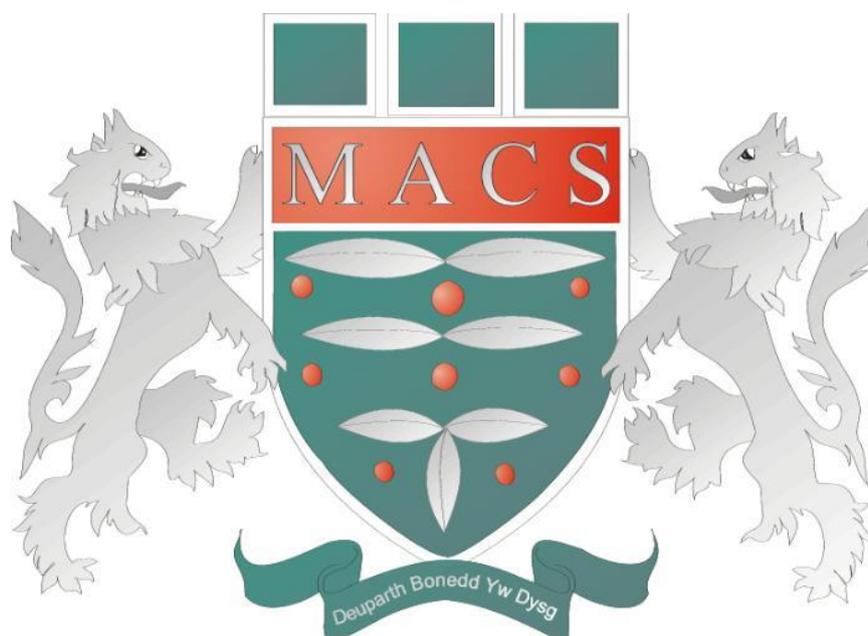


Mountain Ash Comprehensive School



Strategic Equality Plan

Article 29 – goals of education

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Signed _____ *P. Jarman* _____ (Chair of Governors)

Date 28.1.20 _____

Reviewed: January 2020
Next Review Date: January 2021

STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2016 – 2020

The Governing Body of Mountain Ash Comprehensive School accepts its duty to exercise the statutory obligations, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010, to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Governing Body has due regard to advancing equality and to this end accepts its specific duty, as stipulated within the specific regulations for Wales Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 *WLG, June, 2011*, namely to:

- publish equality objectives and the Strategic Equality Plan
- develop engagement and involvement provisions for protected characteristic groups
- ensure published material is accessible
- assess the impact of relevant policies and practices
- develop staff training and the collection of employment information
- promote knowledge and understanding amongst employees of the Equality Act
- addressing unfair pay differences
- reviewing progress on the Strategic Equality Plan and associated Equality objectives
- procure practice provisions

This Strategic Equality Plan sets out:

- Background information about the area and the school
- The school's overall approach to promoting equality and, recognising and celebrating diversity and tackling discrimination
- Specific sections on race equality, disability equality and gender equality
- Action plans incorporating overall targets across the three areas, including targets relating specifically to each of these three areas

This Strategic Equality Plan incorporates all previous equality policies.

Contextual Data:

Mountain Ash Comprehensive School is an 11-18 mixed, Local Authority (LA) maintained comprehensive school. Number on roll is 882 with an increasing trend over recent years.

55% of pupil population is male. 45% female.

98% of pupil population is white British

Less than 1% of pupil population is designated as English as an Additional Language (EAL). All of these pupils are defined as at least competent in their use of English.

Less than 0.5% of pupil population has a Special Educational Needs (SEN) statement.

22% of pupil population are categorised for School Action. 3% are categorised for School Action Plus.

7% of pupils were in receipt of a fixed term exclusion in 2011/12. There were no permanent exclusions. The exclusion rate has decreased significantly in recent years

Equality – Aims and Values

At Mountain Ash Comprehensive we are committed to providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest standards.

The purpose of this Strategic Equality Plan is to fulfil that duty in respect of each of the protected characteristic groups:

- ✓ Gender – male or female
- ✓ Age – young or old
- ✓ Disability –all disabled people
- ✓ Gender reassignment – people who were born in the wrong gender
- ✓ Race – people of any colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins
- ✓ Religion or Belief – includes any religion or lack of religion
- ✓ Sexual orientation – how people feel as well as act in respect of same sex, opposite sex or either sex – including reactions to marriage and civil partnership
- ✓ Pregnancy and Maternity – from the time the woman becomes pregnant

...in establishing justice and equality in all aspects of our policies, procedures and practices.

