

The AIn Community Schools Federation

Applicable to The Duchess's Community High School

Policy – Community Cohesion

Introduction

At The Duchess's Community High School, we actively promote the spiritual, moral, social, economic and cultural development of our students and seek to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Our school celebrates diversity and welcomes the contributions which different groups and individuals make to the community. A key commitment of our school is to build and promote community cohesion within the school and wider community.

Community Cohesion incorporates and goes beyond the concept of race equality and social inclusion. A cohesive community is one where:

- There is a common vision and sense of belonging for all groups
- The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- Strong and positive relationships are developed within school and the wider community

Background

The school serves an area of 250 square miles; one of the biggest catchment areas in England. The socio-economic background of students and their families is very mixed as can be seen in census data in Raise on Line etc. The economic background to the area is a combination of small scale rural businesses made up of mainly agriculture, tourism, and local services interspersed with a few small scale manufacturing units. There is also a level of commuting to the Tyne and Wear conurbation 30 miles to the south.

The outlook of families varies from the very insular and low levels of aspiration to those who have wide global knowledge and high aspirations. Rural deprivation can be identified in the larger settlements (Alnwick, Seahouses, and Wooler) as well as in the more sparsely populated areas of the catchment. Extra funding seen in urban areas is not available to deal with these issues.

Raise on Line also shows the ethnicity of the school to be predominantly White British (over 98% against a national picture of 74%)

In religious terms, Christianity is the only religion that has any significant following and only a minority of students would say that they actively attend church services on a regular basis.

It is our belief that this community background generates many complexities in both learning offer and the curriculum that students follow. Also, because of the rurality of our community, there are major difficulties in providing an 'out of hours' package that would support those students and families that live furthest away (often 15 to 20 miles from the school).

What is Community Cohesion?

Community cohesion involves working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging for everyone; a society in which:

- the diversity of peoples backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued
- similar life opportunities are available to all
- strong and positive relationships exists and continue to be developed

The term community has a number of dimensions including:

- The school community – the pupils it serves, their families and the school staff
- The community within which the school is located – the school in it's geographical area and the people who live and / or work there
- The UK community – all schools are by definition part of this community
- The global community – formed by EU and International links

Promoting Community Cohesion

Our contribution to community cohesion can be summarised under the following headings:

Teaching and Learning

Teaching children to understand others, promote common values, value diversity, promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibilities to uphold and defend them and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

Equality and excellence

Ensuring equal opportunities for all to succeed, removing barriers to access and participation to learning and extended activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.

Engagement and Ethos

Providing a means for children 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.

How we promote Community Cohesion

Teaching and Learning

- Because of the varied socio economic background of our students it is important it is important that we work at a variety of levels
- Lessons across the curriculum promote common values and help students to value differences and to challenge prejudices and stereotyping eg. in PSHE, Citizenship, Preparation for Working Life, Work Experience Geography, Sociology, Uniformed Services and RE etc.
- MFL (French and German) are being supported by French and German teaching assistant funded through the Comenius Project (2010 -2011)
- Global understanding is enhanced through a link with a Chinese school (Confucius Project) and ongoing links with St Cloud's State University
- Trips and Exchanges to France. Germany, China, Trinidad, South Africa and Belgium
- Curriculum based activities enrich children's understanding of community and diversity through visits and meetings with members of different communities eg. visits to places of worship and

religious leaders of different backgrounds coming into school to support curriculum delivery. Also video conferencing and ePal communication with schools in India, China and Trinidad

- Collective worship involves members of the local and wider community to promote understanding (Founders Day, Carol Service etc)
- Main School and Sixth Form IAG – employment / HE etc
- Children nominate and raise money for local, national and international charities each year. Assemblies and curriculum activities develop children’s understanding of these charities and of the people / societies they support
- Along side this is the work within PLTS and SEAL to generate higher aspirations and ‘soft’ employability skills. Also H.E.A.R.T agenda – regular work on tolerance, anti bullying, individuality etc. This is crucial because of our very comprehensive intake.

Equality and excellence

- Securing high standards of attainment for all children is our key priority. A rigorous tracking and target setting system is in place to ensure that high expectations are set for every individual and that their progress and attainment is monitored on a termly basis. Any under-performing children are identified and specific programmes of support implemented. Information from RAISE online is also used to inform our provision.
- All children are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential through the careful deployment of resources and staffing. All children benefit from a curriculum which is differentiated and personalised programmes of support and extension are used where appropriate.
- Through our Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Race Equality policies, incidents of bullying, harassment and prejudice are carefully monitored and dealt with thoroughly.

Engagement and Ethos

Links with other schools:

- We are part of the Aln Community Schools Federation and have close working links with a neighbouring village school
- We regularly participate in inter-school activities eg. sports tournaments, “The Big Sing” and “The Alnwickist” the federation schools’ newspaper.
- 14-19 Collaboration, King Edward VI School, All Saints

Links to the community:

- Representatives from the local community come into school to work with the children in a range of curriculum areas and to lead assemblies
- We have developed strong links with a range of external agencies eg. community police, Children’s Services, School Nurse, Children’s Early Intervention Team etc. who support us with our work with children and their families
- The elected school council has a high profile and it is involved in the decision making process
- We offer work experience to all our Year 10s and many of our vocational students.
- We engage very positively with our parents and carers and consider this to be a real strength of the school. They are involved through attending parent evenings, assemblies, performances, accompanying trips

Extended Services

- We run a before school breakfast club each morning

Policy: Community Cohesion

Review: Spring 2017

- A wide range of extra curricular activities are on offer for all children. Attendance at these clubs is monitored
- Parent and child courses, family liaison work , parenting support, other adult and family learning and other extended services are well sign posted in school and via our school website
- We liaise with Extended Services, CEIT and many other agencies to provide best possible support

'Mono – Culture'

Because of the 'mono-culture' that is both our ethnic and religious background it is important that we take every opportunity to engage our students with communities outside their local knowledge. We believe this will serve and support not only our students, but their families and the wider community. It will also help to raise aspirations and reduce the insularness of elements of our local community.

Examples include:

- Curriculum development as mentioned earlier
- Visits from / to a variety of religious groups
- Holocaust survivor visits
- Video Conferencing
- Confucius Classroom Bid
- International Visit
- Link with school in a deprived area of Newcastle
- Charity work

Next Steps

A community cohesion overview which is RAG rated indicates the next steps for development of Community Cohesion within our school.

