



BEECHEN CLIFF

Equalities Review 2021



1. Introduction

This review was undertaken in Autumn 2021 to expand the scope of the Equalities Actions Plans that the school has published, actioned and reported on in the last three years. Since 2018, the school's work on equality and diversity has developed rapidly and been placed at the forefront of the school's vision. Accordingly, the Equalities Action Plan for the academic year 2021-22, which can be found at the end of this report, is more ambitious in its vision and intended impact than its predecessors. Our hope is that every young person and member of staff at Beechen Cliff School has equality of opportunity and never has to face discrimination or harassment. We want a culture of respect and celebration of difference to pervade every aspect of the school community.

2. Aims

2.1. The aims of this review were three-fold:

- To review evidence of the school's actions and their impact towards fulfilling its duties under the public sector duty set out in the Equalities Act 2010;
- To capture the school's current strengths and areas for improvement in its equalities work;
- To use this process to inform the school's Equalities Action Plan for the next year.

3. Legal and MNSP Trust Context

3.1. The Public sector equality duty came into force in April 2011. In carrying out their functions, Public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to achieve the following objectives:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- 3.2. The equality duty has two main parts: the 'general' equality duty and 'specific duties'. The general equality duty sets out the equality matters that schools need to consider when making decisions that affect pupils or staff with different protected characteristics. 'Due regard' is defined by the EHRC as:
- Remove or minimise disadvantages;
 - Take steps to meet different needs; and
 - Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.
- 3.3. In order to help schools in England meet the general equality duty, there are two specific duties that they are required to carry out. These are:
- To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty; and
 - To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objective. Schools need to comply with these duties from 6 April 2012 and update yearly.
- 3.4. Over the last three years, Beechen Cliff has produced an annual Equalities Action Plan (see Appendix 1) with **three** objectives each year. Since the school joined MNSP Trust 2019, this plan has derived from the Trust Equality Act Statement (see references) and has the following objectives relevant to Beechen Cliff as a secondary school for boys:
- By the end of the school year, progress for boys in English at GCSE will be Progress 8 (0) for the Trust;
 - Disadvantaged children will make progress in line with 'others' nationally at all key stages;
 - Children with a special educational need or a disability, will make progress in line with 'others' nationally at all key stages.;
 - We will work to ensure that there is more equal representation of genders in each of the four quartiles of pay in the Trust; and
 - We will ensure that there are more people with protected characteristics on our Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies.

3.5. The school's own equalities development areas have also been targeted for action, such as the gender achievement gap at A Level.

4. National Background

4.1. The national context for the school's work on equalities is important. With reference to Trust priorities (see section 5) and the context of Beechen Cliff being predominantly a boys school, some of the most important national factors which relate to equalities work for pupils and staff are as follows:

- Covid-19: The EHRC 2020 report into the effect on the pandemic in Britain cited many negative effects on children. These included significant interruption to their education and widening of inequalities for those who already perform less well than their peers, particularly boys, Black pupils, some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, pupils who need support in education, and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged;
- Sexual harassment and violence: Ofsted's (2021) rapid review earlier this year, although not proposed as representative of all schools, reported how prevalent sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are for children and young people;
- School exclusions: The Timpson Review (2019) drew attention to children more likely to be excluded: those with some types of SEN, boys, those who have been supported by social care or are disadvantaged are all consistently more likely to be excluded from school than those without these characteristics. Exclusion rates also vary by ethnicity, in particular they are high for those who are Black Caribbean, and Mixed White and Black Caribbean;
- Experiences of LGBT children: Cambridge University's 'School Report' (2017) revealed that, whilst there has been some progress since 2007 and 2012, bullying of LGBT pupils remains very high and mental health outcomes are also very poor;
- Male mental health: a report by Mind (2020) shared findings that there have been some improvements in male mental health, such as the proportion of men who would ask for help with their mental health, but that there have been increases in the number experiencing suicidal thoughts and regularly feeling worried or low;

