School Motto
'God shines within our hearts.
Jesus walks by our side.
The Holy Spirit gives us strength.'

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, New Mills

Equality Objectives 2026–2030

Our commitment to equality

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we believe that **every person is created in the image and likeness of God and has inherent dignity, worth and value**.

Our mission statement,

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underpins our commitment to ensuring that every member of our school community is valued, respected, included and able to flourish.

Our Catholic identity calls us to recognise the dignity of every individual and to live out the Gospel through love, compassion, justice, reconciliation and service. Our curriculum and Catholic life promote respect for others, an understanding of difference and a commitment to challenging prejudice and discrimination.

Our school website states that all children, regardless of their **personal faith, background, gender or ability**, are expected to live out the Gospel values of love, forgiveness, honesty, friendship and respect. Our curriculum is designed to enable every pupil to develop their talents, confidence and independence and to make a positive contribution to their community and the wider world. (St Mary's Academy)

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Legislation.gov.uk)

Our equality objectives therefore reflect both our statutory responsibilities and the distinctive mission and values of St Mary's.

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Our Equality Objectives

Objective 1 – Promote dignity, inclusion and respect for every person

To ensure that every pupil, regardless of background, faith, race, sex, disability, family circumstances or other protected characteristic, experiences a culture in which they are **known, valued, respected and included**.

We will:

- explicitly teach the dignity and uniqueness of every person through our Catholic curriculum, Religious Education, PSHE/RSHE and Catholic Social Teaching;
- promote our school virtues, including **Peace, Faith, Humble, Perseverance, Unique, Kind, Inclusive, Love, Equal and Generous**;
- ensure that pupils understand that difference is something to respect and value;
- challenge stereotypes, prejudice and discriminatory language;
- ensure that pupils understand that everyone has a right to feel safe, respected and included.

Success will be demonstrated through: pupil voice, parent/carer feedback, behaviour and safeguarding records, curriculum monitoring and evidence of pupils actively demonstrating the school's virtues.

Objective 2 – Remove barriers and improve equality of opportunity

To identify and remove barriers that may prevent individual pupils from achieving their full academic, personal, social, emotional and spiritual potential.

We will:

- provide appropriate adaptations and reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND and disabilities;
- ensure that teachers adapt learning and the environment to meet individual needs;
- monitor the participation, progress and attainment of different groups of pupils;
- ensure that vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils receive appropriate support;
- provide equitable access to technology, resources, enrichment, trips, residential experiences, clubs and leadership opportunities;
- ensure that equality of opportunity does not mean treating every pupil identically, but providing what each individual needs to flourish.

This reflects the school's SEND commitment that every child should benefit fully from education and that teachers are responsible for meeting the needs of all children, including those with SEND. (St Mary's Academy)

Success will be demonstrated through: analysis of pupil progress and participation data, SEND reviews, pupil voice, curriculum and enrichment participation, and monitoring of reasonable adjustments.

Objective 3 – Develop understanding of different cultures, faiths and backgrounds

To develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and respect for the diversity of the local, national and global community.

We will:

- provide opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures, faiths, traditions and perspectives;
- use Religious Education, Global Learning, PSHE/RSHE, literature and the wider curriculum to develop understanding;
- promote respectful dialogue about difference;
- challenge prejudice, stereotypes and misconceptions;
- develop pupils as responsible global citizens;
- strengthen opportunities to learn from and work with people and communities beyond St Mary's.

This builds on the school's existing work through Global Learning, links with other schools, CAFOD, community partnerships and the curriculum. The school's British Values provision also explicitly promotes mutual respect, tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, challenging stereotyping and bias, and global learning. (St Mary's Academy)

Success will be demonstrated through: pupil voice, curriculum evidence, participation in cultural and global learning activities, assemblies and community events, and monitoring of prejudicial incidents.

Objective 4 – Prevent and challenge discrimination, prejudice and bullying

To create a school community in which discriminatory behaviour, prejudice, harassment and bullying are not tolerated and where pupils understand how to challenge injustice safely and respectfully.

