

‘Be a shining light’

British Values at St John Baptist CE Primary School

We take our responsibility to prepare children for life in modern Britain very seriously. We do this through our values-based approach to education, and by active and thoughtful involvement with all sections of our community. Our belief is that integration can be promoted by engagement with and respect for different views and religions, alongside rejection of intolerance and prejudice. We wish to ensure that our school becomes and remains a positive force for peace and good.

Values are the ‘big ideas’ that guide us in our lives and determine our thinking and behaviour, and so we ensure that fundamental British values are embedded in all aspects of school life. Our children embrace these concepts with enthusiasm, and demonstrate a good understanding of their application to their own lives. Our aim is to help all our children discover and aspire to be the very best they can be, and to prepare them for the life of work and enable their development as good citizens.

We actively promote British values through our school vision, Christian ethos, agreed rules, curriculum, teaching, extra-curricula visits and activities, and through the continuous professional development of our staff and governors and workshops for children and families.

Democracy

We began our journey to become a values-based school in 2002 when the whole school community came together to debate and vote for our 22 shared values. In February 2014 we were assessed by The International Values Education Trust for The Values-based Education Quality Mark. We were successful and are now part of the International Values Education Trust (IVET) and an accredited ‘Values based Education’ school. Our values are central to our ethos and are explored in Collective Worship and through class discussion. They are displayed around the school. The children have their voice heard through their democratically elected school council representatives, through their weekly learning reviews and through the annual pupil questionnaire. They have been introduced to local democratic institutions such as the Council Chambers (where the school council met the Mayor of Lewisham in 2016).

The Rule of Law

Children are familiar with the concept of the rule of law through their engagement with the rules that govern the class and the school as well as the country. In order to promote understanding of accountability and the importance of the rule of law, we have arranged for the school council to meet their local MPs at the Houses of Parliament in December 2015. Members of the school council will cascade their learning into each class on their return, and this work will be embedded into the curriculum by an ongoing programme of annual visits.

School rules are reinforced by our high expectations of children's behaviour, by our consistent approach to behaviour management, and through school collective worship. Children are taught the value and reasons behind rules as well as the responsibilities that they involve and the consequences when they are broken. Visits from authorities such as the police and fire service are a regular part of our calendar and help reinforce this message.

Individual Liberty

Our shared values provide us with the key vocabulary we need to talk to our children about their behaviour, learning, and their life in school. We use these discussions and collective worship to promote self-worth and self-respect in our children, so that they learn to value themselves. Children are aware of the value of their voice, as the school council is consulted on many aspects of school life.

We also teach the responsibilities that go hand-in-hand with liberty, for example through our development of our 'young leaders' who are given specific tasks and responsibilities such as setting up collective worship, dining hall support, leading play, and helping other children with reading. We actively encourage children to develop independence in learning, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. Children are encouraged to think for themselves, and they are advised how to exercise their personal freedoms safely (for example through our E-safety and PSHE lessons). They are taught about the internet and how to use it safely, both in class and through visits by external organisations such as the NSPCC.

Mutual Respect

As a values-based school, respect is fundamental to our practice. Respect is taught explicitly within lessons and collective worship, and is shown to families (for example through regular newsletters). Adults around the school promote respect for others, as do our young leaders. Respect for others and for the environment is reiterated through our classroom and learning rules, as well as through our behaviour policy.

We further develop respect by actively promoting children's understanding of the guiding principles that underpin different religions. We ensure that there are many visits, trips and opportunities for children to learn about other faiths, creeds and cultures. We have developed strong and on-going with other local primary schools including a Catholic school, a special school and several C of E schools.

Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

We enhance children's understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society by giving them opportunities to experience and celebrate such diversity. Our curriculum enables children to expand their knowledge, understanding and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Collective worship and discussions involving prejudices and bullying have been followed and supported by learning in RE and PSHE. Members of different faiths or religions are encouraged to share their knowledge to enhance learning within classes and the school.

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