The principles of this Strategic Equality Plan apply to all members of the school community.

Our approach to promoting equality

The overall objective of this Strategic Equality Plan is to provide a framework for the school to pursue and embed its equality objectives to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities. The plan will build upon the school's success from the 2019 Estyn Inspection which recognised that:

- *A comprehensive personal and social education (PSE) programme contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This provision is well planned and themes are threaded through a valuable programme of tailored focus days, assemblies and outside speakers.*
- *The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about and reflect on a wide range of ethical, local and global issues.*
- *The programme also provides pupils with beneficial opportunities to learn about and understand prejudice and discrimination so that they respect diversity and the rights of others. For example, the 'We are More' ambassadors share their expertise and experience at several conferences promoting gender equality and positive relationships.*

The school is committed to equality principles and will work consistently to ensure that all pupils and staff are encouraged to achieve their full potential; a culture of respect for others is engendered and differences between people are recognised and celebrated. The school will endeavour to create a community where pupils are well prepared for life in a diverse society.

The school aims to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents or carers or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for other children or dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, social class, where the person lives or spent convictions.

As a result, the following Equality Objectives have been agreed:

Strategic Equality Plan – Objective 1

Develop more effective participation, engagement and communication methods with pupils, parents and carers to ensure fully inclusive participation in school life..

OUTCOMES

That pupils and all parents and carers are informed and involved in decision-making processes within the school

SUCCESS CRITERIA

ALL pupils and parents / carers can help shape school processes and practices

ALL pupils and parents / carers feel listened to and that their opinions and comments are valued

ALL information and meetings for parents / carers are made accessible for all.

Strategic Equality Plan – Objective 2

Work towards excluding all forms of harassment due to equality issues

OUTCOMES

A happy school where ALL stakeholders feel confident that they will be treated equitably and equally regardless of any form of disability / cultural / social differences.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Pupils are happy at school and confident to discuss with others if issues arise

School follows RCT guidelines in reporting incidents of bullying in all equality issues.

Parents are confident that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon according to agreed school policies

Staff are aware that any personal difficulties they may have will be listened to and supported within all generally accepted guidelines.

Strategic Equality Plan – Objective 3

To work towards becoming a Rights Respecting School to help develop our pupils' acceptance of difference and diversity, and provide them with a strong moral compass.

OUTCOMES

Children's rights embedded in the school's ethos and culture, leading to improved well-being and academic success.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

ALL pupils feel listened to and that their opinions and comments are valued.

ALL pupils are aware of the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation.

ALL pupils are aware of their rights and use the language to articulate their thoughts/ideas.

ALL staff aware of children's rights and use the language to articulate thoughts/ideas to the pupils.

Improved behaviour amongst pupils.

Positive impacts on relationships between pupils and their peers, as well as pupils and staff.

Action plans detailing how these objectives will be met are included in the appendix of this document.

Leadership, Management and Governance

The Governing Body is committed to meeting its duties and aims to follow the good practice set out in the codes of practice and framework guidance which support the legislation. Whilst the Governing Body has overall responsibility to ensure that equality is promoted throughout the school and are embedded in its practices, it is the responsibility of all staff, including those helping on a voluntary basis, to promote equality.

The Governing Body:

- recognises that all staff need to be aware of, and understand, their responsibilities regarding equality legislation and guidance.
- recognises that discrimination may occur on more than one ground at the same time and that equality of opportunity cannot be achieved by always treating people alike.
- acknowledges that it has a key leadership role in promoting equality and recognises the need to work with school staff and partnership organisations, including the local authority.

Policy, planning, implementation and review.

The Governing Body will endeavour to ensure that all relevant policies reflect the school's commitment to the principles of equality and that this commitment is reflected clearly in all its work.

All staff are encouraged to contribute to the formulation, development and review of policy documents. The school ensures the involvement of governors and, where appropriate, takes steps to enable the contribution of pupils and their parents/carers and other relevant parties.

All policies, functions and strategies are regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in fulfilling the requirements of new legislation.

Outcomes of monitoring and assessment will be recorded by the Governing Body and other key partners. Members of the school community will be kept informed of all Equality initiatives being undertaken.

Staffing: Recruitment and staff development

The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and are in line with local authority guidance and statutory duties. The school seeks to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school.

The school routinely monitors all recruitment activity and staff in post by the statutory equality indicators of gender, ethnic background and disability and fulfils its responsibility to provide data to the authority annually via PLASC.