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We will:

- ensure that pupils and adults understand the difference between conflict, unkind behaviour, prejudice and bullying;
- explicitly address racist, homophobic, sexist, disability-related, religious and other forms of prejudice;
- respond promptly and proportionately to discriminatory incidents;
- ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed where behaviour may constitute a safeguarding concern;
- provide appropriate support for pupils who experience discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- develop pupils' confidence to be active bystanders and to report concerns;
- analyse behaviour and safeguarding information to identify patterns and groups who may require additional support.

The school already promotes mutual respect, positive relationships, anti-bullying, cyber-bullying, restorative practice and the challenging of stereotyping and bias through its wider curriculum and Catholic ethos. (St Mary's Academy)

Success will be demonstrated through: analysis of behaviour and safeguarding records, pupil and parent/carer feedback, staff training, curriculum monitoring and a reduction in repeated or unresolved discriminatory incidents.

Objective 5 – Promote equality of participation and pupil voice

To ensure that all pupils have meaningful opportunities to participate in school life, contribute their views and take on leadership responsibilities.

We will:

- ensure that pupil voice is representative and inclusive;
- provide leadership opportunities that are accessible to pupils with different strengths and needs;
- ensure that pupils from different backgrounds and abilities are represented in pupil leadership;
- use School Council, Pupil Parliament, chaplaincy, FISH, Fairtrade, environmental groups, sports leadership and other pupil groups to develop participation;
- ensure that pupils understand that their views can contribute to positive change.

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Pupil voice is already an important part of St Mary's approach, with opportunities including School Council, Pupil Parliament, chaplaincy, Minnie Vinnies, Fairtrade and sports leadership. (St Mary's Academy)

Success will be demonstrated through: participation data, pupil voice surveys, representation across pupil groups and evidence of pupil-led improvements.

Objective 6 – Ensure equitable access to the wider life of the school

To ensure that all pupils have fair and equitable access to the opportunities that enrich school life beyond the classroom.

We will:

- monitor participation in clubs, sporting activities, trips, residentials, performances, leadership opportunities and enrichment;
- identify and remove financial, physical, sensory, social or other barriers to participation;
- provide appropriate adaptations and support;
- ensure that pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils are not disadvantaged from taking part;
- monitor participation across relevant groups and take action where inequalities are identified.

This reflects St Mary's commitment to providing children with experiences that develop **resilience, confidence and self-esteem**, both within lessons and through extra-curricular activities. (St Mary's Academy)

Success will be demonstrated through: participation data, pupil voice, parent/carer feedback and monitoring by leaders and governors.

Objective 7 – Promote equality through the curriculum and Catholic Social Teaching

To ensure that the curriculum develops pupils who understand fairness, justice, human dignity, responsibility and the importance of caring for others.

We will:

- embed the principles of Catholic Social Teaching across the curriculum;

- develop pupils' understanding of dignity, community, participation, solidarity and care for creation;
- provide opportunities for pupils to explore issues of equality, fairness, poverty, prejudice and social justice;
- use literature, history, geography, RE, PSHE/RSHE, Global Learning and other curriculum areas to challenge stereotypes and broaden pupils' understanding;
- encourage pupils to put their learning into action through service and charitable activities.

The school states that all seven Catholic Social Teaching strands are linked throughout the curriculum, with Catholic Social Teaching and the Religious Education Directory at its core. (St Mary's Academy)

Success will be demonstrated through: curriculum reviews, pupil work, pupil voice and evidence of pupils applying Catholic Social Teaching to local, national and global issues.

Objective 8 – Promote equality and accessibility for parents, carers, staff and visitors

To ensure that information, communication and access to school services are as inclusive and accessible as reasonably possible.

We will:

- provide information in accessible formats where reasonably required;
- consider the needs of parents/carers with disabilities or communication needs;
- ensure that the school environment is accessible to pupils, staff and visitors;
- consider equality implications when reviewing policies, procedures and school developments;
- promote equality and dignity in recruitment, employment, professional development and staff wellbeing;
- ensure that staff understand their responsibilities in relation to equality and discrimination.

How we will monitor our Equality Objectives

Equality is not a separate activity at St Mary's; it is embedded within our Catholic mission and the everyday life of the school.