- Disadvantage: The annual report of the Education Endowment Fund (2020) celebrated the closure, but not elimination of and in fact tailing off in recent years, of the attainment gap from 2009 to 2019, but asserted that this would be widened significantly by Covid-19;
- Gender equality: the government's road map for gender equality published in 2019 stated that in the UK women are, on average, more likely to enter the workforce with higher qualifications than men, but earn less per hour; and
- Race and ethnic disparity: a government report commissioned and published in 2021 had as a key recommendation that the curriculum should become more inclusive, in particular to tell the multiple, nuanced stories of the contributions made by different groups that have made this country the one it is today.

4.2. These national surveys demonstrate that issues around equality for the school mirror the national picture. There are therefore challenges and opportunities for the school to make a difference to young people growing up in 21st century Britain.

5. School Context

- 5.1. Over the last three years, the school has made significant changes to protocol and practice to improve its work on equalities.
- 5.2. Whilst the underlying aim to include every pupil and student in the school has remained at the core of the school's vision, four particular issues 'brought home' the need to further develop work in this area:
- The growing diversity in the school, particularly more pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds;
 - A serious incident in January 2018 involving racist abuse towards a Year 11 pupil by his friends;
 - Recognising that the number of boys seeking support for their mental health was low and their mental health outcomes were poor, and disproportionately so compared to girls; and
 - A persistent gap in achievement at A level between boys and girls, with girls underachieving in comparison to the boys.

5.3. Alongside these areas, and in line with national outcomes, the achievement of boys facing disadvantage at GCSE is an issue that the school has been working hard to tackle and is a fundamental matter of social inequality.

5.4. Since 2018, a range of improvements have been made to tackle the issues above. These can be seen in historic Equality Action Plans and in documents available on the school website. In addition to effective teaching of boys at Key Stages 3 and 4, and girls at Key Stage 5, work on mental health and SEND/PP teaching and intervention, strategies of particular note have been the following:

- The Pledge of Respect: a visual display in the school of the school's commitment to respecting everyone and fulfilling our duties under the Equality Act (2010) renewed annually and located at the heart of the school.
- The Equalities Protocol: for responding to discriminatory behaviours, language or actions by pupils and students, which sets out how the school will pursue disciplinary and educational action for every equalities incident, escalating if necessary where there are repeat 'offences' and involving external agencies, such as the Police and Local Authority where required.
- Student leadership: drawing on the school's work around mental health, which utilised the power of student leadership to precipitate a step-change in the profile of male mental health, students have been at the forefront of equalities work.
- The PSHE and Tutor time programme: these cover all protected characteristics over the course of the academic year through assemblies, Theme of the Week and Character activities, participation in national campaigns such as Show Racism the Red Card, rewards for showing respect and information shared through the weekly newsletter.

5.5. The school is proud of the work that has been done to date, and particularly its impact on attainment for boys, but wants to do even more.

6. Data and evidence review

6.1. To inform this review, a number of data and evidence sources were utilised. A survey of pupils, parents and staff in October 2021 received a pleasing number of responses and data on pupil attendance, exclusions, attainment and equalities incidents has also been analysed. The findings from our review of these data are presented in the form of strengths and areas for development.

