



Ysgol Bryn Castell

Strategic Equality Plan

Agreed by BCBC HT Federation Policy Group

October 2024

Notes for schools

This policy has been produced drawing on examples from other authorities and through discussion with BCBC.

There has been discussion at some length as to whether each individual school should draw up its own distinct equality objectives and it was agreed with BCBC that schools should seek to align their equality objectives to those drawn up by the local authority (which in turn align to the WG). In order to make the LA objectives more appropriate for schools, the policy group has agreed an adapted version of their objective statements and recommend this to all schools for their use.

Schools are advised to maintain the same timeline (currently 2024-28) as the BCBC Equality Plan and to update it when BCBC next renew theirs.

As always, this policy template is intended to provide guidance, but schools may draw up individual policy statements and equality objectives should they so wish.

Strategic Equality Plan Template for Schools 2024 - 2028

Introduction

At Ysgol Bryn Castell we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of any protected characteristic. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored, and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Characteristics of our School

Include here relevant diversity descriptions for the school, e.g. ethnicity, FSM, EAL.

Include relevant information on services/interventions provided by the school, e.g. ELSA

Include relevant information regarding accessibility, e.g. playground access.

The Legislative Background

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination, victimisation and harassment on the basis of the following characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (protection against direct discrimination only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or (non-)belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

This plan is a requirement of the Welsh Public Sector Equality Duty and sets out how we will meet the duty and regulations and continue to improve our equality performance via our Equality Objectives.

Developing Equality Objectives and Engagement

We continually seek to improve equality and eliminate discrimination within the school community by reviewing our performance, for example:

- Analysis of data, such as progress and wellbeing.
- Gathering information about representation of different groups.
- Gathering views of stakeholders.
- Undertaking equality impact assessments.

Bridgend County Borough Council have undertaken extensive consultation with stakeholders across the authority in order to formulate their equality objectives. In aligning our school objectives to their own, we may undertake additional specific consultation in order to ensure that our own objectives are relevant to the specific circumstances in our school.

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the school seeks to promote and ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society through a range of measures including;

- using materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of the various protected characteristics, without stereotyping;
- promoting attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- providing opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- seeking to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

Ysgol Bryn Castell has achieved the UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Bronze and Silver level. We are currently working towards the Gold Award.

Our school is committed to upholding the rights and dignity of every child in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly Article 37. We actively promote family involvement, transparent communication, and access to advocacy, safeguarding every child's right to safety and dignity.

Publication, Monitoring and Review

Our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) will be reviewed and renewed in line with the timeline and equality objectives set out by our local authority. We will publish our SEP on our school website and make it available from the school office. The plan will be available in a range of formats on request.

As part of our responsibility to monitor the SEP, we will:

- regularly review and analyse available information and data used to identify priorities for our equality objectives.
- use impact assessments to seek to ensure that actions taken have had a positive impact across the relevant protected characteristics
- seek to ensure that promotion of equality is embedded within school planning and that any discrimination is challenged and eliminated.

The Strategic Equality Plan must be reviewed at least every four years but may be updated earlier if necessary.

Signed:

Chair of governors

Date approved by the full Governing Body:

Date of review:

Strategic Quality Objectives 2024-2028 (aligned to Bridgend objectives 2024-28)

Objective 1: Ensure that every parent / family has equity of access to the services that they need.

Additional information from local engagement.

Families can find it difficult to access and attend the school site, as pupils attend Ysgol Bryn Castell from the whole County Borough of Bridgend. This can make building relationships with professionals, and networks of support with other parents and carers difficult and can make it difficult to access in-person services at the school.

Actions

Action	Description	Action Owner	Start date	End date
1	Spring phone call and discussions with pastoral staff to build and strengthen relationships with families.	Pastoral Staff	Spring 2024/25	Ongoing
2	School counsellor offers family support to whole family using a variety of communication methods including text, phone and at home, and can offer support to the wider family, rather than just the individual pupil.	School Counsellor Headteacher	Post-Covid	Ongoing
3	Building relationships with school staff such as Home School Liaison Officers (HSLO) through holding individualised admission visits and bespoke transition for every new pupil.	Home School Liaison Officers, Assistant Headteachers	As each new pupil is admitted to the school	Ongoing
4	Development of in-school events to include coffee mornings, which are more accessible and invite professionals and support services from the wider community.	Home School Liaison Officers, Assistant Headteachers	Autumn 2024	Summer 2028

This objective will be judged to be successful if...

- Parents/carers and families have access to the services they need
- More parents/carers will be aware of the services that are available to support them
- Parents/carers are more able to contact the school to ask for help and support

Objective 2: Protecting the most vulnerable - Ensure that policies and procedures support the rights and wellbeing of all learners including the most vulnerable.

Additional information from local engagement.

The profile of our learners has changed significantly, with almost 50% of our pupils now having autism. Whilst all policies, and procedures are written to be fully inclusive of all learners, a thorough review of key documentation such as the behaviour policy would be beneficial to ensure these documents continue to fully reflect the diverse needs of the pupil population at the school. This will ensure that our approaches remain responsive, equitable, and supportive for all pupils.

