

Equality Information & Objectives 2021

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 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

During the pandemic, most external national assessment has been paused, and as a result we are still drawing on 2019 data.

Nationally, GCSE attainment of girls has exceeded that of boys and there was a 5.5 percentage point gap between the Average Attainment 8 score of girls and boys. The Average Attainment 8 gap between Wiltshire girls and boys was marginally smaller at 5 percentage points. The Average Attainment 8 for All Wiltshire Pupils exceeded the National All Pupils Attainment 8 by 2 percentage points.

The gap for disadvantaged pupils (as measured by percentage point difference in attainment between Disadvantaged Pupils and all other pupils, either in the current year, or in the six years to 2019) and the gap between different ethnic groups, were 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 both in Wiltshire and nationally but there are also groups where there is persistent underachievement.

Because numbers of pupils in most ethnic groups tend to be small, it is not possible to publish school-based data in this area.

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

National and Wiltshire data has highlighted concerns about the ongoing lower attainment of Black Caribbean boys both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged. There are comparatively small numbers of Black Caribbean pupils in Wiltshire schools but year on year these pupils underachieve.

Nationally, Black Caribbean boys who are eligible for free school meals achieve similarly to their FMS-eligible White British peers and tackling this low attainment for all disadvantaged pupils is a key priority nationally, for local authorities and for schools.

Nationally and in Wiltshire this underachievement for Black Caribbean boys extends to pupils who are *not* eligible for free school meals. The national attainment gap for achieving GCSE English and Maths 9-4 between non-FSM eligible White British boys and non-FSM eligible Black Caribbean boys was 19.7 percentage points (65.1% of non-FSM White British boys achieved this compared with 45.4% of non-FSM Black Caribbean boys). Small numbers mean it would not be appropriate to publish Wiltshire data, but is similar to the national picture and follow a pattern that has concerned the LA for a number of years. A notable feature of Wiltshire data is that a far greater proportion of Black pupils are in the non-FSM category in comparison to national data, so tackling underachievement for this group is a priority.

This national and local vulnerability has been recognised and schools are working closely with the LA to implement/anticipate proven strategies to raise attainment for these pupils.

Black Lives Matter

Our curriculum, teaching, policies and practices are regularly reviewed and updated. The Black Lives Matter movement has provided a new impetus to this important work. This school has access to guidance and information from the LA as well as sharing best practice with other Wiltshire schools.

Gypsy/Roma/Traveller Pupils

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

Nationally, 19.1 per cent of Gypsy/Roma pupils and 26.6 per cent of Irish Traveller pupils achieved the Average Attainment 8 score.^{vii} While the majority of Wiltshire Gypsy/Roma/Traveller pupils choose to attend primary school until the end of Year 6, it remains a concern that, year on year, around 60 per cent of Wiltshire Gypsy/Roma and Traveller families decide to home educate their children during the secondary school years.^{viii}

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.^{ix}

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 per cent for the numbers of Gypsy/Roma children/young people and 400 per cent 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.^x

Faith and Belief

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

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 Islamophobia) 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 national 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.^{xi}

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. Data from the Wiltshire Healthy Schools survey provides useful information and indicates that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils (LGBT*) are at increased risk of poor mental health and are more likely to say they are experiencing school-based bullying. This school knows this is one of the fastest changing areas of equality and that some of our LGBT* pupils may be vulnerable. Our school is doing the following:

Seeking support and guidance from the LA and other appropriate bodies, 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}

This school knows that LGBT* pupils benefit from meeting with others who may have similar experiences including those who are confident and secure with their LGBT* identity. To provide additional support, this school is working with pupils, to set up an LGBT* group OR at the request of pupils, this school has an LGBT* group that provides peer support; has reduced the isolation experienced by some pupils; and provides a mechanism for addressing any school-related difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

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
- Provide feedback to the school about the experiences of LGBT pupils both in-school and out of school.

Abbeyfield School is aware of the support and advice that we can access in relation to Gender Identity from the Local Authority.

In addition, this school is aware of the changes we can make to help avoid unnecessary gender distinctions. For example, we seek to offer mixed gender sports teams where it is practical to do so. 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 routinely divide pupils into groups solely based on their sex, while recognising that on occasion there will be valid reasons for doing so.

