

Community Cohesion Policy

At Beaver Road.....

- There are no invisible children.
- All engage
- Many will shine
- Some may reach the stars

As a pupil at Beaver Road

- I have a chance to dream and my dreams are fostered.
- I have many chances to showcase my talents.
- I am encouraged to understand my emotions and manage them.
- I am encouraged to develop my social skills and how to use them.
- I experience the joy of discovering nature.
- I experience the joys and wonders of Manchester and the surrounding region.
- I am a school, local, national and world citizen.

From the *Governors' Strategic Statement for 2010*

Beaver Road Primary School

Background

'The curriculum for all maintained schools should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'.

(Education Act 2002 Section 78)

Schools have a duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different groups'.

(Race Relations Amendment Act 2000)

From September 2007 schools are, in addition, under a new duty to promote community cohesion.

(Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion July 2007)

'Race and faith are often seen as the most frequent friction points between communities, and the most visible sources of tension. However, discrimination and prejudice can be experienced by other groups - including the disabled, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender communities and different age and gender groups. Schools should therefore design their programmes to recognise where other strands of the equalities agenda - including gender, sexual orientation, disability and age - are interconnected with the aspiration to promote community cohesion, but should note that the main focus of the duty is cohesion across different cultures, ethnic, religious or non-religious and socio-economic groups'.

(Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion July 2007)

What is community cohesion?

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 appreciated and valued
- A society in which similar life opportunities*** are available to all
- A society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

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Common vision

The recently published report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion takes this agenda forward in the context of rapid change in some local communities. It suggests the importance of “shared futures”, and breaks the original definition of cohesion down into more detail – outlining a cohesive community as one where: “There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country. This recognises the contribution made by individuals within any community and the fact that people will naturally hold different ambitions, aspirations, beliefs and life experiences. But importantly, it places a strong emphasis on how they will also share important characteristics and experiences with those from their own and different communities.

***Sense of belonging*

In addition, the Commission provides a helpful definition of ‘sense of belonging’ as:

- *There is a strong sense of an individual’s rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn.*
- *There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny.*

****Life opportunities*

The Commission’s report also underlines the importance of equality – both the importance of tackling inequality gaps, but also the importance of making this social change visible to all communities, communicating fair treatment at all times.

Schools’ role here is crucial: by creating opportunities for pupils’ achievement and enabling every child and young person to achieve their potential, schools make a significant contribution to long term community cohesion.

(Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion July 2007)

Barriers to Community Cohesion

A recent MORI polling conducted for the Commission on Integration and Cohesion found that:

- 18% of people surveyed identified immigration/migrants as the main issue facing Britain today – with this answer overtaking crime in MORI’s regular surveys in May 2006.
- More than half of people (56%) felt that some groups in Britain get unfair priority when it comes to public services like housing, health services and schools. (Although this seems to be a stronger national than local perception – locally only 25% feel that some groups get unfair priority).

Beaver Road Primary School

- For the 14% of people surveyed who said they were not proud of their area, the main reasons were crime (55%), a feeling of lack of community spirit (43%) and concern about poor facilities (29%).

Our School Community

Our School is a multicultural community reflecting the ethnic, social, cultural and religious diversity of Manchester.

The Beaver Road Primary School community includes

- Our School Community – the children and young people we serve, their parents, carers and families, our School staff and governing body, and community users of the School’s facilities and services;
- The Community within which our School is located – the School in its geographical community and the people who live or work in our area (i.e. Didsbury, Manchester, the North West)
- The United Kingdom Community
- The European Community
- The Commonwealth
- The Global Community

The role of our School in promoting Community Cohesion

Community cohesion is about building a more tolerant, more understanding and fairer society, in which all members share a common sense of belonging that overcomes their differences.

We are committed to collaboration and cooperation throughout the School.

We use the resources we have within our local community, across the United Kingdom and the European Union and beyond, to extend and enrich our children’s knowledge, understanding and experience.

At Beaver Road we believe that cohesion is about:

- how to avoid the corrosive effects of intolerance and harassment
- how to build a mutual civility among different groups
- supporting, developing and enhancing respect for diversity alongside a commitment to common and shared bonds

At Beaver Road we build community cohesion by:

- Promoting equality of opportunity and inclusion for different groups of pupils within our school.
- Respecting diversity.
- Identifying and remedying inequality.
- Promoting shared values.
- Encouraging and providing opportunities for children to actively engage with others and understand commonalities.

Beaver Road Primary School

- Deepening children's knowledge, understanding and experience of their locality and community
- Promoting and developing the international dimension of the curriculum
- Actively networking and collaborating with other schools locally, nationally and internationally.

Evaluation of our School's contribution to Community Cohesion

Our School's success in contributing to community cohesion will be assessed under three headings:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – *to help children and young people to learn to understand others, to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values, to promote awareness of human rights and to apply 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, striving to remove barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and working to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups.*
- Engagement and extended services – *to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations: including links with different schools and communities and the provision of extended service with opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups.*

Our School's contribution to Community Cohesion will be **satisfactory** if:

The school has taken a set of actions based on an informed understanding of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. It is actively promoting community cohesion within the school community and is reaching out to other communities. Its work has a generally positive impact within the school, which is a largely cohesive community, but there may be only limited evidence of its success in promoting community cohesion beyond the school. Evaluation of its work is patchy but provides some relevant information.

Our School's contribution to Community Cohesion will be **good** if:

The school demonstrates that it makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion based on a clear analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. It evaluates its contribution to community cohesion and can identify clear impact but this may be uneven across the three strands. There are effective plans that promote engagement with a range of community groups beyond the school and the immediate community. The impact of its work is felt strongly within the school and pupils from different backgrounds get on noticeably well with each other.

Beaver Road Primary School

Our School's contribution to Community Cohesion will be **outstanding** if:

The school acts vigorously and successfully, using information from an incisive analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context at local and national levels to focus its exceptional contribution to community cohesion. It evaluates its work rigorously in order to build on its many strengths. The school's actions have a markedly beneficial impact on community cohesion within its local community and beyond. The school community is highly cohesive and the pupils have a strong understanding of what is required to maintain this state.

Reporting to Governing Body

The School Leadership Team will report to Governors on an annual basis on the success of our School's contribution to Community Cohesion.

Raj Mahapatra is the link Governor.

This Policy is to be reviewed by the Governing Body in September 2012.