Steps are taken to ensure that everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this Strategic Equality Plan. New staff are made familiar with it as part of their induction programme. Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this plan. The school will ensure that staff and Governors are able to access the appropriate levels of support and training necessary to ensure that they are aware of contemporary equality practices and procedures.

Staff receive appropriate training to enable them to deal effectively with bullying and discriminatory incidents. A rolling programme of staff development is in place to ensure the right staff have the right skills to deliver equality improvement.

There are clear mechanisms in place where appropriate senior personnel are well engaged with staff and all stakeholders and act upon staff feedback and challenge, releasing resources where necessary and feasible to implement agreed changes effectively

There is regular appraisal of the capability of all staff members and senior personnel to deliver equality improvement.

The Gender Pay Objective

The school has not developed a gender pay objectives as:

- our school has adopted and implemented the local authority's objective, analytical job evaluation system based on job demands for all non-teaching staff which determines their salaries based on national pay spines.
- all teaching staff are paid in accordance with nationally negotiated rates
- the school is committed to ensuring that its staff are paid in line with national rates which are determined in a fair and equal manner.

The school is committed to ensuring fair and open treatment for its entire staff during recruitment, promotion, identification of training and development needs and all other internal staff processes.

Personal development and pastoral care

The pastoral support system takes account of disability, gender, religious and ethnic differences and the experiences and particular needs of people living in a diverse society.

The school provides appropriate and effective support for EAL pupils and value is placed on their home languages.

Support is given to victims and perpetrators of harassment and unacceptable behaviour. External agencies are involved, where appropriate.

Monitoring data, including that relating to disability, ethnicity, gender, social disadvantage (FSM) and SEN will be used to monitor the attainment, progress and well-being of pupils and, where appropriate, targets will be set to address any identified inconsistencies.

The school will endeavour to use monitoring data including that relating to disability, ethnicity, gender, social disadvantage (FSM) and SEN to monitor admissions, attendance, exclusions and the use of sanctions and rewards. Analysed results will be used to inform planning and decision making.

Learning and Teaching

All pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum in accordance with WAG guidelines.

All classroom staff ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel safe, included and that their contributions are valued.

Teaching styles include collaborative learning and AfL practices so that pupils appreciate the value of working together. All pupils are encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem-solving tasks.

Pupil grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under review and may, where appropriate, be analysed by equality indicators.

All classroom staff encourage pupils to become independent and to take appropriate responsibility for their own learning.

All staff challenge stereotypes and foster pupils' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.

Resources and displays reflect the experience and backgrounds of a range of people living in the United Kingdom. They celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes in all curriculum areas. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school.

School curriculum

Curriculum planning takes account of the needs of all pupils and considers them in relation to the various equality strands. The school monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum experience for pupils of all backgrounds.

The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of boys and girls; pupils who are disabled; pupils learning English as an additional language; pupils from minority groups; pupils who are more able and talented; pupils with special educational needs; pupils who are looked after by the local authority and pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils within the Christian ethos of the school.

The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

Extra-curricular activities and special events e.g. school concerts and community events cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils. The school gives due regard to parental preferences and concerns.

Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of all pupils from all groups.

Admissions, attendance, behaviour, discipline and exclusion

The Governing Body is the Admissions Authority for Aberdare Town Church School. The schools admission arrangements are operated in line with the school's policy on school admission which is available from school upon request. The Governing Body ensures that it is administered fairly and equitably to all pupils. Comprehensive information regarding pupils' ethnicity, home language, religion, physical needs, diet, known allergies etc is included in all admission forms.

The school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all. However it is recognised that social/cultural background and other personal factors may affect behaviour. The school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and sanctions as agreed within the whole school behaviour policy statement.

Exclusions and attendance are robustly monitored and effective action is taken in order to reduce gaps between different groups of pupils. Absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel in compliance with agreed procedures stipulated within the whole school attendance statement. Those involved in this work are aware of and sensitive to community issues.

Pupils, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any group is always unacceptable. The appropriate policies (Anti-bullying, Behaviour, EAL, Inclusion, Disability Equality Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Race Harassment Policy) are all linked to this Strategic Equality Plan. Appropriate provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance for pupils and staff.

Attainment, progress and assessment.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils and they continually challenge them to reach higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement.

The monitoring and analysis of pupil performance by disability, special educational needs, gender, ethnicity and other social/cultural indicators enables the identification of groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. The school ensures that action is taken to counteract this.

Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupil progress. The school ensures that all formative and summative assessment is free of gender, racial, cultural and social bias.

