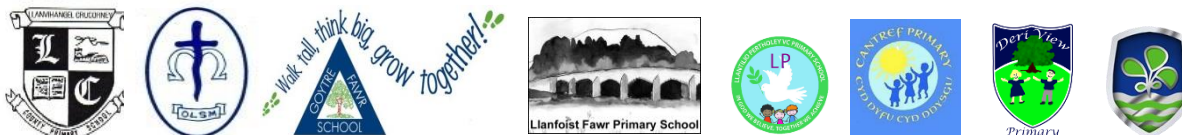


Our Lady and Saint Michael's RC Primary School.



STRATEGIC EQUALITY POLICY AND PLAN 2023 - 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Our Lady & St. Michael's (OLSM) is a voluntary aided, English medium Roman Catholic primary school. The school offers an education to children aged 4 – 11 years in the town of Abergavenny and the surrounding area.

We are a co-educational day school, open to children of all faiths and none. Choosing the right school for your child is one of the most important responsibilities you undertake. The purpose of this prospectus is to help you make that choice and to give you information about our school.

Our Lady & St. Michael's is a school that our children, staff and governors are proud of. We strive to promote the values of our Christian faith throughout our daily life. We endeavour to provide our pupils with a curriculum which will motivate and engage them. We constantly review the achievements of the school and celebrate our successes.

We regard each child as special and a unique gift from God. We aim to nurture each individual to ensure they find and fulfil their potential.

We see the quality of our relationships as the cornerstone of what we are about. Within our relationships we promote self esteem, respect, tolerance, honesty, fairness and forgiveness.

Our aim is to give as broad and balanced a primary education as possible working with parents, the parish and Archdiocese, Monmouthshire County Council and the wider community.

As of July 2022 the school has 205 pupils on roll with 20% EAL and 20% eFSM.

1.2 Statement of Purpose

- Promote good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.

1.3 Mission Statement

Mission Statement of Our Lady & St. Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School

We live, we love, we learn, we grow in Jesus. Byw, Caru, Dysgu, Tyfu yn yr Iesu.

We live; with Jesus at the centre of our lives.

We love; one another as brothers and sisters in God's family.

We learn; to be the person God called us to be.
We grow; to take our place in the community.

1.4 Vision Statement

We regard each child as special and a unique gift from God.
We aim to nurture each individual to ensure they find and fulfil their potential.
We see the quality of our relationships as the cornerstone of what we are about.
Within our relationships we promote self-esteem, respect, tolerance, honesty, fairness and forgiveness.

1.5 School Aims

Aims of the School

- To be a welcoming, distinctive, Catholic community of deep love and care, where everyone is valued for whom they are.
- To create a strong partnership between home, school and parish and to be of service to local and global community.
- To recognise the presence of Christ in our lives and to celebrate His love for us through prayers, worship and in everything we do.
- To be a school with a deep understanding of the need for holiness in order to witness Christ in the world of today.
- To provide high quality education which is inspirational and creative to enable children and staff to reach their full potential in meeting the challenges of the modern world.
- To ensure that all have a shared ownership of the Mission and Mission Statements of the school in our search for excellence.
- To be an evangelising community where we nourish the faith of our children and the wider school family through prayer and the liturgical and sacramental life of the school.
- To continue our pilgrim journey as a school with an enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God and a determination to nurture the whole person.

2. EQUALITY VISION AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Strategic Equality Plan has been developed so that the School can set out how it aims to meet its commitment to equality and how it will meet its legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires all schools to have equality objectives in place by April 2012. These objectives cover all following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage

and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and include the Welsh language in Wales.

- 2.3 Actions to achieve these objectives are in the Action Plan at the end of this document and are an initiative or action in the School Improvement Plan and evaluated through the School Improvement Plan and the school Equality Self Evaluation Tool.
- 2.4 The policy protects pupils, parents and guardians, employed staff (full time, part-time or on casual contracts), agency staff and contractors, governors and volunteers.
- 2.5 This Policy was written and adopted by the Abergavenny School Cluster in conjunction with the Head Teacher, and in consultation with staff and governors. This policy will be reviewed within 4 years.
- 2.6 The plans in Appendices 1 and 2 were written by the Head Teacher in consultation with school stakeholders and are reviewed annually.

