

Catholic Values, British Values

“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).

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.

At Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School, 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 that we speak of in our Mission Statement. 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 Cardinal Heenan 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 Mission Statement ‘Respect, Believe, Achieve,’ 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 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 governments’ 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 Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School, and should be seen as an indication of our approach rather than an exhaustive list.

Democracy

Democratic values are an explicit part of the ethos at Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School. All adults listen to the views of the students and value their opinions. Students have further opportunity to have their voices heard through our Student Council and Student Voice. The elections of School Council representatives are the result of student votes and so every person has the opportunity to stand and to vote. Pupils are involved in decision making across the school, take part in debates and mock elections are held during the time of elections in our country. The local MP for the school, Mr. Stephen Twigg, is a regular visitor to the school, addressing students and parents during question

and answer sessions, industry day and other events. This gives our students a real insight into the democracy in which we live and how it works.

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 every day, as well as when dealing with behaviour and through assemblies. The curriculum is designed to ensure Students are taught the values and reasons behind laws, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when laws are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police are regular parts of our learning programmes and help reinforce this message.

Individual Liberty

Within Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School, students are actively encouraged to make independent choices knowing that they are in a safe, secure and supportive environment. As a School 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, through assemblies and P.S.H.E activities.

Mutual Respect

Respect is one of the core values of our School, and is modelled by students and staff alike. 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, 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. The development of teaching and learning across the School allows

mutual respect throughout the curriculum, and our Behaviour for Learning policy promotes 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 homophobia and other forms of bullying in assemblies and P.S.H.E. as well as in some curriculum areas. Furthermore, we aim to promote equality by making sure that no-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination due to protected characteristics including age, disability, ethnicity or national origin, gender, religion, sexual identity or orientation.

Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

This is achieved 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 school community and within the wider community. All students experience a connection with other cultures and beliefs through our RE and P.S.H.E. programmes, Collective Worship and local, regional and international links. The emphasis on enterprise, working with others, and learning other languages directly contributes to the

appreciation of others perspectives on life. 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.

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