

British Values at Shenfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School

The DfE have recently reinforced the need “*to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.*” The school takes opportunities to promote British Values, defined by the government as the following:

Democracy

Democracy is at the centre of our school values and involves all stakeholders. Pupils have the opportunity to have their voices heard through our School Council, who are elected in each class from Yr 2 – 6 by the pupils. Meetings are held fortnightly and children hold council meetings in their classes to share ideas and express their opinions. Pupil perception surveys carried out by all subject leaders and senior staff. As the community is a key curriculum driver, parent's governors and all staff are involved in contributing their opinions and improving the school on a regular basis.

The rule of law

The importance of Laws, whether they be those that govern the class, the school, or the country, are consistently reinforced throughout regular school days, as well as when dealing with behaviour and through school assemblies. Pupils are taught the value and reasons behind laws, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when laws are broken. Our behaviour policy reflects our aim to teach children about the importance of respect, justice and consequence in a nurturing supportive environment that develops the whole child.

Individual liberty

Within school, pupils are actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. As a school we educate and provide boundaries for young pupils to make choices safely, through of provision of a safe environment and empowering education. Pupils are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and advise how to exercise these safely, for example through our E-Safety and PSHE lessons. Within the curriculum we promote enquiry based learning that enables children to become independent learners. Whether it be through choice of challenge, of how they record, of participation in our numerous extra-curricular clubs and opportunities, pupils are given the freedom to make choices.

Mutual respect

As a church school part of our school ethos and behaviour policy revolves around Core Christian Values for Life such as 'Respect', and pupils have been part of discussions and assemblies related to what this means and how it is shown. Working Walls around the school promote the core Christian values which highlight where a child has been observed showing this value and this is celebrated in assembly as example to all. This is reiterated through all our classroom and learning rules, as well as our behaviour policy.

Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

This is achieved through enhancing pupils understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society and by giving them opportunities to experience such diversity. Assemblies and discussions involving prejudices and prejudice-based bullying have been followed and supported by learning in RE and PSHE. A 2012 SIAS inspection of our school stated:

"The commitment of the whole school community to the school's Christian character is a key factor in its development. Pupils achieve well and grow into mature and compassionate young people. They are confident to express the impact of Christian values on the way they conduct themselves and respond to the needs of others. Links made with a multi-faith school in London have broadened their understanding of different faith groups in society and have brought learning in lessons to life." (SIAS, Dec 2012)

Members of different faiths or religions are have shared their knowledge to enhance learning within classes and the school. Visits to local places of worship also shape the RE curriculum. With the curriculum children have the time to reflect on their own beliefs and discuss their opinions with others so their spiritual development is enhanced. The school provides a culture where pupils can do this and celebrate diversity.

In actively promoting British Values, we will also focus on, and be able to show how our work with pupils is effective in, embedding fundamental British values. Actively promoting also means challenging pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views. We are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils. All staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.