

Ballykeel Primary School

Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy

2014

Approved by:
Board of Governors



Community Relations Equality and Diversity NI

Rationale

In order to place CRED within the context of the overall school improvement agenda, four main characteristics of ***Every School a Good School*** play a key part in promoting CRED through their approach to:

1. Child Centred Provision
2. High Quality Teaching and Learning
3. Effective Leadership
4. A School Connected to its Local Community

These in turn link clearly with School Development Planning and the central role of the school's ethos in underpinning the life and work of the school. The embedding of CRED into teaching and learning is a key focus within the School's Development Plan for 2014-2017. Relevant sections have been highlighted and included in appendix 1.

Definitions of Community Relations, Equality and Diversity

Community Relations is to encourage greater cross-community contact and co-operation; to support encourage and develop mutual understanding; and to promote recognition of and respect for cultural diversity.

Equality is about creating an equal society, where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Diversity is about recognising individual as well as group differences, treating people as individuals, and placing positive value on diversity in the community.

Ballykeel Primary School's Ethos:

As our school is based on a Christian ethos, the pastoral dimension is central to Ballykeel Primary School and permeates every aspect of school life. We believe that the holistic approach to development on all levels produces well rounded "whole" people equipped with the skills to deal with life. In recognition of this, our School Development Plan includes areas for focus and development through curriculum, teaching and learning, staff organisation and development and parents and the school in the community. The PDMU, CRED and RE coordinators and staff work together to ensure that CRED is embedded into all areas of learning.

Community Relations in Schools includes using;

The DENI Community relations, Equality and Diversity Policy, 2011.

“Northern Ireland is emerging from the period of conflict into a new and hopeful phase, and we become more diverse in our communities, I want to ensure our children and young people have the skills and attitudes to ensure a society where equality and diversity are valued and relations within and between communities are strong.”

It is against this backdrop that re-building a strong and vibrant society is a role for the whole of the Government, but we recognise and value the contribution that education can play – one which is challenging, but one that we must achieve if the next generation is to avoid the mistakes of the past.

There is, for example, a greater representation of children and young people from different ethnic groups in classrooms; increasingly there are children for who English may not be their first language and who come from a different culture.

The Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement, including **Section 75*** and Schedule 9 to the NI Act 1998, place a statutory obligation on public authorities in carrying out their various functions relating to the north of Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependants and persons without

The Promotion of Section 75 in Ballykeel Primary School:

***Section 75** of the Northern Ireland Act issued by the Equality Commission includes;

- Age
- Marital Status
- ‘Men and Women’ generally
- Persons with Dependants
- Political Opinion
- Racial Groups
- Religious Belief
- Sexual Orientation

In addition, without prejudice to this obligation, Public Authorities are also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting **good relations** between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, and racial group.

The policy, and its delivery, must recognise the influences, both positive and negative, that peers, parents, guardians and the media have on the views, perceptions and stereotypical images of young people. The views of children and young people need to inform the delivery of **community relations, equality and diversity** in education settings, both within and outside school. The changing nature of curriculum delivery in both formal and non-formal settings provides the dynamic backdrop and context for the policy review with the focus on the needs of the learner and on equipping children and young people with the key skills to be successful learners and participative citizens.

In order to articulate more effectively the wider scope of the new policy, it has been renamed **'The Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education' (CRED) Policy**, and will be premised on the interdependence between equality, good relations and human rights, including the **UNCRC**** and commitments in the Good Friday, St Andrews and Hillsborough Agreements. The policy reflects the changing educational needs of young people with regard to community relations, equality and the greater diversity of our community, and wider changes as we emerge from conflict and strive to live and work together in building a peaceful, just and prosperous society based on equality and good relations. The policy is set within the wider context of Programme for Government (2008-11) commitments and the Executive's overarching Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration.

****United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** is at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. A rights-respecting school not only teaches about children's rights but also models rights and respect in all its relationships: between pupils and adults, between adults and between pupils. The Right's Respecting School Award helps to achieve this.

The proposed aim of the policy is to:

- Contribute to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination, and by providing formal and non-formal education opportunities for them to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions within the resources available.

The objectives of the policy will be to:

- Ensure that learners, at each stage of their development, have an understanding of and respect for the rights, equality and diversity of all without discrimination; and
- Educate children and young people to live and participate in a changing world, so that they value and respect difference and engage positively with it, taking account of the on-going intercommunity divisions arising from conflict and increasing diversity within our society; and
- Equip children and young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to develop mutual understanding and recognition of, and respect for, difference.

