

A policy for promoting equality: race, religion & belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age.

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The background to our policy, the stance of the Catholic Church in matters of racial justice, as well as our legal and professional responsibilities, is outlined below.

Our policy seeks to

- promote an understanding of a variety of cultures, valuing the positive contribution these make to our community
- promote an environment where we challenge racist and sectarian assumptions, attitudes and behaviour
- provide a curriculum which emphasises the positive aspect of all cultures and gives children and young people the confidence that racism can be and must be eradicated.

We shall promote race equality and good race relations by ensuring that:

1. awareness, understanding and respect for different cultures and racial backgrounds is reflected in our curriculum content and learning activities in order to promote respect for and reflect the diversity of our community

2. pupils from different cultures and racial backgrounds are treated fairly and appropriately, in the planning and organisation of the curriculum, the methods and approaches adopted, the allocation of pupils to classes/teaching groups, and through assessment and the use of resources.

[An E.A.L. strategy is implemented on enrolment of any bilingual pupil. The Head of English in KS3/4 or of Literacy in KS1 & KS2 is alerted and steps are taken to assess the level of support required. Liaison with the home tutor is the key ingredient for success, and sustaining a high level of home tuition, especially in the early weeks and months, is vital. Encouragement to take every opportunity to speak in English rather than to revert to the mother tongue as a matter of course is taken. Staff need support in implementing an appropriate strategy in their teaching. The school has made a new appointment to work specifically in this area by providing additional support on an individual or small group basis.]

3. attainment at all levels and any issues of underachievement are monitored and addressed, and attainment of and support for bilingual pupils is also monitored.

4. children are not excluded from school activities as a result of their religious or cultural beliefs with regard to food and/or dress

5. resources, teaching materials and school information promote respect for and a positive image of different traditions, cultures and races

6. school activities offer all pupils the opportunity to experience a wide range of cultural diversity and exposure to positive role models and visitors

7. pupils understand the background and potential of our multicultural society, including the appropriate use of language and terminology

8. positive and open consideration, within a Welsh and a Catholic context, is given to such issues as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and the role of the media

9. the content and styles of books and materials are updated so as to be appropriate and contemporary
 10. traditions, festivals and customs (e.g. dress, food) of different cultures are respected and celebrated.
 11. all teachers are expected to ensure that curriculum topics and activities reflect a global dimension and use appropriate, positive images
 12. global responsibilities, world development issues and interdependence are an integral part of the curriculum and special focus on such matters as Fair Trade is made.
 13. opportunities to extend the understanding of other races, cultures and traditions by involvement with Fair Trade organisations such as CAFOD, Christian Aid and others are provided
 14. positive links within our community, particularly with groups and families from different racial/cultural backgrounds are established
 16. any incidents of racial and/or cultural harassment are dealt with effectively and taken seriously. This includes name calling and/or social exclusion of children. Preventing and dealing with discriminatory behaviour, abuse, intimidation or racial harassment is regarded as the responsibility of all members of the school community.
 17. we shall give all pupils at appropriate stages the opportunity to discuss, explore and understand the implications of racism and other forms of prejudice and bias. This is done throughout the curriculum but mainly in RE, English, History, Geography and music & art.
- The Head carries overall responsibility for the implementation, communication and review of the policy.
 - The policy is issued to all teaching and non-teaching staff and to parents and pupils via the school website

Background to our beliefs:

We believe that each human being is created in the image and likeness of God; has a dignity and value that must be respected, promoted, safeguarded and defended; that we are all equal in the eyes of God; and that we are all bound together by our common humanity.' (Charter, Catholic Racial Justice Congress, 2003)

Over many years, Catholics have been involved with others in society in an effort to overcome racism. This has been only partially successful, and it has involved us all in a learning process. The murder of Stephen Lawrence and the inquiry into his death highlighted the issue and potential for 'institutional racism'.

In an attempt to respond positively, the government has passed new legislation requiring public bodies (including schools) to be proactive in promoting equality. This is appropriate for Catholic organisations and institutions even where they are not bound by the legislation. This has been addressed in separate guidelines (Serving a Multi-Ethnic Society, November 1999).

More recently, the Charter of the Catholic Racial Justice Congress 2003 has articulated the commitment which the Catholic community must make in order to become 'a truly inclusive Church'. We urge all to familiarise themselves with the Charter and to work with others for its full implementation.

The gospel values which underpin our work call us to the service of all, especially the poor and marginalised.

Institutional racism is a form of structural sin and primarily a sin of omission. The Macpherson Report defined it as (46.25):

'the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.'

