



Public Sector Equality Duty Audit

The Priory Witham Academy

Reviewed by: M Garner

Review: July 2025

The Priory Federation of Academies Trust (The Trust) will adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by not discriminating against all stakeholders with which the organisation may be working with on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

Please refer to the Federation's Public Sector Duty audit for all actions and work relating to staff.

The Trust's Equality Objectives for 2021-2025 are:

1. To cascade and embed ongoing equality and diversity training across the Trust, using our existing support frameworks to continue to improve understanding and to help eliminate discrimination.
2. To promote and monitor the involvement of all groups of pupils, and specifically those with protected characteristics, in the extra-curricular life of all the academies within the Trust.

The context in which the Academy works:

The Academy is one of twelve schools in the Priory Federation of Academies Trust. The academy largely serves the local authority housing estate in the Moorland Ward. The area has unfavourable socio-economic indicators with high levels of unemployment, families with diverse and complicated relationships, poverty and crime. It is in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country (Indices of deprivation 2019). The challenges faced by our pupils as a result of this have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Our current demographics see 73% of primary pupils and 43% of secondary pupils,

- 48.3% of pupils are disadvantaged.
- The percentage of boys is in line with girls
- Attendance continues to be effectively driven, currently at 90% (Academic Year 2024-25)
- FSM is significantly above the national average of 22.5% and is currently 49.8% (nursery-Y13).
- The percentage of children at SEN Support (FS2-Y11) is above the national average at 33%, and at EHC or Statement is 4.7%
- The number of children from different cultural backgrounds is increasing and is now 17.5%

The Early Years Foundation Stage, at Witham Academy, is fundamental in creating a stimulating learning experience securing an excellent start for pupils, many of whom arrive with personal, social and emotional development below their chronological age and significantly delayed language development.

- 87% of 2 year olds have funded places for 15 hours. The LA add a supplement to the EYE entitlement based on the IDACI deprivation measure.
- There were 74 three and four year olds who were entitled to this funding

The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:

1. Age*
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership*
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

*These characteristics apply to the Trust as employers, but not in relation to our provision for pupils.

What do we do to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between individuals who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? Map to evidence/examples/records kept.

- Audits and provision trackers allow the engagement of pupils with protected characteristics to be reviewed and monitored.
- The Witham Values programme and Personal Development Days (PD Days) are used to increase understanding and build confidence amongst pupils to ask questions and develop social interactions with their peers.
- A dedicated PD programme that runs for 30 minutes at the start of each day ensures that knowledge and understanding is developed through quality first teaching.
- Pastoral support and tracking systems alongside SIMS ensure incidents are reported promptly and dealt with, the impact of which demonstrates to pupils the importance of such matters, ensuring there is no discriminatory behaviour.
- The Academy maintain a log of racist and discriminatory incidents.
- Each Year Group have a Phase Leader or Year Director who are supported by a team of pastoral staff. They support both pupils and parent/carers need. They support pupil's re-education and reintegration.
- The use of tutor time is utilised to develop an adaptive curriculum that looks at the trends taken from My Concerns. All pupils can access the full curriculum
- The Witham Values Programme and PD days provide opportunities for all to take part.
- Clubs, trips, activities are open to all pupils. They are equitably provided for, for example, educational visits are planned to ensure that all pupils are able to participate.
- Translators are used for meetings with parents where required.
- Exam arrangements meet the needs of all pupils within the cohort i.e. size of desks, font size.
- Equality is promoted across the curriculum especially in RE and PD days with the impact of which is the continued education of pupils which impacts in the positive and respectful ethos of the school.
- Development of the Witham Rewards Programme promote and actively seeks out equitable provision
- There is a wide range of pastoral of support staff that understands the needs of the pupils and supports them, for example, the beacon team, family support workers, Pastoral managers.
- Equality and Diversity officer appointed to strategically develop the provision of EDI across the Academy.
- Regular communication with parents/carers
- Academy Safeguarding and SEND team host cluster meetings.
- LGBT + Awareness celebrated
- Outside visiting speakers
- Values Days
- PSHE programme

What do we do to engage with the protected groups to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations?