Self-evaluation and peer assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress, giving all pupils full opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do and, therefore, to benefit from the process.

Partnerships with parents and the community

The school endeavours to provide information materials for parents in accessible, user-friendly language and formats. Where appropriate, the school will endeavour to provide information in community languages and alternative formats upon request.

Progress reports to parents ensure that all parents/carers have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue.

All parents are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the school. Information and meetings for parents are made accessible to all. Parental involvement is monitored to ensure the participation of parents from all groups whose children are at the school. Actions are included in the schools Strategic Equality objectives to address any inconsistencies. When appropriate the school will take steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under-represented groups of parents and sections of the community.

The school works in close partnership with parents and the community to address specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to diversity. Informal events are designed to include the whole community and, at times, may target minority or marginalised groups.

The school's premises and facilities are available for use by all groups within the community (e.g. after school clubs). The school endeavours to address accessibility difficulties.

The school recognises that it has a responsibility to promote equality through its procurement and commissioning activities and endeavours to ensure the services it uses are aware of its equality objectives.

Impact Assessments

Impact assessments refer to the review of all current and proposed policies and practices in order that we are able to formally assess their impact on different groups of people. This is achieved through systematic impact assessments by increasing the participation of stakeholders

As far as is reasonable, we apply the highest requirement of the law across all equality strands. This stance is taken in order to aim for the highest level of equality for all groups while taking into account the need to apply the test of what is relevant and proportionate.

We strive to ensure that our actions are proportionate to the relevance of equality issues in relation to our policies, procedures and practices. In so doing we are able to prioritise those actions that enable us to address the most significant objectives across all equality strands in order to deliver the best equality outcomes. This enables us to focus on the policies, practices and procedures that have the greatest effect on different stakeholders.

Our Impact assessments will be an on-going process to ensure our policies procedures and practices develop and evolve and will be incorporated into the Governing Body's review and revision of every policy. Every new policy or procedure will be drawn up with regard to our duty to promote equality.

Information gathering

The collection of information is crucial in supporting us in the identification of actions to be taken to improve equality and address discrimination and harassment within the school community. As of April 2012, it is a statutory requirement that the development of this Strategic Equality Plan and the specific objectives within it have been informed by the in-put of all stakeholders.

To this end, in addition to the collation, monitoring and analysis procedures outlined above, information has been gathered via the following consultation processes:

- Feedback from staff surveys and / or in-put through staff meetings and INSET
- Analysis of parent/carer questionnaires
- Feedback and consultation from Annual Governing Body reporting to parent meetings
- Feedback from School Council meetings, whole school pupil surveys and listening to learner /pupil voice surveys on children's attitudes to themselves and the school.
- Issues raised during reviews of Individual Educational Plans, Annual Reviews and mentoring/support meetings

Measuring progress

The action plans which accompany the Strategic Equality Plan will set out short, medium and long term objectives to be achieved.

Progress will be reviewed through the school self-evaluation cycle.

This Strategic Equality Plan will be reviewed and revised on a four yearly cycle. Progress within the objectives agreed within the equality action plans will be reviewed and revised annually.

This process will continue to involve the full participation of all stakeholders and be evidenced based, using information that the school has gathered and analysed and such evidence will be used to conduct accurate impact assessments and inform future objectives

Publishing the Strategic Equality Plan and objectives

Awareness of the Strategic Equality Plan and progress towards identified objectives will be raised via:

- Staff meetings, assemblies, governing body meetings, parent consultations, school newsletters, annual governing body reports to parents
- Incorporation into the School Development Plan
- Incorporation into the School Self-Evaluation
- Publishing the documentation on our school website. It will also be referred to in the Annual Report from the Chair of Governors.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the Strategic Equality Plan with the Local Authority Link Adviser and with Estyn when the school is inspected

- Ensuring hard copies are available by request
- Endeavouring to produce copies, upon request, in appropriate formats and languages

Local Authority

The school will work closely with Rhondda Cynon Taff where our responsibilities have shared elements. Issues that may require particular attention are:

- Employment, where the respective responsibilities of the school and Local Authority will vary according to the status of the school, the delegation of responsibilities locally and the extent to which schools buy back services from the Authority.
- Procurement, which is regulated by the Local Authority. Local Authority regulations will be amended to reflect the requirements of Equality legislation
- The provision of extended services

Further details for school can be obtained from:

The Headteacher
Mrs S Evans
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School
New Road
Mountain Ash
CF45 4DG

Appendix

Strategic Equality Action Plans

Strategic Equality Plan – Objective 1

Develop more effective participation, engagement and communication methods with pupils, parents and carers to ensure fully inclusive participation in school life..

