

Equality Information

Abbeyfield School 2019

Abbeyfield School is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and with respect as we want our school to be a safe and inspiring learning environment for all our pupils. This school recognises that people have different needs and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating everyone the same.ⁱ Abbeyfield School creates inclusive processes and practices where the varying needs of individuals can be identified and met.

This document explains how we show our commitment to equality for our school pupils and how we plan to tackle inequalities that may impact at school.

Sex (Gender) - Boys and Girls

Nationally, GCSE attainment of girls exceeds that of boys and there is a 5.5 % gap between the Average Attainment 8 score of girls and boys. The Average Attainment 8 gap between Wiltshire girls and boys is marginally smaller at 5.2 %.

The social class attainment gap (as measured by percentage point difference in attainment between those eligible and registered - and those not eligible/registered - for free school meals, either in the current year, or in the past six years) and the gap between different ethnic groups, is much greater than the gap between boys and girls.ⁱⁱ

The gender gap in attainment, with on average, girls outperforming boys, is not a new phenomenon; it was referenced as far back as the 1868 report of the Taunton Commission which investigated secondary education and mentioned concern about the poor standards of boys' (academic) work.ⁱⁱⁱ A gap in the proportions of boys and girls gaining good grades at GCSE was identified soon after GCSE exams were introduced in the late 1980s.^{iv}

In terms of subject choice there remain differences in the academic GCSE and A level subjects chosen by girls compared to boys. This is a national issue and not something limited to our school or to Wiltshire. The differences are more apparent at A level (Key Stage 5) than GCSE. Nationally at GCSE, boys are significantly more likely than girls to opt for Economics, PE, Business Studies, ICT, whilst girls are more likely to opt for Social Science, Drama, Home Economics and Performing Arts.^v

Minority Ethnic Pupils

Many minority ethnic groups of pupils do well but there are also groups where there is persistent underachievement.

Very small numbers of minority ethnic pupils mean it is difficult for Abbeyfield School to use school-based monitoring information to identify areas of concern or to celebrate successes. The school is fortunate that LA and national attainment data is a valuable source of information.

Black Pupils (Broad category including Black African, Black Caribbean and Pupils of Any Other Black Background)

National data has highlighted concerns about the ongoing lower attainment of Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean pupils. The gap for Black Caribbean boys is particularly significant with 35.5 % achieving the average Attainment 8 score compared with 46.5 % of All Pupils (a gap of 11 percentage points). The national achievement gap for Black Caribbean pupils achieving the All Pupil Average Attainment 8 score 7.3 %.^{vi}

LA data for 2018 has identified the lower attainment for pupils of Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean heritage and is aware that these groups of pupils (although there are comparatively small numbers in Wiltshire schools) are recognised as having a local as well as a national vulnerability. This school is working closely with the LA to implement/anticipate proven strategies to raise attainment in this area.

Gypsy/Roma/Traveller Pupils

Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller pupils are the lowest achieving ethnic groups.^{vii}

Nationally, 15.4 % of Gypsy/Roma pupils and 17.9 % of Irish Traveller pupils achieved the Average Attainment 8 score.^{viii} While the overwhelming majority of Wiltshire Gypsy/Roma/Traveller pupils choose to attend primary school until the end of Year 6, it remains a concern that a majority of Wiltshire Gypsy/Roma and Traveller families decide to home educate their children during the secondary school years.^{ix}

A House of Commons Briefing Paper (September 2017) reported that education issues for Gypsies and Travellers include prejudice, discrimination and discriminatory attitudes. The issues also include the schools' response to discrimination and high levels of self-exclusion from mainstream education because of discrimination.^x

Abbeyfield School is committed to tackling racism and discrimination against Gypsy/Roma/Traveller pupils regardless of whether the school has Gypsy/Roma/Traveller pupils on roll and to promote positive representation of GRT communities and their histories. It is known that many GRT families do not disclose their ethnicity to the school as they fear discrimination and prejudice. Research by the Traveller Times in 2017 revealed that 70 % of GRT families have experienced anti-GRT racism in education.

