



# British Values Policy

March 2016

## Our Mission Statement:

St Benet's is a happy and holy place of learning and the centre of a thriving community.

- A place where dedicated staff, children and parents work together in partnership to develop a sense of belonging with respect, dignity and compassion for all.
- A place where everyone strives for excellence and all achievements are celebrated together.
- A place where we live out our Catholic Christian Faith and embrace the faiths and cultures of others.
- St. Benet's is a safe, secure and happy place of learning.

The DfE have recently 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."* The promotion of 'British values' is central to Catholic education because British values have their origin in the Christian values of our nation.

At St Benet's these values are reinforced regularly and in the following ways:

### Democracy:

Our children at St Benet's are involved in democratic processes. Children have the opportunity to have their voices heard through our School Council, Mini Vinnies, ECO school panel and Pupil questionnaires. The elections of House Captains and School Council representatives are based solely on pupil votes. At the beginning of each year, children affirm the school's expectations, along with the rights and responsibilities associated with these. The children and staff actively engage with each other to create a happy, learning environment where everyone is responsible for the rules.

We are a thinking school and during any P4C lessons, children enter heavily into debates with their peers when discussing a philosophical question of interest. Other debates happen in school, whether during group meetings or during whole class situations, such as English and History. All children are listened to by adults and their thoughts and suggestions are considered and respected by every adult in school. Children help to decide which charities they would like to fundraise for, particularly children in our Mini Vinnies and School Council groups. Our Upper Junior classes participate in discussions with Chester-le-Street Council and in one initiative 'Have Your Say', children's opinions are valued about how to improve local playgrounds, skateparks etc. Our school behaviour policy involves rewards which the pupils vote on as a class group. Children are encouraged to be leaders at St Benet's. KS2 children are play leaders and help younger children at break/lunch. We have established a Buddy System involving Reception and Year 6. This year, our School Council and Mini Vinnies will visit the Houses of Parliament where they will gain a fantastic insight into how Parliament works and focus on debates. Our Year 6 children visit London in summer term to experience life in the capital city, visiting famous sights like: The Tower of London, Buckingham Palace as well as going to theatre shows.

### 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 regular school days, as well as when dealing with behaviour and through school assemblies. Pupils are taught the value and reasons behind laws, that they govern and protect us, the responsibilities that this involves and the consequences when laws are broken. In Religious Education lessons and in the daily Catholic life of our school, the rules of the church are highlighted. Children learn about the 10 commandments and the Precepts of the Church. At St Benet's children help to develop fair rules to use in classrooms and around the school including the playground. Visits from authorities such as the Police; Fire Service; Childline, are regular parts of our calendar and help reinforce this message. We ensure that children are aware of the responsibilities that come with having rights. They develop independence in managing relationships and behaviour. We encourage children to resolve conflict and right any wrongs. At St Benet's, we encourage children to be leaders throughout the school. They understand that the rules created in class permeate through all activities and events. Children are aware that they act as school ambassadors on educational visits.

### Individual Liberty:

St Benet's is a safe place for children and adults. It is a supportive environment. Children are aware that there are boundaries and how they can make choices wisely. They are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights. Regular e-safety sessions are provided for children and parents/carers. Children are given the freedom to make choices. They are given ownership of their learning. Children are regularly given next steps whether verbally or written so they know exactly how to progress in their learning. As a school we educate and provide boundaries for young pupils to make choices safely, through the provision of a safe environment and empowering education. Pupils are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and advise how to exercise these safely, for example through Thinking Skills and PSHE lessons. Children know that they have the freedom to make choices about choosing the level of challenge in some lessons, particularly Numeracy lessons. Whether it be through choice of challenge or participation in our numerous extra-curricular clubs and opportunities, pupils are given the freedom to make choices.

### Mutual Respect:

Our school ethos; 'A happy and holy place of learning and the centre of a thriving community' is an ethos based on love and acted out in daily school life. Our school ethos and behaviour policy revolves around Christian Values such as 'Respect', 'Love', 'Forgiveness' and 'Peace'. In RE, Thinking Skills and PSHE lessons, we promote that every person is unique and created in the image of God. Posters and display boards around school illustrate our ethos and mission here at St Benet's. We promote respect for others and this is reiterated through our classroom and learning rules, as well as our behaviour and anti-bullying policies. We promote that every person is unique and "created in the image of God". We support numerous charities at different times of the year; eg: CAFOD World Gifts during Advent, St Cuthbert's Care during Lent, Shoebox Appeal during Autumn and many more. Assemblies, collective worships and discussions about such charities allow our children to consider and pray for our Parish community as well as brothers and sisters all over the world. Our partner school in Sri Lanka and our international links with this country and recent pen pal links with a school in Poland, enable our children to respect and form friendships with those living in a completely different part of the world. Children make all visitors feel very welcome here at St Benet's and we work together to help one another. Children's achievements are celebrated. Work is displayed well and there are weekly assemblies to celebrate one another's achievements. Learning and effort are highly respected. The whole school is focused on developing an intrinsic sense of worth and achievement. At St Benet's, we take part in many competitions with other schools both locally and nationally and take pride in representing our school.

### Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs:

Our core subject, Religious Education, provides pupils with a deep understanding of their own faith as well as an awareness of other religious communities. We illustrate how Jesus encouraged tolerance with others in stories such as *The Good Samaritan* and *The Women at the Well*, spreading the message that everyone is equal in the eyes of God. Once a term we have an 'Other Faiths' Week where our RE lessons are centred on a faith different to Christianity, eg: Sikhism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism. Members of different faiths or religions are encouraged to share their knowledge to enhance learning within classes and the school. The aim of these themed weeks is to enable our children to understand these communities and to respect them. Children visit places of worship belonging to other faiths, eg; synagogues and mosques and we celebrate festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Assemblies and discussions involving prejudices and prejudice-based bullying have been followed and supported by learning in RE, Thinking Skills and PSHE.

Policy Written by: Miss C Caulfield (Deputy Head Teacher)

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