Leigh St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Equality Policy and Objectives

October 2026 | Equality Objectives 2025–2028

Next policy review: October 2027

Our Mission and Commitment

INSPIRE To be the best that I can be
BELIEVE To believe I can make a difference for good in this world
ACHIEVE To know I have the roots to grow and the wings to fly

At Leigh St Mary's, we want every child and family to feel welcome, understood and part of our community. We encourage a lifelong love of learning and give children the confidence to discover their strengths. Our Christian values guide the care we show one another and our belief that every child can flourish. We welcome people of all faiths and beliefs, and those with no religious belief, with equal warmth and respect.

At Leigh St Mary's, our Diamond Rules help us put kindness and respect into everyday practice: show respect and good manners; follow instructions with thought and care; and care for everyone and everything. These expectations bring pupils, staff, governors and families together. We recognise that children and adults need different kinds of support, and that fairness sometimes means doing things differently so everyone has a meaningful opportunity to succeed.

Our School Bible Verse from Colossians 2 Verses 6 and 7

"As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so continue to live in him. Keep your roots deep in him and have your lives built on him. Be strong in the faith, just as you were taught. And always be thankful."

Our School's Christian Vision

At Leigh St Mary's Church of England Primary School, our vision is to be a flourishing Christian community where everyone is inspired to learn, believe in their potential and achieve all they are called to be.

Rooted in the love and grace of God, revealed through Jesus Christ and inspired by Colossians 2:6–7, we seek to ensure that every member of our school family is "rooted and built up in Him", growing in faith, wisdom and character.

Guided by our Christian values of friendship, respect and kindness, we aspire to nurture a community where love shapes relationships, everyone is valued and each person knows they belong. We aim to inspire hope, encourage resilience and develop courageous learners who face challenges with confidence, perseverance and an 'I can' attitude.

Through our motto of Inspire, Believe, Achieve, we strive to enable every child to flourish spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally. We seek to equip them to live life in all its fullness, serving others with compassion, integrity and joy and making a positive difference in God's world.

Scope and legal duties

This policy applies to education, admissions, behaviour, exclusions, participation, employment and Leigh St Mary's dealings with families and the wider community. As a voluntary-aided maintained school, we must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

We will consider how to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. This consideration must inform decisions before and while they are made, with proportionate evidence and a record of relevant actions.

The Equality Act contains nine protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. Their application differs across education and employment. Age and marriage or civil partnership are not protected characteristics under the school-pupil provisions. Marriage and civil partnership is relevant to the first equality-duty aim in employment, rather than all three aims.

Inclusive education and access

At Leigh St Mary's, we want every child to enjoy learning, develop their interests and feel proud of their progress. We provide a broad, balanced and accessible curriculum with high expectations for everyone. Staff get to know pupils, notice barriers early and adapt teaching, communication, routines and assessment. We draw on Greater Manchester Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision and the SEND graduated approach, listening to children and working closely with families and professionals.

At Leigh St Mary's, we take time to understand each child as an individual. Disability and special educational needs are not interchangeable: a child may be disabled without having SEN, and a child with SEN may not meet the Equality Act definition of disability. We listen to families and consider the support a child needs, without assuming that a diagnosis alone tells us everything about them.

Reasonable adjustments and accessibility

We anticipate potential disadvantage to disabled pupils and make reasonable adjustments, including appropriate auxiliary aids and services. Families are not charged for reasonable adjustments. We review their effectiveness with pupils and parents, while meeting duties relating to medical conditions and special educational provision.

Our separate Accessibility Plan addresses participation in the curriculum, improvements to the physical environment and accessible information. It identifies actions, responsibilities, resources and review arrangements. The plan and SEN information report are published as required. This equality policy does not replace them.

Participation and school life

We want children at Leigh St Mary's to experience the joy of belonging and taking part. We review access to clubs, visits, residential activities, leadership roles, performances and other opportunities, considering financial, communication, disability and cultural barriers from the outset. Staff will not assume that a child cannot participate because of SEND or a medical condition. We will work with families, seek appropriate advice and make reasonable adjustments.

