



AGORA  
LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP

## Agora Learning Partnership (ALP) Equality Statement and Objectives March 2024

**Work Together, Learn Together, Succeed Together**

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### Introduction

**A**

...is for *acceptance*

**L**

...is for *liberty*

**P**

...is for *passion*

At the Agora Learning Partnership, we believe that collaboration is essential if we are to achieve our quest to improve the life chances of all the children in our care. We feel *passionately* that for collaboration to be successful, relationships must be both positive and respectful. Furthermore, all children and adults associated with our Trust must feel *accepted* and *liberated*; we firmly believe that everyone should be free to be who they want to be – they should be proud of their talents and interests and have their own thoughts, beliefs and ideas, which they can confidently promote and share. The Agora Learning Partnership is a place where discrimination is not tolerated; instead, we celebrate the diversity in people and value the positive impact all the children and adults in our Trust community have on our organisation.

We also recognise that we are responsible for ensuring that all children and adults within the Partnership can flourish and reach their full potential. To achieve this, we employ a range of strategies to help secure equity for all; where adaptations to the Trust offer are made in order to achieve this. Ultimately, this empowers people to feel fully included and able to play a positive role within the Partnership.

This aspect of the Partnership's ethos and culture is imperative to its success and to the success of the staff and the children, during their time in the Trust and as they venture into the wider world. The children are developing the skills and the character they need to succeed in a wonderfully diverse world-wide community.

### Strategy

In order to keep this important aspect of the Trust’s work at the forefront, it clearly features in the Trust’s vision and aims. The vision statement reads, “...throughout our whole Partnership, we will work to provide a welcoming, safe and respectful environment; an environment where diversity is embraced and celebrated and where there is equity of opportunity for all.”

The vision and aims of the Partnership are achieved through its overarching improvement strategy – the Together Strategy; which commenced in September 2021 and has been developed over time in line with the needs of the Trust.

The Together Strategy is sub-divided into four strands – Together for Children, Together for Staff, Together for Schools and Together for Community. Promoting the importance of diversity, whilst working to achieve equity and be inclusive, features in all aspects of the Trust’s improvement work, outlined within the strategic plans that related to each of the Together Strategy strands.

## **The Agora Learning Partnership as the Educator**

The Trust’s prime purpose is to provide children with a purposeful, broad and impactful education; an education that is adapted to meet their needs and offers equity in the opportunities provided. It is believed that this will enable the children to secure the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to be successful during their educational journey and in their broader lives – as positive citizens who are able to engage successfully in the wider society.

Specifically, the Partnership employs a range of strategies to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic;
- Foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

Examples include:

- The Trust is committed to a ‘local decisions for local children’ approach, to ensure the provision in each school is supportive of the particular children and families the school serves.
- The Trust tracks the academic performance of all children in Trust schools.
- The Trust requires individual schools to monitor the academic performance of DfE recognised groups of pupils: those with special educational needs; disadvantaged pupils (i.e. pupils in receipt of the pupil premium grant and eligible for free school meals); pupils according to their ethnic origin; pupils according to gender; pupils with English as an additional language. In addition the Trust requires schools to monitor the academic performance of pupils with protected characteristics and any groups that may be identified over time.
- A range of support strategies are employed, such as school-to-school support, to ensure the needs of all children (including those children with special needs and/or disabilities)
- The curriculum in all schools has been developed to meet the needs of the children within each specific school community, although an overarching curriculum overview is in place to ensure all schools understand that the curriculum must:
  - Be fully inclusive and ambitious for all children;
  - Promote diversity, equity and inclusion;
  - Be underpinned by the National Curriculum, which is delivered as a minimum, and enhanced to ensure it is tailored to meet the needs of the children;
  - Support the personal development and wellbeing of all children;
  - Support children to understand a range of careers and career pathways.
- All children are entitled to complete a range of enrichment activities by the time they leave the Partnership, age 11; these are detailed in the Children’s Pledge.

- All children take part in enrichment (which promote and celebrate children’s gifts and talents) and values days, which promote the Trust’s ethos and culture; the Trust’s values are: ‘a’ for ambition, ‘g’ for generous, ‘o’ for optimistic, ‘r’ for respect and ‘a’ for adventure and brave.
- The provision at each school is reviewed on a regular basis through Peer Review (school improvement) days and School Review (monitoring) visits to ensure the needs of children are being met and that the provision (including in relation to relevant aspects of the curriculum) is equitable and inclusive.

## The Agora Learning Partnership as the Employer

In order that the children across the Partnership receive a high-quality education, it is vitally important that the best-quality staff are recruited and retained in all the roles, centrally and in the Trust’s Academies. In order to achieve this, the Partnership strives to be the ‘employer of choice’.