Knowing that institutional racism can exist in some of the key institutions of our society, we cannot assume that Catholic organisations and institutions are unaffected. In such a situation, we become culpable if we fail to take stock and examine carefully the nature of the service we offer.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

The Amendment Act imposes a general duty on public authorities, including schools, in performing their public function to have due regard for the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between persons of different racial groups; and
- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.

The legislation requires schools and colleges to have a race equality policy that covers staff, pupils, parents and carers, and the wider community.

The specific duty on a school requires it to:

- have a written statement of policy for promoting race equality;
- have in place such arrangements as necessary for fulfilling, as soon as is reasonably practicable, its statutory duties;
- assess the operation and impact of all of its policies, including its race equality policy, on staff, pupils and parents, and, in particular, on the attainment levels of pupils;
- monitor, by reference to racial groups, the admission and progress of students;
- monitor, by reference to racial groups, the recruitment and career progress of staff; and
- include in its race equality policy an indication of its arrangements for publishing the policy and communicating the results of its assessment and monitoring activity under the policy.

2. Inspectors are asked to check * whether:

- the school has a race equality policy;
- the race equality policy covers all the specific duties that the school has under the Act and the main areas of school activity that are relevant to promoting the general duty;
- the race equality policy is linked to the school's development plan and is regularly reviewed and kept up to date;

- the school has made arrangements to assess the impact of all its policies on pupils, staff, and parents from different racial groups, and gives priority to its policies' impact on pupils' attainment levels;
- the school has made arrangements to monitor the impact of its policies and the way they work, and gives priority to its policies' impact on pupils' attainment levels; and
- the school has made arrangements to publish the results of its monitoring every year.

*Taken from "A Framework For Inspectorates" published by the commission for Racial Equality, July 2002.

3. Questions which we must answer in relation to racial equality include:

- Does the school use "Learning for All: Standards for racial equality in schools" (published by the Council for Racial Equality) as a source of guidance and good practice?
- Does the school value the contribution of minority ethnic pupils?
- How does the school counter stereo-typing?
- Are cultural differences and diversity valued and celebrated in the school?
- How does the school promote respect and understanding of diverse cultures, languages, faith and ethnic groups, especially if there are few pupils from these diverse backgrounds at the school?
- Are pupils tolerant of other pupils' beliefs, cultures and backgrounds?
- How effectively do different aspects of the curriculum contribute to developing pupils' awareness of cultural diversity?
- Are pupils able to discuss and reflect on life in other cultures?
- Do pupils recognise and increasingly understand a diversity of beliefs, attitudes, and social and cultural traditions?
- How does Collective Worship, with its mainly Catholic Christian framework, contribute to developing pupils' awareness of cultural diversity?
- How does the school support pupils from other faiths to observe their own religious customs and practices?
- Does the school make good use of additional resources, for example, the expertise of community leaders?
- Do learning resources show sensitivity to different groups and cultures?
- Does the school record all racist incidents and report these to the parents or guardians, schools governors and the LEA?
- Does the school analyse the ethnic identity of pupils who are excluded?
- How well informed is the school about pupils' home language, cultures, values and customs?

4. English as an additional language

The National Assembly for Wales provides funding to LEAs for ethnic minority achievement under the Better Schools Fund priority 3A, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG). The aim of this grant is to improve equality of educational opportunity for all minority ethnic groups including those for whom English is an additional language.

[Registered Inspectors will ensure that they include in the section on the context of the school, where relevant, reference to details of the languages spoken and the number of pupils learning English as an additional language.

Comments on other related matters, such as the quality of teaching, the quality of the curricular provision, and links with parents and the local community, would be included in the relevant sections of the full report.]

5. Questions which must be asked in relation to English as an additional language include:

- Is there a whole school policy for supporting pupils who learn English as an additional language and, if so, is it implemented consistently?
- Is the environment welcoming for pupils for whom English is an additional language?
- Do teachers use information about the languages spoken by the pupils?
- Do pupils with English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum? Have any mainstream teachers undertaken training to help them understand the learning needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language?
- How close is the liaison between English as an additional language teachers and mainstream teachers?
- How are lessons in mainstream classes and, where relevant, during any withdrawal sessions, structured to meet the specific needs of pupils learning English as an additional language?
- Does the school track the success of its English as an additional language provision by evaluating pupils' attainments and is it using the information to identify targets for improvement?
- Does the school use the first language to support learning?
- How does the school meet the needs of pupils with English as an additional language when no support teaching is available?
- Does the school fully understand that a lack of competence in English alone is not to be equated with learning difficulties?
- How does the school assess the needs of pupils with English as an additional language when they are suspected of also having special educational needs?