Uniform, equipment and activity arrangements will be considered for affordability, disability, religious observance and equal opportunity. Facilities, privacy and personal-care arrangements will meet applicable law and safeguarding requirements, with individual needs assessed sensitively. Any reliance on a statutory exception must be specific, lawful and recorded; it is not a general exemption from equality duties.

Behaviour and attendance

The Positive Behaviour Policy will be applied consistently and proportionately, taking account of disability, SEND, communication, safeguarding and individual circumstances. We will examine patterns in sanctions, removals and exclusions, review adjustments and support, and challenge discriminatory behaviour.

At Leigh St Mary's, we recognise that regular attendance is easier when children feel safe, connected and supported. We work with families to understand and reduce barriers, taking proper account of medical needs and disability-related absence. Attendance targets and rewards must not unlawfully disadvantage pupils. Necessary medical treatment and support must never be withheld as a sanction.

Admissions and employment

The governing body is the admission authority. Admissions will follow the School Admissions Code and published arrangements. Any faith-based criteria must fall within the lawful framework for schools with a religious character. SEND, disability or perceived behaviour difficulties must not be used as unlawful barriers to admission.

Recruitment, pay, professional development, promotion and employment decisions will be fair and comply with equality law. We will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and staff. Any religious

occupational requirement or other exception must be applicable to the particular post and supported by appropriate advice.

PSHE Relationships Education and Health Education

At Leigh St Mary's, PSHE gives children a safe and thoughtful space to learn about themselves, their relationships and the world around them. It supports respect, personal safety, emotional wellbeing and responsible participation in society. Relationships Education and Health Education are compulsory at Leigh St Mary's as a maintained primary school. Broader PSHE supports these statutory subjects. Any additional primary sex education is distinguished clearly in our separate published policy.

We will have regard to the revised DfE statutory guidance effective from 1 September 2026. The separate Relationships Education or RSE policy will explain content, sequencing, teaching responsibilities, accessibility, parental engagement, resources and withdrawal arrangements. This equality policy supports that provision and does not replace it.

Teaching that promotes equality

Teaching will be factual, age-appropriate, carefully sequenced and accessible. Staff will adapt language, resources and learning activities for pupils' developmental and communication needs. SEND must not lead to pupils being excluded from learning that helps them recognise unsafe situations, seek help and develop healthy relationships.

At Leigh St Mary's, children learn how kindness, respect, boundaries and privacy help us care for ourselves and one another. They learn about online safety and where to turn for help. Books, examples and teaching materials will reflect diverse people and families, including single-parent, adoptive, foster, kinship and same-sex-parent families. We want every child to recognise that their family matters and that they belong.

Staff will challenge racism, sexism, disability-related prejudice, homophobic and transphobic bullying, religious intolerance and other discriminatory language. Teaching will avoid stereotypes about what children can do, enjoy or become. Pupils may express respectful questions and differing beliefs without being subjected to harassment or intimidation.

Our Christian character is an important part of life at Leigh St Mary's. It guides our commitment to love, dignity and respect while we meet statutory curriculum requirements and equality duties. We discuss religious beliefs sensitively alongside accurate information about the law. Contested ideas will not be presented as established facts, and teaching will follow current DfE requirements on sex and gender reassignment. No pupil will be pressured to disclose personal information or adopt a particular belief.

Working with parents and safeguarding

At Leigh St Mary's, we value open and trusting relationships with parents. We will consult families when developing and reviewing our Relationships Education or RSE policy, listen carefully to their questions and make teaching materials available in accordance with DfE guidance. Consultation helps us understand our community and explain our teaching, while statutory curriculum requirements remain in place.

There is no parental right to withdraw a child from Relationships Education, Health Education or national curriculum science. Where the school provides additional sex education outside national curriculum science, the Headteacher must grant a parental request for withdrawal and arrange purposeful alternative education. The separate policy must identify this content clearly.

