

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: The Role of Governors

Enhance Academy Trust | Governor Training

Session Objectives

What is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and why does it matter.

- ▶ Protected Characteristics and Discrimination
- ▶ Legal and Statutory responsibilities
- ▶ Inclusive Language
- ▶ Unconscious Bias
- ▶ Microaggressions

Your role in EDI as a governor

- ▶ Learn how to monitor, support & challenge on EDI
- ▶ Align EDI to Trust vision: Church, Pupils, Staff, Communities
- ▶ Lead the way in setting culture

What is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in School

Equality: Ensuring children and staff have equal access to opportunities and resources to learn and succeed without discrimination.

Diversity: Recognising and celebrating the wide range of backgrounds, cultures, languages, abilities and ideas that our children and staff bring to the classroom.

Inclusion: Proactively creating a welcome and supportive environment where every person feels valued, respected and has a sense of belonging.

Equity: Putting things in place according to physical need, to remove barriers and achieve a level playing field.

Why is it important in our Primary Schools

- ▶ Lays the foundation for future attitudes
 - Children form attitudes about difference early set the tone now
- ▶ Supports a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment
 - EDI fosters a culture where every child feels safe, valued and respected
 - essential for emotional wellbeing and engagement
- ▶ Promotes fair access to opportunities
 - Ensures SEND children, EAL learners and those from disadvantaged or marginalised groups receive appropriate support and representation.
- ▶ Reduces prejudice and stereotyping
 - Early exposure to diverse stories, role models and experiences helps challenge bias before it becomes ingrained.
- ▶ Prepares children for life in Modern Britain
 - Teaching about different cultures, faiths, families and identities aligns with the British Values agenda and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural) education
- ▶ Aligns with safeguarding Duties
 - An inclusive culture helps staff identify and respond to discrimination, bullying or abuse more effectively

Why is EDI important at CAPA College

- ▶ Enables authentic artistic expression
 - An inclusive environment empowers students to explore their identity and express diverse stories through their art without fear of judgement,
- Reflects and respects diverse audiences
 - Performing arts must represent real world audiences, inclusion enriches creativity, broadens perspectives and challenges dominant narratives
- ▶ Prepares students for Inclusive Workplaces
 - ▶ The creative industries demand collaboration with people of all backgrounds. Understanding EDO principles builds professional awareness and employability.
- ▶ Supports Wellbeing and mental health
 - ▶ Many students in post 16 settings are navigating complex identity and life transitions. A strong EDI culture ensures access to appropriate support, reducing isolation and stigma.
- ▶ Promotes Equity in competitive fields
 - ▶ Performing arts can be elitist. EDI helps remove barriers for working-class, disabled, neurodivergent or racially minoritised students, ensuring talent is nurtured fairly
- ▶ Demonstrates the Trusts Ethical Leadership
 - ▶ It signals to staff, families, and wider industry partners that the college is serious about fairness, representation, and opportunities.

Protected Characteristics

- ▶ Age
- ▶ Disability
- ▶ Gender reassignment
- ▶ Marriage and civil partnership
- ▶ Pregnancy and maternity
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Religion or belief
- ▶ Sex
- ▶ Sexual orientation

Types of Discrimination

Direct	Unfavourable treatment of a person because of their protected characteristic
Based on associations	Unfavourable treatment of a person due to their association with someone who has a protected characteristic
Based on perception	Unfavourable treatment of a person due to a perceived protected characteristic
Arising from disability	Unfavourable treatment of a person due to an issue arising as a consequence of a disability
Failure to make reasonable adjustments	When an organisation refuse to make reasonable adjustments for a Disabled individual*
Indirect discrimination	When a general policy/practice has a disadvantageous impact
Harassment	Unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that humiliates, offends or causes distress.
Victimisation	The unfair treatment a person may encounter after making a complaint of discrimination**

The Legal Framework

- ▶ Equality Act 2010
- ▶ Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- ▶ Duty to prevent Sexual Harassment
- ▶ Schools/trusts must publish information demonstrating compliance with the PSED annually and publish equality objectives every four years.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

All public bodies -including schools and any organisation that provides a public function has to demonstrate how they show due regard to the need to:

- ▶ Promote equality of opportunity
 - ▶ Removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people with protected characteristics due to having that characteristic.
 - ▶ Taking steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics due to having that characteristic.
 - ▶ Encouraging protected groups to participate in public life and in any other activity where participation is proportionately low.
- ▶ Tackle discrimination
 - ▶ Ensuring staff, parents/darers and pupils are not unfairly discriminated against
 - ▶ Taking steps to prevent discrimination (through clear policies and processes
 - ▶ Trying to protect people from discrimination by others.
- ▶ Foster positive relations between different people.
 - ▶ Tackling prejudice
 - ▶ Promoting understanding- giving pupils opportunities to learn about people from all walks of life.