POLICY STATEMENT

The fundamental truths of Christianity, in common with other faiths, include the dignity and equality of all human beings. All of us are created in the image of God, are loved by God and are part of one human family. Thus every human being deserves respect and has fundamental rights. This belief, articulated by the Second Vatican Council, must be reflected in the vision and lived out in the practice of Catholic organisations and institutions. This is not an easy task. We live in a world which is complicated, diverse and unequal. Respecting diversity and promoting equality is complex and challenging. Legislation in the UK deals with diversity and equality in six areas:

- race
- gender
- disability
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation
- age (by end 2006)

With a growing number of agencies and organisations involving, employing and serving more and more people, we must understand and comply with current legislation and good practice and reflect this in all we do. This document sets out the policy of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Our view is that those responsible for, or working in, Catholic organisations and institutions have twin duties. The first is to witness to the Gospel by striving always to be inclusive, respectful of the human dignity of all and in tune with the spirit as well as the letter of the law. The second is to safeguard and uphold the Catholic ethos and identity of the organisation in question. In carrying out these twin duties, Catholics should always keep in mind:

- Our first obligation is to the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.
- It is fundamental to this teaching that every person deserves respect.
- Catholic bodies should publicly acknowledge their commitment to both diversity and equality.
- While people have a right to their private and family lives, at the same time a Catholic organisation needs to cultivate and preserve an ethos appropriate to its vision, mission and values and this will make demands on all involved in the organisation.
- We value the contribution that talented and committed people, with different life experiences and abilities may be able to make in the life of the Church.
- In a society in which relationships are increasingly fractured and complicated, it is only to be expected that this may at times be reflected in the lifestyles of those who serve the Church.
- Where there is tension between discrimination law and the right of a Catholic institution to safeguard its ethos, Catholics should seek advice. We, the bishops of the Church, commend this policy to all the faithful as an expression of faith and witness in today's society. With this policy statement we have issued Guidelines demonstrating our determination to set an example of respect for all God's people and their contribution to the human community. As we take up this challenge, we must remain true to our own faith and traditions. We expect the freedom to live according to these, just as we recognise the same rights for other faith communities. Above all, we are called to be neighbour, friend and partner to all men and women, as we struggle together to create a more just society.

Guidelines

We hope that these Guidelines on Diversity and Equality for the Catholic community in England and Wales will help us as we grapple with changing circumstances and legislation. The values upheld in this document should be reflected in our dealings with all people.

1. In addressing the issues of diversity and equality, our first obligation is to the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.
2. We must also understand and comply with discrimination legislation. Where there is tension between discrimination law and the right of a Catholic institution to safeguard its ethos, relevant expert advice should be taken.
3. Catholic bodies should publicly acknowledge their respect for diversity and commitment to equality. Usually this will take the form of a Diversity and Equality Policy which will both shape and reflect the ethos and practice of the organisation. It will give confidence to all parts of society that participation in our organisations and institutions is both welcome and desired. Employment
4. There will be instances in most Catholic organisations where a particular job carries with it a 'genuine occupational requirement'¹ that the post-holder be Catholic.

The new legislation makes explicit provision for this. Other posts may require the post-holder to have knowledge of the Catholic Church. In many cases it will be appropriate to require that job applicants should be broadly in sympathy with the vision, mission and values of the organisation.

5. Every applicant and employee has a right to his or her private and family life and all Catholic employers must respect that right. At the same time, Catholic organisations and institutions will have expectations of their employees, and they should state explicitly what these are (eg 'not to bring the organisation into disrepute'). Candidates for appointment should be fully informed about the expectations of the organisation, and they should be given the chance to discuss these before offers are made either orally or in writing. This is particularly important in relation to leadership and pastoral roles. Any such expectations should, of course, be applied in a consistent and nondiscriminatory way, and reference should be made to them in the contract of employment.
6. As employers, subject to limited and narrow exceptions, Catholic organisations must ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age. This is 'direct discrimination'.³ Only a person's qualifications and ability to do their job should determine decisions about recruitment, retention and promotion.
7. It is also important to avoid any requirements or conditions being applied to a job which would have the unintended effect of putting some individuals at a disadvantage because of their ethnic origin, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age, unless those conditions or requirements are clearly justifiable. This is 'indirect discrimination'.
8. Employers must ensure that no employee suffers any form of bullying or harassment in the course of employment, and understand that action must be taken to address the situation whenever a person feels that he or she is being harassed. Catholic organisations should have a policy on both bullying and harassment.
9. Employers should take seriously claims by individuals that they are encountering prejudice, discrimination or harassment in their work and must not dismiss these as over-sensitivity. An employee must not be penalised for raising these issues, unless the complaint is found to have been malicious.