3 THE NATIONAL EQUALITY AGENDA

3.1 The Equality Act 2010

- 3.1.1 The nine protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act include everybody: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Equality Act sets down Public Sector Duties that apply to all the school's functions:
- Promoting equality of opportunity
 - Promoting good community relations
 - Eliminating discrimination
- 3.1.2 Specific public sector duties for Wales are set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, as issued by the Welsh Assembly Government. See 3.3.

3.2 The Human Rights Act 1998

- 3.2.1 Human Rights and equality are inextricably linked. Equality is treated as a fundamental human right, from the principle of equal respect for the inherent dignity of all people. Article 14 of the Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination '*on any grounds such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status*'. The words '*other status*' have been held to cover, amongst other things, sexual orientation, illegitimacy, marital status, trade union membership, trans-sexualism, disability, carers and imprisonment.
- 3.2.2 Article 14 can only be used when attached to a complaint relating to another Article of the Convention, such as Article 3: right to life, liberty and security of person or Article 8: right to a private and family life, home and correspondence.
- 3.2.3 In some instances the Human Rights Act 1998 gives greater rights to people than other equalities legislation because it judges treatment against a fixed standard and does not rely on comparison between treatment of one group of people and another.

3.3 The Welsh Language Act 1993 & the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

- 3.3.1 The Welsh language has official status and belongs to all the people of Wales. The Welsh Language Measure puts the Welsh and English language on a basis of equality.
- 3.3.2 The Welsh Language Education Scheme was approved by Monmouthshire County Council and applies to all schools. The principles of the Scheme and this Plan are similar; in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we will take the Welsh language into account alongside all the protected characteristics.

4 PUPILS

4.1 A School for Everyone

4.1.1 Our school is open to everyone. We will not discriminate in our admissions criteria, in providing education and access to any benefit, service or facility either directly or indirectly, against anyone with a protected characteristic. Opportunities in our school will be of equally high standard for everyone. We will not discriminate on the grounds of:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Age is the 9th protected characteristic and in a school context it applies to everybody except for pupils. We also do not discriminate on the grounds of Welsh language.

4.1.2 The school's duty to our pupils goes beyond just the formal education. It covers all school activities such as extra-curricular and leisure activities, after-school and homework clubs, sports activities and school trips, as well as school facilities such as libraries and IT facilities.

4.1.3 The school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. The duty is anticipatory. The school will ask disabled pupils whether they need any support or adjustments so that we are ready for them (for example, produce the lesson notes in large print or in an electronic format before the lesson). In some cases a disabled pupil may receive support under the special educational needs (SEN) framework under Part 4 of the Education Act 1993.

4.2 How do we deliver equality?

4.2.1 We will mainstream equality in providing education, access to benefits, services or facilities by making sure that people:

- Know the school's equality duties and the school's equality commitments
- Can access all the benefits of being at the school
- Know how to ask for help
- Are offered suitable support (for example, translation and interpretation, transport, technology, adaptations) where the lack of these services would place a person at a disadvantage on the grounds of a protected characteristic – to meet a need, not only a preference
- The impact upon the person involved is of great importance in determining what is reasonable

4.3 What support can you expect?

4.3.1 The school can only refuse to deliver support or adaptation if the school can prove that service is 'unreasonable' or 'impractical'. However, this can only apply to particular and unforeseen circumstances.

4.4 Positive Action

- 4.4.1 The school can take proportionate positive action to address disadvantages faced by pupils of a protected characteristic, or where it would enable or encourage participation by an under represented group. An example of this is engaging male role models to work with all children (as well as small groups of boys) in order to engage boys in developing better reading and writing skills. We will gather evidence before taking positive action.

4.5 Curriculum, Resources and Involvement

- 4.5.1 We will mainstream equality through the curriculum in our choice of diverse and challenging materials and activities. We will support children and young people, examine their lives and personal identity in the light of people's experiences, which are both similar and different to them.
- 4.5.2 The images we use will reflect the diversity of society in a positive way so to meet the third duty of the Equality Act - to promote good relations between people. We will not omit or avoid certain equality issues because to do so would be to promote a false picture of the people of Monmouthshire.
- 4.5.3 We will welcome people across the protected characteristics to our school to share their skills and experience. We will make sure that we make all people feel welcome.