Being the ‘employer of choice’ means that the Trust ‘offer’ for staff is such that staff see the benefits of being part of their school and the wider Trust. These benefits are such that staff wish to remain with the Trust, even if they are interested in moving to a role in a different school.

To be the ‘employer of choice’, it is imperative that all staff feel they belong to the Partnership, they are able to be themselves, they have equity of opportunity, they are fully included in the Trust as a whole and that they can voice their views and opinions with confidence. Many strategies to achieve this for all staff are already in place; for example:

- A staff training offer, accessible and adapted to meet the need of specific staff groups
- Training days for all staff, teaching and non-teaching
- Ongoing professional development opportunities, including through events such as the Peer Review days and a range of offers e.g. apprenticeships
- The Partnership offers a range of collaborative working group opportunities for both teaching and non-teaching staff;
- Opportunities for career progression; for example, through staff carrying out school-to-school support, through secondments to new roles or by having access to new opportunities through Trust growth
- Trust-wide events for all staff, such as the wellbeing day that took place in January 2024
- The identification of talent in all staff groups through the Agora Associate application route, with identified individuals from a range of staff groups providing school-to-school support based on their expertise in specific areas of their work
- Consistent approach to recruitment, via a recruitment portal
- Regular opportunities for staff to share their views and opinions (for example, through staff surveys) with clear evidence that improvement actions are taken based on the feedback
- Clear, open lines of communication, promoted with staff, in order that staff can express their views or share concerns
- Tracks the cause of serious incidents and complaints
- The Trust publishes an annual gender pay gap report
- The requirements of the Equalities Act are shared with Academy leaders

## Impact

With regards to the Trust’s work pertaining to diversity, equity and inclusion, there is ongoing evaluation of its impact. For example, through the evaluation of the impact of the Together Strategy and through other relevant activities; such as the termly Peer Review days and School Review visits.

Evidence of impact is also gathered through the analysis of other relevant data and sources of information.

The following data was collected through the most recent wellbeing survey completed by 91% of staff:

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree/Agree
In your school, are there opportunities for flexible working for you or staff who need it?	72.5%
Are you aware of opportunities that could help your career progression?	69.2%
Are you given the support you need to progress in your career?	76.3%
Do you feel comfortable being yourself at work?	92.2%
Do you feel you can be yourself in your role?	95.5%
Do you feel safe to share your ideas and your perspective on matters that arise at work?	85.8%
Do you feel part of the school community?	88.3%
Are you represented in your school community?	89.7%
Is there somewhere safe to go if you need to raise a concern?	94.0%
Do you have the same level of opportunity as your colleagues?	84.3%

Furthermore, in 2023, inspectors wrote in the Trust’s Multi-Academy Trust Summary Evaluation (MATSE) report:

- “The trust’s aims and ethos are based on a determination to provide a high-quality, inclusive education for all.” (MATSE 2023, page 3)
- The trust’s commitment to supporting the success and achievement of vulnerable pupils is well defined. This includes support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. This focus is embedded through all trust systems and processes to ensure that the needs of these pupils are fully understood and consistently met. As a result, vulnerable pupils are supported to achieve highly.” (MATSE 2023, page 5)
- “Trust leaders’ commitment to inclusivity is evident in each of the schools in the trust.” (MATSE 2023, page 5)
- “The implementation of a trust-wide curriculum for personal, social and health education ensures high quality and consistency with aspects of curriculum that support the developing personal attitudes of pupils. This includes important principles, such as learning about protected characteristics.” (MATSE 2023, page 6)

### Future Work (2024-2027)

The following Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Ambassadors have been identified as essential in ensuring there is ongoing developments in the Trust’s ‘diversity, equity and inclusion’ work:

Lead Trustee:	TBC, (Agora Learning Partnership)
Trust Leader:	Rebecca Daulman (Chief Executive Officer, Agora Learning <a href="mailto:Rebecca.Daulman@agoralearning.co.uk">Rebecca.Daulman@agoralearning.co.uk</a> )
Lead Governor:	Varies per school.
School Leader:	Varies per school.

The Agora Learning Partnership is committed to ongoing improvements in relation to the following:

- Eliminating discrimination
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

As such, the Trust will work to achieve the following objectives over the next three years:

- To ensure the Trust’s vision and aims are shared widely and understood by stakeholders in order that there is full awareness of the Trust’s focus on being a welcoming, safe and respectful environment, where diversity is embraced and celebrated and where there is equity of opportunity for all (*performance measure: positive Peer Review outcomes and improved staff survey results*).
- To continue implementing the Together Strategy, specifically in relation to becoming the ‘employer of choice’, including a focus on:

- The development of a working group that will focus on Trust matters pertaining to diversity, equity and inclusion;
- A Trust-wide staff induction process;
- Flexible working;
- The review, update and launch of the Staff Pledge.

