

British Values

In June the Prime Minister made a speech in the House of Commons about British Values in the wake of the Trojan Horse enquiry into extremism in Birmingham schools. The upshot has been that schools are required to be at the forefront of promoting these values. Just to make sure we do promote them, Ofsted have included 'British Values' in their latest schedule for inspection.

I have recently held a number of assemblies to start our young people thinking about what British Values are. Ironically I don't think we need Ofsted looking over our shoulder to be pleased to do so. When you look at the values Mr Cameron is referring to:

- a belief in freedom;
- tolerance of others;
- accepting personal and social responsibilities;
- respecting and upholding the rule of law;

there's not much to argue with. I can also quite easily get behind the idea that they are uniquely British in that they are anchored by history and tradition. They haven't simply appeared out of thin air: parliamentary democracy achieved through universal franchise, a free press, the Magna Carta, a body of law and an independent judiciary, equality of opportunity and many other readily recognisable 'British' aspects of our way of life have been achieved through long, hard struggle. I think that the *uniquely* British bit comes from being able to demonstrate that we have a culture which embraces change, difference and positive contribution, with an open mind and heart. It is also a culture which resolutely defends itself from being undermined and will reject in a muscular and rigorous manner those individuals who have scant regard for democracy and the rights of others; in short, being clearly and decisively intolerant of those who don't share these values.

For example, we can readily accept Islam, a major world religion, as being a welcome and legitimate part of our daily life in Britain, but Islamic extremism, as was shown in the recent Trojan Horse enquiry in Birmingham, has no place. Similarly, while freedom of speech is a fundamental British Value and one which we fully endorse, there are those whose racist or homophobic or far right or otherwise deliberately divisive and inflammatory views we would wholly condemn. Such views have no place in West Park school or wider society.

It was quite easy to set the scene for those British Values assemblies because of the clearly identifiable links to our West Park culture. I was able to put up on the screen in the Hall a power point slide from our 'Open Evening' that lists West Park values:

- decency and good manners;
- truth, honesty, trust;
- kindness and care for the weak;
- sense of community and mutual support;
- physical and mental fitness;
- academic progress.

The connection with British Values is obvious and translates into social and personal achievement at many levels:

- good attendance;
- being happy;
- getting involved;
- growing as a person;
- continuous effort;
- high exam results;
- expectations of excellence in all things.

West Park values lead to the unique West Park culture. British Values lead to the unique British culture. Mutually supportive and complementary, we are happy to use British Values as a starting point for preparing our young people for life in modern Britain.

(Adapted from the Head's address to pupils, parents and staff at 'Celebration Evening' October 2014)

West Park

'A caring school where we put pupils and their achievement first'



Promoting fundamental British Values Policy

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1. Aims

- 1.1 This policy sets out the four key areas within which the DfE has defined British Values, and the ways in which West Park pupils learn and develop understanding of these areas, both through the curriculum, extra-curricular and other opportunities.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 As of September 2014, the DfE requires all schools to promote the historical and current values that underpin the national identity known as being British. Within this, all schools are required to ensure that the curriculum actively promotes these fundamental British values. West Park is a multicultural community within which we celebrate pupils and cultures from all over the world. Alongside this, the school is keen to support all pupils in learning about and deepening their understanding of British Values, cultures and systems.

3. What is 'Britishness'?

- 3.1 Fundamental British values are defined by the DfE as:
- (a) Democracy: respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process
 - (b) The Rule of Law: respect for the basis on which the law is made and applies in England.
 - (c) Individual Liberty: support and respect for the liberties of all within the law.
 - (d) Mutual Respect and Tolerance: support for equality of opportunity for all and respect and tolerance of different faiths and religious and other beliefs.

4. Government Advice to guide school policy

- 4.1 Academies (including independent and free schools) must meet the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development standard set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations. (See web link in Associated Resources section).

This is advice from the Department for Education. It is non-statutory, and has been produced to help independent schools (including academies and free schools) understand their obligations under the standard for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils contained in Part 2, Schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. It is supplementary to and should be read alongside the departmental advice published on 30th November 2013.

The standard has been amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 to strengthen the requirements on schools in relation to fundamental British values, with effect from 29 September 2014. The changes mean that, rather than encouraging 'respect' for the values, independent school proprietors are now required to 'actively promote' them. Schools are also now required to ensure that the principles set out in paragraph 5 (b) of the standard are 'actively' promoted. The implications of this change and other, more specific, changes to the standard, are explained in this advice. Schools will be measured on their performance in these areas under the independent schools inspection framework of the relevant inspectorate.

A commitment to make changes to strengthen the SMSC standard was included in the Government's Prevent strategy (see web. Link in Associated Resources section). In line with this commitment, sub-paragraphs 5(1)(a)(ii) and (iii) have been amended to clarify existing requirements on schools. In addition, new sub-paragraphs 5(1)(a)(vi) , 5(1)(b) and 5(1)(c) are intended to ensure that schools encourage pupils to respect specified fundamental British values:

- not promoting extremist views, or partisan political views, through the curriculum and/or teaching;
- offering pupils a balanced presentation of views when political issues are brought to their attention;
- improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils.

4.2 The regulations state that to meet the standard for the SMSC development of pupils, the proprietor of the school must:

- (a) actively promote the fundamental British values: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- (b) prevent the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school;
- (c) take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

4.3 The balanced presentation of opposing views applies while pupils are in attendance at school, while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities provided by, or on behalf of, the school, and in the promotion of those extra-curricular activities, whether they are taking place at the school or elsewhere.