6.2. Strengths

- Boys' attainment in English has been greater than the national average with an Attainment 8 score of 10.98 in 2019 (national average 9.95, national average for boys 9.08). Boys' progress in English has been greater than the national average for boys with a progress 8 score of -0.1 in 2019 (national boys: -0.45). No national figures have been published in 2020 or 2021 but comparison to 2019 figures suggests that this is the same with the Centre Assessed Grades and Teacher Assessed Grades.
- In the most recent analysis, comparing progress of Pupil Premium boys with their peers at Beechen Cliff against the national average progress gap shows significant improvements have been made at Beechen Cliff over the last three years and that the progress gap at Beechen Cliff is not only narrowing rapidly but is now lower than the national average. In 2021 the progress gap was 0.37 (national progress gap in 2019: >0.58).
- The gender gap at A level in 2021 has reduced to negligible levels following successive years of improvement.
- Boys mental health outcomes have improved significantly in recent years, including those for LGBT pupils. In the Sixth Form, for instance, there was a 352% increase in demand for mental health support from boys from 2017-18 to 2019-20. Further detail on this can be found in the school's submission to the DfE Education Select Committee in 2020 (see references below).
- Numbers of equalities incidents are decreasing, having increased initially from 2018, reflecting increased profile and reporting. For example in Term 1 2019-20, there were 18 incidents, Term 1 2020-21 there were 13 incidents and Term 1 2021-22 there were 10. Importantly the number of 'repeat offenders' is very low, demonstrating the impact of intervention, and the number of pupils 'calling out' discriminatory language or behaviour has increased.
- Fixed term exclusions for boys are lower than national rates. Fixed term exclusion data for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans is in-line with the national average for all pupils but lower than that for boys nationally. Number of exclusions for SEND pupils without EHCP is lower than the national average.

- The attendance of pupils identified at SEN (K) has increased in the last three years, from 88.1% in 2018-19 to 95.3% in 2020-21.
- Pupil, parent and staff surveys in October 2021 were highly aligned in respect of their responses to how well the school encourages positive relationships, respect and tolerance amongst all members of the school community: 85.9% of pupils, 84.1% of parents and 92.2% staff agreed or strongly agreed with this. Parents and staff recognise many of the strategies the school has put in place to promote respect, including promoting the core values of the school, the Pledge of Respect, the pastoral programmes and assemblies and PSHE. The numbers of each group disagreeing or strongly disagreeing were very low - a greater proportion were either neutral or 'did not know' rather than negative responses.
- Pupils and staff responses in October 2021 were very similar when questioned about equality of opportunity: 87.5% of pupils and 89.1% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that pupils were given equal opportunity to be successful. Pupils particularly reflected that they were given equality of opportunity through their access to extracurricular opportunities and invitation to participate, for example, in applications for student leadership roles. Staff frequently talked about the support given to pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged as examples of providing equality of opportunity.
- With respect to tackling discrimination and harassment, staff and pupils were well aligned with 84.4% of staff and 82.8% of pupils stating that there is a zero tolerance approach. Staff and pupils identified many examples of where action was taken by the school, for instance through the safeguarding response. The numbers of each group disagreeing or strongly disagreeing were very low - a greater proportion were either neutral or 'did not know' rather than negative responses.
- Representation of female staff at a senior level has improved in the last three years, from a male-only senior leadership team in 2018-19 to a 50:50 split in 2021-22.
- Governor representation from protected characteristic groups has improved since 2018.

6.3. Areas for development

- There was close alignment between the proportion of pupils and parents who reported that they or their child had experienced bullying on account of their race, religion, gender, sexuality, age or disability, or because they are transgender: 11.1% of pupils with these characteristics and 11.7% of parents of children with these characteristics. Some pupils responded that they had not told the school whilst some parents who reported their child had been bullied felt the school had not done enough. A small number of staff felt that in some cases, harassment and discrimination were still not adequately tackled.
- There remains a gap in progress between those pupils eligible for Pupil Premium and those who do not, and also for SEND learners and those not on the SEND register. Boys' progress in English, although higher than boys nationally, remains below average for all pupils.
- The attendance of pupils with SEND (E) and/or who are Pupil Premium remains consistently below that for all pupils.
- Historically, pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium have been disproportionately excluded from school and those of Black Caribbean and mixed Black Caribbean and White heritage have been disproportionately excluded from the school.
- Parents reported a lower agreement with the school having a zero tolerance approach to harassment and discrimination, with 68.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing (versus more than 80% of pupils and staff)
- Some staff feel that female staff do not receive the same respect as male staff.
- Six of 64 staff respondents disagreed that equality of opportunity existed for staff and 13 of 64 neither agreed nor disagreed. There were no consistent themes in the open response, but this area needs to be explored further.
- Lowest paid jobs percentages have not changed in the last two years with 88.2% of the lowest paid jobs in the Trust being occupied by women. However the average hourly pay has improved with women's hourly pay moving from 33% in 2018/19 lower than men's to 30.4% lower than men's in 2020/21. This remains a Trust development area.