Staff will establish safe discussion routines and respond to questions sensitively. Disclosures and concerns will be managed through safeguarding procedures; confidentiality cannot be promised where a child may be at risk. External visitors and resources will be checked, and school staff remain responsible for the teaching provided.

Responsibilities and responding to concerns

Governors and senior leaders

The governing body will approve and oversee this policy, publish equality information and objectives, review progress and ensure appropriate resources and accountability. Governors will scrutinise the equality implications of significant decisions and ensure that the Accessibility Plan and linked policies remain effective.

Mrs Watson, Headteacher, is accountable for implementation, training, statutory publication and action on discrimination. Mrs Coop, Deputy Headteacher, supports consistent teaching, behaviour and safeguarding practice. Mrs Wilkinson, Pastoral Manager, coordinates day-to-day pastoral responses and family support, escalating concerns to the Headteacher and safeguarding team. These responsibilities do not replace statutory safeguarding referral routes or independent reporting routes for allegations against staff.

Staff, pupils and the wider community

All staff must model respectful conduct, challenge prejudice, make agreed adjustments, report concerns promptly and participate in training. Curriculum leaders will review resources and access within their subjects. The SENCO, PSHE lead and pastoral team will support colleagues and monitor relevant provision.

Children at Leigh St Mary's will be helped to follow the Diamond Rules, include others and speak to a trusted adult if something feels unfair or unkind. We ask families, visitors and contractors to share this commitment and raise concerns through the appropriate channels. We will consider accessible communication, interpretation or other assistance so that people can take part and be heard.

Prejudice, bullying and discrimination

At Leigh St Mary's, we want children and adults to feel confident that their concerns will be heard and taken seriously. They can speak to a class teacher, Mrs Wilkinson, Mrs Coop, Mrs Watson or the office. Staff will listen carefully, act to protect those affected, record factual information securely and consider safeguarding or other referrals. Relevant incidents will be recorded on CPOMS or the appropriate confidential staff system.

We will respond with care for everyone involved, considering the nature, impact, repetition and context of the incident. At Leigh St Mary's, support, proportionate consequences, education and follow-up will help address harm and prevent recurrence. Parents will be informed where appropriate and safe. Leaders will check patterns, repeat incidents and whether children feel safe, rather than judging success only by fewer recorded reports.

Nobody will be treated adversely for raising an equality concern or supporting a complaint in good faith. Unresolved concerns can be raised through the published Complaints Policy. Staff can use grievance or whistleblowing routes, and safeguarding allegations must follow the Child Protection Policy.

Evidence impact and accountability

Leaders will consider attainment, progress, attendance, participation, behaviour, exclusions, accessibility, wellbeing and feedback. Analysis will use relevant information lawfully, recognising small cohorts and avoiding identification of individuals. We will not assume a person's protected characteristics or request unnecessary sensitive disclosures.

Equality consideration will be proportionate and documented in decision records, policy reviews or an equality assessment where helpful. No particular assessment form substitutes for meaningful consideration. Leaders will establish current baselines and dated actions for the objectives below, report to governors at least annually and publish an anonymised progress summary.

Equality objectives 2025 to 2028

These four priorities reflect our commitment to a welcoming and inclusive Leigh St Mary's community. We have retained the 2025–2028 objectives and strengthened the actions and measures that help us understand their impact. At the first review after approval, leaders will confirm baselines, current progress, resources and any additional numerical targets.

Objective 1 Strengthen community relationships and cohesion

At Leigh St Mary's, strengthen the connections that help families feel welcome, supported and listened to. Develop positive relationships across different faiths, cultures, backgrounds and family circumstances, with more opportunities for families to participate and shape our community.

Actions: review barriers to family engagement; offer accessible communication and varied ways to contribute; develop purposeful links with local groups, churches and other faith or community organisations; and use pupil and family feedback to shape activities.

