

Protected Characteristics

Intent & Progression Document



Subject Leader: Miss Tyers/ Mrs Mumford

Academic Year: 2024-2025

Our School Mission

We Believe, We Succeed and We Soar

Christ is at the center of St. Mary's as we strive to nurture and care for our community and encourage them to Believe, Succeed and Soar. Through God's love, we support our pupils in recognising their God given gifts, strengthening their work as missionary disciples.

'Do little things with great love' St Therese of Lisieux

The mission of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is that of Jesus Christ; to build a teaching and learning community where we show due regard for the development and understanding of the uniqueness and dignity of each person. At St Mary's, each child is valued as a unique individual, a child of God, made in the image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our Gospel Values

With God's love we show:

Love

'My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you.' John 15:12

We recognise God's unconditional love to be our source of love. A Christ-like love respects the talent of each person in our school.

Respect

'In everything, then do to others as you would have them do to you.' Matthew 7:12

We believe that, as children of God, we have a duty not only to respect our friends and teachers but also to show respect to our environment as we are stewards of the earth.

Honesty

'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.' 1 John 3:18

We show honesty in all we say and do, in the pursuit of justice and fairness.

Forgiveness

'Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.' Luke 6:37

We believe that mercy will be shown by the way we forgive others, finding God in all things.

Generosity

'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Acts 20:35

Just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, we have a role to serve our neighbours and the wider community. Through fundraising and prayer, we will strive to help the people in our world, our common home.

Patience

'Jesus replied, 'You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' John 13:7

We remember to be patient and trust in God as we know he has a much greater plan for us. He allows us to be tested so that we learn to walk in his ways and trust in him.

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Grantham

Protected Characteristics Intent

Scripture Link:

(Genesis 1:27)

'So God created humanity in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'

Human Dignity

The dignity of the human person is central to the life and the teaching of the Catholic Church, and this is foundational to any teaching related to the Protected Characteristics at St Mary's. Human dignity originates from God and is of God because we are made in God's own image and likeness. The human person is the most central and clearest reflection of God among us. Human beings have transcendent worth and value that comes from God; this dignity is not based on any human quality, legal mandate, or individual merit or accomplishment. Human dignity is inalienable – that means it is an essential part of every human being and is an intrinsic quality that can never be separated from other essential aspects of the human person. As a Catholic school we strive to be a haven of respect and custodians of the true dignity of each human being. We encourage, celebrate and value the diversity of all our communities. We actively promote the principle of equality for all. We aim to ensure that everyone within our community is treated fairly, with respect and dignity. We seek to eliminate any form of inequality, bullying or discrimination.

Pope Francis speaks eloquently on the matter of equality: *"The Church does not exist to condemn people but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God's mercy. For the Church to offer God's mercy it must 'go outside and look for people where they live, where they suffer and where they hope' The enemy of mercy is self-righteousness."*

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of, Age, Sex, Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, Pregnancy and Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Reassignment. These are called Protected Characteristics. In UK law, individuals are protected under the Equality Act 2010 from these types of discrimination. Whilst primary schools are not required to provide teaching on the specifics of the Protected Characteristics, at St Mary's we firmly believe that having an awareness of Protected Characteristics is crucial for developing understanding and inclusivity in schools and society. Therefore, we have embedded Protected Characteristics into our whole school ethos.

At St Mary's, the Protected Characteristics are actively promoted in school through:

- Our school ethos, SDP, and SEF
- Our school core Gospel Values
- Our school behaviour policy
- Conscious role modelling by all adults in the school community
- Active engagement and communication with parents and carers
- Celebrations of the word and assemblies
- Promotion of British Values across the school community
- Discussion within curriculum subjects, taking a cross-curricular approach
- Our RSHE curriculum
- Religious Education (RE) lessons and Protected Characteristic talks
- Sporting competitions, festivals and opportunities
- Art and Cultural activities
- Pupil Voice e.g. School Council, Play Leaders, Lunch Leaders, Agents of Change, Chaplaincy Team and Eco Team
- Educational visits
- Guest speakers and visitors from the wider community
- Extra-curricular activities, after-school clubs, charity work and work within the local community

We believe that embedding Protected Characteristics into the whole school ethos:

- Promotes self-esteem, self-knowledge and self-confidence of everyone in our school community
- Helps pupils recognise the diversity of the world and how to interact with and appreciate people from different backgrounds
- Equips pupils with the knowledge and skills to identify and challenge discrimination and prejudice
- Encourages pupils to develop empathy for others and understand challenges faced by those with Protected Characteristics
- Helps create a more inclusive environment where all pupils feel a sense of belonging
- Helps pupils develop into responsible and active citizens who understand the importance of equality and human rights
- Promotes a more inclusive and equitable learning environment that prepares pupils for a diverse and complex world
- Promotes respect for pupils' own and other cultures
- Develops understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law
- Fosters an environment where all individuals feel valued and respected, regardless of their characteristics

