

British Values and Catholic Ethos

Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy

This policy has been developed to expand on the Saint Robert Lawrence Catholic Academy Trust Statement on British Values and to set out how we will incorporate British Values across the curriculum at Saint John Houghton.

The values of the Gospel are at the heart of our academy and the 'British values' identified by the Government encourage us to live these values. Our framework for understanding British values draws on the example of Jesus and his welcome and inclusion of all, which is expressed in the Gospels and further developed in Catholic teaching.

The Beatitudes offer a clear statement of the attitudes and the values at the heart of our faith:

Blessed are the poor in spirit – **Values: Faithfulness & Integrity**

Blessed are those who mourn – **Values: Dignity & Compassion**

Blessed are the meek – **Values: Humility & Gentleness**

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness – **Values: Truth & Justice**

Blessed are the merciful – **Values: Forgiveness & Mercy**

Blessed are the pure in heart – **Values: Purity & Holiness**

Blessed are the peacemakers – **Values: Tolerance & Peace**

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake – **Values: Service & Sacrifice**

(Christ at the Centre)

The government set out its definition of 'British Values' in the 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), which was designed to prevent the extremism and religious radicalisation of young people. British Values are considered by the present government to be ***democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.***

We recognise, not only the importance of helping students 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.

We provide an education which focuses on the formation of the whole person and on our vocation and purpose in life. We are guided by our trust mission statement 'Rooted in faith, growing in love, learning together: one Body in Christ.'

Education and schools are our attempt to offer all young people an opportunity for a full life and a place in society.

A Struggle for Excellence: Catholic Secondary Schools in Urban Poverty Areas 1997

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 our Academy and should be seen as an indication of our approach rather than an exhaustive list.

Democracy can be seen as a state of society characterised by equality of rights and privileges. It can also refer to our nation's electoral systems. At our Academy we have a free and fair electoral process for student positions of responsibility, including Head Boy and Girl and student council representatives. There are many other ways in which it is promoted through the curriculum. In History Democracy and rights is taught including The Magna Carta.

The Rule of Law The importance of laws, whether they be those that govern the class, the Academy, or the country, are consistently reinforced throughout every day, as well as when dealing with behaviour and through Acts of Worship. There are many examples where the rule of law is promoted through the curriculum. In English teachers and students explore together rules of life and law that underpin aspects of modern British life. All departments consistently apply the whole school rewards and sanctions policy and School Code of Conduct.

Individual Liberty

[Our] educational mission entails the ongoing development of the entire potential of every person. It seeks to promote the well being and freedom of every person, made in the image and likeness of God and finding fulfilment in God alone. This is the vision which shapes the daily life of a Catholic school as a community in which faith is expressed and shared through every aspect of its activity.

Religious Education in Catholic Schools – Bishops of England and Wales 2000

At Saint John Houghton students are actively encouraged to make independent choices knowing that they are in a safe, secure and supportive environment. As an Academy we educate and provide boundaries for students to make choices safely, through the provision of a safe environment and an empowering education. We encourage students to see themselves as unique individuals able to make a unique contribution to building community. Students 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 our exploration of E-Safety in computing and their tutor time activities. There are many other examples where individual liberty is promoted through the curriculum. In Geography pupils learn about China and the differing political system and rights of freedom and democracy.

Mutual Respect

The way we manage and structure life in our schools already proclaims (our) message. It is expressed in the ways we show, or fail to show, acceptance of and respect for all in the school community, whatever their ability, religious commitment, social or economic situation, culture or colour. This is the chief way we influence pupils, their families and staff, and also counter-balance some of the more divisive, harmful influences of society.

Our Schools and Our Faith 1988

Respect is one of the five core values of our academy and is modelled by students and staff alike. The academy promotes respect for others and this is reiterated through our classroom and learning environments as well as extra-curricular activities such as sport. In line with our commitment to democracy, students are always able to voice their opinions as we foster an environment where students can debate ideas and are safe to disagree with each other. We encourage students to substantiate opinions and to realise the value of co-operation and consensus as well as decision making through voting. Our emphasis on ethics, fairness and justice means that we ask our students to ensure that they look out for those who might be marginalised and disadvantaged. There are many other ways in which Mutual respect is promoted through the curriculum. In History student learn about Racism and the slave trade and its abolition. In Science all students follow a lab code of practice for both behaviour in a lab and using practical equipment.

Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

A Catholic school responding to the challenges of a multi-faith society is faced with a number of tensions: between faithfulness and openness, between being a teacher and being a learner, between being mandated to proclaim a message and mandated to engage in dialogue, between forming faith and respecting religious freedom and personal conscience.

Catholic Schools and Other Faiths 1997

This is developed through equipping students with the ability to develop positive values, understand their own beliefs and their place in a culturally diverse society. We give our students opportunities to experience such diversity within the community of the academy and within the wider community. All students experience a connection with other cultures and beliefs through Religious Education.

Our Religious Education curriculum follows the teaching of the Church in providing a broad and balanced education, which includes an understanding of and respect for people of other faiths or none and other religions, cultures and lifestyles. There are many other ways in which tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs is promoted through the curriculum. In Modern Foreign Languages through the exploration of the French culture at KS3 pupils are able to learn about different ways of living and in Music they will study Reggae.

Our British Values curriculum audit provides an analysis of where the different British Values are taught across the curriculum.