Evidence of progress: participation records and feedback show who is being reached and where barriers remain; previously underrepresented families have more opportunities to contribute; and pupils can explain how they show respect for people whose lives or beliefs differ from their own.

Lead: Headteacher and Pastoral Manager. Review: termly participation checks and annual governor evaluation.

Objective 2 Further develop our diverse and accessible curriculum

Continue to develop a rich and accessible curriculum at Leigh St Mary's that reflects diverse lives, challenges stereotypes and discrimination, and encourages children to ask thoughtful questions and respect different perspectives.

Actions: subject leaders audit texts, resources, examples and access; address identified gaps in representation; embed age-appropriate equality learning across PSHE, Relationships and Health Education and other subjects; and provide staff development on bias, accessibility and responding to prejudice.

Evidence of progress: each subject's review identifies action and subsequent improvement; sampled work and pupil discussions demonstrate growing understanding; and participation and learning information inform further adjustments. Leaders will check that representation is meaningful across the year.

Lead: Deputy Headteacher, curriculum leaders and PSHE lead, supported by the SENCO. Review: curriculum monitoring each term and annual governor evaluation.

Objective 3 Embed Emotionally Friendly School Silver practice

Develop and embed Emotionally Friendly School Silver practice at Leigh St Mary's, strengthening a whole-school culture in which children and adults feel safe, understood and supported. Use the Silver accreditation framework to develop emotional wellbeing, inclusive classroom practice and support for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND and social, emotional and mental health needs.

Actions: use the EFS audit and action-planning process; develop staff confidence and wellbeing; strengthen supportive relationships and emotional-regulation approaches; assess needs with pupils and families; and review targeted support and referral pathways. Leaders will confirm Leigh St Mary's accreditation status and agree the appropriate Silver milestones, whether working towards the award or embedding practice after accreditation.

Evidence of progress: a reviewed Silver action plan and portfolio; staff training and feedback; pupil and family views on safety, belonging and access to support; and individual reviews showing whether support improves engagement and wellbeing. Accreditation status will be reported accurately, separately from the impact of provision.

Lead: Headteacher and Pastoral Manager with the SENCO and EFS lead. Review: termly action-plan review and annual governor evaluation.

Objective 4 Improve attendance through inclusive family support

At Leigh St Mary's, build trusting partnerships with families to understand what helps or hinders children's attendance and punctuality. Work together to reduce barriers, paying particular attention to disability, medical needs, SEND, disadvantage and difficult family circumstances.

Actions: identify emerging patterns early; listen to pupils and parents; agree individual support with clear review dates; coordinate school and agency help; and check that reasonable adjustments and medical arrangements are effective. Retain 96% or above as an aspirational attendance benchmark, where appropriate, alongside individual progress and context.

Evidence of progress: reviewed support plans; improved punctuality and attendance where achievable; reduced persistent absence and unexplained gaps between groups; and family feedback on the usefulness of support. No child will be disadvantaged or blamed for unavoidable medically necessary absence or disability-related barriers. Formal attendance action will follow the applicable guidance and individual circumstances.

Lead: Pastoral Manager and Headteacher, with the SENCO and relevant agencies. Review: regular case reviews, termly trend analysis and annual governor evaluation.

Related school documents

Read with the Accessibility Plan; SEN Information Report and SEND Policy; Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies; Child Protection Policy; PSHE and Relationships Education or RSE Policy; Attendance Policy; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy; Admissions arrangements; staff conduct and employment procedures; Complaints Policy; and data-protection arrangements.

Legislation guidance and supporting resources

Equality Act 2010

Equality Act 2010 Specific Duties Regulations 2011

Children and Families Act 2014

Human Rights Act 1998

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education England Regulations 2019

DfE Equality Act 2010 advice for schools

Public Sector Equality Duty guidance for public authorities

DfE Relationships Education RSE and Health Education statutory guidance effective September 2026

DfE What maintained schools must or should publish online

DfE SEND Code of Practice

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education

DfE Working together to improve school attendance

Emotionally Friendly Settings accreditation framework