5. STAFF

5.1 Employment

- 5.1.1 The school aims to be a fair employer and promote a friendly working culture. Without committed enthusiastic, skilled and empowered people the school cannot succeed. We will create a healthy, safe and supportive work environment where people are respected for who they are and employees can perform at their best.
- 5.1.2 We want our workforce to reflect society in Monmouthshire. It is illegal to discriminate either directly or indirectly against people in selecting and employing people, in the terms of employment, access to training, promotion, transfers, retirement, dismissal, and other benefits on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics.
- 5.1.3 School employees are covered by the school's Pay Policy which ensures that we have robust pay scales, performance management and commitment to continual professional development for employees through all employment levels. We refer to and have adopted Monmouthshire County Council's Human Resources Policies.

5.2 Requests in Relation to a Protected Characteristic

- 5.2.1 We will make every reasonable endeavour to meet employees' requests relating to a protected characteristic, including dress, food, holidays, prayer times, work patterns, leave, support, physical adaptations, in order not to discriminate.

5.3 Positive Action

- 5.3.1 Positive action measures can be used to counteract the effects of past discrimination so that people in such groups can achieve their potential. We will evidence that we believe such disadvantages or under representation exists before taking action.
- 5.3.2 If two candidates meet the job requirements and are equally good candidates, the school may choose a candidate from a less represented group in order to address demographic balance in the workforce.

5.4 Monitoring and Publishing Information

- 5.4.1 We will monitor and publish equality information on our workforce in line with Monmouthshire County Council's Strategic Equality Plan. This includes monitoring recruitment, employee development and retention.
- 5.4.2 The council's payroll service supports us in this. We will publish data in a way that does not identify individuals.

- 5.4.3 Figures on employment will not inform us of the reason for any differentials. For the causes of any differentials and actions to address them we'll ask current and prospective employees their opinions and experiences.

5.5 Positive About Disabled People

- 5.5.1 The school is committed to the two ticks - 'Positive about disabled people initiative', which guarantees an interview for disabled people who meet the essential job requirements. We can make changes to an employee's environment and role if they are disabled.

6. COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The school will communicate with people in a way that is suitable for them. We will:
- Design materials that are easy to read-clear language and clear layout
 - Use images that reflect the school and our local community
 - Ask people of their preferred method of communication, where we can record it and use it
 - Provide information in a variety of formats (for example, large print, Braille and other languages) where needed
 - Ensure full contact details are easy to find
 - Train and support employees in communication
- 6.2 The school recognises British Sign Language as a language in its own right. In Monmouthshire schools we also use Signalong. The school will promote Deaf culture and identity and make use of suitable BSL interpretation and recordings. The Gwent Hearing Impaired Service supports children, young people and families in school so that they can participate fully in school life. Where relevant, will train staff in deaf equality and BSL skills. We will identify the staff who have relevant communication skills to make it easy for pupils, visitors, parents.
- 6.3 The school will ensure that all policies (including the Strategic Equality Plan) are available on request.

7. ENGAGEMENT

- 7.1 The school regularly consults and involves all the school's stakeholders (including, parents, governors, and staff) on matters that concern them, including this Plan and Equality Objectives. Engaging people will give us evidence to work out how well we are doing in delivering equality.
- 7.2 The school has robust procedures for finding out how pupils think and feel about the school.

8. COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS

- 8.1 We like getting feedback about the school. We need people to tell us how we are doing. If you have a concern or complaint please let us know. You can tell a teacher or school employee, telephone, write or email us. If you'd like to make an appointment with a relevant person, we'll arrange it and feel free to bring along a friend or colleague for support.
- 8.2 When we deal with a concern or complaint we will do our best to keep people involved and informed of what's happening and check that everyone is happy with the process. Advocacy and personal support is available for children and young people who need it.

9. DISCRIMINATION, VICTIMISATION AND HARASSMENT

9.1 Discrimination

9.1.1 The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination. The school will make sure that nothing we do discriminates against any person or people on the grounds of a protected characteristic. Human Rights are applicable to all people in relation to the school. There are several kinds of illegal discrimination defined in the Equality Act 2010, they apply to service delivery and employment across the protected characteristics:

Direct discrimination – where a person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic (for example refused to admit a child because they are Roma).

Combined direct (dual) discrimination - where a person is treated less favourably because of a combination of protected characteristics (for example a school excludes a pupil because they are black and male).

Discrimination based on association - occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (for example where their brother is a disabled person).

Discrimination based on perception - occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because you mistakenly think that they have a protected characteristic (for example discrimination against a young person who is believed to be gay, even if they're not).

