



British Values Statement

September 2026

At Birtley House Special School, we ensure that through our vision, values, rules, curriculum and teaching we promote tolerance and respect for all cultures, faiths and lifestyles. We have a duty to prepare our children for life in modern Britain and to keep them safe. We value the diverse ethnic backgrounds of all pupils and families; we undertake a variety of events and lessons to celebrate these. We have found this approach to be enriching for all parties as it teaches tolerance and respect for the differences in our community and the wider world. Underpinning all this are a range of curriculum topics which have strong links to British History.

Curriculum

In September 2016 the school adopted a new PSHE programme called Jigsaw which incorporates British Values and prevention of extremism. Lessons are 30-40 minutes weekly.

Lessons are differentiated and adapted in order to meet the individual needs of pupils, all of whom have additional educational needs.

Vocabulary can be a particular barrier to learning. Therefore, extra input is given to pupils' understanding of terminology and specialist vocabulary. Visual prompts, photos and symbols are used as learning aids.

Visits to places of interest include: Places of worship for different religions, Police Shop at Bluewater, Fire Museum at Ash Garden centre, House of Parliament.

As a school, we recognise and celebrate a variety of cultural and religious festivals, such as St. Patrick's Day, Chinese New Year, Diwali.

The school runs an active School Council and all pupils contribute to voting and offering ideas for improving the school etc. Pupils are encouraged to take on positions of responsibility within the school, to make a positive contribution. For example: class monitor jobs, pet monitors, library monitors.

During General Elections and the Brexit Referendum the school held mock elections in which pupils had the opportunity to develop their knowledge, understanding and experience of an election, ensuring a balanced presentation of opposing views was offered.

Displays show evidence demonstrating the school's commitment to promoting British Values.

The school has a broadly Christian ethos and maintains close links with the local Church of England church in West Kingsdown (St Edmunds). The vicar attends regular assemblies and the children visit the church once a year as well as attend the Christingle Service. Collective worship is held every day.

The school is a very nurturing environment in which all pupils are taught to respect, listen and care for each other. Pupils' additional educational needs mean that some pupils receive extra social skills lessons to teach them the specific skills required for social communication and interaction. This programme may need to continue into their secondary education programme.

General overview

Birtley House School is committed to serving its community and surrounding areas. We recognise the multi-cultural, multi-faith nature of the United Kingdom and understand the crucial role our academy plays in promoting these values.

Through our provision we:

- enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely
- enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures
- encourage respect for other people;
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England
- promote an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process
- encourage an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety
- promote an understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence
- teach an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law
- encourage acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour; and teach an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination

The Five Key British values

Democracy

To understand how they can influence decision making through a democratic process.

We empower our pupils by giving them opportunities to make choices about the things that they believe to be important. By valuing each 'voice' and by listening and responding to that voice we demonstrate that we support democracy and liberty.

Pupils also have the opportunity to have their voices heard through our Pupil Council and pupil questionnaires. The elections of Pupil Council Members are based solely on pupil votes.

The School Council itself is led by a member of staff and adheres to simple democratic processes. The principle of democracy is also explored in the History and RE curriculum as well as in assemblies. We explore how democracy and the law works in Britain in contrast to other forms of government in other countries.

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TO BE REVIEWED: September 2027 or as needed

Individual Liberty

To understand that the freedom to choose is protected in law. Pupils are actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment.

Pupils have key roles and responsibilities in school e.g. Year 6 Monitors, School Captains etc.

We educate and provide boundaries for pupils to make choices safely, through provision of a safe environment and an 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 our E-Safety and PSHE lessons.

Whether it is through choice of challenge, of how they record, choose their lunch options, of participation in clubs and opportunities etc., pupils are given the freedom to make choices.

Mutual Respect

To understand that while people may hold different views, we may show respect towards them. Part of our school ethos and behaviour policy revolves around core values such as 'Respect'. Pupils have been part of discussions and assemblies related to what this means and how it is shown. These ideas are reiterated through school and classroom rules.

Our PSHE curriculum embodies values of Mutual Respect through units of learning such as Relationships and Being a Responsible Citizen.

Through PE lessons we promote an attitude of equality and fairness.

The Rule of Law

To appreciate that living under the rule of law protects us and is essential for our well being and safety. The importance of laws, whether they be those that govern the class, the academy, or the country, are consistently reinforced throughout regular school days; 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 they hold and the consequences when laws are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police; Fire Service; Ambulance etc. are regular parts of our calendar and help reinforce this message.

We have a clearly structured behaviour policy which all stakeholders understand and follow.

The concept of the Rule of Law is also reinforced through teaching activities in our citizenship curriculum.

Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs

To accept that others have different faiths or beliefs (or none) and these should be accepted and tolerated. This is achieved through enhancing pupils understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society and by giving them opportunities to experience such diversity.

Assemblies and discussions involving prejudices and prejudice-based bullying are regularly held.

We follow an RE syllabus within our creative curriculum which our children can access providing a broad and balanced education on a range of faiths, religions and cultures.

BIRTLEY HOUSE SCHOOL STATEMENT OF VALUES

- Respect and tolerance for people of all faiths, races and cultures
- Understanding that people have different views of 'right' and 'wrong'
- Knowing that people living in England have to follow its laws
- Knowing the difference between 'religious law' and 'state law'
- Understanding that laws keep people safe and promote their well being
- Understanding democracy (what it is, how it works in simple terms)
- Contributing to a School Council and knowing how voting works
- Holding mock elections, providing opportunities to argue different points of view
- Knowing what self-esteem, self-confidence and self-knowledge are
- Accepting responsibility for own behaviour
- Thinking how to contribute positively to lives of people in the school and local community
- Knowing and respecting public services and institutions in England
- Knowing what the police and army do
- Knowing what Parliament is and what they control
- Understanding that freedom to hold different beliefs is protected by law
- Knowing what discrimination is and what to do about it