The intended outcomes of the policy will be to develop learners who:

- Understand and respect the rights, equality and diversity (including linguistic diversity) of all section 75 groups;
- Develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours that enable them to value and respect difference and engage positively with it.

The CRED Co-ordinator drafted the CRED policy with input from the PDMU and RE coordinators. Members of staff and governors were consulted and invited to respond to the draft policy. All responses were discussed and any appropriate amendments were made to the policy document. The policy links with the school PDMU, RE, Rights Respecting School Award** and Extended School Policies.

School Curriculum

There have been substantial changes to the curriculum in schools since the last community relations policy in education was developed.

In the revised curriculum the central focus is on ensuring that young people develop their literacy and numeracy skills as well as knowledge and skills in other areas. There is also a recognition of the role that schools can and do play in encouraging learners to become personally, emotionally, socially and physically effective; to lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives; and to become confident, independent and responsible citizens, making informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives. The primary curriculum, therefore includes Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) as a separate Area of Learning, designed to provide the opportunity to develop specifically children's emotional development, health and safety; their relationships with others; and the development of moral thinking, values and action.

Through the curriculum, teachers are able to address issues of diversity with young people as an integral part of their wider programme of learning.

The revised curriculum is now in place in all year groups in all grant-aided schools. It is providing new opportunities for the promotion of equality and diversity, development of self-esteem and positive relationships with others in recognition of the importance of complementing and assisting the achievement of literacy and numeracy and the development of the whole child.

The values and some of the language around them are listed below;

Honesty: We will promote a culture of honesty; speaking and acting in the best interest of others and self.

Acknowledgement: We will recognise the achievements and efforts of ourselves and others.

Inclusiveness: We will promote a welcoming environment where respect for the individual is paramount.

Trust: We will build trust through our actions, our experiences and our openness.

Forgiveness: We will recognise that everyone makes mistakes and the need for us to forgive and be forgiven.

Care: We will endeavour to develop a caring environment where everyone feels safe, valued and happy.

Respect: We will promote positive relationships between all members of the school community.

Meaningful Interactions:

Ballykeel Primary School works collaboratively with St. Brigid's Primary School and both schools provide opportunities for meaningful interactions, which take place in neutral venues and on each other's campuses. The CRED coordinators and principals from both schools work closely together, applying for funding annually to continue these interactions.

Programmes that Ballykeel PS in involved with:

Whole staff training with St Brigid's

Basketball Twinning Programme with St Brigid's (P6)

Town of 3 Halves with St Brigid's (PACT funding with P7)

Faces and Spaces with St Brigid's (CRED funding) P.1 to P.3,

Buddy System- Class to Class (Nursery)

Sharing work within one theme with St Brigid's (P.4 and P.5)

Pushkin Project with St. James Primary (P.6)

Strengthening Families Programme (P.6 and P.7 parents)

Incredible Years Programme (Nursery to P.2 parents and P.3 to P.7 parents)

Whole School Development:

Whole School Development (with David Gardiner NEELB)

Community relations training with the staff from St. Brigid's (CRIS)

CRED, RE and PDMU coordinators have all attended CRED training.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As is the practice with other school policies, this policy will be reviewed and updated periodically. Information gained will then be correlated by the co-ordinator and used to adapt the programmes for the future. The coordinator will liaise with the RE and PDMU coordinators.

Evidence used to monitor and evaluate the embedding of CRED throughout the school may include:

- Monitoring of Planners, evaluations and topic web
- Monitoring of School Policies
- Co-ordinators annual report
- Feedback from parents (Questionnaires)
- School Wall display boards
- Samples of work and photographs
- Pupil comments

An example of a CRED topic web is included in Appendix 2.

Dissemination of the Policy

The contents of this policy will be made available to all members of the Board of Governors, teaching staff, and those providing sub cover. It will also be available to all parents and visitors on request and they will be encouraged to adhere to and follow its aims and objectives. It can also be found on the school website www.ballykeelps.org.uk

Role of the CRED coordinator

- To update the CRED policy when appropriate
- To liaise with the RE and PDMU coordinators
- To support colleagues with the embedding of CRED throughout the school
- To work collaboratively with CRED coordinator and principal from partner school (St. Brigid's)
- To apply for available funding to continue CRED initiatives between schools
- To create links between outside agencies and community relations organisations
- To encourage the sharing of good practice
- To keep up to date with new developments, curriculum innovations and disseminate to colleagues
- To take responsibility for the requisition and maintenance of resources
- To collate evidence (pupil comments and photographs) for external moderators