

# Race Equality Scheme

## Executive Summary

The Trust's Race Equality Scheme is a clear manifestation of the Trust's commitment to equal opportunities and diversity. It sets out a coherent strategy with supporting actions highlighting how the Trust intends to meet its obligations and duties in respect of race and equality. The Trust is not legally obliged to have a Race Equality Scheme but has chosen to implement one as a visible manifestation of best practice. The actions and activities underpinning the Race Equality Scheme are designed to impact on all areas of the Trust's service delivery as well as relating to the Trust as an employer.

## 1. Introduction

- a) The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) is taking a lead role in transforming secondary education in this country. It is building and enabling a world-class network of innovative, high performing secondary schools in partnership with business and the wider community. The Trust has the support of and works closely and successfully with government. With the increasing importance of its role, the Specialist Schools Trust recognises that it is a key player on the national stage and leads on a number of major national and international initiatives.
- b) Certain public authorities in the UK are legally required to have a Race Equality Scheme setting out their strategy for promoting diversity. Whilst the Trust does not fall under this category, it has voluntarily decided to produce and publish its own Race Equality Scheme in order to highlight its commitment to equal opportunities. This is also reflected in one of the five core values of the Specialist Schools Trust which is "to maintain high standards of integrity, professional and probity and to promote equal opportunities in all areas of operation".

## 2. The law and race equality

### a) General duties

- 1 to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- 2 to promote equality of opportunity
- 3 to promote good race relations between people of different racial groups

### b) Specific duties

- 1 to assess ( and consult when possible) the likely impact of proposed policies on the promotion of racial equality
- 2 to monitor existing policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of racial equality
- 3 to publish the results of assessments, consultation and monitoring

- 4 to train staff in connection with the requirements of the General and Specific Duties
- 5 to monitor, by ethnicity, staff in post, and applicants for employment, training and promotion

### **3. Our commitment**

- a) The Trust is committed to diversity and the very highest standards of equalities practice in service delivery and employment. Equalities at the Trust means a place where:
  - 1 diversity is seen as a strength
  - 2 people's differences are understood and respected
  - 3 everyone has a responsibility to promote good relations
  - 4 services are fully accessible
  - 5 the workforce reflects the community we work with
  - 6 there is zero tolerance of unlawful discrimination and harassment of any kind
  - 7 everyone is able to access the opportunities and life chances on offer
  
- b) In order to achieve our inclusive vision, the Trust has developed its Race Equality Scheme based on the above principles. The scheme and its accompanying action plan will be reviewed annually. In this Scheme we detail how we will:
  - 1 meet the requirements of the Race Relations Amendments Act
  - 2 highlight some of the work we have been undertaking and the progress we have made and need to make to promote equality and diversity
  - 3 set out our arrangements and plans for the next year

### **4. Race equality and diversity review**

#### **a) Staffing & recruitment**

- 1 Periodic reviews of the staffing profile of the Trust continue to show that there is an under representation of ethnic minority staff within the Trust's workforce including low representation of ethnic minority staff in the senior management of the Trust. This seems to be a particular concern when looking at the composition of senior management. The issue of representation is, however, a complex one which impacts across the education profession. In 2004, only 5% of teachers nationally were from ethnic minority groups (Office of National Statistics) whereas 9% of the total population are from ethnic minorities including 17% of the pupil population. Within education, there is very likely to be an imbalance in terms of where ethnic minority staff are in terms of seniority – that is they are more likely to be at lower grades in the profession. This is important because it impacts on the recruitment pool to senior posts.

- 2 There is a more positive picture in terms of representation for non-specialist roles. Administrative staff in particular are more reflective of the diversity of the London workforce profile. Approximately 20% of non-education staff are from ethnic minorities and this figure is rising. Whilst this still falls some way short of the profile of the London workforce which is circa 38% ethnic minority, the gap is continuing to narrow.

