

Dixons Sixth Form

Equality Objectives 2026-2030

Equality Objective 1:

Our 16–18 curriculum is designed to reflect the backgrounds, identities and experiences of our students, helping them to develop a strong sense of belonging, while also encouraging engagement with a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives that broaden their understanding of the world and support their future aspirations.

Why we have chosen this objective:

The Equality Act 2010 established a single Public Sector Equality Duty that applies to all schools, including Local Authority maintained schools and Academies. This duty requires schools to give due regard to the need to:

- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster positive relationships between people from different backgrounds and with different protected characteristics.

At our academy, we believe that equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) should be visible, meaningful and embedded throughout college life. Students should be able to recognise themselves, their experiences and the wider world within the curriculum they study. We recognise that representation within the curriculum plays a vital role in promoting belonging, engagement and aspiration, and that this remains an important area for continued development.

The Department for Education's National Curriculum and Assessment Review (2025) highlighted that when students are unable to see themselves reflected positively in what they learn, it can negatively affect their confidence, motivation and sense of belonging. The review also identified that exposure to a diverse range of perspectives and experiences within the curriculum can strengthen engagement, empathy and understanding of others. The review further emphasised the importance of ensuring that all young people can see themselves represented within the curriculum, while also broadening their understanding of the experiences and perspectives of others.

Research into inclusive curriculum design has consistently shown that students are more likely to engage positively with learning when they feel represented, valued and included within the curriculum. Inclusive approaches have also been linked to stronger student wellbeing, improved confidence, increased participation and a greater sense of college belonging.

Student voice from within our own community reflects these national findings. In the 2024 Edurio Student Survey, only 22% of students agreed that they learn about people like themselves within the curriculum. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that ED&I is meaningfully embedded within curriculum design and classroom practice.

We recognise that an inclusive and representative curriculum supports students' sense of belonging, raises aspirations and contributes positively to wellbeing, engagement and achievement. By ensuring that all students feel seen, valued and respected, we aim to create an environment in which every learner can thrive academically, socially and personally.

As most of the students' time in college is spent in classrooms, we believe our curriculum is one of the most powerful tools we have to promote equality, celebrate diversity and foster inclusion. For this reason, ED&I must underpin the decisions we make about what we teach, how we teach and the experiences we provide for all learners. We understand that developing a truly inclusive curriculum is an ongoing process, and we remain committed to reviewing and developing our curriculum so that it reflects the diversity of our college community and the wider society in which our students live.

This objective was chosen after consultation with staff and students.

To achieve this objective we plan to:

- Ensure curriculum leads are wholly up to date with the ED&I curriculum training facilitated within our trust CCTs.
 - Ensure mechanisms are in place to capture the intentional ED&I of our curricular.
 - Deliver regular PD to support staff in developing ED&I and racial literacy to inform their confidence in exploring sensitive topics and themes.
 - Ensure that representation in the curriculum is meaningful and prevents the perpetuation of negative stereotypes.
 - Implement a phased three-year programme of curriculum development focused on inclusive curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment, with opportunities for reflection, quality assurance and continual review embedded throughout the process. This
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staged approach will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are considered not only in what students learn, but also in how learning is delivered and assessed across the 16–18 curriculum.

- Develop staff understanding and practice through ongoing professional dialogue, training and collaboration with students, enabling teachers to critically reflect on curriculum design, representation and their own positionality. This will support the creation of a more inclusive learning experience that strengthens students' sense of belonging, engagement and aspiration while exposing them to a broad range of perspectives and experiences.

Progress we are making towards achieving this objective:

To be reviewed in the 2026-27 academic year.

Equality Objective 2:

To foster an inclusive academy culture where diversity is valued and celebrated, staff and students are supported to develop their understanding of ED&I through ongoing training and awareness opportunities, and all members of the community feel respected, included and able to learn from one another.

Why we have chosen this objective:

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty, which applies to all schools, including both Local Authority maintained schools and Academies. It requires that the academy gives due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.

During the 2024–25 academic year, we undertook a listening campaign with students, staff and families to better understand experiences and perceptions across our academy community. Feedback highlighted that not all students currently feel fully confident in reporting prejudice-related incidents. Responses also indicated inconsistency in how regularly equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) themes are explored through the curriculum and tutorial programme. These findings reinforced the importance of continuing to strengthen awareness, understanding and confidence across the academy.

National research demonstrates that prejudice-related language and behaviour continue to affect young people across secondary and post-16 education. Stonewall's School Report found that many LGBT+ students hear discriminatory language regularly within educational settings, while research from the Anti-Bullying Alliance highlights the significant impact identity-based bullying can have on wellbeing, attendance, engagement and students' sense of belonging.

Research linked specifically to further and post-16 education also demonstrates the importance of continued education and awareness raising in this area. Data published by the Department for Education shows that the further education sector is increasingly diverse, with students from Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic backgrounds making up 27.9% of all further education learners in England in 2023–24. This highlights the importance of ensuring that post-16 environments are inclusive, respectful and responsive to the experiences of all learners.

Research into experiences of harassment and discrimination among young people also demonstrates ongoing concerns around reporting and understanding prejudice-related behaviour. A 2023 survey on gender-based violence in education found that 52% of girls aged 11–21 did not believe sexist comments were dealt with seriously in school, while 61% of young people aged 17–21 reported worrying about sexual harassment. In further education settings, research published by FE News found that almost one in five respondents did not recognise openly expressing dislike towards people of a particular race as harassment, demonstrating the continued need for education and awareness around discrimination and respectful behaviour.

We also recognise that prejudice-related incidents are often underreported, which was highlighted in our 2024-25 Listening Campaign. Young people may lack confidence in reporting concerns, may be uncertain about what constitutes a prejudice-related incident, or may worry about whether concerns will be taken seriously or acted upon appropriately. Creating a culture in which students feel safe, listened to and supported is therefore essential.

Through ongoing ED&I training, awareness raising and opportunities for meaningful discussion and reflection, we aim to further develop an inclusive academy culture where diversity is valued and celebrated, students feel confident to report concerns, and staff are equipped to respond appropriately and consistently. In doing so, we seek to create a respectful and supportive environment that safeguards wellbeing, strengthens belonging and prepares young people to thrive within modern Britain and an increasingly diverse society.

This objective was chosen after consultation with staff and students.

To achieve this objective we plan to:



- Continue to embed our trust-wide policy for responding to prejudice-related incidents and ensure that staff, students and families are familiar with this policy.
- Monitor the recording of prejudicial incidents for clarity and consistency in staff response.
- Conduct regular listening sessions to gain student voice surrounding their experienced of prejudice-related incidents.
- Implement a phased five-stage ED&I development programme for all teaching and associate staff over a five-year period, ensuring sustained professional development, increased confidence in responding to prejudice-related incidents and the effective embedding of inclusive practice across the college.
- Embed ED&I within staff induction processes to ensure that all new colleagues understand the college's expectations, values and procedures relating to equality, inclusion and the reporting and responding to prejudice-related incidents.
- Review and strengthen the tutorial programme to ensure students receive regular opportunities to develop their understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion, including how to recognise, challenge and report prejudice-related behaviour and discrimination.

Progress we are making towards achieving this objective:

To be reviewed in the 2026-27 academic year.

