Mulberry
Academy Shoreditch

Equality Policy

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1		Existing
2	November 2022	No updates, part of annual review
3	November 2023	No updates, part of annual review
4	November 2024	Update of school principals, in line with Trust Policy Reduced text in section 6, moved relevant additional details to Appendices A and B
5	November 2025	Minor typos corrected No other updates, part of annual review
6	November 2026	No updates, part of annual review

Equality Policy

1 Purpose of the policy

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch is an inclusive school in a diverse and thriving community. We are proud to celebrate this diversity and champion equality.

Every student, staff member, parent/carer, and all other members of the school's community, are valued and respected. We aim to embed the values and ethos that will develop individuals to become positive, respectful and successful citizens within the community and throughout their lives. We are committed to overcoming disadvantage, tackling discrimination and fostering positive relationships.

This policy sets out how the school meets these aims and supports all students and staff in achieving their potential, academically, professionally and personally. It also confirms how the school is meeting its Public Sector Duty to promote equality as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

The policy also confirms the expectation that all members of the school community, including students, staff, parents, visitors, volunteers, uphold our Equality aims above.

2 Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty is made up of a general equality duty and two specific duties. The general duty requires us to have due regard for the need to:

a) **eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
b) **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
c) **foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The Act defines protected characteristics as:

- age[1]
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

It is unlawful for the school to discriminate against a student or prospective student, staff member or prospective staff member, by treating them less favourably because of one or more of these characteristics.

The Act's two specific duties require us to:

a) publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty;
b) publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

[1] A person's age is a protected characteristic for adults in relation to employment. It does not apply to school students.

3 School principles

To achieve the ethos and aims set out above, the school has adopted Mulberry Schools Trust's Equalities principles:

- All pupils, staff and members of the school community are of equal value; we are proud of and celebrate our diversity.
- Inclusive practice, care and sensitivity are intrinsic to all our interactions.
- We foster and promote positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and community.
- We recognise and respect difference and challenge prejudice and discrimination.
- We uphold high expectations of behaviour which demonstrates respect towards all, inside and outside our community.
- We use all available information to set suitable learning and professional challenges for all, respond to diverse needs and overcome potential barriers to learning and progression.
- We collect and analyse data to ensure all groups of pupils and staff are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage through inequality.
- We recognise there is always more to learn and plan wider engagement and training to increase our understanding of equality and diversity.
- We are consultative in our practices, appropriately involving and engaging members of the Trust community in the development, review and evaluation of improvement plans, policies and procedures and when change is proposed.
- We ensure we comply with equality legislation.

4 Implementation

- School staff consider equality implications before they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they keep all policy under review on a continuing basis. The Equality Duty is integrated into all the school's functions, and the monitoring and analysis necessary to comply with the duty is carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind.

- Our admissions and recruitment arrangements are fair, transparent and informed by clear guidance so that there is no risk of discrimination. We maintain an accurate record, when possible and appropriate, of the protected characteristics of our students, employees, Local Governing Body members, Trustees and applicants for jobs. This data ensures we know the needs of our school population well and informs our Equality Objectives, planning and monitoring focuses.
- We strive to narrow all gaps in achievement affecting students from particular cultural and ethnic backgrounds, who belong to lower-income households, have a disability or have special educational needs. We aim to provide appropriate and varied learning, teaching and support to ensure all students make excellent progress, regardless of their needs, dispositions, aptitudes or circumstances. We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students as set out in our Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, which prompts action to close any achievement gaps that become evident. We publish an analysis of standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage.
- We closely monitor data on absence from school and exclusions for evidence of overrepresentation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.
- We actively promote equality and diversity though an academic curriculum and Personal Social and Health Education programme which are broad and challenging and which promote critical thinking, celebrate difference and challenge stereotypes or discriminatory thinking. We endeavour to present diversity through our displays, resources, events, contributors and role models. We provide opportunities for students to listen to a range of opinions, empathise with different experiences and to engage in social action. We are alert and proactive about the

potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

- Our focus extends beyond academic success. Our students participate in an unrivalled series of innovative challenges and projects throughout their time with us and, whatever their interest, passion or talent, we strive to ensure all students take part in initiatives involving esteemed national and global partners, universities and businesses. Monitoring allows us to target underparticipating groups.
- The school's annual plan for the use of Pupil Premium funding enables us to counter the effects of disadvantage on progress and participation and, in particular, creates opportunities for students to broaden their experience.
- Our Behaviour Policy outlines our expectations of both students and staff in their interactions with each other and this includes our approach to challenging and tackling bullying, prejudice and discrimination, wherever and whenever it occurs. Prejudice-related incidents are identified, recorded and dealt with, and reported to the LGB. Through the Student Pledge, drawn up by the students and staff, students are encouraged to model the positive values of the school, at home and within their local community.
- We recognise that people with disabilities may have different needs from those of who do not have a disability. This is always taken into account when developing and implementing decisions, policies and services and may lead to reasonable adjustments. A bi-annual Accessibility Audit helps us ensure the accessibility of our provision and facilities to students, staff and visitors.
- Our Special Educational Needs Policy aims to meet the needs of students with a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision. Our Examinations Policy sets out procedures relating to access arrangements that ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability.
- Our professional development programme for staff has a strong focus on equalities issues. It is also designed to ensure equality of access and a profile of participation that reflects the full staff community. We are attentive to the need to ensure that all staff gain from professional development and do not experience blocks to employment or promotion opportunities.
- As an employer we are committed to equal opportunities principles and we monitor and actively promote equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. We strive to eliminate discrimination and harassment. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment and retention and all appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability. We also aim to increase the extent to which staffing, in all roles and at all levels, reflects the diversity of our community. We have specific policies to address staff conduct, discipline, grievances and dignity at work.
- The school's Complaints Policy sets out the procedures through which we handle complaints, including those that relate to any experience or perception of inequality or discrimination, with the specific aim of prompt and, where possible, informal resolution that precludes the need for escalation.
- We regularly gather feedback and responses from students, staff and parents on their experience of the school's provision, practice and policy and endeavour to involve a wide-cross-section of our community in the school's development and improvement.

5 Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and all visitors to support our commitment to equality and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. The Trust's Committees keep relevant aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review. The Trust Board biennially reviews this Policy and its impact.

The school's Executive Principal and Principal are responsible for maintaining an ethos in the school that upholds this policy and the Equality Duty. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is understood and implemented by all staff and for making students and staff aware of its commitments and expectations.

Leadership Team members are responsible for addressing the policy actively within their areas of responsibility and for collating and analysing relevant monitoring evidence.

The Senior Equality Leads are responsible for ensuring that equality remains a high priority for us all. They lead the Equality Working Party Groups, develop, plan, support and monitor initiatives to further equality across the school; and proactively engage staff, pupils and parents with the aims and principles of this policy. They use research and community voice to determine training needs and ensure that equalities training is delivered at least once a year. They meet at least once a year with the named Governor for Equalities to discuss the school's work and action plans.

The Equality Working Groups (pupils and staff) support an inclusive school culture where the whole community feels equally visible, valued and has a voice. The groups are responsible for ensuring that issues of concern raised by pupils and staff are addressed.

All staff are responsible for acting on this policy consistently in their day-to-day professional responsibilities and for supporting students and their families to share the school's commitment to equality.

6 Equality Objectives

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to publish equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable. Mulberry Schools Trust has determined four over-arching equality objectives (see Appendix A).
The school's specific targets under these objectives, are drawn from evaluation of our work in relation to equalities and community cohesion and are identified each year in the school Improvement Plan (SIP).

In addition, we publish 3 to 5 equalities targets yearly that are specific to the current context and data of Mulberry Academy Shoreditch (see Appendix B). Actions, monitoring arrangements and evaluation mechanisms are identified both in Appendix B and within the SIP and are taken forward as part of the annual school improvement cycle.

7 Disseminating the policy

We ensure the whole school community knows about our commitment to equality through all relevant communications, interactions, practice and policy.

This policy, including the Equality Objectives and data, is available on the school website and in the staff handbook. Its principles, expectations and commitments are built into curriculum and extra-curricular activities for students and professional development for staff throughout the year.

8 Monitoring the policy's impact

On students

As part of the school's Self Evaluation, we collect the following information on our students:

- attainment and progress data,
- attendance data,
- exclusions,
- sanctions and rewards,

- involvement with extended learning opportunities including careers education
- involvement in intervention,
- option choices,
- parental engagement
- progression from Y11/Y13

Senior Leaders with responsibility for the above areas analyse this data routinely from an equality perspective in terms of:

- eligibility for Pupil Premium – a measure of disadvantage
- ethnicity
- prior attainment
- SEN and disability,
- sex
- with English as an additional language
- looked after status

Analysis after each attainment/progress data collection leads to short term action to adjust learning and teaching plans or to target support and intervention. Analysis of end of year outcomes leads to specific areas for school-wide development built into the School Improvement Plan.

