Press release: For immediate dispatch

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**Putting the Government’s new LGBT Action Plan into practice- Greater Manchester Schools Achieve the Rainbow Flag Award**

This week the Government launched its national LGBT Action Plan to ensure the rights of our lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans citizens. In particular it revealed that “gay cure” therapies are still being offered in the UK, and that 19% of LGBT pupils get verbally harassed and insulted at school. Local organisation, The Proud Trust, has contributed to the action plan to tackle discrimination and has met with 10 Downing Street to explore ways all young people can receive inclusive and positive opportunities.

This week it was announced that four Greater Manchester primary schools, and one secondary school, achieved full Rainbow Flag Award status, in a national scheme for all schools and colleges. The project, that is being delivered in the North West by the Manchester-based LGBT+ youth charity The Proud Trust, encourages a whole-school approach to improve visibility and inclusion of LGBT+ people and identities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, plus other related identities). The project has been funded from the Government Equalities Office, via the Department for Education.

The five schools celebrating their successes are Unsworth Primary School in Bury, St Andrew’s Methodist Primary School in Salford, St Philips CofE Primary School in Atherton, Wigan, and Alma Park Primary School in Manchester and The East Manchester Academy. Each of these schools has successfully demonstrated that they have a real commitment to eradicate LGBTphobic bullying, achieving this through positively educating about LGBT+ identities, LGBT+ people and the positive contribution that these people have made to our society. Following staff training delivered by The Proud Trust, these improvements have been evidenced through inclusive lesson plans, displays, art work, updated policies, engagement with parents, among lots of other initiatives. Many of these initiatives have included work around the rainbow flag itself, a positive symbol for the LGBT+ community.

Tahseen Ali, YR5 class teacher at Unsworth Primary said “We are thrilled to have achieved the Rainbow Flag Award and are proud of our staff and children who have worked really hard on this project. Our children have a greater understanding of LGBT+ communities, but more importantly are confident in challenging LGBTphobic language and attitudes.”

Jonathan Hancock, Assistant Head Teacher at St Philip’s CE Primary in Atherton, said “We have really enjoyed being part of the Rainbow Flag Award. It has increased the levels of staff confidence immensely, and made our school a bolder and brighter place.”

Rachel Williams, Training Manager at The Proud Trust said “We are delighted with the wonderful LGBT+ positive work that has been happening through the Rainbow Flag Award process. It is so important that these conversations happen with children in primary schools. LGBT+ people are a part of our world, part of our communities, and it is no longer acceptable to omit their existence from education. We must prepare children for the world they actually live in. The Rainbow Flag Award is currently accepting applications for the September cohort, and we hope many more schools and colleges will become part of this success story.”

For more information about the Rainbow Flag Award, go to [www.rainbowflagaward.co.uk](http://www.rainbowflagaward.co.uk), or contact The Proud Trust on 07531 061777.

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For more information about The Proud Trust visit [theproudtrust.org](http://theproudtrust.org)