4.4 Schools must also ensure they actively promote principles that:

- (a) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- (b) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
- (c) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated, and to society more widely;
- (d) enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
- (e) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own cultures;

- (f) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010;
- (g) encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

5. British values: expectations for pupils

- 5.1 The DfE's non-statutory advice for improving the SMSC development in independent schools, academies and free schools, has information on expectations for pupils.
- 5.2 Paragraph 13 of the document sets out 'the kinds of understanding and knowledge that can be expected in pupils' as a result of schools meeting the standard to respect 'fundamental British values'. These include:
 - (a) an understanding as to how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;
 - (b) an understanding that participation in elections by those opposed to democracy should be allowed by law, but the success of such candidates is undesirable for the well-being of society if it would lead to the end of democracy;
 - (c) an understanding that bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account by the people, through the democratic organs of government;
 - (d) an understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law, and an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour.

6 How do we actively promote British Values at West Park?

6.1 *Democracy*

We:

- (a) provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of and promote respect for public institutions and services through lessons, assemblies, speaker events and the curriculum;
- (b) use the School Council to teach pupils how they can influence decision making through democratic process;
- (c) include information about the advantages and disadvantages of democracy and how it works in Britain and abroad through the PSHE, History, Geography, RS, and English curricula;
- (e) encourage pupils to be aware of injustice, perceived or real and think about ways in which this can be challenged through school processes or in the wider world, charity fundraising initiatives and awareness raising campaigns;
- (f) use assemblies to explore themes relating to democracy in this country and around the world.

6.2 ***Rule of Law***

We:

- (a) ensure school rules and expectations are transparent, clear and fair, available for all to consult and that they are used consistently across the different areas and age groups within the school. Organise School Council C3 meetings to give experience of due process and restorative justice;
- (b) help pupils to distinguish right from wrong through discussion and modelling positive behaviour;
- (c) arrange police visits to build links between and understanding of the local constabulary and their work to support the local community;
- (d) help pupils to understand that the law and living under the rule of law is intended to protect individuals. Use opportunities in lessons and C3 Council meetings to review understanding of the rule of law and its effects upon individuals and groups;
- (e) help pupils to understand that the law is to be respected through upholding and adhering to it as a community and to our own school rules;
- (f) use curricular opportunities to explore the differences between civil, criminal and religious law as they pertain to British and other societies.

6.3 ***Individual Liberty***

We:

- (a) support all pupils to develop positive self-esteem, self-confidence, self-awareness and self- knowledge;
- (b) encourage pupils to assume responsibility for their own behaviour and acknowledge the effects it may have on others;
- (c) challenge stereotypes and promote individuality at every opportunity, modelled by staff and older pupils to set positive examples through the school;
- (d) work tirelessly to establish and maintain a climate in which all pupils feel safe and bullying is not tolerated;
- (e) deliver a diverse speaker programme to expose pupils to people from a wide range of backgrounds and belief systems.

6.4 ***Respect and Tolerance***

We:

- (a) promote respect for individual differences;
- (b) use curricular and extracurricular opportunities to expose pupils to British and other cultures, their ways of life and faiths, encourage and support pupils in growing their understanding and appreciation of these;
- (c) use assemblies as a vehicle to embrace and accept different ways of worship and different perspectives on faith;
- (d) use curricular opportunities to encourage critical thinking and deeper understanding of difference and beliefs;
- (e) discuss differences between people: ethnicity, gender, faith, disability, sexuality and family situations such as young carers or looked after children ensuring that pupils can understand these different elements within British society.

7. Summary

7.1 All staff and pupils at West Park are expected to behave with integrity, tolerance and compassion in their dealings with one another. We provide opportunities for all pupils not only to explore their own cultures but also to understand how these align with British values and how we can work together as a community for the greater good. Every member of the community has a part to play in enshrining the core values and beliefs so as to build a strong, united and democratic school. Where unfairness or bullying is found to exist it will be fiercely challenged and democracy and the rights of individuals will take centre stage.

7.2 Examples of opportunities and activities to promote British Values at West Park include:

- (a) visits to iconic British buildings and locations, together with plenty of additional information about the building and what it represents in terms of British culture, historical and social significance;
- (b) speakers including local MPs, journalists, lawyers, human rights workers, war veterans and former prison offenders: all of whom provide alternative views on British Values and encourage pupils to take an open and interested approach to the world around them;
- (c) in lessons, debate and discussion of ideas, pupils sharing and defending their beliefs in a way that is collaborative and supportive;
- (d) teachers modelling positive behaviour and democratic values in their interactions with colleagues and pupils;
- (e) assemblies are frequently used as vehicles through which tutor groups present to the wider community, examples of key moments, people or ideas from British history.
- (f) lessons, when appropriate, providing forums in which pupils can learn more about and question the notions of liberty, justice, democracy, law, governance, faith and belief systems. As a multicultural school we take care to ensure that all pupils feel safe, secure and able to celebrate their own and each other's backgrounds, beliefs and cultural practices.

Associated Resources

Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils
November 2013

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268826/dept_advice_template_smscadvicenov13.pdf)

Prevent Strategy 2011

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011>)

Teachers' Standards

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>)

Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils:
supplementary information November 2014

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380396/Improving_the_spiritual_moral_social_and_cultural_SMSC_development_of_pupils_supplementary_information.pdf)

SMSC requirements for independent schools

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-smsc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools>)

The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made>)

The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment)
Regulations 2012

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2962/contents/made>)

The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment)
Regulations 2014

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/2374/contents/made>)

Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf)

Equality Act 2010: advice for schools

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>)