Actions

Action	Description	Action Owner	Start date	End date
1	Review the behaviour policy to ensure that it fully meets the needs of the whole school population.	Headteacher, Governing Body, school staff, stakeholders	September 2024	September 2025
2	Review the curriculum policy to ensure that it fully meets the needs of the whole school population.	Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers, Deputy Headteacher, Manager of AoLEs, Governing Body, school staff, stakeholders	September 2024	July 2028
3	Consider the introduction of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) at YBC.	Senior Management team (SMT), Governing Body, school staff, stakeholders	September 2024	July 2028

This objective will be judged to be successful if...

- Pupils will be more able to self-regulate and limit the number of incidents of behaviours that challenge over time
- The curriculum is developed on an ongoing basis to support the rights and wellbeing of all learners and promote inclusivity for all

Objective 3: Living Standards - Consider the impact of any policy changes or decisions on vulnerable pupils / families including those in poverty.

Additional information from local engagement.

The school has a high proportion of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals:

- **Autumn 2024:** 60.3%

Accordingly, policy decisions are informed by this data. Staff are reminded of the potential impact that even small demands can have on families experiencing poverty. This consideration is reinforced during staff training and regularly discussed in Senior Management Team meetings.

Actions

Action	Description	Action Owner	Start date	End date
1	Review of charging policy: All education during school hours is free. Ysgol Bryn Castell (YBC) do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the Curriculum. Regular school visits are undertaken, but no charges are made to pupils.	Headteacher, Admin Manager, Education Visit Coordinators, Governing Body	Spring 2025	September 2028
2	Parents/Carers are encouraged to apply for the School Essentials Grant for the purchase of school equipment.	Admin Team	Spring 2024	Ongoing

This objective will be judged to be successful if...

- No pupils are charged for any activity undertaken as part of the curriculum
- Eligible families are informed about the School Essentials Grant
- Staff receive training on the impact of poverty and small financial demands

Objective 4: Participation and engagement - Encourage every member of our school community to participate and engage in issues that are important to them and influence the decisions that affect their lives at our school.

Additional information from local engagement.

There is a strong School Parliament at the school, but this could be extended to ensure that it reaches and engages with all members of the school community and takes forward their views.

Actions

Action	Description	Action Owner	Start date	End date
1	Strengthen the School Parliament by giving them additional roles and responsibilities – creating sub-committees for items such as health and safety, Cymraeg, Eco etc. and encourage their participation and feedback in key decisions.	Sarah Davies, Headteacher, GB, School Parliament, all staff	September 2024	July 2028
2	Parents and Carers are given the opportunity to attend school more frequently through regular coffee mornings at the school, helping to build networks of support for families.	SMT, HSLOs	September 2024	July 2028
3	Trade Union representatives within the school meet regularly to share feedback on behalf of their members.	Headteacher, TU representatives in school	September 2024	July 2028
4	Creation of a 'feedback' e-mail address for parents/carers and other members of the school community to use.	Admin Team	September 2024	Ongoing

This objective will be judged to be successful if...

- More pupils, parents/carers and staff feel able and willing to participate in and influence decisions that affect their lives at the school

Objective 5: Learning - Promote equal access to quality learning for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, abilities, age or ethnic background. Support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Additional information from local engagement.
 As a special school, Ysgol Bryn Castell provides individualised, inclusive learning which is specific to each pupil’s Additional Learning Needs. Pupils have a range of plans including IDPs, IEPs and PBSPs in-place to ensure that the school environment, curriculum offer and support structures meet their individual needs.

Actions

Action	Description	Action Owner	Start date	End date
1	Consider the introduction of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) at YBC.	Senior Management team (SMT), Governing Body, school staff, stakeholders	September 2024	July 2028
2	Strengthen provision for speech and language needs through clear strategies and interventions.	Headteacher, Governing Body, Deputy Headteacher, SALT, SMT	September 2024	July 2028
3	At least one school leader to have attended DARPL and embed within the school.	Deputy Headteacher, SMT	September 2024	July 2028

This objective will be judged to be successful if...

- PBS will have been implemented
- Pupils receive improved support for their ALN including speech, language, emotional, and behavioural needs.
- DARPL is embedded within the school

Objective 6: Employment - Promote a more inclusive workforce and improve the participation, well-being, and opportunities for development for those with protected characteristics.

Additional information from local engagement.
 Ysgol Bryn Castell, in-line with other Special Schools across Wales, continues to experience high-levels of staff turnover and ongoing recruitment and retention challenges, which are more prevalent with support staff. The recent impact of poverty has also been significant, as we have seen high numbers of staff move to higher-paid roles elsewhere. A key priority in this area, is to expand the level and number of employees working at the school.

Actions

Action	Description	Action Owner	Start date	End date
1	Work with BCBC to implement a model where the school employs Apprentice Special Support Officers.	Headteacher, Admin Manager, Sarah Davies, BCBC Learning and Development	September 2024	July 2028

This objective will be judged to be successful if...

- The school reduces the number of vacancies and successfully employs high quality staff through the Apprentice SSO route.