

INCLUSIVITY AND EQUALITY

In Ratoath Senior National School, we value the individuality of all of our children. We are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

Aims and objectives:

Our school aims to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our children. We make this a reality through the attention we pay to the different groups of children within our school:

- Girls and boys
- Children who need support to learn English as another language
- Children with special educational needs
- Gifted and talented children
- Children who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion
- Children from different ethnic and minority groups

The Primary Curriculum is our starting point for planning a curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. We meet these needs through

- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Responding to children's diverse learning needs
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils
- Providing other curricular opportunities outside the primary curriculum to meet the needs of individuals or groups of children.

We achieve educational inclusion by continually reviewing what we do, through asking ourselves these key questions -

- Do all our children achieve their best?
- Are there differences in the achievement of different groups of children?
- What are we doing for those children who we know are not achieving their best?
- Are our actions effective?
- Are we successful in promoting racial and social harmony and preparing pupils to live in a diverse and multicultural society?

Teaching and learning style:

We aim to give all our children the opportunity to succeed and reach the highest level of personal achievement. We analyse the attainment of different groups of pupils to ensure that all pupils are achieving as much as they can. We also make on-going assessments of each child's progress. Teachers use this information when planning their lessons. It enables them to take into account the abilities of all their children. For some children, we use the programmes of study from other classes. This enables some of our children to make progress in their own lessons, perhaps after significant amounts of time spent away from school.

When the attainment of a child falls significantly below the expected level, teachers enable the child to succeed by planning work that is in line with that child's individual needs. Where the attainment of a child significantly exceeds the expected level of attainment, teachers use other materials, or extend the breadth of work within the area or areas for which the child shows particular aptitude.

Teachers are familiar with the relevant legislation governing equal opportunities, race, gender and disability.

Teachers ensure children:

- Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- Appreciate and value the differences they see in others
- Take responsibility for their own actions
- Are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success
- Use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping
- Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- Have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- Are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs

International Children - Children entitled to Language Support

A number of our children have particular learning and assessment requirements, which are linked to their progress in learning English as an additional language.

The teaching, learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children are important. We encourage all our children to achieve to the highest possible standards. We do this through taking account of each child's life experience and needs. Children who are receiving language support have skills and knowledge about language similar to Irish children speaking English. Their ability to participate in the full curriculum may be in advance of their communicative skills in English.

In Ratoath Senior National School, teachers take action to help children who are learning English as an additional language by various means:

1. Developing their spoken and written English by;

- Ensuring that vocabulary work covers the technical as well as the everyday meaning of key words, metaphors and idioms,
- Explaining how speaking and writing in English are structured for different purposes across a range of subjects
- Providing a range of reading materials that highlight the different ways in which English is used
- Ensuring there are effective opportunities for talking, and that talking is used to support writing
- Encouraging children to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding of one language to another
- Building on children's experiences of language at home and in the wider community, so their 'developing uses' of English and other languages support one another.

2. Ensuring access to the curriculum by;

- Using accessible texts and materials to suit children's ages and levels of learning
- Providing support through IT and video and audio materials

All children in our school follow the requirements of the Primary Curriculum. Children receiving language support do not produce separate work. We do not withdraw children from lessons to receive language support. The Learning Support Teacher works in partnership with class teachers in the classrooms. This involves supporting individual children or small groups of children and, at times, teaching the whole class.

Sometimes the Learning Support Teacher works with groups of children, of whom only one or two may be language support children.

Children with Disabilities:

At times we may have children in our school who have disabilities and consequently need additional resources. The school is committed to providing an environment that allows these children full access to all areas of learning. All our classroom entrances are wide enough for wheelchair access, and the designated points of entry for our school also allow wheelchair access.

Our teachers modify their teaching and learning as appropriate for these children. For example, they may give additional time to children with disabilities to complete certain activities. They speak clearly and slowly as required, use a range of communication techniques; arrange the classroom furniture for optimal accessibility, incorporate technical aids as part of the educational experience and work with Special Needs Assistants on toileting and other physical needs. In their planning, teachers ensure that they give children with disabilities the opportunity to develop skills in practical aspects of the curriculum.

Teachers ensure that the work for these children -

- Takes account of their pace of learning and the equipment they use
- Takes account of the effort and concentration needed in oral work, or when using, for example, vision aids
- Is adapted or offers alternative activities in those subjects where children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment, or use certain types of materials
- Allows opportunities for them to take part in educational visits and other activities linked to their studies
- Encourages social interaction
- Uses assessment techniques that reflect their individual needs and abilities

In response to the Disability Act 2001, the Board of Management is constantly reviewing how the school can be made more accessible for disabled children.

Racism and inclusion:

The diversity of our society is addressed through our schemes of work, which reflect the programmes of study of the primary school curriculum. Teachers are flexible in their planning and offer appropriate challenges to all pupils, regardless of ethnic or social background. All racist incidents are now recorded and reported to the Principal. The school contacts parents of those pupils involved in racist incidents.

Equality & Gender Equity

Ratoath Senior National School seeks to promote the principles of justice and equality for all members of the school community. In this regard:

The enrolment criteria will not differentiate between pupils from different social strata. There is an equal right of access under the school's Enrolment Policy.

It is school policy to provide a gender balanced range of resources in curricular areas - textbooks, ancillary materials, software, sports equipment etc.

Every opportunity will be taken to promote gender equality through the discreet and hidden curriculum

Teachers will ensure that the language used in the school to mediate the curriculum is gender balanced and will avail of opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of unconsciously held attitudes

There will be no differentiation between the sexes in the allocation of classes to teachers

As agreed with the Board of Management and parents all pupils in Ratoath Senior National School will wear a school uniform

Nothing may appear in an advertisement which would indicate a preference for one gender over another

No question will be asked at interview which could be interpreted as discrimination on gender grounds

This school is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

Summary:

In our school, the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every child are important. We follow the necessary regulations to ensure that we take the experiences and needs of all our children into account when planning for learning.