



# SILVERHILL SCHOOL

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

### PREFACE

Whatever the nature of the local community, pupils growing up in a wider multicultural and multiracial society are subject to various attitudes towards minority groups, and also certain images of these groups portrayed by the media. Racism and hostility exists as much in the 'all-white' parts of Britain as in the multiracial areas.

### ETHOS

Silverhill School stands against racism and all forms of discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion, gender or disability.

### AIMS

- to promote justice, equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all and thereby allow all pupils, irrespective of their ethnic origin, to achieve the level of success and self respect which they deserve, whilst retaining their cultural identity.
- to instil in pupils an awareness of racism and to establish an environment where school becomes effective in reducing prejudice and raising self esteem.
- to prepare children for living in a complex multicultural society.
- to promote an understanding of a variety of cultures, valuing the positive contribution these make to the community, e.g. pupils should understand the differences in dress, hairstyles and diet. Parents can be fully involved themselves in cooking foods, from a variety of cultures, for children to taste.
- to provide a safe and welcoming place for all of its members.
- to provide an environment where racist assumptions, attitudes and behaviour are continually challenged.
- to provide a curriculum which emphasises the positive aspects of all cultures and to give children the confidence that racism can and must be eradicated.
- to support the Local Education Authority in its multicultural and antiracist policies, and to take the appropriate action to deal with any form of racism within the School.
- to recognise that the pupils themselves are often the most important multicultural resource within the classroom and their experiences are valued and shared.
- to recognise in our teaching the contributions to the development of Science, Technology and the Arts which have been made by different cultures.
- to adopt the view that cultural diversity is a positive advantage. Pupils are often the most valuable multicultural resource in the classroom. Pupils' own experiences of festivals, food, dress, etc. should be shared.
- to contribute towards imparting a sense of citizenship in the pupils.
- the teacher's will, by careful use of language and choice of resources, avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.
- to use self-evaluation by whole school discussion to assess the implementation of this policy.
- all subject co-ordinators will continually review their schemes of work in the light of this policy with respect to content, methodology, aims and resources.

## **SOME SUBJECT SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS**

### **R.E.**

The scheme of work is designed to reflect and co-ordinate with the various religious festivals as they occur - so as to reflect the relevance of R.E. to every day life. We use opportunities such as assemblies, Easter, Divali and the Nativity play to actively involve pupils in the religions of Great Britain.

### **DESIGN**

In Design, especially Textiles, Ceramics and Art, we work towards instilling in the pupils an appreciation and understanding of art, craft and designs from other cultures as well as those from Western-European culture.

### **DRAMA**

Occasionally in drama, work is deliberately aimed at discussion and reflection on discrimination and racism. Children are encouraged to understand the feelings of minority groups. A wide range of integrated drama and music is used.

### **ENGLISH**

Wherever possible, we would endeavour to draw attention to the multiethnic origins of the English language. We look at how contemporary language is influenced by other cultures e.g. draw comparisons between American and UK English. When teaching literature one can explore a wide range of works from Afro-Caribbean, Asian and black American authors. There are many fine examples of literature written as a result of discrimination. A wide range of stories and poems are used and their origins are explored.

### **HUMANITIES**

Humanities teachers dealing with issues of the third world and development have access to a wide range of material.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Mathematics taught at primary and secondary schools is derived from cultures other than those of Western Europe. Many people are unaware of the origins of modern mathematics.

### **MODERN LANGUAGES**

Modern Languages teaching aims to develop a high degree of cultural awareness through the use of authentic materials of a broad cultural diversity, discussion of different themes such as food, family life, housing, school, geography, music and art. Languages other than English can be explored when studying particular topics, e.g. some Greek words are learnt when studying ancient Greece.

### **MUSIC**

The wealth of 'World Music' available today as heard in recordings, live performances and from the media, gives the music teacher many examples to use as a basis for Listening and Appraising, Performing and Composing. It is hoped that pupils can appreciate and recognise what has been and what can be achieved by integrating the music from different cultures as heard in the many diverse styles of music today. There are many fine examples of music composed as a result of discrimination. Non-western instruments tend to be expensive and difficult to obtain. However, most keyboards and synthesisers have representative sounds for the pupil to use and more visual resources are now available in many formats.

### **SCIENCE**

Science has a variety of materials, from a variety of cultures, which can be used to demonstrate scientific theory, e.g. food preservation, heat transfer and house design experiments to name but a few. We need to draw attention to ways in which scientific/economic evidence can be misused to assert a point of view, e.g. the world food supply and causes of pollution.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Dance is a good vehicle by which one can explore anti-racist topics and various forms of discrimination. The children often work on themes and are free to explore and develop their own ideas. The growing number of contemporary sportsmen and women from different ethnic groups achieving success in a variety of sports helps to present a positive image of the different cultures. The camaraderie and equality of sport at all levels is also used to further enhance the sense of equality of different races, ethnic groups and cultures.

## **CHOICE OF READING SCHEMES, BOOKS AND OTHER LITERARY RESOURCES**

Staff should choose and use resources

- which portray a world view as seen from different cultural perspectives and thereby communicate how it feels to be of another ethnic or cultural group.
- which are factually accurate and use up-to-date text, illustrations and maps. N.B. Inappropriate material must be thrown away.
- which do not stereotype individuals or groups.
- which do not equate the white man with "civilisation".
- which do not use paternalistic approaches to other peoples or cultures.
- which do not reduce all non-western societies to the exotic, picturesque and primitive.
- which show the achievements and attributes of different societies, both past and present, e.g., Chinese and Islamic science, African civilisations before colonisation and the benefits of the extended family system etc.
- which show children of different ethnic groups involved in the activities described, e.g., physics, design, music, mathematics.
- which positively and realistically portray children from a variety of ethnic and cultural groups and class backgrounds.
- in which children from ethnic minority groups can find characters which enhance their self esteem, where ethnic minority characters have important roles and adults hold positions of authority.
- which show ethnic minority characters not having to justify their blackness by being exceptionally virtuous or brave etc.
- which have illustrations that avoid caricature.
- which accurately reflect the population of Britain today. Are the representatives from the ethnic minorities in the text or illustrations merely token?
- which use dialect appropriately and not to ridicule.
- which use a range of folk tales from different oral or cultural traditions.
- which use stories or poems written by children from different cultures.

## **ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN RACIST BEHAVIOUR IS SUSPECTED**

If racism is suspected we talk to the suspected victim, the suspected racist and any witnesses. If any degree of racism is identified, help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both parties.