



## *British Values*

### **Fundamental British Values**

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

I do not think anyone in the profession would argue with these standards. It is a sort of Hippocratic Oath for educators, but the inclusion of the phrase 'fundamental British values' does open a debate as to what this exactly means. The examples in the code are all based on the conventions and laws which have been built up in Britain over the past 2,000+ years. The invasions by the Romans and the Normans. The conversion to Christianity and the later dissolution of the monasteries. The Magna Carta and the two World Wars. A historical mesh which has shaped the land in which we live and the attitudes of those who have been raised here or have chosen to settle here.

It is often difficult to define what these values are and how they permeate throughout every day life in Britain. People are often asked by pollsters whether they 'feel' British, English, or whatever, and many people find this difficult to answer.

The Olympics and Diamond Jubilee did seem to give people an opportunity to think about what it is to be British, and to celebrate this without embarrassment and accusations of jingoism. At school we were proud to display our Union Jacks, and stand to attention for the National Anthem.

The fact of the matter is that the 'fundamental British values' inherent in the Teachers' Standards are Christian values that have underpinned the principles of all that has shaped Britain. In our school we

have children of other faiths, but they and their parents tell us consistently that they want their children to attend St John's because of the Christian values we promote, which they see as universal values.

To clearly define what 'fundamental British values' are, may I suggest that the answer is very simple... read the Gospels and heed the teachings of Our Lord!