

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic High School



Community Cohesion Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 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 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 the wider community.

1.2 Community cohesion lies at the heart of what makes a strong and safe community. It must be delivered locally through creating strong networks, based on principles of trust, and respect for local diversity, and nurturing a sense of belonging and confidence in local people. Effectively delivering community cohesion also tackles the fractures in society which may lead to conflict and ensures that the gains that communities bring are a source of strength to local areas.

1.3 For schools the school community is the children and young people it serves, their parents, carers and families, the staff, Governing Body and the community users of the school's facilities and services. It is also the community in which it is located, the community of Britain and the global community.

1.4 The vision of St Joseph's RC High School recognises and celebrates the diversity within our catchment area and welcomes the contributions which different groups and individuals make to the community. Differences between groups of people can cause misunderstanding and friction. A key commitment of St Joseph's RC High School is to build and promote community cohesion within the school and the wider community

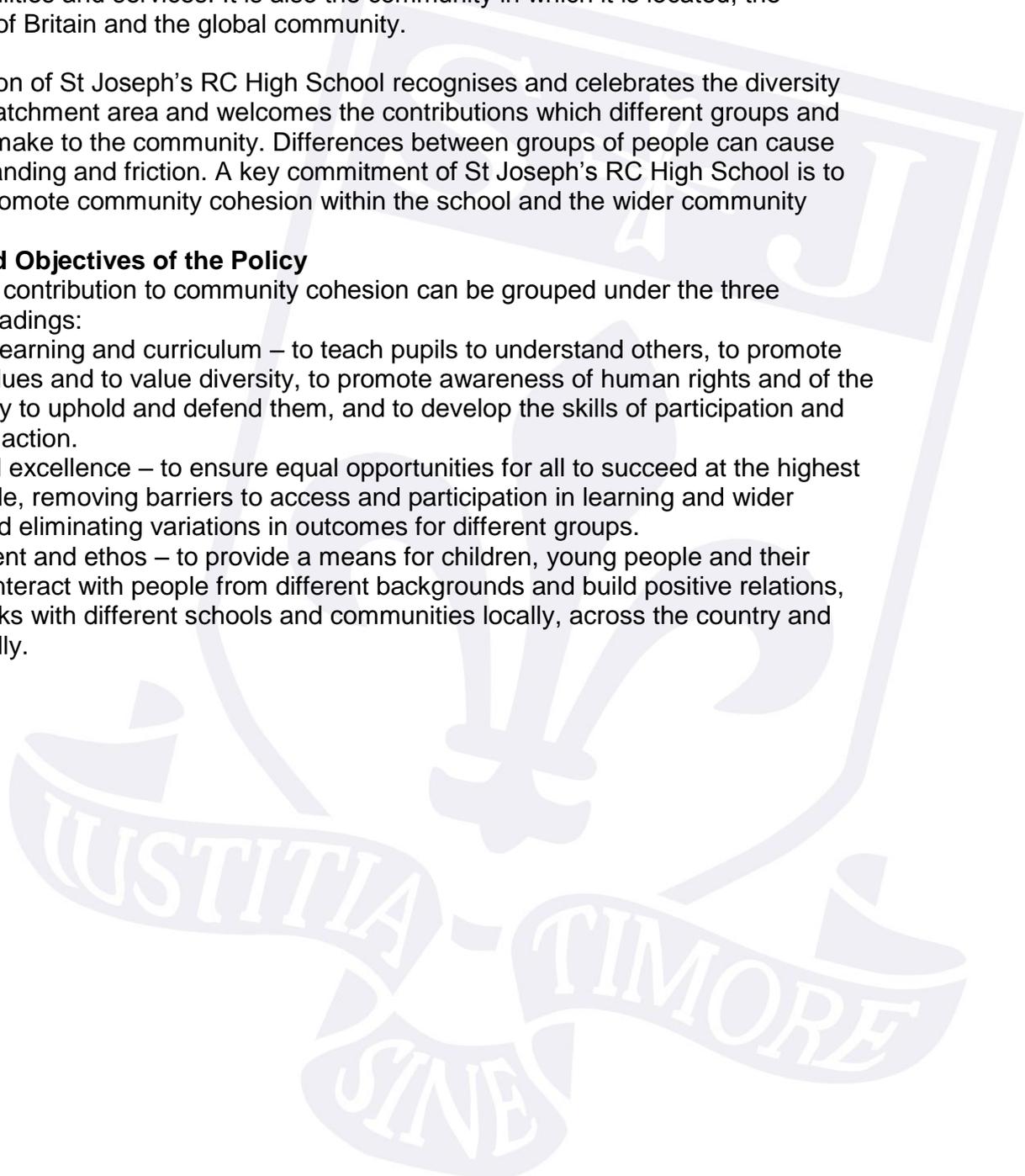
2. Aims and Objectives of the Policy

St Joseph's contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

*Teaching, learning and curriculum – to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

* Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.

* Engagement and ethos – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally.



3. How Do We Promote Community Cohesion

Some of the work and activities that support community cohesion can also contribute towards the Every Child Matters outcomes of 'making a positive contribution', 'enjoy and achieve' and 'achieving economic well-being'.

3.1 Teaching, learning and curriculum

An effective school will have a high standard of teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity will be integrated across the curriculum.

We will ensure that:

- * Lessons across the curriculum promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice, discrimination 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.
- * Our teaching and curriculum provision supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values, and build pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them.
- * Assemblies are arranged that involve members of the local and wider community to promote the engagement of learners and shared understanding as well as the school's ethos and values.
- * Learners are encouraged to value diversity and to develop a better understanding of society by challenging assumptions.

3.2 Equity and excellence

We will continue to focus on 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.

We will also ensure that:

- * The school tracking systems will enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.
- * We will monitor, record and deal effectively with 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.
- * Our school admissions arrangements will emphasise the importance of community cohesion and social equity.
- * High standards and expectations will be set for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio economic groups.

3.3 Engagement and ethos

School to school:

* We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We shall look either locally or further afield 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 include:

* Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the pupils.

* Local engagement through links with community groups and organisations, enabling them to play a role in the school and encouraging pupils to make a positive contribution in the local area.

* 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.

* Engagement with parents.

* Provision of 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.

4. Monitoring and Review

4.1 Role of the Governors

The Governors will conduct an annual review in the Summer term of the school's existing practice in relation to community cohesion and determine what further action may be required.

4.2 Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will monitor the three areas and report to the Governors termly on the progress and impact of the policy. The information from the annual review will feed into the next School Development Plan.

