



RSJ Case Studies



School's Context:

Manor Junior School (MJS) is a five-form entry junior school, with capacity roll of 600 pupils serving a mainly South Asian community (47% Bangladeshi; 17% Pakistani; 8% Indian).

MJS's community's deprivation has been exacerbated by the pandemic and ongoing global challenges. The school is facing a sharp increase in need, Barking & Dagenham has the highest domestic abuse incidents in the country, with the highest percentage of children living in low-income households in London and the 7th highest percentage of overcrowded households in the country, our referrals to Social Services have tripled compared to last academic year. Within our community there is an emerging cohort of families facing multiple and complex vulnerabilities such as seeking refuge, no recourse to public funds (NRPF), homelessness, trauma and acute financial hardship who do not meet the eligibility criteria for Pupil Premium funding. We have seen a substantial increase in percentage of looked after children (LAC) and previously looked after children (PLAC) since the pandemic rising from typically 1 or 2 children in 2020 to an average of 10 children since 2023.

The Rationale (What was the problem/challenge/difficulty you wanted to overcome? It should fall into the category of one of the 3 RSJ Initiative Priorities. 1. Curriculum 2. Student Experience 3. Leadership and staff experience)

Rationale (Student Experience Priority)

At MJS, we recognised the need to ensure that **every** child feels a genuine sense of belonging within our diverse school community. Our aim was to create an environment where all pupils not only feel included but are also celebrated for their individuality and uniqueness.

The Approach (What was tried, with whom, and how was it executed?)

Our **EDIT Team** (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Togetherness) is made up of children from across the school who play a vital role in strengthening our commitment to equality and inclusion at Manor Junior School. Coordinated by a senior leader for inclusion and supported by the pastoral team, EDIT includes around **20 pupils from all year groups**, representing our rich mix of **cultures, faiths, and backgrounds**. The team meets **fortnightly**, with agendas shaped collaboratively by pupils and staff. Outcomes are shared with the Headteacher and wider staff to ensure pupil voice directly informs school practice.

One of EDIT's proudest achievements is the creation of our **child-friendly Equality Act – "Equali-Bees."** This pupil-led initiative has become central to life at MJS, helping everyone understand fairness, respect, and kindness in everyday school life. The **Equali-Bees statement** reminds us that *"Everyone is welcomed, valued, and accepted for who they are."* It underpins how we **celebrate our uniqueness, promote British Values**, and **uphold the Barking and Dagenham Inclusion Pledge**.

Assemblies inspired by EDIT, such as **"Equali-Bees,"** highlight the importance of equalities. In **2024**, we launched **'Be Active Day'**, ensuring all pupils could access enriching wellbeing activities like dance, gymnastics, tennis, and yoga. We also celebrated **VE Day** through culturally diverse experiences and celebrated **Afro Hair Day** to support self-expression and equality.

Through initiatives like **The Ride to Freedom** programme, pupils have also deepened their understanding of **human rights, equality, and social justice**, continuing our journey to make MJS a place where **everyone belongs**.

The impact (feedback from the target group/s)

The initiatives led by our **EDIT Team** and supported across the school have had a significant impact on our pupils' sense of belonging, confidence, and understanding of equality and social justice.

Through initiatives such as the **Equali-Bees Act** and our **Inclusion Pledge**, pupils now articulate a clearer understanding of fairness, respect, and inclusion. Our pupil voice surveys show that children feel **more valued and accepted** within our school community, with over **90% reporting that they feel proud to be part of MJS** and that “everyone is welcomed for who they are.” Staff feedback also reflects a stronger culture of inclusivity and pupil empowerment across the curriculum and daily school life.

The impact (What has changed because of the approach)

How we choose activities for our children has changed as we now **plan with inclusion, representation, and pupil voice at the heart of every decision**. Activities are selected to ensure that all pupils — particularly those who are **LAC (Looked After Children)** or **Pupil Premium** — have equal access to meaningful experiences that build confidence, leadership, and a sense of belonging.

Opportunities such as the **Social Enterprise Project, Film Enterprise Club, theatre visit, and trip to Parliament** have enabled pupils to develop public speaking, teamwork, and self-belief, while seeing the real impact of their contributions within the school community.

How and what we teach is based on **our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion**, ensuring that the curriculum reflects and celebrates our pupils' varied backgrounds and experiences. This approach has strengthened engagement, empathy, and understanding across the school and deepened our commitment to the **Barking and Dagenham Inclusion Pledge** and **Race and Social Justice Charter**, ensuring that every child at MJS feels **seen, heard, and valued**.