*(performance measure: progress detailed in termly reviews of impact relating to the implementation of the strategy)*

- To develop a Trust-wide 'diversity, equity and inclusion' strategy, underpinned by information detailed within the Equality Statement, with input from a broad range of representatives (children and adults) in order that ongoing improvements in relation to the diversity, equity and inclusion agenda are secured *(performance measure: progress detailed in termly reviews of impact relating to the implementation of the strategy)*
- To review and update the Trust's communication strategy, ensuring that all communication is reflective of the Trust's ethos and culture in relation to the importance of having a diverse Trust community in an equitable and inclusive environment *(performance measure: improvements in relevant staff survey outcomes)*.
- To ensure the implementation of the Trust's IT strategy promotes and supports improvement in access, engagement and collaborative working opportunities for all children and staff, including those with protected characteristics *(performance measure: positive feedback from children in pupil voice activities improvements in relevant staff survey outcomes)*
- To ensure that all policies and the Trust's core documents e.g. the Scheme of Delegation, as they are reviewed, align with the Trust's ethos and culture related to diversity, equity and inclusion *(performance measure: impact of policies after implementation)*.
- To achieve further equity for staff across the Trust by implementing standardised job descriptions and related person specifications; also, ensure there is equity in the delivery of roles Partnership-wide – for example, in relation to working hours or release time to carry out specific responsibilities *(performance measure: improvements in relevant staff survey outcomes)*.
- To review and update the Trust's recruitment processes and related documentation to ensure these:
  - Are reflective of the Trust's ethos and culture in relation to the importance of having a diverse Trust community in an equitable and inclusive environment;
  - Are easily accessible to all interested parties, including those with protected characteristics;
  - Clearly demonstrate that applications from all interested parties, including individuals with protected characteristics, are welcomed;
  - Include standardised interview questions and tasks.*(performance measure: an increase the diversity of applicants for positions within the Trust and the Trust's Academies)*
- To achieve further equity for staff across the Trust by implementing standardised job descriptions and related person specifications; also, ensure there is equity in the delivery of roles Partnership-wide – for example, in relation to working hours or release time to carry out specific responsibilities *(performance measure: improvements in relevant staff survey outcomes)*.
- To provide clarity with regards to the professional development pathways (Agora Avenues) on offer through effective coaching and mentoring of both teaching and support staff; once launched, track the impact on staff to ensure these are supporting equitable continuing professional development opportunities for all staff *(performance measure: staff survey results)*.
- To provide further training for staff to ensure that the diversity, equity and inclusion agenda remains at the forefront of their thinking and provides opportunities for the ongoing development of knowledge *(performance measure: feedback in training evaluation forms)*.
- To continue to promote and help children to deepen their understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion through all subjects, Trust-wide, and ensure the curriculum offer is updated regularly in order that it remains current and reflective of new developments.
- To offer further curriculum enrichment events and activities, ensuring these nurture a broad range of children's talents and interests and are fully inclusive *(performance measure: positive feedback from children in pupil voice activities)*.

- To review and update the Trust’s ‘Reading Passport’ to ensure the texts shared with and read by children have the greatest impact on their learning, including by celebrating diversity, whilst promoting equity and inclusion (*performance measure: outcomes of Peer Review days*).

## Legal Requirements

The legal and moral responsibilities related to diversity, equity and inclusion are taken very seriously at the Agora Learning Partnership. It is fully understood that, legally, the Trust must protect people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society, including in relation to ‘protected characteristics’ – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This legal requirement is detailed in The Equality Act 2010.

The responsibilities outlined in the Public Sector Equality Duty also guide the work of the Trust, including in relation to the overarching aims (General Duties). The three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic;
- Foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

The two specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty, intended to help schools meet the general duty, are:

- Set equality objectives
- Publish information

## Monitoring

The Board of Trustees monitors the work of the Trust and its Academies, to ensure the duties detailed above are fulfilled for both children and employees. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for working with the Trust’s Academies to assist them in fulfilling their duties.

The Trust Board expects individual Academies to monitor the impact of their work on meeting the requirements of their equality duties and share this with the Chief Executive Officer (and other members of the Central Team where relevant), in order that a view of how the Trust fulfils its duties in relation to equality, overall.

## Publication

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Trust and its Academies to publish, at least annually, accessible information that demonstrates compliance with the general duty. At the Agora Learning Partnership, the required information is published annually in a report format on the websites of the Trust and the individual Academies.