

British Values Vision and Our Catholic Ethos

The government set out its definition of 'British values' in the 'Prevent Strategy' (2011), which was designed to prevent the extremism and religious radicalization of young people. British values are considered by the present government to be **democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of 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.

"We are proud that Catholic schools promote values that are both Catholic and British, including: respect for the individual, democracy, individual liberty, respect, tolerance and inclusiveness. Our schools promote cohesion by serving more ethnically diverse and poorer communities. Catholic schools provide high standards of education which are popular with parents from all social, economic and faith backgrounds." Paul Barber (Catholic Education Service 15 December 2014).

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we recognise, not only the importance of helping children to flourish academically but also spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, so they are fully prepared for life in British society and for their role as citizens, able to make the strongest possible contribution to the Common Good of all. We teach the importance of British Values by going much deeper into the meaning of what it means to live a good life, within a framework of Catholic Christian Values. This provides the context and meaning for understanding why *British values* are important. Our framework for understanding British values draws on the example of Jesus and his welcome and inclusion of all, which is developed in Catholic Social Teaching. At St Mary's we provide an education which focuses on the formation of the whole person and on our vocation and purpose in life. We are guided by our mission statement and by the Christian values of honourable purpose (that is, vocation and service), respect, compassion, co-operation and stewardship as we reflect on our place and purpose in the world. We place a significant emphasis on the celebration of individuality and difference

within our communities and our calling to work for the Common Good, in the service of others. Our Catholic ethos, which includes explicit reference to Christian and *British values*, makes a tangible difference to the way we work together and with our wider communities. Within this framework it would be impossible to overlook the government's view of British values expressed as 'democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.'