

British Values and Our Catholic Ethos



Mission Statement

St. Mary's school community follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, working together to develop the whole child, in a spiritual, moral, academic, physical, social and emotional way, within a caring and supportive environment.

St. Mary's Primary is a Catholic school which seeks to live out the values of Jesus Christ. We promote these values by our words and deeds, and Catholic doctrine and practice therefore permeates every aspect of the school's activity. We provide a Catholic curriculum, which is broad and balanced, recognising that every pupil is unique and is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Our curriculum is designed to enable every pupil to discern their vocation and to be well-equipped to follow it as active citizens in service to the world. Catholic Religious Education is the "core of the core curriculum" (Pope John Paul II – address of His Holiness John Paul II to the bishops of Great Britain on their Ad Limina visit, 26th March 1992) and the foundation of the entire educational process. We also provide a range of extra-curricular activities and strong pastoral support. We incorporate democratic principles, value the rule of law, support individual liberty and foster a community in which different faiths and beliefs are respected.

The Aims of our School

We will endeavour to create a Catholic Ethos in our school, which reflects the Gospel values, through the love, care and respect we show to each other, and to all who come to our school. We will teach the beliefs, traditions and practices of the Catholic Faith.

Through the prayer and worship in school we will try to be a living community of people celebrating their love for God and one another.

We believe the quality of the curriculum, with Religious Education at its core, is of prime importance and will focus on the development of the whole child. We will at all times try to make provision for children with special needs, so that all members of our school community achieve their potential.

We will help the children to develop an awareness of and respect for other religious and cultural backgrounds, as we believe this to be an essential preparation for adult life.

We believe that good communication between governors, staff, parents and children is important for the well-being of our school, and we will work in partnership with the wider community especially the home and parish in developing each child's potential.

Aims for Each Child at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

- ◆ Whilst at St. Mary's School I will learn about being a Christian. I will experience the beliefs, traditions and practices of the Catholic Faith.
- ◆ I will achieve as much as I possibly can in each area of the National Curriculum.
- ◆ I will know how to learn and enjoy learning, and will view work in a positive and conscientious manner.
- ◆ I will co-operate and communicate with others effectively, independently and in a group, and try to win and lose graciously.

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- ◆ I will tolerate and respect the religious beliefs, views and values of others, understand the need for good behaviour and moderate my behaviour accordingly. I will respect the belongings and property of others.

- ◆ If I have a problem I know I can find someone who will discuss it with me.

- ◆ I will try to learn from my mistakes and accept there is always room for improvement.

- ◆ I will share a sense of responsibility for my school, parish, local community and the wider environment.

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 present government to be **democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and 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. Mary's we recognise, not only the importance of helping students to flourish academically but also spiritually, morally, socially and culturally (this is highlighted in the school's Mission Statement) 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. Mary's 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 motto 'Love, Listen and Learn' and by the Christian values of honourable purpose (that is, vocation and service), respect, compassion, co-operation and stewardship 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 taking our lead and inspiration from Christ with regard to the Gospel values: the belief that all human beings are uniquely created and loved by God and worthy of respect and manifests itself in the way that we treat and value:

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- Our relationships with each other and the wider community;
- Our respect for one another;
- Our welcome to and interest in all those who visit our school;
- Discipline inspired by forgiveness, healing and reconciliation;

Our school environment, 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. Mary's and should be seen as an indication of our approach rather than an exhaustive list.

Democracy: At St. Mary's, the principle of democracy is consistently reinforced with the democratic process being employed for important decision within the school community, for example, elections being held for the school council. The principle of democracy is explored within the curriculum e.g. in Religious Education, and Humanities.

The Rule of Law: The importance of laws, whether they are those that govern the class, the school, or the country, is consistently reinforced throughout every day, as well as when dealing with behaviour and through assemblies. The curriculum is designed to ensure pupils are taught the values and reasons behind rules, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when rules are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police and Fire Service are regular parts of our learning programmes and help reinforce this message.

Individual Liberty: At St. Mary's students are actively encouraged to make 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. 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 our exploration of E-Safety in computing and their PSHE and Religious Education activities.

Mutual Respect: Respect is a core value of our community and is modelled by students and staff alike as we believe that every person is unique and created in the image and likeness of God. The school 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, pupils are always able to voice their opinions as we foster an environment where students can discuss ideas and are safe to disagree with each other. We encourage pupils to realise the value of co-operation and consensus as well as decision making through voting e.g. for School Council representatives. Our emphasis on ethics, fairness and justice means that we ask our

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students to ensure that they look out for those who might be marginalised and disadvantaged (e.g. through our programme of Catholic Social Teaching, focus on Fair Trade, PSHE and RE lessons). The development of a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school develops mutual respect throughout the curriculum and our class codes of conduct (agreed by pupils at the beginning of each academic year and regularly revisited) promote the values of respect and responsibility. The school has taken a very strong stance on social inclusion and anti-bullying through an explicit focus on strategies to enable respect for difference through, for example, reflections on forms of bullying.

Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs: This is achieved through equipping pupils with the ability to develop positive values, understand their own beliefs and their place in a culturally diverse society. All students experience a connection with other cultures and beliefs through our RE programme, e.g. through showing how Jesus encouraged tolerance in Bible stories such as 'The Good Samaritan', as well as local and international links. The emphasis on working with others, and learning another language directly contributes to the appreciation of others perspectives on life. Our Religious Studies curriculum follows the teachings of the Church in providing a broad and balanced education, which includes an understanding of and respect for people of other faiths (key teaching focus on Islam and Judaism) or none and other religions, cultures and lifestyles.

The community of St. Mary's actively contributes positively towards British Values each day through working to live out our motto 'Love, Listen and Learn', which was decided by the children of the school and reflects the Gospel Values, rooted in the teaching of Christ which constitute the targets and outcomes of the educational enterprise of our Catholic school.

These Gospel Values are to be found rooted in the Beatitudes, the proclamation of Christ's Sermon on the Mount and are as such the objective values given by Christ himself.

While they are not definitive, the Gospel values based on the Beatitudes may be summarised as follows:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Values: Faithfulness and Integrity

Blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted.

Values: Dignity and Compassion

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Values: Humility and Gentleness

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Values: Truth and Justice

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Values: Forgiveness and Mercy

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Values: Purity and Holiness

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Values: Tolerance and Peace

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Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven.

Values: Service and Sacrifice

The job of communicating Gospel Values which we see as fundamental to our teaching of the importance of British values is not in addition to the quest for high academic standards and vocational excellence but integral to it. "Catholic schools, while providing a quality education, hold up Christian values to children, inviting them to build their own lives on them. Teaching these values, for those who know how to accept and live them consistently, yields highly positive results – as experience confirms – at the personal, family and professional levels." (Pope John Paul II, Address to Teachers and Students of the Catholic Flaminia Institute, Rome, 23rd February 1997).