10. Special attention needs to be paid to recruitment and advertising to ensure that potential candidates have a reasonable opportunity to know of vacancies. To ensure fairness in this area, for instance, recruitment by word of mouth only must be avoided, and communication of a vacancy should facilitate applications from a suitably diverse selection of people. In this way Catholic employers gain by attracting the best applicants for their vacancies.

11. In shortlisting, interviewing and appointment, those responsible for the process should be clearly aware of the criteria for selection contained in the agreed person specification and job description. These criteria should be applied consistently to different types of candidates. Where appropriate, those making an appointment should be given guidance concerning the possible effects of stereotypes, prejudices and misunderstandings on the selection process. Attention also needs to be given to the composition of selection panels to ensure the avoidance of bias. Selection procedures should be agreed prior to the commencement of the appointment process and applied consistently to all applicants.

12. Where members of certain groups are under-represented in particular work situations, it is permissible in law to provide training for employees to become credible candidates for promotion or transfer to another job. We would encourage this practice where it is appropriate.

Representation on Catholic bodies

13. Apart from employment, there are numerous situations in which people are selected for membership of committees, commissions, councils, boards and other bodies within the Catholic community. Those in authority are encouraged to examine selection procedures to ensure that they reach out to the full diversity of the Catholic community in their area or constituency. Where some groups are under-represented it will often be appropriate to make special efforts to encourage a wider participation.

Voluntary participation in Catholic activities 14. There are other situations which are in principle open to all but where some groups are under-represented (eg Parent Teacher Associations, Justice and Peace Groups and other voluntary associations). In such situations it is important to reflect on the reasons for any lack of participation by particular groups and to try to eliminate anything that unnecessarily discourages full participation. In some cases, it will be appropriate to make special efforts to encourage the participation of under-represented groups.

Positive Action

15. In so far as the law allows, Catholic bodies are encouraged to take reasonable initiatives to promote equality and full participation in the many activities of the Catholic community. 'Reverse discrimination'⁶ is usually inappropriate and sometimes (in employment) unlawful; but there are many forms of 'positive action'⁷, short of 'reverse discrimination', which promote inclusion, participation, diversity and equality.

Monitoring 16. We encourage those with authority at all levels of the Church to be more aware of whether different groups are represented in the many facets of the life of the Church (eg schools, parish councils, organisations etc). Sometimes this can be done informally; but in other situations formal monitoring will be needed. Schools are specifically required to monitor racial background and disability.

17. Moreover, formal monitoring of some kind may be appropriate beyond employment situations (eg monitoring the membership of large organisations, the clients who use a service, the admission and achievement of pupils of different backgrounds in schools etc).

Key Issues The issues of race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age which are discussed below are both different and inter-related. Each has its own history and particular characteristics. At the same time, there are many similarities in the experience of prejudice and inequality and in the legislation to remedy it across these six areas. It is appropriate that the issues are addressed together; and it would be wrong to give some greater or lesser importance than others.

Race and ethnicity

18. Over many years, Catholics have been involved with others in society in an effort to overcome racism. This has been only partially successful, and it has involved us all in a learning process. The murder of Stephen Lawrence and the inquiry into his death highlighted the reality of 'institutional racism'.⁹In an attempt to respond positively, the government has passed new legislation requiring public bodies (including schools) to be proactive in promoting equality. This is appropriate for Catholic organisations and institutions even where they are not bound by the legislation. We have addressed this matter in separate guidelines (Serving a Multi-Ethnic Society, November 1999).

19. More recently, the Charter of the Catholic Racial Justice Congress 2003 has articulated the commitment which the Catholic community must make in order to become 'a truly inclusive Church'. We urge all Catholics to familiarise themselves with the Charter and to work with others for its full implementation. We believe that each human being is created in the image and likeness of God; has a dignity and value that must be respected, promoted, safeguarded and defended; that we are all equal in the eyes of God; and that we are all bound together by our common humanity.' (Charter, Catholic Racial Justice Congress, 2003)⁸

Gender

20. Some attitudes toward women in our society are inappropriate but deeply rooted. We are working and must continue to work to correct this situation. We recognise the gifts particular to men and women and the different roles that they are sometimes called to play.¹¹At the same time, we recognise and uphold their fundamental equality and support society's attempt to give them full and equal rights. The Church must continue to support women and men in realising their full potential.

