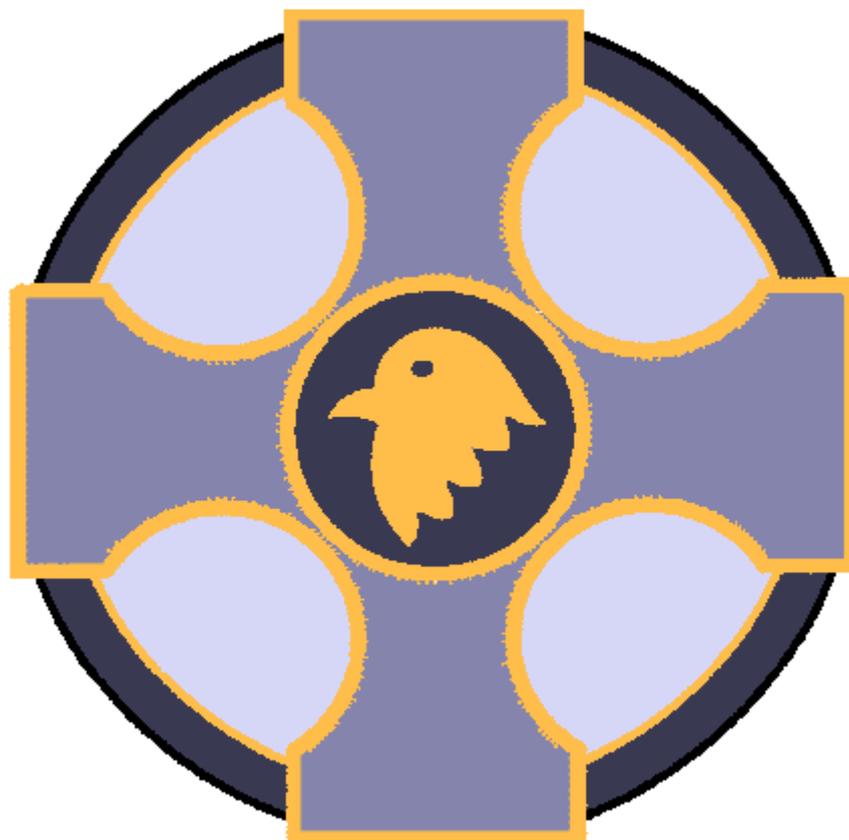


# **ROYSIA MIDDLE SCHOOL**



## **EQUALITY POLICY**

**2012-2016**

**Agreed by the Governing Body: 20 SEPTEMBER 2012**



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## Introduction

People are different from one another in many ways. If we understand, acknowledge and appreciate this diversity, we are better able to manage different needs effectively and provide every individual with an equal opportunity to reach their potential. This approach creates a motivating and rewarding place to work and learn.

Roysia Middle School's equality scheme gives guidance to the governors, headteacher, staff, parents/guardians and visitors about the way in which our school will eliminate unlawful discrimination and ensure that all pupils have equal access to education. Although there is no longer a legal requirement to publish an equality scheme, Roysia Middle School has chosen this as best practice because it is an effective way of communicating our responsibilities, strengthening our commitment and presenting our equality objectives.

This equality scheme gives an overview of the Equality Act 2010. It identifies the school's duties under the legislation, provides a checklist of key activities and highlights some of the ways in which these are being addressed. Roysia Middle School's *Equality Action Plan* is included in this scheme (see Annex 4). It sets out the school's equality objectives showing where we are taking specific measures to promote equality, together with timescales and expected outcomes. This equality scheme replaces our *Equality Policy 2010*, and combines the previously separate equality schemes for disability, gender and race.

### Roysia Middle School

Roysia Middle School is a welcoming school where everyone is valued highly and where differences and similarities are embraced, respected and celebrated. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. Our broad, balanced curriculum is delivered in a way that provides equal opportunity for all pupils to maximise their potential. We endeavour to foster positive relationships with parents, governors and members of the wider community.