OUTCOMES

That pupils and all parents and carers are informed and involved in decision-making processes within the school

SUCCESS CRITERIA

ALL pupils and parents / carers can help shape school processes and practices

ALL pupils and parents / carers feel listened to and that their opinions and comments are valued

ALL information and meetings for parents / carers are made accessible for all.

Action	Personnel responsible	Start / Completion	Resources	Key Evidence
Advise parents of appropriate policies that are due for review and invite their comments.	HT/CJ	Jan 2020 onwards as policies are updated	Dates of policies due for renewal E-mail for parents	Parent Mail Responses
Invite comments from pupils at school via school senedd in relation to appropriate policies	Staff school senedd reps	From Sept 2019	Time for SC meetings	Minutes of meetings
Use parents/pupils comments when policies reviewed with staff/GB etc.	HT / GB	From Jan 2020	Feedback from pupils/ parents...	Updated policies
Ensure school prospectus updated with reviewed policies as appropriate to WG guidelines.	HT	Annual review	WG Guidelines	Up-to-date prospectus complying with WG guidelines
Use questionnaires to establish issues which concern parents and how these can be addressed	SLT	Sept 2019	Questionnaires	Completed questionnaires Actions set up to reflect outcome of questionnaires
Continue to send clear and easy to read communications e.g. parent mail messages, letters	Class teachers	From Autumn 2019	Parent mail Classcharts	Parent mail Classcharts Letters
Clearly advertise Parent mail and Classcharts to parents / carers ensuring up-to-date and relevant information is included. Use the website to promote these	SLT / School clerk	From Autumn 2019		Parent mail Classcharts Letters Website

Overall Evaluation and Way Forward

Appendix

Strategic Equality Action Plans

Strategic Equality Plan – Objective 2

Work towards excluding all forms of harassment due to equality issues

OUTCOMES

A happy school where ALL stakeholders feel confident that they will be treated equitably and equally regardless of any form of disability / cultural / social differences.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Pupils are happy at school and confident to discuss with others if issues arise

School follows RCT guidelines in reporting incidents of bullying in all equality issues.

Parents are confident that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon according to agreed school policies

Staff are aware that any personal difficulties they may have will be listened to and supported within all generally accepted guidelines.

Action	Personnel responsible	Start / Completion	Resources	Key Evidence
Anti-bullying policy will be reviewed – reflecting on current practice	Senedd /SLT/GB	Annual review	Existing policy Review of existing practice	Minutes of Senedd meeting / GB minutes
Model anti-bullying policy from WG/LA will be used to guide school policy	Senedd /SLT/GB	As published	Model policy Meeting time	Up-to-date Anti-bullying policy available on school website or upon request
Record of bullying incidents to be started at school and completed as per RCT regulations	HL	From Sept 2019	Records	Records
Raise parents and carers awareness of the anti-bullying policy and that they are able to access the policy when required through communication and website	SLT/Senedd	Autumn 2019	Letters/website	Letters/website/parent mail
Staff on long term sick leave to be confident when applying for phased returns to work – knowing that the phased return is for their benefit – as well as the school	CJ / Human Resources advice	Sept 2019	HR policies/school policies/return to work meetings	HR policies/school policies/return to work meetings
Accessibility Plan is up-to-date and relevant – allowing access to all parties – within the confines of the site on which the school stands – and has next steps for progress included.	SLT and GB	As per policy review dates	Reviewed accessibility plan	Up to date plan Minutes of GB Buildings committee

Overall Evaluation and Way Forward

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Strategic Equality Action Plans

Strategic Equality Plan – Objective 3

To work towards becoming a Rights Respecting School to help develop our pupils' acceptance of difference and diversity, and provide them with a strong moral compass

OUTCOMES

Children's rights embedded in the school's ethos and culture, leading to improved well-being and academic success.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

ALL pupils feel listened to and that their opinions and comments are valued.

ALL pupils are aware of the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation.

ALL pupils are aware of their rights and use the language to articulate their thoughts/ideas.

ALL staff aware of children's rights and use the language to articulate thoughts/ideas to the pupils.

Improved behaviour amongst pupils.

Positive impacts on relationships between pupils and their peers, as well as pupils and staff.

Action	Personnel responsible	Start / Completion	Resources	Key Evidence
Please find attached the RRS Action Plan				

Overall Evaluation and Way Forward

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