There are a number of actions that are being taken to address the issues raised above. These include:

- 3 The publication of a “Diversity Action Plan for Employment”. This will cover a range of strategies in relation to developing good employment practice. This will involve the attendance at appropriate BAME recruitment fairs, continuing to develop the transparency and fairness of the Trust’s recruitment processes, the use of the media to promote the positive diversity work of the Trust, etc.
- 4 A survey of potential applicants to the Trust to identify perceptions of the Trust as an organisation in respect of its diversity profile
- 5 Development of a specific conference/open days for staff from organisations related to under-represented groups. The aim would be to give transparent information on working with or for the Trust as an employee, secondee or Lead Practitioner
- 6 Enhanced recruitment guidance for managers
- 7 Improved management information for SMT

#### **b) Ethnic monitoring**

- 1 There is ethnic monitoring of the number of full and part-time staff employed by the Trust as is evidenced in the section above. However, it is important that diversity issues permeate all that the Trust does, to ensure that the services we provide are relevant to all stakeholders. A more rigorous monitoring of areas other than staffing could well be helpful in ensuring that the Trust can put over a much more inclusive perspective on its work.

To ensure a more balanced public representation of the organisation, the Trust is currently looking at monitoring and proactively managing the ethnicity of:

- 1 Speakers at major Trust events such as the national conference and other major national and regional Trust events
- 2 Lead practitioners and others similarly retained (e.g. consultant heads)
- 3 Attendance at major Trust events
- 4 Consultants

#### **c) Training**

- 1 Equality and diversity training forms a key part of the Trust's standard training programme for managers. Almost half of the Trust's managers have already been on an equality and diversity workshop with further sessions planned during the course of 2006/7.
- 2 In addition to the above, an equality and diversity training module is now included in the induction for all new staff.

## **5. Further Initiatives including education programmes**

### **a) Cultural diversity award**

- 1 In order to make it clear that the Trust places great importance on equality and diversity, the Trust is currently working on establishing a cultural diversity award for schools. This is likely to be awarded on the basis of excellent achievement of ethnic minority pupils; Innovation in terms of promoting race equality & cultural diversity within school and the community and /or excellence in curriculum innovation in terms of cultural diversity
- 2 A second option being looked at is the development of an Equality and Diversity (or Cultural Diversity) mark with quality standards that schools could be awarded. This could cover achievement, racial harmony, work with communities and innovation against agreed criteria.

### **b) Directorate diversity champions**

- 1 To ensure that there is on going monitoring and championing of equality and diversity, each directorate now has a member of staff who takes on the role of diversity champion. The role encompasses an audit function in terms of ensuring that equality and diversity actions are in place, developed and completed within each directorate. They also explore the development of new work within the directorate. They report to the Diversity Steering Group which meets quarterly and is chaired by the Director for Finance & Corporate Services.

### **c) Data development**

- 2 Although there is a considerable amount of data about the success of the specialist schools movement, there is currently little data available within the Trust on the success of specialist schools with ethnic minority pupils. It is proposed that a research project is developed to evidence this. This could be a distillation or a development of the current data produced in "Education outcomes and value added by specialist schools".

### **d) Community plan**

- 3 Within the support and advice offered to aspiring schools bidding to become specialist schools, further emphasis could be given on the community aspects of bids with reference to ethnic minority communities. In the recently produced toolkit, ethnic minorities are identified throughout the document as a target group but there are no case studies identified or further development of ideas. For example, ESOL or EAL classes for adults aren't mentioned although many schools offer this facility. It is proposed that further work is done on this aspect of advice given on developing the community plan.

## **6. Race equality scheme consultation & publication**

- 4 The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust Race Equality Scheme will be published on the Trust's website and intranet site for consultation. The document will also be sent to the DfES and other key partners as appropriate.

## **7. Race equality scheme review**

- 5 The Race Equality Scheme will be formally reviewed on an annual basis. This will include an assessment of the status of proposed actions against success criteria. If an action has not been undertaken, it will be investigated and remedied as appropriate. If there are breaches of the scheme, then these will be handled within the normal Trust procedures be it staffing procedures or other procedures as appropriate.