At Roysia Middle School we aim to promote equality, tackle any forms of discrimination and cultivate harmonious relations in all areas of school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. The school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for staff, pupils and all those receiving our services. We take seriously our contribution to community cohesion and firmly believe that diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

## The legal framework for this policy

In 2010 the government introduced The Equality Act to replace all existing equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The new Act provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the previous types of discrimination. It extends provision in relation to disability discrimination, and introduces new protection for gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

Under the Equality Act 2010 discrimination is prohibited on the grounds of nine protected characteristics:

- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Age
- Marital or civil partnership status

The Act allows certain exemptions to the provisions for schools, for example in relation to single-sex schools and schools with a religious character. (See Annex 1 for definitions of discrimination)

All maintained schools, including Academies, are defined as public bodies under the Equality Act because they carry out functions of a public nature. As such, schools are required to comply with the single public sector equality duty in relation to all their duties and powers. This applies to pupils, employees, partners, contractors and others who access services provided by the school or at the school.

The Act introduces a public sector equality duty which consists of a general equality duty, and specific duties which are designed to help public bodies meet the general equality duty.

### **General equality duty**

To comply with the three aims of the general equality duty, schools must have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

*In relation to marriage and civil partnership status, only the first aim applies.*

## Specific equality duties

Under the new specific duties, schools are required to:

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty across all its functions, including information relating to persons with a protected characteristic who are:
  - its employees (*only public bodies with more than 150 employees*); or
  - other persons affected by its policy and practices.

The published information must demonstrate the extent to which the policies, procedures and practices have furthered the aims of the general equality duty. It should show how the policies and practices were assessed, what information was considered and the engagement that took place as part of this process.

- Prepare and publish one or more equality objectives; Equality objectives are set by the school and support it in meeting the three aims of the general duty. The school must consider relevant published information before preparing its objectives. The objectives must be specific and include details of how progress will be measured. The school is also required to publish details of the engagement<sup>1</sup> that took place in developing the objectives.

## Timescales

The timescale for schools to publish information demonstrating compliance with the general duty across all its functions is no later than 31 December 2011 and then at least annually after that. The deadline for publishing the school's equality objectives is 6 April 2012 and at least every four years after that.

## Further information for schools

### Duties to pupils

The Equality Act prohibits schools from discriminating against prospective pupils, pupils in the school and former pupils (if there is a continuing relationship with the school). This relates to all the protected characteristics except age and marital/civil partnership status. The Act applies in relation to admissions, education provision, access to any benefit, facility or service, or exclusion of a pupil or other detrimental treatment. It also prohibits discrimination of a pupil on the basis of the protected characteristics of the pupil's parent or sibling.

The Act makes it unlawful to harass or victimise pupils or parents on the basis of "protected acts" such as making, or being involved in, a complaint about discrimination.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that engagement is a new term in this legislation. It covers a range of different activities, from formal public consultations to direct engagement with people from protected groups.

The new positive action provisions allow schools to target measures to alleviate disadvantage experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with protected characteristics. This might include specific educational interventions or adaptation of the school premises to increase accessibility. The reasonable adjustment duty under the Equality Act has been extended to cover the provision by schools of auxiliary aids and services to pupils. This duty arises where such provision is required to alleviate any substantial disadvantage the pupil faces in comparison to non-disabled peers. However, as at July 2011, the government was still considering this provision in relation to schools and no implementation date has been set.

Other relevant legislation includes:

- Children Act 2004
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Duty to Promote Community Cohesion, Education and Inspections Act 2008
- Education Act 1996, Part IV (Special Educational Needs)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Gender Recognition Act 2004

## **Duties as employers**

Employees are protected under the Equality Act from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of all nine protected characteristics. This protection includes harassment of an employee by a third party, eg a contractor. Schools with less than 150 staff are not required to publish information on the effect their policies and practices have on their workforce. They are, however, required to analyse employment policies and practices to ensure workforce equality, eg in relation to promotion or pay gaps and to prepare and publish workforce equality objectives. Schools with more than 150 employees need to ensure that they publish sufficient information to demonstrate how they are meeting the general duty in relation to their employees.

