

Statement on British Values

The DfE have reinforced 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.” These values are embedded in our school’s ethos, home-school links, in behaviour as well as in the whole curriculum.

The government set out its definition of British values in the 2011 Prevent Strategy; the Prime Minister reiterated these values in 2014. At Thomas Coram, these values are reinforced regularly and in the following ways:

Democracy

Democracy is embedded at the school. Pupils are always listened to by adults and are taught to listen carefully and with concern to each other, respecting the right of every individual to have their opinions and voices heard. Pupils also have the opportunity to share their opinions and ideas through our School Council and questionnaires. The elections of the School Council members and House Captains are based solely on pupil votes, reflecting our British electoral system and demonstrating democracy in action. The school council has its own budget and is genuinely able to effect change within the school. Most recently, pupils were consulted on and nominated candidates for new House names. The pupils’ choices of Malala Yousafzai, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr. and Emmeline Pankhurst not only reflect the diverse society in which we live but also uphold those who champion human rights with a determination to make a difference to the life of others, a characteristic of Thomas Coram, from whom the school takes its name.

Pupils’ understanding of democracy is also developed through elements of our curriculum; for example, in PSHE topics including Year 5 learning about structure, law and order.

The rule of law

The importance of laws whether they are those that govern the class, the school or the country, are consistently reinforced. Our school’s core values of respect, responsibility and friendship, together with our code of conduct, are deeply embedded. Each class also discusses and sets its own rules that are clearly understood by all and seen to be necessary to ensure that every class member is able to learn in a safe and supportive environment.

All members of our community understand and follow our Behaviour Policy and its resulting rewards and sanctions.

Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect, be it on their behaviour and learning or on wider values and global issues during worship.

Pupils' understanding of the need for rules is also developed through elements of our curriculum; for example, in the Year 3 PSHE topic on Rules and Responsibilities. In RE, pupils learn about the laws, commandments and expectations of different religions; they examine the impact on their own lives and lives of people in the faith communities.

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 our pupils to make choices safely, for example, signing up for extra-curricular clubs, choosing the level of challenge in some lessons or planning, delivering and evaluating worship.

Pupils' understanding of individual liberty is developed through elements of our curriculum; for example, work in Computing on e-safety and visitors such as the NSPCC delivering the 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' message. In RE, pupils understand the difference between religions and realise that people have the freedom to choose what they believe and how they express their faith.

Mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

Our school ethos and behaviour policy are based around the core Christian values of respect, responsibility and friendship – as evident in our slogan 'Living for learning and caring for all'. These values, to which all members of our community contributed to identifying, determine how we live as a community. Pupils know and understand the importance of respect being shown to everyone, whatever their differences.

Pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society is enhanced by visitors and visits to places of worship which are important to different faiths. In RE, pupils investigate what faith practices mean for individuals, thus encouraging mutual respect and tolerance. Many children with a religious background share their belief and practices in the classroom, giving out the message that it is important to respect the beliefs and non-beliefs of others.

In PSHE, children in all year groups learn how to identify and respond to aspects of extremism and radicalisation.