

British Values

West Malling CEP Academy is committed to serving its community and surrounding area. We recognise the multi-cultural, multi-faith nature of the United Kingdom in the 21st Century and understand the crucial role that schools can play in promoting values that value each and every individual, building community, understanding our heritage and protecting our common life and freedoms.

As a local school for *all*, this document seeks to outline key British values and how we actively promote them.

‘Going the extra mile’

In Government guidance, “fundamental British values” are listed as:

- democracy;
- the rule of law;
- individual liberty
- mutual respect and
- tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

For over 1,000 years, a serious discussion of the development of Britain as a nation and the values that we prize cannot be held without recognition of the role of the Christian faith in helping to form such values. From the Church’s role in the signing of the Magna Carta, through the Reformation, the abolition of slavery, the Chartists, the Suffragettes, and right up to the present day, in ways implicit as well as explicit, a Christian worldview has had a tremendous influence on what we now hold as to what it means to be British.

Because of our school’s Christian distinctiveness and core values, our commitment to inclusivity provides possibilities for schools to both hold firm to these British values but reach beyond them and ‘go the extra mile’ (in itself, a biblical phrase) to seek a deeper understanding of our heritage and the need for reconciliation in society.

With that in mind, while we recognise and affirm the Government guidance, we seek as a school to go further. As part of our commitment to promote “fundamental British values”, we also seek to affirm:

- the need to love one’s neighbour, and receive the outsider,
as demonstrated by the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) in Scripture and Britain’s distinguished history, including but not limited to, our willingness to welcome Jewish people and other refugees during World War II.
- the need for servant leadership, seeking to serve others rather than be served,
as demonstrated by Christ’s example washing his disciples feet (John 13) in Scripture and Britain’s model of Constitutional Monarchy.
- the importance of dissent in British history, and the moral courage to stand for justice and truth
as demonstrated by the Prophets of the Jewish Bible (Old Testament) in Scripture, and the campaign for the abolition of slavery and the suffragettes in British history.
- a commitment to the common good and the ability to disagree well.

Our vision and values underpin this work

As a school, children, staff, parents and governors affirm our statement of vision and values:

As God's children we grow and learn together, encouraging everyone in our community to "let their light shine" (Matthew 5:16). We strive to be the best we can be, knowing that "what we will be has not yet been revealed" (1 John 3:2). Through love, trust, compassion, hope, forgiveness and perseverance, we flourish as one inclusive family.

In doing so, we seek to not only encourage an exploration of faith and spirituality, but we celebrate the value and the need to **trust** and place our faith in one another. As a local primary school with a Speech & Language Unit integrated into our school, the range of children and situations is diverse and provides excellent opportunity for children to build their understanding **love** and **compassion** for one another and different circumstances, and to care for one and for all. The Christian belief that we are all made in God's image not only provides the underpinning rationale that each and every human person has value and is worthy of love and care, but that same belief also encourages a **hope** to see potential revealed and for all to achieve and for every person to understand and celebrate their God-given talents and passions and interests. Likewise, the Christian belief in redemption underpins our encouragement to **persevere**. If, as Christians believe, we make mistakes and fail, that redemption and **forgiveness** is needed. We need to persevere, to try again when we fall; this is an absolute bedrock to the life of our school.

And so

- Children are involved in **democracy**. They vote for their School Council and Eco-Council and elect their representatives, who in turn are consulted and have a voice in the leadership and management of our school. The School Councils are facilitated by a member of staff who, themselves, adhere to democratic processes and ensure each member of the Council is valued and given the chance to be involved. Furthermore children elect prefects in their class each year, as well as House Captains.
- Children understand that behaviour has consequences and the school's own '**rule of law**' is enforced with fairness and impartiality. A clearly structured behaviour policy, which all stakeholders understand and follow, is in place. Our Five Golden Rules help all within school live out the school's values. We regularly review behaviour incidents in school and have anti-bullying campaigns and policies.
- We have links with the local Police through our local PCSO and assemblies are delivered with a focus on aspects of law. e.g. Safety awareness, e-safety awareness.
- Our Christian distinctiveness and ethos, as well as our context, place a high value on the importance of every child in our school and their **individual worth and liberty**. Children have key roles and responsibilities in the school, such as being House Captains, members of the School Council, eco-warriors, lunchtime student mentors, Young Language Ambassadors and even Head Girl and Head Boy. Within the safe and supportive, encouraging environment of the school, children are actively encouraged to make choices. Through a full programme of extra-curricular activities, children are free to seize fresh opportunities, to achieve, and take ownership of their interests and passions. Every child's individual worth is also celebrated by their contributions to lead worship and each term the school has at least one completely child-led act of worship.

- Our daily acts of worship have, at the foundations of the Diocesan curriculum that we follow, the 'Greatest Commandments' to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves. The PSHE curriculum embodies values of **mutual respect** through units of learning that, amongst others, discuss relationships and being a responsible citizen. Our vision statement to trust one another, understand and care for one another, and persevere with ourselves and each other is all about mutual respect and flourishing.
- Our R.E curriculum provides a broad and balanced education on a range of major world religions and cultures to encourage not just **tolerance**, but understanding and thoughtfulness on the wisdom in such traditions. Our daily acts of worship sometimes include themes that reflect on how different cultures around the world can mark the same festivals, and there is a strong and clear focus on our Christian distinctiveness and ethos that makes space for children and adults of all faiths, those of no faith and those with doubts. Within RE lessons, children are encouraged to form their own opinions and reflect on the beliefs of others with respect and curiosity. Being a mainstream school with a Speech & Language Centre means that children and staff are in daily contact with one another and full integration in all children within the life of our school is expected and delivered. We sometimes have visitors from other countries and other faiths, we seek to support a number of charitable concerns ourselves as a school, and maintain strong links with our local parish church of St Mary-the-Virgin, West Malling through whom their links and partnerships overseas afford interesting additional opportunities to the life of our school.
- The need to **love one's neighbour**, and receive the outsider, is intrinsic to our vision and values. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows trust in God and our fellow human beings, the need to understand and care, seizing opportunities whenever they come (even if it's an opportunity to show care rather than academic prowess) and persevere until the end. We have some pupils for whom English is their second language and our Young Language Ambassadors programme (in which the children learn about other cultures and assist new arrivals) is testimony to the integration of the 'outsider' so that they too can feel at home, safe and valued.
- The need for **servant leadership**, is characterised and demonstrated at every level of school life and role models encourage such a view of what it is to lead. The Head Boy and Head Girl each year are recognised, at least in part, for their good character and ability to lead for the benefit of others, and not their own aggrandisement. Teachers and Governors seek to model the same, and our local Parish Priest, who by definition has made considerable sacrifices to follow his calling, is a weekly visitor to the school and well-known to the children.
- The ability to **think for oneself and show dissent** or disagreement is encouraged in the life of our school. RE and PSHE lessons encourage viewpoints to be expressed and heard. The School Council have a clear role in the leadership of our school. Governors are encouraged to challenge staff, and the coaching and mentoring system to improve teaching encourages honest feedback from a desire to improve.
- We know too, however, that children, parents, staff and governors will not always be unanimous in our opinions on the best courses of action for our school. So, as much as we remain committed to the flourishing of our school, we remain committed also to treating one another with grace and respect so that we may continue to learn how to live together in the Christian notion of *koinonia* (fellowship) and, when there is disagreement, disagree well.

David Green, David Rye, Andy Rathbone, Vanessa Dunnet
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