

Thwaites School

EQUALITY POLICY AND OBJECTIVES
2026 - 2027

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THWAITES SCHOOL

Equality Policy and Objectives

2026/2027

At the time of publishing the following roles were held:	
Headteacher	Mark Redhead
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mark Redhead
Behaviour Lead	Mark Redhead
Designated Teacher for cared for or previously cared for children	Mark Redhead
Designated Mental Health Lead (not statutory)	Mark Redhead
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO)	Sarah Morton

Approved by	
Name:	Mark Redhead
Position:	Headteacher
Signed:	M. Redhead
Date:	22/09/2026
Review date:	22/09/2027

Approved by	
Governing Body	
Signed on behalf of the governing body by:	<i>L. Bowden</i>
Position	Chair of Governors



Review Table				
Version	Description of Change	Date	Approved By	Next Review
1.0	Full review and rewrite of Equality Policy and Objectives	22/09/2026	The Governing Body	22/09/2027

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently in response to changes in statutory guidance, local safeguarding procedures or identified safeguarding priorities.

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1. Introduction

Our school is inclusive; we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and we are committed to ensuring all members of our community are equally valued.

We believe that the Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Our approach to equality is based on seven key principles:

1. **All learners are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their sex, gender or gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background, and whatever their sexual orientation.
2. **We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to sex, race, age, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, or marriage or civil partnership. We believe that diversity should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
3. **We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. **We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
5. **We observe good equality practices for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures promote equality for employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including recruitment, promotion and continuing professional development.
6. **We have the highest expectations of all our children.** We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
7. **We work to raise standards for all pupils, including the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out how Thwaites School meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and promotes equality across school life. It is supported by our equality objectives, which identify specific improvements we intend to achieve.

The Equality Act protects people from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Its nine protected characteristics are:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.

- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

The protections apply differently according to the circumstances. Age and marriage and civil partnership are protected characteristics in employment but do not apply to pupils under the school provisions of the Act.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

In carrying out our functions, we must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

For marriage and civil partnership, the duty relates to eliminating unlawful discrimination; the other two aims do not apply.

We consider equality when making decisions, developing policies and reviewing school practice. This includes considering how to remove disadvantages, meet different needs and encourage participation where it is disproportionately low.

Specific publication duties

We publish information demonstrating our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and update it at least annually. We also publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years and review progress towards them annually.

Our equality information and objectives are available on the school website and in accessible formats on request. Published information protects individuals' privacy, particularly where small numbers could make pupils or staff identifiable.

Further guidance is available in the Department for Education's [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#).

3. Links to Other Policies and Documentation

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies and documents:

- Accessibility Plan.
- SEN and Disability Policy.
- SEND Information Report.
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Governors' Statement of Behaviour Principles.
- Attendance Policy.

- Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Safe Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy.
- Complaints Procedure.
- Admissions arrangements published by Cumberland Council.

Employment matters are also covered by the relevant Cumberland Council employment policies and procedures adopted by the school, including the Grievance Procedure.

These documents set out the detailed arrangements for their respective areas and support the implementation of this policy.

Evidence of our work to promote equality also includes school improvement planning, governing body records, relevant staff training, feedback from pupils and families, and information about pupils' progress, attendance, participation and prejudice-related incidents.

We use relevant information already held by the school to identify barriers and inform action. Personal information is handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection requirements. Published equality information does not identify individuals.

4. Our School Profile

Thwaites School is a small rural primary school with nursery provision. Our community includes families from local villages, hamlets and isolated farms, as well as families who travel from outside the school's catchment area.

Our small size enables staff to know pupils and families well and to respond to individual circumstances. Pupils have a range of learning, communication, social, emotional and physical needs. We recognise that special educational needs and disability are not interchangeable: a pupil may have special educational needs, a disability, or both.

We consider how disability, other protected characteristics and wider circumstances may affect pupils' achievement, attendance, well-being and participation. These circumstances may include financial disadvantage, rural isolation and access to transport. We do not assume that pupils with similar characteristics have identical needs.

The school provides support through adapted teaching, resources and individual arrangements. These include sensory resources and access to the Rainbow Room, which provides a space for pupils who need a quieter environment or support with emotional and sensory regulation.

The school's physical environment presents some accessibility barriers. The entrance, hall and ground-floor classrooms can be reached without steps. However, one classroom is accessed by a flight of steps, and the upstairs classroom and library are reached by stairs. The playground exit from a downstairs classroom has two steps, and the alternative external path may be difficult for wheelchair users. There is currently no accessible toilet. These barriers inform our Accessibility Plan and decisions about access, reasonable adjustments and planned improvements.

