

Promotion of British Values at High Beech CE (VC) Primary School

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently stated 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.”

Previously, “Citizenship” and then “Community Cohesion” were required elements to be taught within school, as a response to specific social concerns.

Schools have always taught “values” and Church Schools (approximately 25% of all Primary Schools in England) have looked to 2000 years of Christian teaching, thinking and example as the primary source for making values explicit and real for children in our schools.

High Beech C of E Primary is committed to serving its community and surrounding areas. It recognizes the multi-cultural, multi-faith and ever-changing nature of the United Kingdom, and those families it serves. It also understands the vital role it has in ensuring that groups or individuals within the school are not subjected to intimidation or discrimination.

The school, as a Voluntary Controlled member of the Diocese, accepts admissions from all those entitled to an education under British law, including pupils of all faiths or none. It follows the policies outlined by its Governing Body regarding equal opportunities, which guarantee that there will be no discrimination against any individual or group, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or financial status, or similar. It seeks to, and does, serve all.

The government set out its definition of British values in its *Prevent Strategy*, and these values have been reiterated recently by the Prime Minister. At High Beech these values are reinforced regularly and in the following ways:

Democracy: Democracy is promoted and valued within the school. Pupils have the opportunity to have their voices heard through our School Council, Eco Council and Pupil Questionnaires. The annual election of our School Councillors, founded on our national electoral system, is based solely on pupil votes. Children must be nominated, create a manifesto, make a speech and take part in a “first past the post” election.

In classes, children regularly have the opportunity to debate; listening carefully to opposing opinions and articulating their own arguments. *Pupil voice* is very strong at High Beech; a recent campaign and petition, organised by a pupil in Year 6, to consider humane ways of deterring moles from the school site, was immediately adopted.

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 the school day at High Beech, as well as when dealing with behaviour and through school assemblies. Pupils are taught the value and reasons behind laws that govern

and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when laws are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police; Fire Service and Diocese are regular parts of our calendar and help reinforce this message.

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 the provision of an enabling environment and empowering education. Pupils are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and advised how to exercise these safely, for example through our E-Safety and PSHE lessons.

Mutual Respect: Part of our school ethos and Behaviour and anti-Bullying Policies have revolved around Core Values, and pupils have been part of discussions and assemblies related to what this means and how it is shown. Our five key values: Resilience, Hope, Friendship, Compassion and Forgiveness enable our pupils to learn the importance of friendship and unity; to approach life with positivity and hope, and to show respect, empathy and acceptance towards others.

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. Children discuss other faiths and beliefs with visitors to the school and on visits to a range of places of worship.