

Mainstreaming Equality into the Curriculum for Excellence

Mainstreaming is:

the systematic integration of an equality perspective ... [which] tackles structures, behaviours and attitudes that contribute to or sustain inequality and discrimination.

Scottish Government, Equality Strategy 2000

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/social/wtem-04.asp>

Mainstreaming requires:

- an understanding that inequalities exist
- an acknowledgement that discrimination is occurring,
- a willingness to take action to prevent and reduce the occurrence and to redress the consequences of discrimination

Mainstreaming equality means that equality issues should not be addressed as an afterthought or catered for only by specific programmes or initiatives. It means that equality considerations should be taken into account from the outset.

This framework provides a tool for planning and assessing pupils' learning about equality and anti-discrimination in all subjects.

Four aims have been expanded in detail in order to give teachers a clear description of the knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed.

The first aim, **To include, value and respect all learners**, is a reiteration and clarification of much that is already stated and implied by existing 5–14 documents. It is expected that the first aim will be addressed thoroughly at every stage of Primary and Secondary education and across all subjects.

The other three aims build upon this inclusive approach and add to it. They reflect the purposes of Curriculum for Excellence and the Scottish Government's Mainstreaming Strategy. While some subjects offer more scope than others, there are opportunities at all stages and in all subjects to address elements of these three further aims:

- **To develop learners' understanding of discrimination**
- **To build learners' capacity to challenge discrimination**
- **To give learners opportunities to take action for equality**

In many lessons the addition or alteration may be small. However, the cumulative effect of working towards these 4 aims at every stage and in every subject will be significant.

These curriculum developments will be most effective within a school which mainstreams equality and anti-discrimination into all aspects of its work.

1. To include, value and respect all learners (Confident Individuals)

- a. The languages, resources, images and contexts used are inclusive and diverse: mirroring the pupils' own lives and offering insight into other lives.

- b. Pupils' self-esteem is encouraged by the celebration of all pupils and the groups to which they belong.
- c. Pupils' ability to understand and empathise is developed through learning about aspects of many people's lives.
- d. All pupils' sense of belonging is strengthened. The assumption is never made that there is an average pupil (i.e. a white, English-speaking, able-bodied, middle-class, Christian boy, living in a house with his biological, heterosexual parents) who is being taught to tolerate or respect "others".

2. To develop learners' understanding of discrimination (Successful Learners)

- a. Pupils explore what people have in common and where they differ.
- b. Pupils are taught to see beyond labels and stereotypes, and to understand that everyone has a complex identity and belongs to many groups.
- c. Pupils' feelings and beliefs about difference are explored.
- d. Pupils consider in which circumstances certain aspects of a person's identity give or gave them choices and opportunities.
- e. Pupils are taught about groups that face and have faced discrimination.
- f. Pupils are taught about personal/cultural/institutional discrimination.
- g. Pupils learn to analyse why discrimination occurs.

3. To build learners' capacity to challenge discrimination (Responsible Citizens)

- a. Pupils gain insight into the experiences of being discriminated against, discriminating, witnessing discrimination and taking action against discrimination.
- b. Pupils practise standing up for themselves, each other and unknown others.
- c. Pupils engage in learning activities directly related to injustice, inequality,

prejudice, discrimination and human rights.

4. To give learners opportunities to take action for equality (Effective Contributors)

- a. Pupils and teachers co-operate in auditing and using critically material that excludes, stereotypes or makes prejudiced assumptions, and in working towards a time when all resources, including textbooks and exam questions, reflect the diversity of children, families and society.
- b. Pupils have a part in the decision-making process in school initiatives related to equality and anti-discrimination issues, e.g. against bullying, to welcome refugees, to challenge gender stereotypes.
- c. Pupils consider, and where necessary improve, the equality dimension of all school initiatives.
- d. Pupils act as allies against discrimination, e.g. peer support, playground buddies.
- e. Pupils develop and engage in campaigns against discrimination.
- f. Pupils engage in research to extend their own knowledge and understanding of discrimination.
- g. Pupils educate others by communicating their understanding, experiences and solutions to pupils, staff and the wider community.