Next Steps

We will continue to **embed equality, diversity, and inclusion** across our curriculum and wider school life. The **EDIT Team** and **Equali-Bees** will remain central in shaping how and what we teach, ensuring pupil voice informs ongoing improvements.

Our **curriculum review** will focus on greater representation and inclusion, ensuring all pupils see themselves reflected in their learning. We will also widen access to **musical, sporting, and extra-curricular activities**, providing or subsidising opportunities so every child can participate, regardless of family income.

We will also continue to **share our Equali-Bees model and inclusive practices**, promoting equality, diversity, and social justice beyond our own school community.

A child's story
A lived experience

My school:

My school is very understanding, supportive, caring, and fair. There are so many things I love to do here. I have taken part in lots of activities because I want everyone to feel included and to make school fun for everyone. Being part of MJS has given me the chance to grow and the stability I needed when things in my life changed. I'm really proud to be part of the MJS community and I appreciate how important inclusion is at our school.

RSJ Charter: Priority 2: The student experience

When I started at MJS, there were things happening at home that I thought were normal. Sometimes, people in my family said or did things that made me feel sad and scared. I tried to put on a brave face and pretend everything was okay.

Then one day, in Year 3, I remember sitting in an assembly. The message was that no one has the right to hurt us, and that if something bad is happening, it's not our fault. I remember feeling like they were talking to me. I had been keeping a secret, thinking what was happening was somehow my fault.

After that, I found the courage to share my worries with someone at school, and I started to feel better. Life changed for me after that — it changed a lot.

The Approach (What was tried, with whom, and how was it executed?)

When I was placed with a foster carer, at first I felt lost. But at school, I always felt valued, respected, and welcomed. I felt safe at school.

All of my teachers looked out for me. One particular adult checked on me every day, and I would tell her how I was feeling. Sometimes I cried a lot, she always listened, and that made me feel better. There were some really tough times — once, I couldn't sleep all night. When I came into school, I was so tired that the head teacher said I could make myself cosy on her sofa, and before I knew it, I fell asleep.

My trusting adult, made sure I was keeping up with my homework — sometimes I wished she hadn't, especially when I hadn't done it! But she taught me how important education and opportunities are. She really cared about me and my progress, and she made sure I joined in with lots of enrichment activities.

My school helped me find my voice. They showed me how to express my feelings safely and in the right way. I wasn't asked to be anyone other than myself, and because of that, I became more confident to talk about the things that upset me — and the things that made me happy too.

The impact (feedback from the target group/s)

By feeling safe at school and being given the chance to share my worries, I grew. I grew in confidence, and I felt heard. I joined the EDIT team, and we started talking about topics that really mattered to me — things like our heritage and how it makes our school more diverse and interesting.

One of my favourite times was when we talked about the importance of Afro hair and celebrated Afro Hair Day. I felt proud and empowered to be me. I even spoke in assemblies and to visitors about the importance of inclusion. I spoke at assembly about our Equal-Bees Act and how it reminds us to respect, value, and include everyone.

I love that I see children like me in the books I read. The main character in our Year 5 book was a brave Black girl from Nigeria who went on an adventure. Seeing someone like me in a story made me feel seen and special.

The impact (What has changed because of the approach?)

The staff and children at my school come from many different parts of the world and follow different religions, and that's really important. I've learnt to understand, respect, and celebrate our differences — because they make our school stronger and more interesting.

As I grew, my relationship with my dad got better. I feel more confident now and free to be myself and speak about my experiences. My dad encourages me to talk about my life and praises me when I share how I feel.

At school, I can always talk to staff who make me feel safe. I'm proud of my cultural identity, and I've found a real sense of belonging and connection.

How I open up about my experiences has changed — I don't hide them anymore. I feel proud to speak about who I am and what I have experienced.

The next steps (What will happen next and why? This can include maintaining, or abandoning the idea/activity, refining it, bringing in additional parties or sharing this practice across a wider audience.)

I want to keep our school motto in my heart and take it with me to secondary school. I've already met my new head of year, and I feel excited about what's ahead. Without my primary school, I wouldn't be the person I am today.

My school has taught me that I am valued and that I have an important role to play in the future. I've learnt the importance of inclusion — making sure everyone feels seen, heard, and accepted for who they are. I want to carry that with me wherever I go.

In the future, I want to be a neurosurgeon because I'm fascinated by how the brain works and how it sends messages. Now, I believe I really can be one — because my teachers believed in me first. I will keep sharing my story so that other children know that no matter what happens, things can get better, and they are never alone.