The implementation of these objectives will therefore be monitored through:

- pupil voice and School Council feedback;
- parent/carer questionnaires and consultation;
- staff feedback;
- attendance, attainment and progress information;
- SEND and inclusion information;
- participation in enrichment and leadership opportunities;
- behaviour and bullying records;
- discriminatory and prejudicial incident records;
- safeguarding information;
- curriculum monitoring;
- policy review and equality impact considerations;
- governor monitoring and challenge.

Where monitoring identifies an inequality or barrier, the school will take proportionate action to address it.

The school's commitment is consistent with the Public Sector Equality Duty: to **eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations**. (GOV.UK)

Protected Characteristics

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is committed to preventing discrimination and promoting equality in relation to the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010:

- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Marriage and civil partnership**
- **Pregnancy and maternity**
- **Race**, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin
- **Religion or belief**
- **Sex**
- **Sexual orientation** (Legislation.gov.uk)

The school will also have regard to the wider circumstances and characteristics that may affect a person's experience of school, including socioeconomic disadvantage, family circumstances, care experience, additional needs and other vulnerabilities.

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Our Catholic Commitment to Equality

Our commitment to equality is rooted in the Gospel.

At St Mary's, pupils are taught that they are **"important and precious because God loves me"** and that every person has dignity and worth.

Our Catholic Social Teaching, curriculum, virtues, pastoral provision and wider school life seek to ensure that pupils learn not simply to tolerate difference, but to **recognise the dignity of others, value difference, challenge injustice and act with compassion**.

Our 2026 Catholic Schools Inspection recognised that pupils at St Mary's demonstrate a mature respect for other faiths and cultures and that pastoral care is exemplary, with a strong commitment to inclusion and meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils. (St Mary's Academy)

This is reflected in our school mission:

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At St Mary's, equality means ensuring that **every child is known, valued, included and enabled to flourish**.

Review date: December 2026

Next review: December 2030

Key changes I would make to your existing version

1. **Replace the boys/girls attainment objective.**
   "Diminish the difference between attainment and progress of boys and girls" is too narrow as an equality objective unless your current school data identifies a significant sex-based gap. A broader objective to monitor outcomes for different groups and address identified barriers is more robust.
2. **Remove the RSHE objective as a standalone equality objective.**
   RSHE should certainly promote dignity, respect, healthy relationships and understanding of difference, but "matching the requirements from the newly updated RE curriculum" is not really an equality objective. It belongs more appropriately in the RSHE/RSE policy and curriculum development plan.
3. **Strengthen SEND and reasonable adjustments.**
   This is particularly appropriate for St Mary's because the school's own SEND information

explicitly emphasises that every child is different and that provision should be adapted to individual needs. (St Mary's Academy)

4. **Make Catholic Social Teaching central rather than an add-on.**
   This is a significant strength of St Mary's. The website states that all seven Catholic Social Teaching strands are linked throughout the curriculum. (St Mary's Academy)
5. **Build in pupil leadership and voice.**
   This is particularly strong evidence for St Mary's and was recognised by the 2026 CSI report. Chaplaincy, Pupil Parliament, School Council, Minnie Vinnies, Fairtrade and environmental groups give you very good evidence for equality of participation. (St Mary's Academy)
6. **Use measurable monitoring.**
   The revised objectives give governors and leaders something tangible to evaluate rather than simply stating intentions.
7. **Update the protected characteristics wording.**
   Your original list is correct in substance but has formatting problems and omits the clarity of the statutory list. The Equality Act identifies nine protected characteristics. (Legislation.gov.uk)

Overall, I think this revised version is **much more recognisably "St Mary's New Mills"**: it connects equality directly to your mission, virtues, Catholic Social Teaching, SEND provision, pupil voice, chaplaincy, Global Learning and the school's very strong 2026 CSI evidence, rather than reading like a generic Equality Act statement. (St Mary's Academy)

It would also sit well alongside the **Equality Objectives 2026** policy already listed on the school's policy page, as well as the separate **Racial Equality, Accessibility, SEND, Behaviour and Catholic Life and Mission** policies. (St Mary's Academy)