

British Values Statement

The government set out its definition of 'British values' in the 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), which was designed to prevent the extremism and religious radicalization of young people. British values are considered by the government to be

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

The promotion of 'British values' is central to Catholic education because British values have their origin in the Christian values of our nation.

"We are proud that Catholic schools promote values that are both Catholic and British, including: respect for the individual, democracy, individual liberty, respect, tolerance and inclusiveness. Our schools promote cohesion by serving more ethnically diverse and poorer communities. Catholic schools provide high standards of education which are popular with parents from all social, economic and faith backgrounds."

Paul Barber (Catholic Education Service 15 December 2014).

At St. Thomas' we provide an education that focuses on the formation of the whole person and on our vocation and purpose in life. We are guided by our mission statement 'Learning in the Light of Christ' and by the Catholic virtues of prudence, temperance, courage, justice, faith, hope, charity and fortitude as we reflect on our place and purpose in the world.

We place a significant emphasis on the celebration of individuality and difference within our communities and our calling to work for the Common Good, in the service of others. Our Catholic ethos, which includes explicit reference to Christian and *British values*, makes a tangible difference to the way we work together and with our wider communities. Within this framework it would be impossible to overlook the government's view of British values expressed as 'democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.'

The examples that follow are an indication of some of the many ways we seek to embed *British values* at St. Thomas' Primary School and should be seen as an indication of our approach rather than an exhaustive list. At St. Thomas we

recognise, not only the importance of helping pupils to flourish academically but also spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, so they are fully prepared for life in British society and for their role as citizens, able to make the strongest possible contribution to the Common Good of all. We teach the importance of British Values by going much deeper into the meaning of what it means to live a good life, within a framework of Catholic Christian Values. This provides the context and meaning for understanding why *British values* are important. Our framework for understanding British values draws on the example of Jesus and his welcome and inclusion of all, which is developed in Catholic Social Teaching.

At St. Thomas' Catholic Primary School we are committed to serving our community and local area. In so doing we reinforce British values regularly and in the following ways:

Democracy:

Democratic values are an explicit part of the ethos at St. Thomas and Pupil Voice has a high profile. All adults listen to the views of the pupils and respect their opinions. Pupils are actively involved in agreeing classroom rules and understand the rewards of following agreed rules and the consequences of failing to adhere to the rules that have been agreed. Every child is given the opportunity to feed ideas into our School Council. Each class elects School Council representatives at the start of the year. Classes discuss key issues and then agree on class proposals that are presented during the School Council meeting by their class representatives. The School Council minutes are discussed within each class and identified issues or initiatives are often developed further as themes for whole school assemblies. Our commitment to a democratic approach runs through all aspects of school life.

The Rule of Law:

The importance of laws and rules are consistently reinforced in the classroom, as well as through school assemblies. Pupils are taught to understand the need for laws - that they are there for individual protection, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when laws are broken. Pupils follow a positive behaviour policy and clearly understand the rewards and sanctions that are used. Assemblies and discussions in class focus on recognising right from wrong.

Individual Liberty:

Pupils within St. Thomas' Primary School are actively encouraged to make independent choices knowing that they are in a safe, secure and supportive environment. As a school we educate and provide boundaries for pupils to make choices safely, through the provision of a safe environment and an empowering education. We encourage pupils to see themselves as unique individuals able to make a unique contribution to building community. Developing their self esteem and self-confidence is very important. Pupils are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights, responsibilities and personal freedoms and receive advice about how to exercise these safely, for example through discussions of E-Safety and whole school responsibilities. All pupils are keen to support charities, whether local, national or global. They are taught consideration for others through our Religious Education curriculum and PSHE lessons in particular.

Mutual Respect:

Pupils and staff alike model respect. The school promotes respect for others and this is reinforced through assemblies, our classroom and learning environments as well as extra-curricular activities such as sport. Our school's ethos and behaviour policy are based on Gospel values, with the important commandment being, 'Love one another as I have loved you'. In line with our commitment to democracy, pupils are always able to voice their opinions as we foster an environment where they can debate ideas and are safe to disagree with each other. We encourage pupils to communicate honestly and openly and to understand the value of co-operation and consensus as well as decision making through voting. Our emphasis on fairness and justice means that we ask our pupils to ensure that they look out for those who might be marginalised and disadvantaged. We work hard to promote anti-bullying through a focus on strategies to enable respect for difference and tolerance.

Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs:

As a Catholic worshipping community, pupils are equipped with the ability to develop positive values and understand their own beliefs within a culturally diverse society. Assemblies and class work promote the diversity of society and the right for each person to be respected and valued equally regardless of ability, gender, faith, heritage or race.