The Equality Act introduces new provisions that prevent employers asking questions about health and disability early in the recruitment process. Detailed guidance is available from the Government Equalities Office.

## **Governance and accountability**

### **The Governing Body**

The governing body of Roysia Middle School is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and is liable for any discrimination, harassment or victimisation based on the actions of employees and agents of the school.

The governors must ensure that all those carrying out the school's functions (leadership, staff etc) are appropriately briefed and fully aware of the equality duty. This role is supported by the school's equality scheme. Governors must ensure that school publishes appropriate information demonstrating compliance with the general equality duty across all its functions and that the school's policies and procedures comply with the equality

legislation and promote community cohesion. The governors will also oversee the development and approve publication of the school's equality objectives. All breaches of the equality scheme will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures, including reporting to the governing body and Local Authority as required.

### **The Headteacher**

It is the headteacher's responsibility to implement the school's equality scheme and associated equality objectives. The headteacher will take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory behaviour or practice including incidents of harassment, bullying or victimisation and ensure that adequate records are kept. The headteacher will provide an annual report to the governors on progress with the school's equality objectives and ensure that these are reviewed and updated as required.

### **All Staff**

It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise themselves with this equality scheme. They should keep up to date with equality legislation; current developments and the latest guidance by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources (see Annex 3).

Members of staff have a vital role in challenging discriminatory behaviour, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations in compliance with equality legislation.

To achieve this staff should:

- be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of discrimination, harassment and bullying;
- deal effectively with all incidents from overt name-calling to the more subtle forms of harassment relating to perceived or actual characteristics, in conjunction with the headteacher as appropriate;
- identify and challenge any bias, stereotyping or negative depiction of individuals in the school's culture and within the curriculum as best practice. Not to respond to an incident may be seen to condone the behaviour; *(Although the content of the curriculum is not covered by the Equality Act, this is important for promoting equality and fostering good relations.)*
- deliver the curriculum in an inclusive way which values diversity and promotes community cohesion.

## Strategic aims

The principles of equality and diversity are firmly embedded within Roysia Middle School's strategic aims, as shown below:

### **Roysia Middle School Strategic Aims**

Roysia is a small middle school serving the whole of Royston and the surrounding villages. We provide a safe, happy and stimulating environment for pupils between the ages of 9 and 13 (school years 5 to 8).

We are privileged to work with young people, helping to develop their characters, support their interests encourage their enthusiasms and guide their academic, physical, moral, social and spiritual growth. We intend to further an awareness of the essential role of education in the futures of our pupils and help them to become enthusiastic, independent and lifelong learners.

#### **Our Aims:**

- to create an ethos in which children can develop self-discipline and respect for themselves and their environment;
- to provide a happy and secure environment in which all pupils are eager to learn and develop their abilities and are able to make sound moral judgements;
- to provide an environment which promotes high academic standards;
- to ensure that our pupils realise their potential by making full use of their individual skills and abilities;
- to prepare our pupils for their upper school careers and ensure that their progress through the three-tier system is smooth and continuous.

In addition, Roysia Middle School is committed to:

- seeking to develop an open and questioning mind, sensitivity, imagination and perseverance;
- be ambitious for all of our pupils and encourage them to be ambitious for themselves;
- providing a learning experience where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- preparing children for life in a diverse society, where they are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community.

At Roysia Middle School we take a proactive approach to achieving these aims and honouring our commitment to equality and diversity. The key activities that we undertake are set out below. Other specific equality objectives that we are currently working towards are set out in our Equality Action Plan (see Annex 4).