Indirect discrimination – when a policy or practice is apparently neutral but the effect places a group of people at a significant disadvantage (for example a rigid school dress code which does not account for items of clothing linked to religion).

Discrimination arising from disability – where a person is treated less favourably because of something related to their impairment (for example a pupil with a learning disability disciplined for not obeying a rule that they hadn't understood because they didn't understand the sign).

9.2 HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

9.2.1 The school's work around personal and social education will help build a school community that understands and enjoys equality and diversity.

9.2.2 The Equality Act 2010 protects people from harassment. Harassment is unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

9.2.3 The school has responsibility to protect pupils, prospective pupils, former pupils, employees etc. from harassment. The school will be pro-active on protecting people by raising awareness, training teachers and pupils, encouraging people to report harassment and will deal with problems as they arise.

9.2.4 Harassment now includes harassment based on association (for example a friend of a Muslim is mistakenly believed to be a Muslim).

9.2.5 Where there are instances of bullying in and associated with the school we will deal with instances promptly and sensitively. We recognise that instances that are motivated by prejudice against people of a particular characteristic, or bullying that affects one group of people in particular, has a greater negative effect, both for the people involved and for the school community.

9.3 VICTIMISATION

- 9.3.1 The Equality Act 2010 protects people from victimisation on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics. Victimisation is when a person subjects another person to detriment because they have done, or believed that they will do, a 'protected act.'
- 9.3.2 A 'protected act' are acts that include giving information or evidence under the Equality Act 2010, bringing proceedings, or making an allegation in relation to the Act, as long as they have done so in good faith - that is they thought they were being honest.

9.4 DISCRIMINATION

- 9.4.1 Name calling, physical attacks, threats, the spreading of false rumours in person and on-line are all made more serious where a person is victimised for who they are. We know that discrimination and prejudice are particularly damaging to the individual and to family, friends and the school community. The school will take incidents of discrimination seriously and sensitively. False allegations are also taken seriously.
- 9.4.2 We will take an active role where discrimination is identified and it involves our employees, pupils or premises. Incidents 'on the bus' or 'outside school' negatively affect our pupils as much as incidents in school and we will tackle it where it is known.
- 9.4.3 Discrimination involving adults are treated differently to those involving children and young people. All adults are fully responsible for their actions. Children and young people may need support and education in matters to do with prejudice and discrimination and as such we will try to find solutions that involve the whole group and avoid criminalising individuals' because of their actions. We will work with partners to find solutions, in particular where incidents are complicated or involve a wide group of people.

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PLAN DELIVERY

10.1 Leadership and Management

- 10.1.1 The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school fulfils its legal equalities responsibilities. A member of the Governing Body has a watching brief for equalities matters. With assistance from the Headteacher, the Governing Body will ensure that this Plan is implemented.
- 10.1.2 The named persons with responsibility for dealing with reported incidents of discrimination or bullying are Mr Viv Evans (Headteacher), Miss McCarthy (Deputy Head), Mrs Rose (Senior teacher), Miss Farr (Lower Phase lead). The school will make sure that all incidents of discrimination relating to the school, its pupils and staff are reported and recorded in a register. The register is shared with the Local Authority to help it plan anti-discrimination work. Neither the school nor the Local Authority will ever publicly identify individuals involved in incidents.
- 10.1.3 The Equality Co-ordinator is a senior member of staff with special responsibility for implementing and promoting equalities matters and this Plan.
- 10.1.4 School leaders will make sure that all people involved with the school know our equality commitments and their personal duty under it. We will provide suitable training for all governors, staff and pupils to continually develop their learning and experience of equality matters through a range of methods. Where there are issues or potential issues (for example, social tensions), we will continue to address matters through the curriculum and where it's needed use targeted external interventions.

10.2 Employees and Contractors

- 10.2.1 All staff and contractors (whether paid or not) are responsible for encouraging non-discriminatory practices and to report incidences of behaviour that do not comply with this policy. Therefore they should support the aims of the Strategic Equality Plan

10.3 Pupils

- 10.3.1 All pupils should support the aims of the Strategic Equality Plan and be aware of equality and diversity issues.
- 10.3.2 They should encourage non-discriminatory practices and to report any incidents of behaviour that fail to comply with this policy.

