

Equality Impact Assessment Form

1- Policy details	
Name of policy	Belonging in Education Strategy
Department and service	Children and Family Services, Education Strategy and Transformation
Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment?	Liv Dale, Head of Service - Education Strategy and Transformation
Contact numbers	01163050287
Date of completion	24 February 2026 (reviewed 12/06/2026)

2- Objectives and background of policy or practice change	
What is the proposal?	A new Belonging in Education Strategy for Leicestershire covering the period from 2026-2029.
What change and impact is intended by the proposal?	The Strategy will aim to ensure that in Leicestershire, partners work together to ensure there is a commitment to belonging. All Leicestershire children and young people feel a sense of belonging in Education, so they can live their best lives. The Strategy sets out the Council's strategic approach to ensure children and young people feel a sense of belonging in the educational provisions they attend. The Strategy will clearly set out to stakeholders the four key priority areas, aligned to deliverables and outcomes for each and key responsibilities for implementation.

What is the rationale for this proposal?	In Leicestershire, the council wants all county children and young people to feel a sense of belonging in Education, so they can live their best lives and be the author of their own life stories. In the current climate, the council have a responsibility to work together with partners agencies to support children to gain a sense of belonging through inclusive practice and adapting our responses to new challenges. To develop a sense of belonging in school, children and young people need to feel accepted and valued for who they are and to be offered a curriculum that is accessible and designed to help all children and young people successfully learn. Leicestershire’s Belonging in Education Strategy sets out how the council aim to achieve this goal for every child and young person in all educational settings across Leicestershire. This work aligns considerably to the Education Reforms White Paper “Every Child Achieving and Thriving” (February 2026)
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3- Evidence gathered on equality implications - Data and engagement	
What equalities information or data has been gathered so far? What does it show?	Leicestershire’s population was 712,336 at the latest census in 2021, a 9.5% increase to the county’s population over the last 10 years. This makes Leicestershire one of the fastest growing areas in the country in terms of population (national average 6.6%). Understandably, this has placed added pressures on services for Children and Young People in the County. The County has approx. 143,063 children and young people aged up to 19 years (including 36,154 0- to 5-year-olds). There were 296,400 households within the county. A further 10.2% growth in population is projected by 2031.

There are 101,247 children and young people educated in Leicestershire schools (aged 3-18) during the Autumn term census for 2025/26. This includes 54,454 Primary aged pupils, 44,722 Secondary aged pupils and 1,992 pupils in Special Schools. Children and Young People from minority ethnic groups account for 43.6% of all children living in Leicestershire, compared with 38% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups are Asian or Asian British and Mixed.

From our School Census in Spring 2025, we know that	
Percentage of Black, Asian and other ethnic communities of the total school population (excluding unclassified)	24.6%
Pupils eligible for free school meals	17.2%
Pupils needing SEN support	13.4%
Pupils with EHCPs	4.7%

The latest School Census, which includes all pupils on roll at a school within Leicestershire (aged 4 to 16 years), reports that there are now 13,983 pupils on a SEN Support plan and 7,196 with an Education, Health and Care Plan. SEND pupils account for 18.1% of the Leicestershire school population. Leicestershire has a proportion of children and young people with SEND (identified through EHCPs and SEN support) broadly in line with the English average.

In 2025, the annual school census (Spring term) reported that 13.4% of children and young people were identified at SEN Support level in the County, just below the England average. Previous longer-term trends had indicated a lower-than-average level in Leicestershire, but this gap has now largely closed.

What engagement has been undertaken so far?	The strategy has been developed in conjunction with key stakeholders and responsible bodies.
What does it show?	The Department have used their feedback to help us to shape the strategy, ensuring it reflects shared priorities and processes and is aligned with the current educational landscape.

4- Benefits, concerns and mitigating action

Group	What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	What are the concerns identified and how will these affect those from the following groups?	How will the known concerns be mitigated?
Age	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all age groups.	None identified. None identified.	As part of the development work of the strategy, young people's direct voices have been fed into the work to help us understand impact of 'Belonging' in them. Further work is underway to understand where and when children and young people feel a sense of belonging. This work will also seek to identify if there are issues, themes or patterns (particularly related to intersectionality) that indicate children of specific ages and living

			is specific areas of Leicestershire may be disadvantaged in experiencing the delivery of the Belonging Strategy.
Disability	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all, however may be particularly paramount to those individuals who have a protected characteristic.	Children with disabilities are likely to find standard forms of communication and engagement difficult and there is a risk that in implementing the strategy, they are not engaged, their voice heard and as such implementation does not address issues that reduce a sense of belonging for them	As part of the 'Lived Experience Framework', we are exploring creative ways to capture children's voice when their disability means it is harder to capture using traditional methods.
Race	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all, however may be particularly paramount to those individuals who have a protected characteristic.	Children from global majority backgrounds may not feel the same sense of belonging in their educational provisions than those from global minority backgrounds. This is unknown until KPIs are starting to be gathered specifically to measure belonging.	We will ensure that all child voice and family lived experience gathered with regards to Belonging (including ensuring all children feel a sense of belonging in their educational setting) are representative of Leicestershire's population, including those from global majority backgrounds.
Sex	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.	None identified.	None identified.

Gender Reassignment	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.	None identified.	None identified.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No direct impact identified.	None identified.	Not required.
Sexual Orientation	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.	Children with particular sexual identities may not feel the same sense of belonging in their educational provisions than with alternative sexual identities. This is unknown until KPIs are starting to be gathered specifically to measure belonging.	We will work with schools to understand localised implementation plans that will seek to identify the required activity.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No direct impact identified.	None identified.	Not required.
Religion or Belief	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.	Sense of marginalisation in school communities could impact on the general wellbeing and sense of belonging.	Where localised assessment identifies need impacting on a child's sense of belonging, specific activity will be identified.
Armed Forces (including veterans)	No direct impact identified.	None identified.	Not required.
People with lived care experience	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the	None identified.	None identified.

	Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.		
Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.	Sense of marginalisation in school communities could impact on the general wellbeing and sense of belonging. This may be particularly apparent for asylum seekers and refugee communities.	Where localised assessment identifies need impacting on a child's sense of belonging, specific activity will be identified.

5- Action Plan

Produce a framework to outline how identified risks/concerns identified in section 4 will be mitigated.

What action is planned?	Who is responsible for the action?	Timescale	Expected outcome
Where localised assessment identifies need impacting on a child's sense of belonging, specific activity will be identified. We will work with schools to understand localised implementation plans that will seek to identify the required activity.	Liv Dale	January 2027	To understand if children with protected characteristics the same sense have of belonging than others. Further actions will need to be designed following this initial intel.
We will ensure that all children's voice and family lived experience	Liv Dale	January 2027	To understand if children with protected characteristics the same

gathered with regards to Belonging (including ensuring all children feel a sense of belonging in their educational setting) are representative of Leicestershire's population, including those from global majority backgrounds.			sense have of belonging than others. Further actions will need to be designed following this initial intel.
As part of the 'Lived Experience Framework', we are exploring creative ways to capture children's voice when their disability means it is harder to capture using traditional methods.	Caroline Davis	January 2027	All children and young people are able and encouraged to give their views using preferred communication styles.

6- Approval Process	
Departmental Equalities Group	
Corporate Policy Team	
Sign off by the Senior Responsible Officer for the Project.	