Protected Characteristics Progression

	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	Introducing the idea of treating everyone equally.	Recognising and respecting each other's differences.		Discussions on stereotyping, prejudice, and inclusivity.		Understanding more complex issues around prejudice.	
Age	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sex		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disability			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Race				✓	✓	✓	✓
Religion and Belief					✓	✓	✓
Pregnancy and Maternity						✓	✓
Marriage and Civil Partnership						✓	✓
Sexual Orientation						✓	✓
Gender Reassignment							

Protected Characteristics through the Ten:Ten RSHE Curriculum

Age	The subject of age, and the dignity of the person at all ages, is explored in the unit Life Cycles (All Key Stages, Module 1 Unit 4). Within these lessons, the programme teaches about the natural progress of life and teaches that death is part of God's plan for us.
Sex	Throughout the primary schools' programme, the teaching, stories, videos and image content establish an understanding of the equality of men and women, boys and girls. For example, in the unit "Me, My Body, My Health" (All Key Stages, Module 1, Unit 2) the discourse about the physical differences between boys and girls is matched by teaching about gender equality and dispelling gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes is addressed in a Classroom Short, in the UKS2 session 'Build Others Up'.
Disability	Ten:Ten integrates disability into its "Life to the Full" program by subtly incorporating inclusive imagery, scenarios, and resources into the Life To The Full Programme. This approach ensures age-appropriate and developmental teaching of disability as part of the broader understanding of protected characteristics. Ten:Ten encourages the use of "people first" language (e.g., "person with a disability" rather than "disabled person") to emphasize the individual's identity and dignity.
Race	From the outset within the design of the programme, Ten:Ten have been mindful of ensuring racial representation in our stories, dramas, appendices, scenarios and imagery.
Religion and Belief	This current version of Life to the Full does not contain a specific lesson or unit dealing with understanding of and respect for other religions. Therefore, we teach about this in different ways through our Religious Education curriculum, particularly through our work on 'Other Faiths'. We also acknowledge celebrations of other faiths throughout the year at St Mary's.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Although pregnancy is explored in age-appropriate ways throughout the unit Life Cycles (All Key Stages, Module 1 Unit 4), the specific issue of maternity discrimination is not explored in primary schools.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	The sessions "Who's Who?" (EYFS Module 2.2.1), "Special People" (KS1 Module 2.2.1) and "Family, Friends and Others" (LKS2 Module 2.2.1) explore different family structures. They provide opportunities for children to share news about their own family structure in a non-judgemental forum and also provide opportunity for discussion the different family structures given in the various stories and scenarios. The decision on if and when to include same-sex partnerships, single parent families or non-married parents within these discussions is left for the school to decide; however, the foundation has been laid for a healthy conversation on these matters in these sessions. We have decided to include this content in UKS2. In the Paradise Street dramas (UKS2 Module 1), various family structures are represented through the characters in the films and there is discussion about specific family structures, such as families with 'two mums and two dads' in "Gifts and Talents" KS2 Module 1.2.1.
Sexual Orientation	Attraction to the opposite sex is touched upon in UKS2 Module 1 within the 'Paradise Street' series as part of a discussion around emotional changes. However, sexual attraction as a subject is not addressed as part of the Life to the Full programme. Attraction to the opposite and the same sex forms is addressed in the UKS2 session 'Build Others Up', Module 2, Unit 2 session. 'Build Others Up' is an anti-bullying resource framed by the Protected Characteristics. The Protected Characteristics of sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment are not explicitly named within the session's film. Later in the session, children are presented with a number of scenarios to discuss and sort. For subscribers of Life to the Full Plus, there are also five Classroom Short videos available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise: In this film, children will consolidate and develop learning from the session by learning to recognise prejudice and discriminatory behaviours in themselves and others. In the context of hearing various descriptions of prejudiced actions, children learn in this video that homophobia is being prejudiced against someone because they are attracted to someone of the same sex. - Respond: In this film, children will consider how to respond when they witness or experience prejudice and discrimination, and who to go to for help. - Stereotypes: This informative video explains what gender expression means and explores how gender stereotypes can put people in boxes. It also explains what is meant by sexual orientation and how this is different from gender expression. Children will learn that people don't always fit into stereotypes and that every person should be valued in their uniqueness as someone created in God's image. Ten Ten's Guidance on Protected Characteristics 18 Last updated: 21 September 2023.
Gender Reassignment	This subject is not currently explored in Life to the Full. Rather, the programme provides foundational language about our core identity as children of God to enable schools to address specific issues with their whole school community.