## Complying with the equality duty

### Key activities check list

To comply with the public sector equality duty, Roysia Middle School will:

- Consider the school's functions and determine their relevance to the three equality duty aims for each protected group.** Examples of functions include policies, practices and procedures, budget and resource allocation, admissions, curriculum delivery, extra-curricular activities, employment of staff, training and continuing professional development, management and use of premises.
- Identify which of these functions are main priorities for action.**
- Collect equality information for the protected groups in relation to the equality duty.** This includes information on the effect that policies and practices have on employees, pupils, service users and others from the protected groups;
- Analyse the effect of policies and practices in terms of their impact on equality and how they further the aims of the equality duty.** This will be done using the equality information and the outcome of engagement with people who have an interest in the school's equality performance. New policies will be analysed before being adopted. Evidence of our equality analysis and the information considered will be published.
- Prepare and publish equality objectives for the school** that are specific and measurable and set out how we will monitor our progress (see annex 4). We will publish details about the analysis undertaken and the engagement that took place in developing these objectives.
- The information that we publish will be in an accessible form** that meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

### Delivering the Duty

The following are examples of some of the ways in which Roysia Middle School is meeting the aims of the general equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

At Roysia Middle School we:

- strive to improve our understanding of equality and diversity and our role in delivering the three aims of the general equality duty;
- share our commitment to equality and diversity across the whole school, eg through staff briefings and training and by ensuring that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality scheme;

- have high expectations of pupil behaviour which promotes equality, demonstrates respect to others and is not discriminatory. This is backed by our behaviour policy.
- welcome the diversity that individuals bring to the school and make inclusion a thread which runs through all our activities;
- seek to develop good relationships which value diversity within all aspects of school life and the wider community, and promote community cohesion;
- enable equality of opportunity in staff recruitment, including through the use of “positive action” procedures to recruit high-quality applicants from under-represented groups;
- carry out equality analysis of all the school’s plans, policies and procedures, including at the time of development or review. (see annex 3 for a list of linked policy documents);
- ensure equal access to the school curriculum and extracurricular activities including through the use of reasonable adjustments;
- enforce a school uniform policy that does not discriminate against pupils with a protected characteristic.
- undertake appropriate engagement about our equality performance and value the contribution of all children, parents, carers, staff and others;

### **Ofsted evaluation of equality performance**

In July 2010, Ofsted carried out an inspection of Roysia Middle School. Their assessment also considered the school’s performance on equality and found that:

“Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work and has resulted in significant improvement in the performance and participation of individuals who might otherwise miss out.”

The inspectors also found that:

“The school encourages pupils to be responsible and considerate towards others, and their positive response demonstrates particularly good social, moral and spiritual development.” and that “Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress as they move up through the school”

However, inspectors also felt that more could be done to enhance the progress made by the most able pupils:

“Teaching occasionally limits what different pupils might achieve because the expected outcomes are either too ambitious or not sufficiently challenging for individual pupils.”

Ofsted also asked us to develop a more sophisticated approach to monitoring and evaluation by sharpening the focus of routine monitoring, particularly with regard to the impact on pupil outcomes, so that any underachievement is met with swift and effective intervention. This is addressed in the School Development Plan.

## **Monitoring and review**

At Roysia Middle School we collect monitoring data and review our equality performance on an annual basis. This is a requirement under the specific duties. It is important to monitor progress towards our equality objectives so that we can assess the impact of action taken to meet the general equality duty. We will review our equality objectives at least every four years, and report progress to the governing body on an annual basis. This monitoring helps us to maintain a high level of equality-awareness across the school so that we can build on what has been achieved and more easily identify further areas where action would be beneficial. We publish this information so that staff, parents/carers and others can see how we are performing on equality.

Some examples of the monitoring information that we use:

- achievement and attainment data
- attendance and exclusion data
- information on behaviour and complaints
- data relating to children with SEN/additional needs
- access to free-school-meals
- child-in-care status
- lesson observations
- information from teaching staff on specific topics, eg the effectiveness of differentiation in providing equal access to learning
- pupil interviews
- employee data

This equality scheme will be reviewed on a regular basis to take account of any changes to the legislative framework, updated guidance and in response to the needs of the diverse community that we serve.