National research published in 2018 suggests there has been a significant increase in the number of Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller children/young people who are being cared for by local councils. The data shows an increase of 900 % for the numbers of Gypsy/Roma children/young people and 400 % for Irish Traveller children/young people since 2009. One of the reasons suggested is that Gypsy/Roma and Traveller families are less likely to be offered or to access early help and support and this is important as it is an area in which schools can help.^{xi}

Faith and Belief

Data on Religion and Belief is not collected for monitoring purposes, and there is no information available to compare the attainment of pupils who have/do not have a religion or a belief.

At Abbeyfield School we want to ensure that our pupils understand and appreciate the rich diversity of Britain and the important values that help people with differing perspectives and outlooks to live together harmoniously. This document provides information about some of the things that Abbeyfield School is doing to develop our pupils' ability to live in a pluralistic (diverse) society.

Abbeyfield School recognises how important faith and belief can be as part of a young person's developing identity, whether this relates to a specific faith or belief, or whether this relates to wider belief systems, or morals and ethics.

Abbeyfield School is committed to supporting all our young people as they develop a personal relationship with their own set of values and beliefs, and to supporting, in the context of the Human Rights agenda, the role this plays in the moral and ethical choices they make in life.

This school takes incidents of prejudice-related bullying seriously and is committed to working closely with parents/carers to create a school environment which is nurturing, friendly and supportive for all our children. Our school has established a procedure for recording all incidents of prejudice-based bullying and this includes bullying relating to religion and belief.

Abbeyfield School is aware that negative faith-based media attention (particularly anti-Semitism and anti-Muslimism) can have an impact on all children, and recognises the importance of ensuring that pupils are provided with accurate and appropriate information.

Abbeyfield School ensures all pupils gain knowledge of and respect for the different faiths in Britain as part of our role to prepare pupils for modern life in a diverse Britain. As part of a whole school activity, pupils have the chance to: celebrate different religious festivals; value and appreciate the extent of the similarities between the main faiths; and, learn from religious representatives from various communities.

Abbeyfield School recognises that discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief is a current concern, and our school actively promotes tolerance and respect. This school commemorates Holocaust Memorial Day as a key part of its commitment to informing pupils about the consequences of intolerance.^{xii}

Abbeyfield School has benefited from the Home Office funded resource which aims to foster greater understanding and reduce Islamophobia.^{xv}

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

There is no attainment data available for this Protected Characteristic. This is one of the fastest changing areas of equality. LGBT+ pupils are a group that may be vulnerable to bullying and unfair treatment. It is important our school creates a supportive environment to enable all our pupils to work out who they are and how they fit into society. As a school, we recognise that historic discrimination and unfairness means this may be more difficult for some pupils.

Abbeyfield School is committed to seeking help and guidance from the LA and other appropriate bodies, on the best ways to create a resilient whole-school community that supports all pupils, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils (LGBT+) and those pupils uncertain about their gender identity/sexual orientation.

To support such an inclusive environment, Abbeyfield School is aware that homophobic, biphobic, transphobic language and bullying creates a negative and possibly hostile environment for pupils who may be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or unsure about their sexual orientation/gender identity. Abbeyfield School works with pupils to address any use of discriminatory and bullying language that would create an unequal school environment. Abbeyfield School confidently tackles discriminatory language and supports pupils to create a school environment that values diversity. Abbeyfield School has also benefitted from information contained in the resource '*Valuing All God's Children*' which has informed and enhanced the work we are undertaking in this area.^{xiii}

Abbeyfield School is aware of the support that we can access in relation to Gender Identity, including Local Authority support, and support and advice from *Stonewall*, an LGBT+ campaigning group which has a website containing a range of educational guidance and resources.

In addition, this school is aware of the changes we can make to help avoid unnecessary gender distinctions. Such changes ensure that the school is a more equal environment if there are pupils who are uncertain about their gender identity. This school has flexibility within the school uniform, and endeavours not to divide pupils into groups solely based on their sex.

Abbeyfield School has achieved a Stonewall Bronze Award for its work in this area.

There are many charitable organisations providing support on gender identity to young people, their families and their schools. There are also organisations able to provide advice and support where a pupil has a parent who is transgender. The LA has up to date information about the different organisations, the services they provide and how to contact them.