New Duty to Prevent Sexual Harassment

A new duty under the worker protection act 2023 (an amendment of the Equality Act 2010) requires employers including schools and colleges, to proactively prevent sexual harassment in their workplaces.

Reasonable steps to comply with the new duty:

- Conduct risk assessments to identify where sexual harassment may occur and the steps that will be taken to implement it.
- Implement clear policies shared with staff, pupils and parents/families that state clearly what behaviours constitute harassment and how to report incidents. Clear statements it won't be tolerated.
- Ensure other policies such as IT use and social media align with the harassment policy
- Create clear anonymous reporting systems so staff and students can report harassment
- Record, monitor and analyse incidents to understand what further interventions and training may be required.

Inclusive Language

Red Flag Language - highly offensive and triggering

Some are words that used to be in common usage in British language and are no longer considered appropriate.

The language around protected characteristics is constantly evolving.

Whilst homosexuality as a noun is still widely used, to refer to a person as homosexual is considered outdated and potentially offensive.

Afro Caribbean is a term better replaced with African Caribbean unless you identify as such.

BAME is no longer an appropriate term to be used.

If it isn't okay for everyone to use it, then nobody should.

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious biases are simply biases we hold that we are unaware of.

They can cause us to show preferential treatment of some people or unfair treatment towards others without even realising we're doing it

There are 2 main manifestations of unconscious bias - stereotyping and omission

- ▶ **Stereotyping:** Where as previously educators were encouraged to avoid showing harmful stereotypes within planning and resources, an inclusive approach is now to be more proactive than that. Challenging the narrative.
- ▶ **Omission:** Where we omit to notice something or unconsciously leave someone out. Computer algorithms can add to stereotyping and omission when created by teams that lack diversity, be sure children are seeing themselves.

Microaggressions



Ofsted & EDI

- ▶ Quality of education for all learners, including SEND
- ▶ Respect for others and positive relationships
- ▶ No tolerance of discrimination or harassment
- ▶ Strong personal development and inclusive leadership

Does School Governance Have a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Problem?

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As leaders of our schools, governors and trustees have 4 key responsibilities:

- ▶ Developing a vision and strategy for the school.
- ▶ Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.
- ▶ Holding the school leaders to account, ensuring that every pupil has the best possible education.
- ▶ Engaging with pupils, staff, parents and the school community to understand their views.

With this in mind, you would think that diversity of thought, voices and perspectives is facilitating good governance and the effective running of schools across the United Kingdom. However, this is not the case. Research undertaken by the National Governance Association (2022) shows there is much work to do in diversifying our school governing boards. Respondents to the National Governance Association survey demonstrate vast inequity in the following characteristics:

Age

- ▶ 52% of governors are over 60 years old.
- ▶ 6% of governors and trustees are under 40 years old (lowest on record).
- ▶ 1% are under 30 years old.

Ethnicity

- ▶ The percentage of governors and trustees that are white are overrepresented, whilst those of the Global Majority are underrepresented in all regions.
- ▶ 6% of governors identified as being from the Global Majority:
- ▶ 3% Asian
- ▶ 1% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
- ▶ 1% Mixed/Multiple
- ▶ 1% Other

Sexual Orientation

- ▶ 3% of governors identify as LGBTQ+.

Your Role as Governors

- ▶ Provide strategic oversight on EDI
- ▶ Approve & monitor relevant policies
- ▶ Challenge leaders on gaps & representation
- ▶ Monitor progress against equality objectives
- ▶ Champion inclusion in the community

Monitoring & Evidence

- ▶ Minutes of meetings showing EDI challenge
- ▶ Policy review and approval
- ▶ Data: exclusions, attainment, attendance
- ▶ Visit reports with EDI insights
- ▶ Training records

SEND and Inclusivity

- ▶ SEND is a key EDI priority
- ▶ Ensure curriculum access, reasonable adjustments, inclusive practice
- ▶ Ask: Who might we be leaving behind?
- ▶ Expect reports on SEND progress and provision

Challenge Questions

- ▶ How is our school meeting its equality duties?
- ▶ Are all voices reflected in our curriculum?
- ▶ What does our data tell us about inclusion?
- ▶ How are we ensuring access and equity for SEND pupils?
- ▶ Are we role modelling inclusive governance?

Reflect & Act

- ▶ What will you do differently after today?
- ▶ How can you bring EDI into your governor visits?
- ▶ How can your board model inclusion?
- ▶ Diversity forms
- ▶ EDI Governor
- ▶ Harassment training

Further Resources

- ▶ [School resource hub - UK Feminista](#)
- ▶ [Navigating misogyny and polarised views: supporting staff wellbeing in the classroom](#)
- ▶ www.equaliteach.co.uk
- ▶ [Inclusion and Diversity at Governors for Schools](#)
- ▶ [Equality and diversity guidance for governing boards](#)
- ▶ [Governors' DEIB Toolkit | Diverse Educators](#)