Map to evidence/records kept.

- Pupils with SEN profiles written to reflect areas of need incorporating student voice
- Learning Strategies provide support for social/emotional/physical issues.
- Regular SEN review meetings are held with parents/carers and pupils
- Through the curriculum we engage with protected groups e.g., Holocaust, Black History Month.
- Student and staff survey analysed to review opinions of all stakeholders and action taken accordingly. See Edurio 2025
- Student council meet regularly, and student questionnaires completed for all year groups which enable all pupils including those with protected characteristics to voice any concerns or questions which are then reviewed by the academy's SLT.
- A range of support staff operate across the academy to support all pupils including those with protected characteristics. The dialogue between the pupils, their views and ambitions and a link with people with influence who can then support them.
- The Pastoral Teams promotes a safe space for conversations for people with protected characteristics and then develop strategies to support. This also informs the education programme such as PSHE and PD days.
- SLT review any feedback obtained that comes back from all stakeholders, including pupils, staff and parents, this is collected in a range of ways, such as Edurio surveys, pupils council feedback and a parental working party to name but a few. Adaptations to the curriculum are made where needed.
- Working with the local community such as through the parental working party where curriculum provision and enrichment opportunities and experiences are considered. Parents have a wider input to this as they will contribute through helping to develop community links
- The Pastoral Teams promotes a safe space for conversations for people with protected characteristics and then develop strategies to support. This also informs the education programme such as PSHE and PD days.
- Parent questionnaires go out with all reports providing an opportunity to all those with protected characteristics to raise concerns and share ideas for improvement.
- Behaviour Improvement Officer helps supports learning around behavioural incidents that may need further educational work.
- HIVE Programme support SEN learners to support in their education

How effective are we at eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations?

Map to evidence/records kept.

- The use of audits and provision trackers allow the engagement of pupils with protected characteristics to be reviewed and monitored. The impact is being able to target greater equity of provision through understanding why engagement may be less. Changes made have included adapting sessions or the timings and locations.
- SIMS tracking ensures that staff report any incidents. At the point of review incidents are low.
- Pastoral & safeguarding teams respond to incidents immediately. This is effective as it swiftly addresses any form of harassment. The pastoral structure ensures staff can effectively deal with harassment and victimisation swiftly. This supports staff, particularly pastoral staff in their ability to address issues.
- Assistant Headteacher - Pastoral, DSL, DSO and SENDCO meet weekly to review any incidents.
- Relevant training available for all staff both in and out of the academy, training logs are kept.
- Data is produced for relevant groups such as SEND and EAL to closely track and monitor groups and identify where intervention is needed.

- Parent questionnaires go out with all reports providing an opportunity to all those with protected characteristics to raise concerns and share ideas for improvement.
- PD days and PSHE programme is very effective in providing a solid educational programme where pupils develop and foster an understanding of protected characteristics.
- The Pastoral Team are effective in their liaison with protected characteristics groups and working with them to develop the curriculum.
- The Witham Values programme and Personal Development Days (PD Days) has seen an increased understanding and awareness leading to a low rate of incidents at the point of review.
- Pastoral support and tracking systems ensures prompt action when discrimination, harassment and victimisation incidents happen - demonstrating to pupils the importance of such matters, ensuring we are working to eliminate such behaviour.
- The Academy maintain a log of racist and discriminatory incidents. At the time of review incidents are low because of programmes in place.
- There has been a positive impact with re-educating pupils and parents with regards to language and pupils with protected characteristics have noted a change of low level and unthoughtful language.

Next Steps:

- To continue to develop staff expertise and HIVE Provision through CPD
- Ensure all staff are aware of the training opportunities available in relation to equality and diversity.
- To promote and monitor the involvement of all groups of pupils, and specifically those with protected characteristics, in the extracurricular life of the academy.
- To review use of Picture News to help promote knowledge around protected characteristics.