We review relevant information about the school community annually to inform our published equality information and objectives. We take particular care with small groups, as publishing detailed figures could identify individual pupils or families. We use proportionate summaries and information about the action we take to demonstrate our work on equality.

5. What We Are Doing to Eliminate Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

We take account of our equality duties in admissions, teaching, access to facilities and activities, behaviour, attendance and employment. We challenge discriminatory conduct and promote respect throughout school life.

We consider the potential impact of policies, practices and significant decisions on people with protected characteristics before decisions are made. We record relevant considerations proportionately and act where barriers or disadvantages are identified.

We make reasonable adjustments to prevent disabled pupils from being placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled pupils. This includes appropriate changes to school practices and the provision of auxiliary aids and services. We anticipate needs where reasonably possible and review arrangements with pupils, parents or carers and relevant professionals. Physical accessibility improvements are addressed through our Accessibility Plan.

The Headteacher ensures that recruitment and selection arrangements reflect our equality duties. Detailed procedures are set out in the Safer Recruitment Policy and relevant employment policies adopted by the school.

5.1 Behaviour, Suspensions, Permanent Exclusions and Attendance

Our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and Attendance Policy take account of our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

When responding to behaviour or attendance concerns, we consider individual circumstances, including whether a disability or unmet need is contributing to the difficulty. We make reasonable adjustments where required and review the support in place.

Decisions about sanctions, suspension or permanent exclusion must be lawful and non-discriminatory. We consider relevant evidence and whether appropriate support and reasonable adjustments have been provided.

We review behaviour, suspension, permanent exclusion and attendance information to identify possible inequalities or disproportionate effects on particular groups. Where concerns arise, we investigate and take appropriate action, recognising the limitations of comparisons involving very small numbers of pupils.

5.2 Addressing Prejudice and Discriminatory Bullying

We challenge prejudice, discriminatory language and bullying, including conduct related to actual or perceived protected characteristics or a person's association with someone who has a protected characteristic.



This includes racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic conduct, religious prejudice, and prejudice relating to disability or special educational needs. We respond to incidents whether they occur in person or online.

Staff respond promptly, record concerns and follow the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. Where an incident raises a safeguarding concern, the Child Protection Policy and Procedures also applies. A single discriminatory incident is taken seriously even where it does not meet the definition of bullying.

We support those affected, address the behaviour of those responsible and use appropriate teaching and follow-up to help prevent recurrence. We review incidents for patterns and consider whether changes to support, teaching or school practice are needed.

We do not tolerate victimisation of anyone for raising an equality concern, making a discrimination complaint or supporting someone else's complaint.

6. What We Are Doing to Advance Equality of Opportunity

We use our knowledge of pupils and families, relevant assessment information and feedback to identify barriers to learning and participation. We recognise that promoting equality may involve providing different support to meet different needs.

We work to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Monitoring pupils' progress, attainment, attendance and participation to identify disadvantages and any differences between groups that require action.
- Providing adapted teaching, appropriate resources and targeted support while maintaining high expectations for every pupil.
- Working with pupils, parents or carers, the SENDCO and relevant professionals to identify needs and review the effectiveness of support.
- Supporting access to the full curriculum, educational visits, clubs and other school activities, making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils where required.
- Considering barriers arising from costs, transport, communication or family circumstances and taking proportionate steps to improve participation.
- Ensuring that pupils' views inform decisions about their support, using accessible ways for them to communicate.

We interpret information carefully; particularly where small numbers make comparisons unreliable or risk identifying individuals. We consider pupils' individual experiences alongside any patterns in the information.

Our SEN and Disability Policy and SEND Information Report explain how we identify and support special educational needs. Our Accessibility Plan sets out planned improvements to disabled pupils' access to the curriculum, the physical environment and information.

Where appropriate, we take lawful and proportionate positive action to address disadvantage, meet different needs or increase participation among pupils who share a protected characteristic. Our equality objectives identify priorities for improvement, and we review the impact of the action taken.

7. What We Are Doing to Foster Good Relations

We prepare pupils for life in a diverse society by promoting understanding, respect and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds. We recognise the importance of this work in a small rural school, where pupils may have fewer opportunities to experience the diversity of wider society directly.