21. Catholics should be aware that it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of gender reassignment and the Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows people to have their birth certificates altered and makes it unlawful to disclose information about gender reassignment unless the person has given permission. This relatively new legislation allows some exceptions for faith communities, and Catholics in official positions may need to take advice. Disability

22. In 1998, the Bishops' Conference published Valuing Difference: People with disabilities in the life and mission of the Church.¹²At the heart of the document was the central role which people with disabilities should play in the life of the Church. New legislation concerning people with disabilities requires employers and providers of goods and services to make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. This legislation is a welcome development and one which the Church must embrace wholeheartedly.

23. The Church strives to accommodate all people in its life and mission. We must seek to include people with disabilities in the pastoral, spiritual, liturgical, social and educational dimensions of Church life. 'Part of the Body of Christ is missing when an individual is excluded from Church Life'. (Valuing Difference) Our Catholic organisations must be aware of this and make the appropriate adaptations and adjustments to include people with disabilities. Making changes to buildings, providing large print, Braille and audio resources, installing loop systems, etc is a start. Our attitudes, understanding and awareness of these issues must also be challenged, developed and improved. We will all benefit from making it possible for those with disabilities to offer their wide variety of talents and experiences in the service of the Church.

Religion and belief

24. Particularly since the Second World War, our traditionally Christian society has become increasingly secular as well as religiously diverse. Since Vatican II (and the publication of *Nostra Aetate*) the Catholic community has been more involved in dialogue and cooperation with people from other faith communities and with those of no formal religious faith.

25. Some faith communities, including the Catholic community, have not felt adequately protected by existing laws, and new legislation prohibiting religious discrimination in employment is most welcome.

26. It is entirely consistent with the spirit of this legislation that we insist on the right of faith communities to practise their faith freely and to engage in a range of religious, educational and charitable activities. This is a fundamental human right.¹³The Catholic community has traditionally been engaged in many activities, in parishes, schools and a variety of charitable organisations. Some of these are aimed primarily at Catholics and others are offered to the whole community.

27. On the whole, new legislation allows space for faith communities to carry out activities for their own members, but this may be a matter that will require continued negotiation with public authorities. The provision of services or activities for its own members by the Catholic community or any other faith community is not to be equated with religious discrimination.

Sexual orientation

8. The Catholic community includes people of heterosexual, homosexual and bi-sexual orientation. Every human being, whatever his or her sexual orientation, has the right to live a life free from discrimination and harassment, and we welcome new legislation which protects this right. Moreover, people of all sexual orientations have a right to take a full and active part in the life of the Catholic community. 29. Catholic teaching, of course, makes a distinction between sexual orientation and sexual activity, and it holds that all men and women are called to a life of chastity, and to fidelity if they choose to marry. Catholic organisations and institutions ask their members and staff to respect this teaching. In reaching a balance between individuals' private and family lives and their responsibilities within the organisation consideration may need to be given to the nature of the role and organisation in question.

Age

30. Ability rather than age must be the primary consideration when asking people to fill roles within the Church. We therefore welcome new legislation which (from 2006) will protect all of us against discrimination on the grounds of age, including a bias against young people. Catholic organisations must regularly review their policies on retirement and other age-related issues. We urge all Catholics to seek ways to encourage, support and fully involve people of all ages in the life of the Church. Conclusion

31. Finally, we call upon all Catholics to make a real effort to be open to the challenge of the new legislation. This is an appropriate time to reflect deeply and to welcome the social and cultural changes that are required of us. Catholic organisations and institutions will want to review themselves in the light of these Guidelines and take appropriate action. They will want to check their own policies and practice against the values outlined here and against discrimination legislation. Organisations, institutions and dioceses should consider appointing or entrusting someone with responsibility for diversity and equality. Those producing their own policy and guidelines should ensure that they meet the standards laid down in this document and that effective steps are taken to ensure their implementation.

32. For ourselves, we hope to have given renewed emphasis to the process of creating within the Church a pattern of life founded on the love of God for each person – a place of welcome that enables all who wish so to respond to the invitation of faith. In doing this we will also contribute to the attempt of our society to become truly inclusive.

33. It is our desire that this document should be a catalyst for real change in our Church and the society we seek to serve. We intend to encourage this process in our own dioceses and to review progress in England and Wales through the Bishops' Conference after two years.

All human beings are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's image; they have the same nature and origin and, being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same divine calling and destiny...forms of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design. (Gaudium et Spes, 29)

Head & Senior Leadership Team