Analysis of the wider data sets above enable us to identify differences between groups, and over/under-represented groups. This leads to a review of possible causes and agreed action to address the issues. This may be short term action or school-wide action built into the School Improvement Plan.

The school monitors incidents of prejudice-related bullying or harassment amongst students through the procedures set out in the Anti-bullying Policy.

The school also invites focussed discussion, with students, parents and staff, on the students' school experience in terms of their religion and belief, their sexual orientation and their gender identity.

On staff

In accordance with Employment Duty legislation, we collect equality information on:

- applicants for employment
- staff in post and on different pay scales/grades/points/levels of leadership
- participation in training
- pay progression
- internal promotion
- accessing flexible working

The HR department analyses this data routinely with respect to:

- age
- disability
- ethnicity
- marriage/civil partnership
- religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This analysis enables us to remove any blocks to, and/or target, under-represented groups and to identify and remove potentially discriminatory practice.

The school also invites feedback from, and focussed discussion with, staff on their school experience in terms of their sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy/maternity.

The school monitors incidents of prejudice-related bullying or harassment of staff through the procedures set out in the Dignity at Work and Grievance policies.

Equality objectives

The Trust Equality Objectives for this year (see Appendix A) and the Academy Equality Objectives (See Appendix B) are built into the School Improvement Plan. Monitoring and evaluation processes are detailed there.

Reporting

The Senior Team meet to review equalities data and evaluate the progress of equalities action plans at least twice a year.

9 Review of the Policy

This Equality Policy will be reviewed by the MAS Local Governing Body after a year in the first instance and thereafter biennially. The monitoring report outlined above will inform the review.

We have a rolling programme for reviewing all school policies and use the questions below to assess their potential impact on equality and diversity, so that we can ensure appropriate focus is given.

- To what extent does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community – and what is the significance of the impact?
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Does the policy relate to functions that have been identified through engagement as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?
- Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the policy relate to the school's equality objectives?

APPENDIX A: Mulberry Schools Trust Equality objectives 2026 - 2027

The Public Sector Equality Duty included in the Equality Act 2010 requires schools to have due regard to equality considerations when significant decisions are being made or policies developed. Schools must consider how their activities affect the people who share the protected characteristics and publish information to show how the activities:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
2. Improve equality of opportunity between people with protected characteristics and those who do not;
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In order to discharge this duty, the Trust has evaluated its work in relation to equalities and community cohesion. On the basis of this audit, we have set the following objectives:

MST Equality Objectives 2023-2025:

1. Raising standards of educational achievement

Equality objective: to identify and address any gaps between the overall performance of pupils in each Trust school and, in each school, between all pupils in a year group and those in specific groups such as different ethnic groups or with Special Education Needs and Disabilities.

2. Developing through the Mulberry College of Teaching and Leadership

Equality objective: to ensure that all Trust staff are supported to develop and progress, building strategies for advancing equality for the pupil and staff bodies through learning, teaching, personal growth, pastoral care and training, ensuring there are pathways for all that enable them to maximise their potential and achieve their ambitions.

3. Enriching the Mulberry Learning Community

Equality objective: to foster a culture of mutual respect and to provide an environment for learning and working that celebrates, welcomes and respects the diversity of the Trust schools, their local communities and our wider society, and sets the highest expectations of standards that are equitable for all.

4. Giving active consideration to equality issues

Equality objective: to monitor the potential effects on different people when developing and implementing strategies, policies and procedures. This will include for example consulting with appropriate groups within the schools to ensure due consideration is given to equality issues when developing policies and procedures.

These Trust objectives and the relevant actions and evaluation procedures are detailed in the School Improvement Plan. Three further objectives that relate to the specific current context and data at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch are published in Appendix B.

APPENDIX B: Mulberry Academy Shoreditch Equality Objectives 2026 - 2028

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch Equalities Objectives 2026-2028

Inclusion, Ambition and Community are the three pillars of the Mulberry Academy Shoreditch Way. We want to ensure that students and staff from all backgrounds thrive in our provision. Our Monitoring, Evaluation and Review systems make it clear to all leaders and managers what equalities data they should gather and when and who they should report to regarding their action plans and interventions. While each Senior Leader, Head of Year or Subject Leader will be working to address any inequalities they have identified within their own area of responsibility, these three objectives relate to broader trends across the provision that we plan to tackle at a whole school level.