10.4 Parents

- 10.4.1 All pupils should support the aims of the Strategic Equality Plan and be aware of equality and diversity issues.
- 10.4.2 They should support the school in the promotion of the principles of dignity, courtesy and respect and encourage children to promote the principles in this policy outside school.

11. HOW WE ASSESS PROGRESS AND MONITOR IMPACT

11.1 Equality Impact Assessments

11.1.1 Before introducing important new policies or measures the school carefully assesses the potential impact on equalities, positive or negative. Monmouthshire County Council has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) tool which is suitable for schools. We will publish the Equality Impact Assessments as is required by law.

11.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will include:

- The purpose of the policy or practice
- A summary of the steps taken in the assessment (engagement)
- A summary of the information gathered and used
- The result of the assessment and
- Any decision taken by the school in relation to the results.

11.2 Monmouthshire County Council's Equality Self Evaluation Tool for Schools

11.2.1 This is a different tool and used in different circumstances. The school uses Monmouthshire County Council's Equality Self Evaluation Tool to evaluate performance across most equality matters. It looks at the work of the school in detail and provides a snapshot of where we are. It asks similar questions to the EIA but in respect to the whole school development.

11.2.2 Whenever possible, a broad range of people including staff, parents, pupils and others are involved in consultation on policy development. Any issues arising will be addressed and stakeholders informed of decisions and actions.

11.2.3 Performance in relation to the Action Plan and Equality Objectives will be reported to Governors annually and included in the school's Self Evaluation Report.

11.3 Identifying and publishing equality information

11.3.1 The school will identify, publish and use equalities information each year to show how we are delivering the equality duty. The information we publish will be easy to find and easy to understand.

11.3.2 For pupils and school performance we will be publishing information on:

- Composition broken down by year group, ethnicity and gender and by proficiency in English / Welsh
- Composition broken down by types of disability and special educational needs
- Inequality of outcome and participation connected with ethnicity, gender and disability, and with proficiency in English / Welsh
- Instances of discrimination
- Complaints.

11.3.3 We will be sensible in producing information. We realise that if the data group is very small then a breakdown of that data will not give us and useful information (for example looking at the academic

achievement of two individuals in a year group cannot tell us about the performance of Chinese pupils in general). No data published that will identify any individual.

- 11.3.4 Other matters including language needs, behavioural needs, poverty, schooling history and so on, will be taken into account in analysing data and developing strategies to address equality differences.

12. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following are the schools strategic objectives are taken from the School Improvement Plan which were decided in consultation with staff, pupils, Governors and parents.

APPENDIX 1: Strategic Equality Plan Action Plan

OBJECTIVE 1

Target	Action	Resources / Staff	Date	How will progress be measured?
Develop a robust system and effective pedagogy to support universal learner independence and targeted provision for ALN pupils.	Develop effective differentiation to support pupil needs, ability and challenge. Use 'Step Back' approach to support independent learning. Continue to implement changes outlined in new ALN code. Review the schools ALN structure ensuring effective and efficient use of resources. Use PASS/Happen to audit and track pupil well-being. Use ELSA for identified pupils.	Head teacher/ALNCO/all staff	Ongoing	Regular SDP reviews Monitor pupils / adults. Pupils work ALN documentation. Monitoring tracking information.

Impact on protected characteristics							
Sex (gender)	No	Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, language	Yes	Gender reassignment	No	Welsh	Yes
Age	Yes			Marriage and civil partnership	No	Religion or belief	No
Disability	Yes			Pregnancy and maternity	No	Sexual orientation	No

OBJECTIVE 2

Target	Action	Resources / Staff	Date	How will progress be measured?
1:1 To communicate with parents and carers using different media and formats.	People with disabilities are able to access school information through a variety of formats.	Head teacher	Ongoing	Regular parent surveys.
1:2 To provide support for pupils/ adults on work placements if they encounter harassment or bullying.	All pupils/ adults on work placements have access to support and mentoring where necessary.	Head teacher	ongoing	Monitor pupils / adults.

Impact on protected characteristics							
Sex (gender)	No	Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, language	Yes	Gender reassignment	No	Welsh	Yes
Age	Yes			Marriage and civil partnership	Yes	Religion or belief	Yes / No
Disability	Yes			Pregnancy and maternity	No	Sexual orientation	Yes / No

APPENDIX 2: Accessibility Action Plan 23/24

Details of Improvements	Target Date	Completed	Comments
See priority 3 school SDP 23/24	Ongoing 23/24		