We foster good relations by:

- Teaching about difference, equality and the effects of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE, relationships education, religious education and the wider curriculum.
- Using books, teaching materials and examples that reflect a range of backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, disabilities and family circumstances, avoiding stereotypes.
- Helping pupils appreciate their own identities and experiences while respecting those of others.
- Providing opportunities to learn about the contributions of people from different backgrounds.
- Encouraging pupils to listen to different perspectives, discuss disagreements respectfully and understand how their words and actions affect others.
- Using assemblies, shared activities and everyday interactions to reinforce kindness, fairness and respect.
- Challenging prejudice and discriminatory language promptly, in line with our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Teaching and discussion are appropriate to pupils' ages, understanding and needs. Staff model respectful behaviour and help pupils distinguish between respectfully expressing a belief or opinion and treating another person unfairly.

We listen to pupils, families and staff to understand their experiences of belonging and inclusion. Their feedback helps us identify concerns, improve school practice and review our equality priorities.

8. Publishing Equality Information and Objectives

We publish information on the school website demonstrating how we meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and update it at least annually. This includes relevant information about our school community, action taken to promote equality and progress towards our equality objectives.

We publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years. The objectives are set out in Section 14 and reflect the school's circumstances, identified barriers and priorities for improvement. Each objective includes the action to be taken, responsibility, timescale and how progress will be measured.

The Headteacher and governing body review progress annually and consider whether objectives remain appropriate. Objectives may be revised sooner where changes in circumstances or evidence indicate that this is necessary.

We protect personal information when publishing equality information. In a small school, even anonymised figures may identify individuals, so we use appropriate summaries and accounts of our actions and their impact where detailed figures would compromise privacy.

Paper copies are available free of charge from the school office. We provide information in accessible formats on request, taking account of individual communication needs.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the school community have a role in promoting equality, treating others with respect and raising concerns about discrimination. We provide appropriate information, guidance and training to support these responsibilities.

9.1 Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school meets its equality duties. It will:

- Approve this policy and the school's equality objectives.
- Consider equality implications when making decisions and overseeing school improvement.
- Monitor implementation of the policy and review progress towards the objectives at least annually.
- Ensure that equality information and objectives are published and updated within the required timescales.
- Hold the Headteacher to account for addressing identified inequalities and discriminatory practice.
- Ensure that governors have the information and training needed to fulfil their responsibilities.

9.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy and will:

- Ensure that staff understand their equality responsibilities and receive appropriate guidance and training.
- Consider equality implications when developing policies, organising provision and making decisions.
- Ensure that reasonable adjustments and appropriate support are identified, provided and reviewed.
- Take appropriate action in response to discrimination, harassment, victimisation and prejudice-related incidents.
- Monitor relevant information and feedback to identify barriers and assess the impact of action taken.
- Report progress and significant concerns to the governing body, protecting individuals' confidentiality.
- Ensure that published equality information remains current.

9.3 Teaching and Support Staff

All staff will:

- Treat pupils, colleagues, families and visitors fairly and respectfully.
- Promote an inclusive environment and maintain high expectations for every pupil.
- Adapt teaching, resources and support to meet pupils' needs and implement agreed reasonable adjustments.
- Use materials and approaches that reflect diversity and challenge stereotypes.

- Challenge discriminatory language and behaviour, recording and reporting concerns through the relevant school procedures.
- Listen to pupils and families and raise concerns about barriers to learning or participation.
- Take part in relevant training and apply the guidance provided.

The SENDCO supports staff in identifying barriers and planning and reviewing provision for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.

9.4 Pupils

Pupils will be supported, in ways appropriate to their age, understanding and needs, to:

- Treat others with kindness and respect.
- Recognise and challenge prejudice safely, including by seeking help from an adult.
- Report bullying, discrimination or unfair treatment affecting themselves or others.
- Listen respectfully to different views and experiences.
- Share their views about inclusion and participation in school life.

Responsibility for addressing discrimination rests with adults; pupils are not expected to manage incidents themselves.

9.5 Parents, Carers and Visitors

Parents, carers and visitors are expected to treat others respectfully and support the school's commitment to equality.

We encourage parents and carers to share information about their child's needs, raise concerns and contribute to reviews of support. Concerns about discrimination should be raised with the school and will be addressed through the relevant procedures.

10. Equal Opportunities for Staff

We are committed to promoting equality in recruitment, employment, training and career development. We do not tolerate unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation in any aspect of working life.

Appointments and promotions are based on fair, relevant criteria, merit and ability. Recruitment follows our Safe Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy and the relevant employment procedures adopted by the school.

We make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and staff to remove substantial disadvantages in recruitment and employment. Adjustments are discussed with the individual and reviewed as needs or circumstances change, with specialist advice sought where appropriate.