- The LGB could have even better representation of people with protected characteristics.

7. Equalities Action Plan 2021-22

7.1. The school's Equalities Action Plan for this academic year has more objectives than in previous years for reasons explained above. This reflects the school's enhanced commitment to equality and fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act (2010).

- Objective 1: To uphold our zero tolerance approach towards bullying of pupils with protected characteristics
- Objective 2: To improve the progress of SEND and Pupil Premium pupils and to improve boys' progress in English;
- Objective 3: To ensure Pupil Premium pupils and/or Black Caribbean and Black Caribbean and White pupils are not disproportionately excluded;
- Objective 4: To develop a better understanding of equality of opportunity amongst staff
- Objective 5: To inform parents better about the school's equalities work.
- Objective 6: To further increase the number of Governors with protected characteristics on the LGB

7.2. A more detailed action plan to achieve these objectives can be found in Appendix 2.

8. Conclusion

Covid-19 has further exposed the inequality faced by many in our society - inequality which for some groups of young people and adults has persisted over decades and may be getting worse. Whilst there is much work to do, Beechen Cliff believes there is hope for the future of its pupils, students and staff; hope because purposeful action has led to improvement in recent years, hope because the school's commitment is stronger than ever and hope because children and staff are at the heart of making the changes that will make society a more equal, tolerant and respectful place for all.

9. References

[EEF Annual Report 2020](#)

[Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England](#)

[HM Government, Gender Equality Roadmap](#)

[How coronavirus has affected equality and human rights 2020](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/foreword-introduction-and-full-recommendations#full-recommendations>

[Men's mental health 10 years on](#)

MNSP: Trust Equality Objectives: [Reference documents - please save in here](#)

[Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#)

[Public sector equality duty](#)

[SEND/PP Report to Governors September 2021.docx](#)

[Stonewall School Report 2017 shows anti-LGBT bullying and language has decreased across Britain's schools since 2012](#)

[Submission to Education Select Committee: The impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services 1. Executive Summary 1.1](#)

[Timpson Review of School Exclusion](#)

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Historic Equalities Actions Plans and Reports

Appendix 2: Equalities Action Plan 2021/22

Appendix 1: Historic Equalities Plans

Equality Action Plan 2018-19

Target	RAG	Actions	Lead	Review
To reduce the gap in A level progress between boys and girls to less than 0.1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Girls-specific transition events ● Publish summary of research into girls' achievement ● See girls' views through survey and focus groups ● Prioritise girls for academic interventions ● HoFs to target girls for academic intervention at subject level 	JCO	Sept. 2019
To reduce the gap in GCSE progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils to less than 1.0 in 2020 and less than 0.75 in 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PP pupils are prioritised for Personal Tutoring. ● PP Support Plans. ● PP Teaching & Learning Strategy. ● PP Pastoral Support Strategy. ● Financial Support for Uniform, Equipment & Trips. ● Curriculum intervention for English/Maths ● Year 11 parents revision evening and year 11 revision incentives 	TDM	Sept. 2019
To maintain BME attendance equal to or above non-BME attendance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fortnightly meeting with HoH to monitor BME attendance ● Parental contact and early intervention to establish attendance issue and address barriers ● Frequent communication with parents regarding positive achievements and good attendance ● Target support – allocate 'Mentoring Plus' where appropriate 	KSM	June 2019



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Report on Equality Action Plan 2018-19

Target: Narrowing the gender gap in Sixth Form

Outcome: the gap remained static at VA -0.2

Commentary: many of the girls-specific strategies did not have enough time to have an impact on the Upper Sixth; feedback from girls was that the key time for having an impact was in the Lower Sixth when they were settling into the Sixth Form. Strategies have therefore been started in the Lower Sixth for the next cohort and we would anticipate a narrowing of the gap in 2019-20.