Pupils learning English as an Additional Language

As a group, pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) achieve good outcomes at Key Stage 4 in Wiltshire. In 2018 a higher proportion of EAL pupils (52.7 %) achieved the Average Attainment 8 score, than pupils whose first language is English (48.1 % achieved these grades.^{xvii})

The Local Authority's Ethnic Minority & Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) continues to work with local schools to secure the achievement of EAL learners, and other learners. This includes work with individual children to assess and identify needs and recommend and support provision. It includes support from Bilingual Assistants both in the classroom, and to help establish productive home-school partnerships.

In addition, the service works at a more strategic level. Recent work has included:

- planning and team-teaching in the secondary phase to ensure talk in the classroom models the academic language students need to master to succeed;
- providing training to specific groups including Newly Qualified Teachers, Early Years Practitioners and other school staff to equip them with the skills and knowledge to meet learner's needs;
- hosting "bilingual conferences" for multilingual children to come together, learn how to develop their skills and gain in self-confidence and respect.

EMTAS believes that Wiltshire schools will also benefit more widely from strategies used with learners of EAL, as it is recognised that a focus on language and communication skills can benefit a

broad range of students. This belief has recently been bolstered by the findings of Professor Steve Strand in *English as an Additional Language (EAL) and educational achievement in England*, who demonstrated that an increase in the number of EAL learners in a school is associated with improved attainment by English first language pupils.^{xvi}

There are marked differences between the attainment of EAL speakers, for example, Tamil and Chinese speakers perform better than Pashto and Turkish speakers irrespective of when they arrive in the system. Prior education and where pupils live in England all impact on attainment. Attainment is also affected by arrival time. There is a severe attainment penalty for pupils arriving late into the English school system. For example, at GCSE level, pupils with EAL scored an average grade of a C if they arrived between reception and Year 7. This decreased to a grade of around a D if they arrived in Year 8, 9 or 10 – falling further to below an E if they arrived in Year 11.^{xvii}

Disability and Special Educational Needs

Abbeyfield School reports separately on SEND pupil attainment. To ensure information is not duplicated, this document will focus on disability-related areas of SEND that are the current focus of national attention.

Nationally the attainment gap between pupils who have SEN Support and pupils with no identified SEN is 20.4 %. 14.2 % of Wiltshire pupils with a Statement or EHC Plan achieved the Average Attainment 8 score while 31.4 % of Wiltshire pupils who have SEN Support received these qualifications.^{xx}

Hearing Impairment

Department for Education data shows that at GCSE level England's deaf children are falling a whole grade behind their hearing classmates at GCSE, even though deafness is not a learning disability. This is a significant attainment gap. The National Deaf Children's Society found that the average GCSE grade for a child without special educational needs or a disability per subject is 5, a strong C under the old system.^{xxi} For deaf children, this falls to 3.9, historically a grade D. It should be noted that nationally, there are just over 1,500 pupils who took GCSE's in 2018 whose Primary SEN Need is recorded as Hearing Impairment. This is a small number and means there are very few pupils with hearing impairments in each secondary school. However, the reason this disability is being highlighted by Abbeyfield School, is that just 39.2 % of pupils whose primary SEN need is Hearing Impairment achieved the Average Attainment 8 score last year compared with 49.8 % of their peers without an identified SEN.

Abbeyfield School is aware that pupils with a hearing impairment are vulnerable to academic underachievement and, with the support of the LA, closely monitors their progress and attainment and provides/effectively anticipates support to ensure pupils can make accelerated progress should that be warranted. Please note, it is lawful under the Equality Act 2010 to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils if it is deemed necessary to address disadvantage linked to disability.^{xxv}

Mental Health

Academic attainment is important, but pupils also need to progress through their education feeling happy and self-confident. Abbeyfield School is committed to providing a nurturing environment to help develop the resilience of our pupils to cope with the ups and downs and stresses of everyday life.

There is an increasing understanding of the negative impact of social, emotional, and mental health difficulties (SEMH) on the educational attainment of pupils. The incorporation of mental health into the Equality Act 2010 has helped to highlight this important issue.

