

# Community Cohesion Policy



Leytonstone School

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Signed by Chair of Governors: Kate Lord

Date Ratified by Governors: 28/3/15

Date to be Reviewed by Governors: 28/3/17

## **Community Cohesion**

### **Context**

1. Section 21(4) of the Education Act 2002 (as inserted by section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) states that:

‘The governing body of a maintained school shall, in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school—

- (a) promote the well-being of pupils at the school, and
- (b) in the case of a school in England, promote community cohesion.’

2. This duty came into effect on 1 September 2007. From 1 September 2008, HMCI has a duty under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as inserted by section 154 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) to report on the contribution made by schools to community cohesion.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has published *Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion* to support schools in implementing the duty – see DCSF website.

### **What is community cohesion?**

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

#### **1. Introduction**

Every school - whatever its intake and wherever it is located - is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, language, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

The curriculum of Leytonstone School promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils and of society and prepares our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

We consider this part of our role, and already work in ways which promote community cohesion. As migration and economic change alter the shape of our increasingly diverse local communities, it is more important than ever that our school plays a full part in promoting community cohesion. Our school should be a thriving, cohesive community, but it also has a vital part to play in building a more cohesive society.

Whilst our school is characterised by ethnic, cultural, faith and linguistic we still have a responsibility to ensure that our children learn about an even wider

cultural and community heritage, especially the wider community of East London, the UK and the global community.

We wish to show that through our ethos and curriculum our school can promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing our pupils how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

We believe that it is the duty of our school to address issues of 'how we live together' and 'dealing with difference' however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem. We also need to work in partnership with the local community, the local authority and the Police to ensure that our pupils are appropriately informed and kept safe.

### **Community from our school's perspective**

For Leytonstone's school, the term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- the school community – the pupils it serves, and their roles within the school, their families and the school's staff;
- the community within which the school is located – the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area;
- the community of Britain - all schools are by definition part of this community;
- the global community – formed by EU and international links.

In addition, schools themselves create communities – for example, the networks formed by schools in development groups

### **3 What do we do to promote community cohesion?**

#### **Teaching, learning and curriculum**

We need to ensure that we provide:

- lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in citizenship classes for pupils to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.

a programme of curriculum based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.

support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.

an effective voice and involvement of pupils in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.

opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity across the curriculum

an international dimension to our curriculum planning and delivery

*Examples from our school include:*

- Our school has a varied and relevant curriculum that develops pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities e.g. children go on school visits each year as part of the curriculum to visit a range of Places of Worship and/or experience workshops from a variety of cultures
- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and challenge prejudice and stereotyping e.g. PSHE and Citizenship curriculum and the use of the SEAL programme.
- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- We have yet to bring in an international perspective to our curriculum but recognise that this is an area which needs development.

## **Equity and Excellence**

Our school has a commitment to securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that pupils are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential.

The school tracking systems will enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.

Our school will monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment. Monitoring of whether pupils from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others should be accompanied by appropriate behaviour and discipline policies in place to deal with this.

- A focus on securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic status.
- Tracking and closing the gap between groups e.g. intervention strategies put in place to counter speech and language difficulties.
- The development of more able and talented children within the school as well as

having effective procedures to support children with additional educational needs

- Effective approaches in place to deal with incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment in line with other school policies
- Admission arrangements that promote community cohesion and social equity e.g. clear over-subscription criteria.
- Monitoring our school behaviour policies so that no groups suffer prejudice. Ensure that inappropriate behaviour, exclusions, racist, bullying and drug related incidents other stereotyping are monitored and reported to governors' in the head teacher's report.

## **Engagement and Ethos**

We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We shall look either locally or further field and the means of developing the relationship may be through exchange visits or more likely through the internet. Sharing facilities also provides a means for pupils to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama. Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the pupils, ensuring that the pupil voice is heard and able to effect change.

Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the social care and health professionals.

Engagement with parents through curriculum evenings, parent workshops and family liaison work.

Provision of, or sign-posting to, extended services, and in particular bringing parents together from different backgrounds through parenting and family support and community use of facilities for activities that take place out of school hours, including adult and family learning, ICT and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes.

## ***The school community***

- A school ethos established with clear aims, objectives and rules that underpin everyday practice e.g. no bullying, teasing, homophobic or racist comments
- Partnership arrangements in place to share good practice and offer pupils opportunities to meet and learn from other pupils from different backgrounds e.g. in RE.
- Use of parents to talk about living in different communities and using their skills to promote learning
- School council to take into account pupil views e.g. monitor racism, bullying and playground behaviour

- Regular participation in Citizenship initiatives
- We draw upon a number of local cultural organizations to provide speakers for assemblies or as stimulus to learning in the classroom, e.g. Clergy members from a range of local churches.

### **The Role of Governors**

Our Governing Body is legally responsible for ensuring the promotion of social cohesion and the Head teacher is responsible for ensuring that the duties are fulfilled within school.

On a regular basis our governors will consider:-

- The school's impact on the community i.e. is the school exacerbating divisions or challenging them and breaking them down?
- How our school uses its own data around bullying and racist incidents to inform provision and school development?
- Whether we serve the wider community and help bring pupils and parents together?
- How representative our governing body is of the local community and pupils backgrounds?
- What our school can do to create an ethos of inclusion in which divisions and intolerance of other is unacceptable?
- How our school actively promotes understanding and dialogue between different groups, do we work in partnership with community and faith leaders?
- Any social problems which might impact adversely upon the school and how we have sought to engage key partners?
- Whether we have accessed support and good practice from within the local authority to promote social cohesion and what additional support is available?