Target: Reduce BME attendance gap

Outcome: the gap was positive: BME attendance last year exceeded non-BME by 0.1% - 95.0 versus 94.9%

Commentary: BME attendance was priority in all attendance meetings and tracked throughout the year. Increasing attendance for all groups in 2019-20 will be key.

Target: Reduce the progress gap for disadvantaged pupils

Outcome: The gap reduced by 0.1 from -1.3 to -1.2.

Commentary: whilst reduced, the gap remains significant between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged boys at GCSE. This was disappointing given the comprehensive plan put in place by the school to raise achievement. This plan, however, is a long-term strategy, building from Year 7 upwards and there has been a noticeable change in culture in the school about the priority attached to identifying and catering for pupil premium pupils.

JCO, September 2020

Equality Action Plan 2019-20

Target	RAG	Actions	Lead	Review
To reduce the gap in A level progress between boys and girls to less than 0.1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Girls-specific transition events ● Publish summary of research into girls' achievement ● See girls' views through survey and focus groups ● Prioritise girls for academic interventions ● HoFs to target girls for academic intervention at subject level 	JCO	Sept. 2020
To reduce the gap in GCSE progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils to less than 1.0 in 2020 and less than 0.75 in 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PP pupils are prioritised for Personal Tutoring. ● PP Support Plans. ● PP Teaching & Learning Strategy. ● PP Pastoral Support Strategy. ● Financial Support for Uniform, Equipment & Trips. ● Curriculum intervention for English/Maths ● Year 11 parents revision evening and year 11 revision incentives 	TDM	Sept. 2020
To maintain BME attendance equal to or above non-BME attendance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fortnightly meeting with HoH to monitor BME attendance ● Parental contact and early intervention to establish attendance issue and address barriers ● Frequent communication with parents regarding positive achievements and good attendance ● Target support – allocate 'Mentoring Plus' where appropriate 	KSM	June 2020

Report on Equality Action Plan 2019-20

Target: Narrowing the gender gap in Sixth Form

Outcome: the gap closed from -0.20 to -0.11

Commentary: the VA gap this year closed following the embedding of strategies to target girls. In particular girls' specific events in the Lower Sixth, mental health provision for all students (well accessed by girls) and teachers' priority given to girl intervention has had an impact.

Target: Reduce BME attendance gap

Outcome: the gap was negative: BME attendance last year fell below non-BME (94.4% versus 94.7%).

Commentary: With the academic year ending prematurely in March due to Covid, intervention work to raise attendance until the end of the year was not possible.

Target: Reduce the progress gap for disadvantaged pupils

Outcome: The gap reduced by 0.1 from -1.1 to -1.0.

Commentary: whilst reduced, the gap remains significant between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged boys at GCSE. This was disappointing given the comprehensive plan put in place by the school to raise achievement. This plan, however, is a long-term strategy, building from Year 7 upwards and there has been a noticeable change in culture in the school about the priority attached to identifying and catering for pupil premium pupils.

Equality Action Plan 2020-21

Target	RAG	Actions	Lead	Review
To reduce the gap in A level progress between boys and girls to less than 0.1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Girls-specific transition events ● Publish summary of research into girls' achievement ● See girls' views through survey and focus groups ● Prioritise girls for academic interventions ● HoFs to target girls for academic intervention at subject level 	JCO	Sept. 2021
To reduce the gap in GCSE progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils to less than 1.0 in 2020 and less than 0.5 in 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PP pupils are prioritised for Personal Tutoring. ● PP Support Plans. ● PP Teaching & Learning Strategy. ● PP Pastoral Support Strategy. ● Financial Support for Uniform, Equipment & Trips. ● Curriculum intervention for English/Maths ● Year 11 parents revision evening and year 11 revision incentives 	TDM	Sept. 2021
To maintain BME attendance equal to or above non-BME attendance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fortnightly meeting with HoH to monitor BME attendance ● Parental contact and early intervention to establish attendance issue and address barriers ● Frequent communication with parents regarding positive achievements and good attendance ● Target support – allocate 'Mentoring Plus' where appropriate 	KSM	June 2021

