

British Values at Emscote Infant School

The Department for Education has emphasised the important role that British values can play in education and 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 government set out its definition of British values in the 2011 Prevent Strategy, and these values were reiterated in 2014. At Emscote British values are promoted in much of what we do, during school assemblies and Religious Education and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) sessions. We also teach British values through planning and delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. As a community school, British values underpin all of our work at school.

As well as actively promoting British values the opposite also applies: we would actively challenge pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British values, including “extremist” views.

Below are just a few examples of how we promote British values. The first section is a general overview; the others are specific expectations set out by Ofsted.

Being Part of Britain

As a school we value and celebrate the diverse heritages of the local community. Alongside this we value and celebrate living in, and being part of, Britain. In general terms this means that we celebrate traditions and customs in the course of the year, for example, Harvest Festival during the autumn term; Remembrance Day; our annual Christmas service; Easter and so on. We also value and celebrate national events such as royal celebrations, elections and others such as the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One.

Democracy

Children, parents and staff have many opportunities for their voices to be heard at Emscote Infant School. Democracy is central to how we operate.

An obvious example is our structure of the School Council. Each class elects two class representatives, reflecting our British electoral system and demonstrating democracy in action. Children are elected fairly and pupils are start to consider characteristics important for an elected representative. Pupils and adults vote in secret, everyone gets one vote, regardless position. The school council regularly meets with the school coordinator to discuss issues raised by class members.

Pupils are always listened to by adults and are taught to listen carefully and with concern to each other, respecting the right of every individual to have their opinions and voices heard. We encourage pupils to take ownership of not only their school but also of their own learning and progress. This encourages a heightened sense of both personal and social responsibility, and is demonstrated on a daily basis by our pupils.

The opinions of pupils and parents are gathered through anonymous questionnaires completed twice a year, and via surveys completed on specific issues such as school meals. All results are publically posted and can be found on our website.

There are also opportunities to comment on Parentview, via a link on our school website.

Pupils are encouraged to participate in campaigns such as the annual Send my Friend to School campaign. They exercise their democratic rights by writing to our local MP, who is invited into school on an annual basis to participate in our version of Questiontime.' They have written directly to the Prime Minister and the Queen and proudly shared their responses in assemblies and on displays in school.

Mutual respect

Part of our school ethos and behaviour policy are based around core values such as resilience (with a particular focus on developing "Growth Mindsets"), respect and responsibility, and these values determine how we live as a community at Emscote. All members of the school community treat each other with respect irrespective of their race, faith, gender or disability.

Assemblies are based on values and are central to how we expect everyone to go about their life at our school. The assemblies celebrate differences and other cultures and help to build understanding of different people and their belief systems that may hold both similarities and differences to our own. Our values are highly visible around the school.

Children and adults alike are challenged if they are disrespectful in any way. Children learn that their behaviours have an effect on their own rights and those of others.

Children are encouraged to show mutual respect for the natural world around them, especially with the support of our ECO council.

Children are taught about how to develop respectful relationships in a wide variety of ways including through our PSHE curriculum. We also promote mutual respect in the online world as set out in our E-safety and Acceptable Use policy that is seen and signed by all stakeholders.

Rules and Laws

The importance of rules and laws, whether they be those that govern our school or our country, are referred to and reinforced often, such as in assemblies and when reflecting on behaviour choices. At the start of the school year each class discusses the school rules and class routines, principles that are clearly understood by all and seen to be necessary to ensure that every class member is able to learn in a safe and ordered environment.

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. These values are reinforced in different ways:

- visits from authorities such as the police and fire service
- during Religious Education, when rules for particular faiths are thought about
- during other school subjects, where there is respect and appreciation for different rules

To encourage and promote good behaviour, attitude and work, we have devised a reward system which is consistently followed throughout the school. We are committed to praising children's efforts, not attainment. We endeavour to praise the children informally, individually, during group work, in front of the whole class and the whole school.

Children are rewarded not only for achievement in curriculum areas, but also for behaviour and general adherence to the school or class rules. Rewards are given in the form of stickers (including ones for "magic manners") or certificates. The achievements of children (and staff) are recognised during our weekly achievement assemblies.

Individual Liberty

Alongside rules and laws we promote freedom of choice and the right to respectfully express views and beliefs. Through the provision of a safe, supportive environment we provide boundaries for our pupils to make choices safely. For example:

- choices about what learning challenge or activity they will complete
- choices about which ideas they vote for in class council
- choices around the participation in extra-curricular activities

Our pupils are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and are taught how to exercise these safely, such as in our e-safety and PSHE lessons. They also understand that with rights come responsibilities. This is backed up by a scheme called Heart Start that was introduced December 2018.

Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Emscote Infant School is proud to be a community school that serves its local community. We are proud to promote and celebrate different backgrounds and beliefs. Tolerance, politeness and mutual respect are at the heart of our aims and ethos.

Our pupils are able to live and work alongside people from all backgrounds and

cultures. This will be particularly necessary in a future where technological advances will make the “world a smaller place”.

Our pupils show understanding and respect for different faiths and beliefs :

- through Religious Education, PSHE and other lessons where we develop awareness and appreciation of other cultures including visiting places of worship that are important to different faiths
- in English through fiction
- in art and music by considering cultures from other parts of the world
- across the curriculum
- we are proud of our well-established link with a school in Bo, Sierra Leone. This link is a mutually-beneficial international alliance that enables both staff and pupils from each school to learn about each other’s practises, cultures and values. This has included a staff exchange for a number of years.
- celebrating cultural differences through assemblies, themed weeks, noticeboards and displays.
- Welcoming visitors from the Erasmus Link (Spain, Italy, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia and Hungary)

Whilst instances contrary to our values are relatively rare no school can guarantee that there will never be instances which are contrary to our values. Each is treated seriously in line with our policies and expectations.