Objective 1: To increase the overall progress and attainment of students at KS4 and KS5

Targets KS4:	**Targets KS5:**
A8 55.00 Basics 9-5 60% Basics 9-4 80% Strong EBACC 30%	Value Added All 0.5 Value Added A Level 0.5 Value Added BTEC 0.5 A*-C 70% A*-B 40% A*-A 15% Average Grade B

- No significant gaps in progress between any groups using Subject Progress Index as a measure.
- Progress of High Prior Attainers (HAPS) at GCSE is in line with other groups and at KS5 is above
  +0.5 VA

Why have we set this objective?

- Our Academy it is situated in Weavers' Ward of Tower Hamlets which has the highest Deprivation Index of 5. In our current Year 11 cohort, 66% of students are eligible for Pupil premium and 43% speak English as an additional language. In our current Year 13 cohort, 69% of students speak English as an additional language.
- Although previous exam data show that there are no significant progress gaps for individual groups, we know that the context of our school and the intersectional nature of our students' identities mean that the attainment and progress of every student is a matter of equity. In order to meet their ambitious further education and career aspirations, they need the highest quality of exam results.
- We set separate specific targets for the progress of HAPS considering that the progress of HAPS and especially HAPS in receipt of pupil premium nationally is below average.
- The targets are aspirational based on the prior attainment of the cohorts. They are set at more than one point above nationally expected progress.

Actions:

Curriculum and Teaching:

- Subject Leaders ensure that high quality work is shared and deconstructed with staff and students regularly to ensure that students know what success looks like. (HODs, Assistant Principal- Leadership Development)
- Student work, including high quality examples, is a focus of all Departmental meetings (HODs, Assistant Principal- Leadership Development)
- Assistant Principal designated to lead on the strategy for raising the attainment of HAPS (Assistant Principal- HAPs)
- Develop and implement Year 11 and 13 strategies, to be reviewed each half term (Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal- Outcomes) Support for Curriculum Leaders
- Regular monitoring of underperforming subjects (HODs, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal- Outcomes, Subject line managers)
- Clear structures in place for sharing of best practice between HODs/Departments. Opportunities for cross curricular links through joint line management and collaborative department time. (Assistant Principal- Leadership Development)

Data tracking and intervention:

- Forensic analysis of external exam outcomes and the Year 10/12 Summer 2 data drop to identify inschool variation and action plans (Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal- Outcomes)
- After each data drop for all year groups, HODs/HOYs to identify action needed to improve progress of underachieving groups to be reviewed at each following data drop (HODs/HOYs, Subject Line Managers)
- Fortnightly basics meetings (Principal, Assistant Principal- KS4 Outcomes, HODs English and Maths)
- Basics is an agenda point in maths and English line management meetings (Assistant Principal- KS4 Outcomes)
- Regular monitoring of students with SEND support by the Inclusion team, further specific strategies for individual underachievers to be circulated to class teachers **(Assistant Principal- Inclusion)**

Students and Families

- Celebrate students exceeding targets after each data drop and inform parents/carers; specific parental engagement meetings to support any under-achieving students (HOYs, Deputy Principal- Outcomes)
- Weekly rewards assemblies for Year 11 and 13 (HOY Y11 and Y13)

Objective 2: To increase the reading ages of students in Year 7, so that all students have a reading age in line with their chronological age.

Why have we set this objective? Reading is a fundamental skill that students need to access the curriculum and to succeed in the wider world. We have a broad-reaching reading strategy that encompasses reading for pleasure, reading in lessons and interventions for students whose reading age is below their chronological age.

Although baseline tests conducted at the start of Year 7 show that there are no significantly underperforming groups across students with SEND, EAL or eligibility for pupil premium in comparison to our cohort as a whole, students' whose stanine score is below average are underachieving within the national context. Ensuring they catch up to their reading age is an equity issue, especially considering the context of this Year 7 cohort in which 58% are eligible for Pupil Premium, 25% have special educational needs and 47% speak English as an additional language.

