

## Community Cohesion

### A Policy Statement

Reviewed 30<sup>th</sup> August 2017

#### Background

The Education Act 2002 placed a duty on governing bodies of a maintained school such that

‘.....in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school—

(a) promote the well-being of pupils at the school, and

(b) in the case of a school in England, promote community cohesion.’

The duty came into effect on 1st September 2007 and since 1st September 2008 HMCI reports on the contribution that schools make to community cohesion.

#### What is community cohesion?

Two definitions are helpful when looking at the policy implication for The Unity Federation.

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community. *Guidance on community cohesion, DCSF 2006.*

A cohesive society is one in which the statistical chance of any member of a society gaining access to a service, acquiring a job or achieving educational success is not related to his or her race, faith or cultural background – only to his or her talent, ambition or desire’. *Institute of community cohesion.*

#### Community from a school’s perspective

For schools the term community has a number of dimensions which governors have a duty to understand and ensure that the school is responding accordingly to these dimensions.

- The school community – the children and young people it serves, their parents, carers and families, the school’s staff and governing body, and community users of the school’s facilities and services;
- The community within which the school is located – the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area. This applies not just to the immediate neighbourhood but also to the city or local authority area within which a school is located;
- The UK community - all schools are by definition part of this community; and The global community – formed by EU and international links.
- The communities the schools themselves create – for example, the networks formed by similar or different types of schools, by schools that are part of the specialist schools network, or by schools that work collaboratively in clusters or in other models of partnership.

In order to successfully fulfil the duty to promote community cohesion at Sculthorpe & West Raynham Church of England Federation we consider the three strands of faith, ethnicity and culture, and socioeconomic factors and seek to demonstrate:

- that we understand the context of our own community;
- that we plan and take appropriate actions;
- and that these actions have had an evident impact.
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We consider the above in the context of the three following headings:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum
- Equity and excellence
- Engagement and extended services

### **The context of our community**

The Unity federation was formed in January 2014 after the successful collaboration of Sculthorpe VA Primary School and West Raynham VC Primary School since 2005 and Colkirk since January 2012. The schools are based in two villages close to Fakenham in North Norfolk and cater for children aged 4-11 years old. Each school is based within rural communities and children from several village communities attend both schools; there are a few children who attend the schools from town communities such as Fakenham.

From the Raise Online and Key Data we know that:

- Our schools tend to have higher than the national average in relation to the numbers of children who qualify for free school meals
- Our schools tend to have lower than the national average number of children whose English is not a first language
- Our schools have more children classified as white British than compared to the national average.
- Our schools tend to have more children who have special educational needs at all levels than the national average.
- Our schools are judged to have a deprivation level lower than the national average.
- Our schools are Church of England schools where admissions criteria favour children who have affinity to the Churches within the rural communities outlined in the Admissions Policy.

### **Within the school community**

#### *Teaching, learning and curriculum*

Teaching, learning and curriculum at The Unity Federation has clear policies in place in relation to inclusion and racial discrimination. Many aspects of the broader curriculum are aimed at helping children and young people to learn to understand others, to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values, to promote awareness of human rights and to apply and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

We believe that we have a strong sense of community in each school within the federation and with children across the age groups working together and with older children taking responsibility for the welfare of younger children. As a federation there are clear plans in

place to ensure that the sense of community extends across both schools so that one cohesion federation exists; this is already occurring through the establishment of a single governing body, single staffing structure and a single Ethos Committee but will continue over time as a result of shared activities such as sports mornings, shared learning events and educational visits.

Within the curriculum children are exposed to diversity through activities such as school plays which focus on different cultures and countries, through external musicians and artists of different ethnicities and cultures visiting the school and through individual children and families sharing diversity in their lives, be of in relation to faith or culture.

As a Church of England federation, religious worship is taught within this context but children are encouraged to learn about and to understand different faiths. Examples of events that have been planned which we believe have impacted upon community cohesion are: visits by a practicing Sikh, visits by a range of faith leaders including Salvation Army Captain, Methodist Minister and Local Vicar.

#### *Equity and excellence*

Our aim is to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, striving to remove barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and working to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups. The five areas of Every Child Matters underpin the work of the school, and are shown in graphic form around the schools through their published vision and values. This is so that every member of the school community is aware of them.

Challenging targets are set for all children, and the achievements of all are valued; this included both academic achievements and wider ranging ones outside school, which are displayed for all to see. This can be evidenced through the monitoring undertaken by the Ethos Committee and reported to the full governing body

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#### *Engagement and extended services*

The Unity Federation provides a sign post service to wrap around acre for children as well as a range of after school club both held in the schools and the local and wider community.

#### **The local communities**

The Unity Federation aims to provide the means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations including building links with the local communities, with different schools and communities and providing opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups. The schools views themselves as being at the heart of the local communities in which they are placed and the activities reflect this view. Examples of this within the school are:

- School visitors which include those from local communities e.g. School Nurse, Firemen, Hawk and Owl Trust.
- School events to which the communities are invited e.g. Annual Art Exhibitions.
- Village events which the school contributes to e.g. Village Day, Sports Days etc.

- School assemblies held within the Parish churches e.g. Harvest, Easter, Carols and regular Eucharists /school services.
- Use of village sports facilities
- Regular news page from the Head of School, Executive Head Teacher or pupils in Parish magazine.
- Links with the local OAP Luncheon Club, termly visits and fund raisiers.
- Links to nominated charities e.g. The Big C, FARA Kids and NSPCC.

### The UK and global community

The school curriculum covers aspects of life both within the UK and overseas. Through the Fakenham Cluster, Executive Heads in Norfolk and other associations the schools make regular contact with other schools and undertake shared activities such as Sports Events.

Visitors with disabilities come into the school to talk to the children and share their experiences wherever possible and appropriate. There are links with the global community through our establishment of a relationship with schools in other countries. The Unity Federation have had links with schools in Europe, America and Africa.

As Governors of a federation within a rural setting the governors and staff of the Unity Federation are fully committed to ensuring the children within our schools are exposed to learn about, understand and accept difference and diversity within society and leave the school equipped to relate to all people and to have a vision for themselves and belief in themselves which encompasses a desire to achieve whatever their abilities or talents.

Ratified by Governors:



30<sup>th</sup> August 2017

Chair of Governors

To be reviewed annually or more frequently if national policy changes.

Year	Reviewed by whom and when:	Any Changes
2014	C Allen	Change of name to Unity Federation
2015	C Allen / G Yarham	
2016	C Allen / G Yarham	
2017	C Allen / LGB	Added more community links in Local Community Section
2018		