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 2019 a higher proportion of EAL pupils (50.5%) achieved the Average Attainment 8 score than pupils whose first language is English as 48.6% achieved these grades.^{xiii}

Wiltshire's EAL pupils and English first language pupils both exceeded National attainment by 2.0 percentage points.

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, 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.^{xivi}

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.

Wiltshire has a higher proportion of EAL pupils who start their education in the UK system after the Foundation Year (YR). Nationally, 20 per cent of EAL pupils start school in England after YR whereas 26 per cent of our Wiltshire EAL pupils start their education in the UK after this time.

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 gap in the average Attainment 8 score between pupils who have SEN Support and pupils with no identified SEN was 17.3 percentage points in 2019. 18 per cent of Wiltshire pupils with a Statement or EHC Plan achieved the Average Attainment 8 score while 30.8 per cent of Wiltshire pupils who have SEN Support received these qualifications.^{xx}

In the UK, 8% of children are disabled as defined under the Equality Act 2010. Shockingly, but unsurprisingly, a disabled person with a degree is still no more likely to be in work than a non-disabled person whose highest qualification is at GCSE. Societal attitude and stereotyping are likely to be a factor. This warrants a bespoke Equality Objective to begin to tackle societal perceptions and understanding of disabled people, for example:

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 1,715 pupils who took GCSEs in 2019 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 [name of school], is that just 38.6 per cent of pupils whose primary SEN need is Hearing Impairment achieved the Average Attainment 8 score last year compared with 49.9 per cent 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

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.

Every school is required to identify and address the SEND needs of the pupils that they support. 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 2021

- **Increase understanding of religious/faith diversity**

A 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. This document provides information about what Abbeyfield School is doing to develop our pupils' ability to live in a pluralistic (diverse) society.

Abbeyfield School has an Equality Objective to increase understanding of religious/faith diversity (including people who do not have a faith) and to develop an awareness of the history of religious intolerance both in Britain and across the world 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.

Abbeyfield School has an Equality Objective that will address pupil mental health and wellbeing as part of our commitment to preventing mental health difficulties that may start in childhood but have a greater impact in adult life.

- **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

LGBT+ pupils are a group that may be vulnerable to bullying and unfair treatment. The 2017 Wiltshire School Health Survey^{xxii} reported that in both secondary school and Year 12/FE, LGBT pupils tended to be bullied more frequently, to have lower levels of happiness, life satisfaction and healthy lifestyles, worry to the extent it impacts on their sleep; and to engage in more risky behaviours than pupils who were not LGBT.

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 has an Equality Objective that 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.

- **Disability and Special Educational Needs**

In the Wiltshire School Health Survey 2017^{xxii}, secondary school pupils with SEND tended to feel less safe, to be bullied more frequently, to have lower levels of happiness, life satisfaction and healthy lifestyles, and to engage in more risky behaviours than pupils with no special educational needs or disabilities. Results from the 2020 and 2021 survey will be available later this year.

Abbeyfield School has an Equality Objective that will be focused on individual pupils and the writing of support plans. When developing a support plan with parents/carer and professional, we will consider equality as a distinct category. This might include curriculum development ideas, as well as CPD to gain a greater understanding of the impact of societally negative disability bias, the impact on young people and how to combat that within school.

Progress against the above objectives will be reviewed annually and published separately in the Equalities Report.

References:

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- 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/RTPO1-07.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} Department for Education: Revised GCSE and Equivalent Results in England, 2017 to 2019:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/676596/SFR01_2018.pdf
- ^{vii} <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4>
- ^{viii} Wiltshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS)
Nine Wiltshire Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are recorded in the 2019 GCSE attainment data. For the same year group, when they were in Year 6 in 20014, twenty-two Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils are recorded as on the school roll in the school census.
- ^{ix} 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>
- ^x 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>
- ^{xi} 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>
- ^{xiii} <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
- ^{xvii} 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/>

^{xxii} Wiltshire School Health Survey 2017.

LGBT* survey data includes: 39% LGBT* secondary pupils reported being happy with their life compared to 68% non-GGBT*; 46% LGBT* worry most nights affecting sleep compared to 18% non-LGBT*; 25% LGBT* secondary pupils reported being bullied in the last 12 months compared with 11% of their non-LGBT* peers. SEND survey data includes: 25% SEND secondary pupils reported being bullied in the last 12 months compared to 11% of their non-SEND peers; 31% SEND pupils worry most nights which affects sleep compared with 19% non-SEND peers].