



Statement of British Values

Promoting British Values at Mortimer St. John's CE Infant School

Since September 2014, schools have been required to actively promote fundamental British values to meet the new Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) education standard.

What are British values?

There is some debate about the answer to this question; however, the document "Promoting fundamental British Values as part of the SMSC in schools" says "schools should 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." It is this list of values that are used below as a basis for this statement.

Promoting British values at Mortimer St. John's Church of England Infant School

At Mortimer St. John's the importance of SMSC education in developing well-rounded citizens who contribute to society and improve their communities has always been recognised and promoted. More than this, British fundamental values have always been at the heart of what we do, although in the past they may not have been labelled as such.

Our school's mission statement "Our learning community is built on love, hope, trust and friendship which develops the spark of God in everyone" draws directly from the beliefs of the Church of England and on the biblical foundations. These are arguably the most important influence on the British legal and justice system as well as the British political system, which are the source of ideas of freedom, tolerance, due process, political service, democracy and equality. The same biblical values that lie at the root of our national identity are at the core of our school aims. When the term 'British' values is used it is important to underline that this embraces the fact that we are a nation with a proud history of people of many different ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs and secular values all living together in a plural society. A Church of England school models this wider picture of inclusivity, freedom and equality. So the values that underpin this school are British to the core. How do we promote these values? The ways in which we achieve the requirement to promote British values are many. Some of them are explored below.

Democracy

Democracy is within the ethos of the school. Our children have the opportunity to have their voices heard through pupil questionnaires, class circle time, pupil interviews and family assemblies. Children are always able to voice their opinions and ideas through every day activities and we foster an environment where children are safe to disagree with and challenge each other.

The Rule of Law

The understanding of right and wrong is a thread that runs through school activity. It is discussed both in whole school and class collective worship, RE and PSHE lessons. Children are supported in making good choices between right and wrong using Golden Rules. Children are continually reminded about what is needed to make a safe and happy community and the role of boundaries (rules, laws) to achieve this. Children are taught the value and reasons behind school rules, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when rules are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police; Fire Service etc. are a regular part of our curriculum and helps reinforce this message.

Individual Liberty

Within school, children 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 our children to make choices safely, through the provision of a safe environment and empowering education. Children are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and are advised how to exercise these safely, for example through our E-Safety and PSHE lessons. Whether it is 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

Part of our school ethos and behaviour policy has revolved around our values such as 'Love, hope, trust and friendship', and pupils have been part of discussions and assemblies related to what this means and how it is shown. The school promotes respect for others and this is reiterated through our classroom and learning rules, as well as our behaviour policy.

Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs

Our school, like our country, has a richness that is due to the diversity of those who live here, and we value, embrace, and respect those from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs. We are a church school with a Christian ethos, but, true to the foundation of the school, this makes us an inclusive community. Therefore, we are the community school that serves and respects our community irrespective of background, faith or belief. The RE syllabus (the Agreed syllabus for Berkshire) supports children's understanding of different faiths, and allows them to learn both about and from them.