All staff, including teaching, support and administrative staff, have fair access to relevant training and professional development. We consider individual needs and circumstances when arranging opportunities.

We respect staff members' religion or belief, including the absence of religious belief, and consider requests relating to religious observance fairly. We also support staff experiencing pregnancy, maternity, menopause or other health-related needs through appropriate arrangements and the relevant employment policies.

We take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including assessing risks, providing appropriate information and training, and maintaining clear reporting arrangements. This includes risks arising from contact with colleagues, parents, visitors and others encountered through work.

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns promptly. Reports are taken seriously, handled sensitively and addressed through the appropriate adopted employment procedure. We do not tolerate victimisation of anyone who raises a discrimination concern or supports another person's complaint.

Detailed employment arrangements are set out in the relevant Cumberland Council policies and procedures adopted by the school, including grievance and disciplinary procedures.

11. Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy

The Headteacher and governing body review this policy annually and sooner where changes in legislation, guidance or school circumstances require it.

The review considers:

- Progress towards the equality objectives and the impact of action taken.
- Relevant information about pupils' achievement, attendance and participation.
- Patterns in prejudice-related incidents, bullying and complaints.
- Feedback from pupils, parents, carers and staff.
- Barriers identified through SEND provision and accessibility planning.
- Any changes needed to school practice, staff training or published information.

We interpret information proportionately, taking account of the school's small size and protecting individuals' confidentiality.

Equality information is updated and published at least annually. Equality objectives are reviewed annually and published at least every four years, with earlier revisions where necessary.

The governing body approves substantive changes to this policy and the equality objectives. Agreed actions identify who is responsible, when they will be completed and how their impact will be reviewed.

12. Disseminating the Policy

This policy and the school's equality objectives are published on the school website. Paper copies are available free of charge from the school office, and accessible formats can be requested to meet individual communication needs.

The policy is brought to the attention of staff and governors as part of induction. Relevant updates are communicated to them, with guidance or training provided where needed.

We explain our expectations about equality and respectful behaviour to pupils in ways appropriate to their age, understanding and needs. Parents, carers and visitors can access the policy through the website or school office.

13. Complaints

Concerns or complaints about discrimination or the implementation of this policy are taken seriously and addressed promptly and fairly.

Parents, carers and members of the public should raise complaints through the school's Complaints Procedure, available on the school website or from the school office. Where a concern falls under a separate statutory or employment procedure, we will explain the appropriate route.

Staff complaints are addressed through the relevant adopted employment procedures, including the Grievance Procedure where appropriate. Safeguarding concerns are managed in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.

We make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to access the complaints process and take account of individual communication needs.

We do not tolerate victimisation of anyone who raises a discrimination complaint or supports another person's complaint. Information is handled sensitively and shared only where necessary to investigate, respond or meet legal obligations.

The Headteacher and governing body review relevant themes and outcomes, while protecting confidentiality, to identify improvements to school practice. Using the school's complaints process does not affect a person's statutory rights.

4. Equality Objectives

Objective 1 — Improve access for pupils with mobility needs

By July 2027, improve the school's readiness to include pupils with mobility needs by addressing barriers that can be resolved through changes to layout and organisation, and agreeing a prioritised programme for barriers requiring specialist advice or building adaptations.

Why we have chosen this objective

The accessibility review completed on 23 September 2026 identified barriers involving stairs, some doorways and heavy doors, access to outdoor areas and the absence of an accessible toilet. Although no current pupil is reported to be excluded from learning because of these barriers, they could affect future pupils or pupils whose needs change.

Actions and timescales



- **By December 2026:** Review circulation routes and furniture layouts, implement practicable improvements, and identify suitable ground-floor arrangements for teaching and access to library resources.
- **By March 2027:** Obtain advice from the local authority or suitably qualified advisers about priority physical access improvements and safe evacuation arrangements.
- **By July 2027:** Agree a programme identifying proposed adaptations, priorities, indicative costs, funding options, responsibilities and target dates. Record interim arrangements and reasons for any deferred work.
- Involve the SENDCO, relevant staff, pupils and families in identifying needs and reviewing proposed arrangements.

Responsibility

The Headteacher will lead this work, supported by the SENDCO and the governor responsible for health and safety. The governing body will oversee progress and decisions about resources.

How success will be measured

Practicable layout improvements have been completed and checked; arrangements for accessible teaching and resources are documented; and each outstanding physical barrier has a recorded action, responsible person and review date.

Progress and the effect on access and participation will be reviewed annually and summarised in the school's published equality information. Detailed actions will be recorded in the Accessibility Plan.