## **Annex 1: Definition of discrimination**

Unlawful discrimination is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as follows<sup>2</sup>:

### **Direct discrimination (including based on association or perception)**

Direct discrimination occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably than you treat (or would treat) another pupil because of a protected characteristic.

Direct discrimination based on association occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy and maternity). This might occur when you treat a pupil less favourably because their sibling, parent, carer or friend has a protected characteristic.

Direct discrimination based on perception occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because you mistakenly think that they have a protected characteristic.

### **Discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity**

It is discrimination to treat a woman (including a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger. It is direct sex discrimination to treat a woman (including a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is breastfeeding a child who is more than 26 weeks old.

### **Indirect discrimination**

Indirect discrimination occurs when you apply a provision, criterion or practice in the same way for all pupils or a pupil group, but this has the effect of putting pupils sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage.

### **Discrimination arising from disability**

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when you treat a disabled pupil unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and cannot justify such treatment.

Discrimination arising from disability is different from direct discrimination which occurs because of the protected characteristic of disability. For discrimination arising from disability, the motive for the treatment does not matter; the question is whether the disabled pupil has been treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability.

Discrimination arising from disability is also different from indirect discrimination. There is no need to show that other people have been affected alongside the individual disabled pupil or for the disabled pupil to compare themselves with anyone else in order to illustrate their disadvantage.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: Equality and Human Rights Commission. Guidance for education providers: schools. Key concepts: What is discrimination?  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-education-providers-schools](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-education-providers-schools)

## **Annex 2: Linked policy documents**

Roysia Middle School carries out equality analysis of all its policies to ensure that they do not discriminate against any individual or group and to determine the extent to which they further the aims of the general equality duty. The following policy documents are backed by this Equality Scheme:

Admissions policy  
Behaviour including an anti bullying section  
Continuous professional development policy  
Curriculum policy  
Health and safety  
Procurement policy (to be written)  
Pay and Performance Policy  
Recruitment Policy

## **Annex 3: Additional sources of information**

### **Advisory, conciliation and arbitration service (ACAS)**

ACAS aims to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations. Their experienced advisers help organisations improve productivity through impartial advice, training, information and a range of problem resolution services.

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

### **Department for Education**

The Department is responsible for education and children's services. It issues guidance and information to education providers on the implications of the Equality Act.

[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

### **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)**

The EHRC is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the equality duty. Their main purpose is to promote compliance, improve standards, and collate and promote best practice. The Commission gives advice and guidance and publishes information specifically for schools.

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

### **Government Equalities Office (GEO)**

The GEO is responsible for the Government's overall strategy on equality which is contained mainly in the Equality Act 2010. The GEO gives guidance on the Act and its provisions as they come in to force. Most provisions came into force on 1 October 2010 but some are still under consideration by the Government.

[www.equalities.gov.uk](http://www.equalities.gov.uk)

### **Office for Disability Issues (ODI)**

The ODI leads the government's vision of achieving equality for disabled people. They give guidance and support to help include and represent disabled people including developing policy ideas and new ways of delivering services.

[www.officefordisability.gov.uk](http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk)

### **Ofsted**

Ofsted has a regulatory and inspection role which aims to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. Their assessment of public sector bodies also includes performance on equality. They can help schools to identify equality issues through individual inspection reports; national studies and dissemination of best practice information.

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex 4: Roysia Middle School's Equality Action Plan**

Roysia Middle School has drawn up an equality action plan in order to ensure that we make progress in meeting the aims of the equality duty. We have shaped our plan in consultation with pupils, staff, governors, trade unions, parents, and others who have an interest in our equality performance. This action plan will form the basis for the development of our Equality Objectives (by April 2012) in accordance with requirements of the Equality Act.

The following action plan outlines what will be achieved in 2012-16.

