



## St Thomas of Canterbury

### British Values Statement

The Department for Education has 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."

As a Catholic school, St Thomas of Canterbury actively promotes Gospel values, and believes that these and British values are mutually supportive. The values of the Gospel walk hand in hand with British values. Bringing with it solidarity, joy, truth, faith, hope, love, justice, peace and community, as well as compassion, prayer and dignity.

At St Thomas of Canterbury, we reinforce British values regularly and in the following ways:

#### **Democracy:**

All adults listen to the views of the children and value their opinions. The school is clear in demonstrating how children should contribute and co-operate and consider the views and needs of others. The School Council, whose members are elected by their peers, meets regularly and takes part in decision making on a range of topics. The children have further opportunities to have their voices heard through our Pupil Voice interviews and surveys. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to take part in the Local Authority Democracy Debate. Our local MP visits school to talk to the children.

#### **The Rule of Law:**

At St Thomas of Canterbury, we have a positive behaviour policy. Staff consistently reinforce high expectations of pupils and the children are reminded of the importance of rules in the classroom, as well as in school assemblies. They clearly understand the rewards and sanctions that are used. Pupils are taught to understand the need for laws - that they are there for individual protection, the responsibilities that they create and the consequences when laws are broken. Assemblies and discussions in class focus on recognising right from wrong. Visits from authorities such as the Police and Fire Service help to reinforce these messages.

### **Individual Liberty:**

The children are encouraged to be independent learners, constantly making choices, within a safe and supportive environment. They are encouraged to express their views, and teaching and learning incorporates their preferences and interests. They are helped to understand their personal freedoms and are taught how to use these rights to best effect. They are provided with opportunities to learn about what makes a good choice, while E-safety teaching enables them to make choices in a safe manner.

### **Mutual Respect:**

At the heart of our Gospel teachings is Jesus' commandment:

**'To love one another as I have loved you'.**

All pupils are taught the importance of self-respect, honest and open communication with others and fair play. Pupils work collaboratively and value others' opinions.

At St Thomas of Canterbury, our Christian values of respect and tolerance permeate all areas of school life. Our school ethos encourages everyone to consider and support each other and to celebrate the worth and individuality of every member of the school community. This engenders a climate within which the children feel safe and secure and facilitates the fulfilment of potential. All staff demonstrate respect to everyone with whom they come into contact. They consistently model and promote the behaviours and attitudes that are the foundation of positive relationships. Assemblies and class work promote the diversity of society and the right for each person to be respected and valued equally, regardless of ability, gender, faith, heritage or race.

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

Our school's curriculum aims to develop understanding of the world and the children are reminded of their place in a culturally diverse society. The RE and PSHCE schemes of work provide opportunities for pupils to develop tolerance of and empathy towards those from different faiths and beliefs. The children visit places of worship that are important to different faiths.

Actively promoting these values, which are also integral to many other countries throughout the world, means challenging pupils, staff or parents/carers who express opinions contrary to fundamental British values, including 'extremist' views.

We, as a school, need to be mindful of our existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues. These duties are imposed on maintained schools by sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996.