Information about the support provided by Abbeyfield School for pupils with special education needs and for disabled pupils is detailed in the SEND section of the school website.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Increase understanding of religious/faith diversity

Another current focus for Abbeyfield School is to ensure that our pupils understand and appreciate the rich diversity of Britain and the important values that help people with differing perspectives and outlooks to live together harmoniously.

We are developing our pupils' ability to live in a pluralistic (diverse) society whilst developing their understanding of religious/faith diversity (including people who do not have a faith) and an awareness of the history of religious intolerance in Britain and Europe, and to learn to promote tolerance and understanding.

Pupil mental health and wellbeing

Academic attainment is important, but pupils also need to progress through their education feeling happy and self-confident. Abbeyfield School is committed to providing a nurturing environment to help develop the resilience of our pupils to cope with the ups and downs and stresses of everyday life.

We are addressing mental health and wellbeing for pupils as part of our commitment to preventing mental health difficulties that may start in childhood but have a greater impact in adult life.

We also recognise the importance of supporting staff to manage their own wellbeing.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

LGBT+ pupils are a group that may be vulnerable to bullying and unfair treatment. It is important our school creates a supportive environment to enable all our pupils to work out who they are and how

they fit into society. As a school, we recognise that historic discrimination and unfairness means this may be more difficult for some pupils.

We will address LGBT+ issues and will create a school that is supportive, inclusive and welcoming for LGBT+ pupils as well as families with LGBT+ parents/carers.

Abbeyfield School is working with all our pupils (including our LGBT+ pupils) to:

- Reduce the isolation experienced by some LGBT+ pupils
- Identify changes to ensure the school is as welcoming as possible for LGBT+ pupils
- Raise self-esteem of LGBT+ pupils and help them to feel confident and comfortable with their identity
- Enable more confident members of the school community to support pupils who are having more difficulties

References:

ⁱ The Equality Act 2010 and Schools

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

ⁱⁱ Department for Education, Revised GCSE Results 2016 to 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4>

ⁱⁱⁱ Report of the Schools Enquiry Commission (The Taunton Report) 1868,

<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/index.html>

^{iv} Gender and Education: The Evidence on Pupils in England, The Department for Education and

Skills. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090108131527/http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RTP01-07.pdf>

^v TES News: The Gender Divide is just as Worrying at GCSE as it is at A Level

<https://www.tes.com/news/opinion-gender-divide-just-worrying-gcse-it-level>

Gender and Subject Choice, Data and Explanations

<http://www.earlhamsociologypages.co.uk/Gender%20and%20Subject%20Choice.html>

^{vi} <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4>

^{vii} Department for Education: Revised GCSE and Equivalent Results in England, 2017 to 2018:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/676596/SFR01_2018.pdf

^{viii} <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4>

^{ix} Wiltshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS)

^x Wiltshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS)

House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper: Gypsies and Travellers, Number 08083, 28 September 2017

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8083/CBP-8083.pdf>

^{xi} The Fragility of Professional Competence, 2018, Dan Allen and Sarah Riding, University of Salford
<http://usir.salford.ac.uk/46146/1/the-fragility-of-professional-competence-january-2018.pdf>

^{xii}https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf
Holocaust Memorial Day Trust <http://www.hmd.org.uk/>

^{xv} Faith in Us
<https://www.equaliteach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/FAITH-IN-US.pdf>

^{xiii} Valuing All God's Children
<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1988293/valuing%20all%20god's%20children%20web%20final.pdf>

^{xvi} <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4>

^{xviii} Professor Steve Strand
https://v1.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/uploads/pdf/EAL_and_educational_achievement2.pdf

^{xiv} Educational Outcomes for Pupils who have English as an Additional Language: The Education Policy Institute, The Bell Foundation, Unbound Philanthropy by Jo Hutchinson, Director for Social Mobility and Vulnerable Learners (February 2018) <https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/research-report/educational-outcomes-of-children-with-english-as-an-additional-language/>

^{xx} <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4>

^{xxi} National Deaf Children's Society note on Department for Education figures on attainment for deaf children in England (2018) updated 13 February 2019.
<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/about-us/news-and-media/latest-news/lost-generation-of-deaf-children-falling-a-grade-behind-at-gcse/>