Aspect of the duty	Issue being addressed	Action to be taken	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	How often will monitoring take place?	Who will be responsible for implementing the action?	Start date	Completion date
Take active steps to promote equality of opportunity between boys and girls, men and women, when carrying out their functions and activities	An equal amount of girls and boys to be involved with citizenship type activities (NB: sometimes very difficult as ratio of boys:girls = 5:4)  Continued involvement of boys in music	Ensure all committees are representative of gender. School Council  To encourage boys to participate in musical performances  Employment of staff that can specialise in music	Discussion with pupils (Governors to be involved)  The number of boys performing in the school concerts and performances to increase	Termly when bullying incidents are logged  Twice Yearly	Senior Leadership Team in collaboration with staff leading the groups  Leader of Music	Jan 2012	September 2014
Further development of work with whole school on raising awareness and needs of pupils with disabilities	Review of SEN.  Focus upon pupils transferring to Roysia from First Schools	Induction transition programme for pupils  Assembly Programme Engagement in the 'Achievement for All' initiative CPD for all staff Whole school PSHCE	Attainment & Achievement of pupils	Twice yearly via assessment manager.  On going via observations in classrooms by SLT	SENCO Governors  SLT	Jan 2012	Ongoing -2016
Continuous professional development for staff regarding pupils with disabilities	Awareness of identified pupils for their continued participation in school life at Roysia	CPD for staff Awareness raising of individual pupil's needs. (case studies to be written) Parent/carer invited in to talk to staff at staff meeting	Interview the pupil and parent/carer	Twice yearly through Statement reviews plus analysis of assessment data	Leader of Special Educational Needs  All staff	Jan 2012	On going so that the process becomes well established 2016

Aspect of the duty	Issue being addressed	Action to be taken	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	How often will monitoring take place?	Who will be responsible for implementing the action?	Start date	Completion date
To review sections of our Behaviour Policy To review the Behaviour Policy to ensure parity of care and support	Build in flexibility so that account can be taken for individual pupils.  Over representation of boys in lunch time detention	Year Leaders of Learning to review the Pastoral Policy plus the consequences for KS2 and KS3  CPD for staff on behaviour management and teaching strategies for boys	Less repetition of incidents occurring	On going	Year Leaders of Learning  Subject leaders	Sept 2012	Ongoing
To review at the Anti-Bullying section of the Behaviour Policy	To establish clear understanding and consistency within the school and beyond that bullying is totally unacceptable	Working Group to be set up with representation from a parent/carer, pupil, Governor and staff members  Assemblies and PSHCE lessons to reinforce anti-bullying code and school code of practice  School to continue to work closely with PCSOs and School Nurse.	Fewer incidents occurring	Termly through bullying returns	Deputy Head teacher	Sept 2012	July 2013
To take active steps to ensure religious beliefs are understood and valued	Pupils to have a sense of what a belief and value is and how this can be applied to everyday life	Through a programme of RE, assemblies, work with religious groups, pupils to have a similarities and differences within our society and the impact this can have on the ways in which we conduct our lives	Assessment activities within the curriculum  Regular discussion with all ethnic minority families.	Continuous	Leader of RE  SLT	January 2012	January 2014  ongoing

Aspect of the duty	Issue being addressed	Action to be taken	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	How often will monitoring take place?	Who will be responsible for implementing the action?	Start date	Completion date
		Ethnic minority groups to be identified and awareness made of their religious beliefs and experiences				January 2012	
To take active steps annually to identify our most gifted and talented pupils and challenge them	All staff to keep records of ways in which they are challenging our gifted and talented pupils  Gifted and Talented pupils need to feel a sense of pride and enjoy challenge on a regular basis	CATs tests to be reinstated  Continuous Professional Development for staff  Programme of activities implemented appointment of Leader of G&T	Assessment activities within the curriculum  Interview of all G&T pupils	Termly	SLT  Team Leaders  Leader of G&T	Aut. 2012	Ongoing 2015
To reflect our diverse community at Roysia	All members of the school need to embrace the diversity within the school and to develop awareness amongst the whole community	Opportunities within the lessons to embrace the experience of the class community	Questionnaire to pupils	Annually at least once	All staff	Spring 2012	Ongoing 2015