for all groups of students; especially students eligible for Pupil Premium, students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and students from minority ethnic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BLT works to reduce gaps in attainment and achievement and planned action is set out in AIPs and the BLT Business Plan.</li> <li>Reducing gaps in attainment and achievement forms part of academy self-evaluation, Standards Panel monitoring and is reflected in evaluation of leadership and management.</li> <li>Academy Pupil Premium plans and reviews can be found here:</li> <li><a href="#">The Ebbsfleet Academy</a></li> <li><a href="#">The Hayesbrook School</a></li> <li><a href="#">The High Weald Academy</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to improve accessibility across the school for students, staff and visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BLT has secured a new build at The High Weald Academy which is DDA compliant.</li> <li>BLT has worked closely with PFI provider at The Ebbsfleet Academy to improve accessibility for those with disabilities. Students who are wheelchair users participate fully in the curriculum and the life of the academy.</li> <li>Accessibility plans are reviewed annually.</li> <li>The Trust adapted to on line interviewing during lockdown ensuring that all candidates were able to access virtual platforms and forums. Testing was put in place for candidates who requested adjustments or training to access the virtual interview processes.</li> <li>In 2019/20 ongoing adjustments to working the environment and/or working pattern were made for five employees under the Equality Act 2010. Adjustments on working environment or working pattern were made for a further two employees following OH referrals where the Equality Act did not apply but where these interventions supported a return to work.</li> </ul>
Monitor the incidence of the use of homophobic, sexist and racist language by students in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidence of discriminatory language by students are monitored at academy level and reported to Academy Councils.</li> </ul>

<p>academy community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2019/2020 there were no incidents of sexist language reported.</li> <li>• At Academy A - 7 incidents of racist/xenophobic language and 10 incidents of homophobic/transphobic/biphobic bullying and 2 of disability discrimination. Students were sanctioned with either a fixed term exclusion, academy detentions and/or internal exclusion. Parents were notified either through telephone conversations and/or parental meetings. All incidents of discrimination resulted in restorative conversations with students. There was one repeat offender who was responsible for the two disability discrimination comments which occurred on consecutive days.</li> <li>• At Academy B - 1 incident of racist/xenophobic language and 0 incidents of homophobic bullying. The student was sanctioned according to academy policy, parents were notified and restorative conversations took place.</li> <li>• At Academy C - 5 incidents of racist/xenophobic language and 1 incident of homophobic bullying. Students were sanctioned according to academy policy, parents were notified and restorative conversations took place. Any student who demonstrates racist behaviour is required to complete a racist information pack to promote equality and educate the student with a greater understanding of diversity.</li> </ul>
<p>To review and revise the curriculum so that it encourages tolerance and respect</p>	<p>Curriculum review found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All academies promote British Values including respect and tolerance and devote time to exploring what they mean through assemblies and activities. The Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) and Religious Studies (RS) curriculum covers attitudes and relationships and raise awareness of the benefits of a diverse society. Each academy has an active Student Council who are encouraged to embody and promote respect and tolerance in their activities.</li> <li>• All academies plan the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) provision at the start of the year. Opportunities to be taught and discuss British Values are provided throughout the year through weekly assemblies and SMSC sessions. These cover a variety of topics such as LGBT rights, gender equality and racism. In Year 7 and 8 students have a dedicated weekly PSHCE lesson. The</li> </ul>

	<p>curriculum in these lessons covers British Values and explores issues of equality and diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At Academy A - RS and Citizenship are taught in Year 7 and 8 for 2 lessons a fortnight. In Years 10 and 11 students then choose to study either Citizenship or RS at GCSE to ensure that they have awareness of tolerance, rights, responsibilities and religious diversity within the context of multi-cultural Britain. Each year has one 'Academy Day' dedicated to focusing on issues of tolerance, rights and responsibilities at an age appropriate level. The house system provide opportunities for students to volunteer and raise money for charitable causes.</li> <li>• At Academy B – PSHCE is taught via a discreet curriculum in key stage 3 and by supplementary lessons or 'drop down days' in key stage 4 to cover issues such as sexual health and safe driving. In key stage 3, each tutor group is responsible for a 'Shine a Light' assembly where the group decide on and research a cultural or social topic that is important to them and, with their form tutor, design and deliver an assembly to the rest of the year group. Opportunities are provided for students to raise money for charitable causes and students are very active volunteering in the community.</li> <li>• At Academy C – Opportunities for students to volunteer and raise money for charitable causes are planned for 2020-21.</li> </ul> <p>The roles of Anti-Bullying ambassadors, Peer Ambassadors and the Student Council develop a supportive culture within the academy. The academy operates a restorative justice model that enables students to reflect and acknowledge their mistakes in order to promote personal self-development.</p> <p>Students have the opportunity to be involved in debating topics and activities as a part of the tutor program that cover topics linked to that of the PSHCE curriculum.</p> <p>Students are rewarded for behaviours that demonstrate tolerance and respect through the allocation of House Points within the academy behaviour management software – Class Charts.</p>
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