Report on Equality Action Plan 2020-21

Target: To reduce the gap in A level progress between boys and girls to less than 0.1

Outcome: the gap closed from -0.11 to -0.06

Commentary: the VA gap this year closed following the embedding of strategies to target girls. In particular girls' specific events in the Lower Sixth, mental health provision for all students (well accessed by girls) and teachers' priority given to girl intervention has had an impact. Whilst A Level examinations didn't take place, the TAG process implemented in school was robust.

Target: To reduce the gap in GCSE progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils to less than 1.0 in 2020 and less than 0.5 in 2021

Outcome: the gap closed to 0.37

Commentary: whilst reduced, the gap remains between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged boys at GCSE. It suggests the strategy, which began in September 2018, is starting to take effect. However, it remains a priority for improvement, particularly given the impact of the pandemic. Whilst GCSE examinations didn't take place, the TAG process implemented in school was robust.

Target: To maintain BME attendance equal to or above non-BME attendance

Outcome: The attendance gap widened to 0.8%

Commentary: this gap growing was disappointing given the progress the previous year, however the range of strategies that could be employed again were reduced by Covid. The report by the commission on race and ethnic disparities recommended disaggregating BME as a group in 2021 and this target will therefore not be maintained.

JCO, September 2021



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Appendix 2: Equalities Action Plan 2021-22

Objective	Success criteria	Actions	Lead	Resources
To uphold our zero tolerance approach towards bullying of pupils with protected characteristics	Decrease on incidents from 2020-21 to 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Use pupil, staff and parent voice to further develop practice to reduce bullying- Review and enhance Equalities Protocol	JCO	Staff to support with capturing voices (SSU/AM?)
To improve the progress of pupils in English and the progress of SEND and Pupil Premium pupils overall	Improvement the progress of pupils in English and the progress of SEND and Pupil Premium pupils overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High quality, teacher led intervention English and maths lessons at KS3 & 4- New Learning Mentor supporting Pupil Premium learners at KS4- New reading programme in Year 7- SEND/PP progress is a focus of all Faculty FIPS- Clear plan to support vulnerable groups in place including seating plans, mark first and targeted questioning	JLB	SEND and PP Leads

To ensure Pupil Premium pupils and/or Black Caribbean and Black Caribbean and White pupils are not disproportionately excluded	Pupil Premium pupils and/or Black Caribbean and Black Caribbean and White pupils are not disproportionately excluded in 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilise FTE Checklist to ensure due diligence in respect of all exclusions - Utilise Behaviour Support Plans to intervene early with pupils at higher risk of exclusion 	JCO	HoH use of behaviour support plans
To develop a better understanding of equality of opportunity amongst staff	Staff survey in summer 2022 shows better understanding of equality of opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with union representatives to capture staff voice 	TDM?	<p>Staff voice</p> <p>Union reps</p>
To inform parents better about the school's equalities work.	Parent survey in summer 2022 shows better parent understanding about equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase information on school website and frequency of reference in newsletters - Ensure parent-facing meetings and communication is monitored for equalities content - Publish video with Boys in Mind on equalities work 	JCO	<p>Parent feedback group</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Newsletters</p> <p>SLT review of parent-facing meetings</p>
To further increase the number of Governors with protected characteristics on the LGB	Increased number of Governors with protected characteristics on the LGB in 2022 than in 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LGB to recruit at least one other Governor with a protected characteristic - Equalities to become standing item on LGB 	HE	Parent body