Actions:

- Use the New Group Reading Test (NGRT) programme to monitor reading scores, identify students for intervention and measure the impact of interventions. Assess all students twice a year and students who are involved in additional interventions every term. (Librarian and Literacy Lead)

Literacy for all Year 7 students:

- Timetabled fortnightly Literacy lessons include 30 minutes of Sparks Reader and 30 minutes of Lexia. Staff are trained to support with follow-up interventions.
- Weekly homework to achieve 300 accuracy points (SRPs) a week
- Promote reading for pleasure: Fortnightly storytime in tutor period, Authors, World Book Day,
  Roald Dahl Day, Harry Potter Day, Book Club, Volunteering Opportunities, House Reading Competitions, Rewards and Rewards Trips
- Department Leaders continue to embed whole-school language acquisition strategies in their curriculum areas such as unit glossaries, Unravel Reading, Talk Tactics, TTTT and Time to Shine

Interventions for students with an NGRT stanine score below 3

- Conduct additional phonics screening for students with stanine scores below 3 to determine which students should be part of 'Read Write Inc Fresh Start' phonics intervention.
- During the fortnightly literacy lesson, these students work on the 'Lexia Core 5' phonics intervention until they are ready to progress to 'Power Up' (Literacy Teacher, Literacy Lead)
- At the start of the year, students access phonics intervention sessions at least once a week which consist of 20 minutes of 1-1 teaching and 30 mins of reading or sparks reader (Literacy Teacher, Literacy Lead)
- Continue to increase the number of staff trained in phonics interventions so that all students who need this intervention are able to access it three times a week (Literacy Lead, Librarian, Assistant Principal Inclusion)
- Host an Information session for the Parents of this group in Half Term two covering the interventions students are accessing, the importance of reading and how to promote and reinforce reading at home.
- In the 'Rise and Read' morning programme, these students partner with reading volunteers in older year groups to read a book of their choosing.

Other Interventions for students:

- Reluctant Readers of All Levels Intervention: Students are identified by class teachers. Focus groups are used to identify the barriers to reading. Students attend a weekly library session in school, are gifted a book of their choosing and are taken on a visit to the local library

Staff conducting interventions and literacy sessions are trained to ensure that all interventions are based on the specific needs of the student, so that they are getting the right support to progress.

Objective 3: For 100% of students leaving Mulberry Academy Shoreditch Sixth Form to progress to further education, employment or training.

Why have we set this objective? We aspire for all our students to access ambitious destinations, which will set them up for a successful future. Our Sixth Form is inclusive; we have lower entry requirements for Level 3 courses than other KS5 provisions in the borough. As a result, we are oversubscribed, with 280 students in our current Y13 cohort, 62% of whom are in the Lower Band of Prior Attainment. Low prior attainment is a Risk of NEET indicator.

Student Voice analysis shows us that, following balanced and impartial CEIAG, 50% of this cohort have expressed an interest in progressing to Apprenticeships rather than University. As a result, we are currently increasing the resources that we put into supporting these students to secure these roles before they leave us.

Actions:

- The majority of Y13 students will continue with UCAS support sessions until Christmas to ensure that they have the option of pursuing a university course if they decide to (Sixth Form Team)
- Split the leadership of Sixth Form destinations, with separate teams leading on University and Apprenticeships guidance and interventions (Head of Sixth Form)
- Deliver a robust programme of support for students seeking apprenticeships (all Apprenticeships Lead):
- Weekly support session for students working on applications
- Provide a support manual clarifying the key steps applicants need to take with suggested timelines
- Host a Student and Parent event about the process of applying to apprenticeships
- Use the Destinations Spreadsheet for monitoring, ensuring that students aspiring to progress to apprenticeships are attending the available trips, workshops, events and support sessions
- Ensure that sessions on job search, applications and interviews are accessed by all students planning to progress to apprenticeships and employment
- Train KS5 vocational staff and tutors during Summer Gain Time on how to support the students applying for apprenticeships
- Ensure the effective use of data to identify interventions needed:
- Careers Leader manages Sixth Form tutors to gather and update Destinations aspirations in Y12 HT2, HT5 and Y13 HT1, HT3 (Careers Leader, Sixth Form Tutors)
- Apprenticeships Lead reports half termly to the Head of Sixth Form on actions, tracking, interventions and destinations secured
- Pastoral Team, Careers Leader and Inclusion maintain risk of NEET tracking and implement early interventions, including additional careers meetings and referral to Young Workpath
- Continue to offer part-time employment to alumni on gap years (Headteacher, Assistant Head- Inclusion)
- KS5 careers lead to continue to support alumni who are not yet in further education, employment and training. These alumni are invited to attend support sessions in school.