

British values statement

We are committed to serving our community and recognises the multi-cultural, multi-faith and ever-changing nature of the United Kingdom. We also understand the vital role the academy plays in ensuring that groups or individuals within the academy are not subjected to intimidation or radicalisation by those wishing to unduly, or illegally, influence them.

We follow equality guidance which endeavours to ensure there will be no discrimination against any individual or group, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or financial status, or similar. We are dedicated to preparing students for their adult life beyond the formal, examined curriculum and ensuring that it promotes and reinforces British values to all our students.

The five key British values* are:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

The academy uses strategies within the national curriculum and beyond to secure such outcomes for students. The examples that follow show some of the many ways we seek to instill British values.

** Definition set by the government in the 2011 Prevent Strategy.*

Democracy

Encouraging pupil voice is a high priority for TWA. Independent thought and choice-making is actively encouraged and expressly taught throughout the academy. For some, this will mean expressing simple opinions about what food they like or what toy they want to play with, for others, it will be making decisions about everything from reward days to creative performances. Pupils are taught to have respect for others' choices alongside theirs through, e.g. turn-taking at a very simple level to participation in discussion and debate at the other.

The use of questionnaires and surveys to gather information and preferences is introduced early on in school and older pupils, with the responsibility of running events are encouraged to seek feedback through questionnaires. Pupils are taught that their contribution to the academy community is valued through a number of responsibilities they are encouraged to take on. These may include sports leadership, playground duties, care of younger pupils and responsibilities within the classroom.

All our Secondary pupils have the chance to stand for the School Council and in so doing, experience how a democratic election is carried out. All members are elected annually by the Secondary Dept. pupils and all pupils have one vote and we work hard to ensure each child's vote is a genuine choice and has meaning for that pupil. The School Council can access a budget for academy improvement. In addition to the Student Council, Class Reps act as go-betweens to ensure all pupils across the academy have a voice and decisions made at Council level are fed back.

The whole academy are made aware of local government through occasional visits from the mayor.

The rule of law

Expectations of behaviour are reinforced in a variety of ways depending on the age and understanding of the pupil. Behaviour plans are in place for those that need additional support and although these are individualised, they are guided by the same basic principles and expectations. Class behaviour charters are in place for those classes where this has meaning and standards are further reinforced through assemblies and the curriculum. The emphasis on consistency is key in the academy to support pupils with all aspects of their learning from academic concepts to appropriate social behaviours. Staff teams are therefore kept as consistent as possible, (as appropriate to the age and understanding of the pupils) and meet regularly to discuss common approaches to individuals displaying challenging behaviour. Departmental reward systems are in place which have value and meaning for pupils.

Pupils develop their understanding of the rule of law and as they move up the school in ways appropriate to their cognitive ability. Through SEWB and Understanding the World, they learn about how the rule of law applies to their local communities and society as a whole. All pupils learn about how the rule of law applies to them directly through concrete, context-specific examples. For some, this may mean learning how to use more socially appropriate means of communication, for others it may mean learning to respect powerchair driving speeds, for others it may mean learning about copyright law when using the Internet.

Individual liberty and Mutual Respect

Due to the vulnerability of our pupils, we strive hard to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure at all times and we work especially hard to find creative and timely solutions to resolve any issues that may arise due to the nature of our pupils' learning difficulties. By far the majority of pupils say they feel safe and secure at school when asked. Pupils are generally very supportive of each other and do generally display high levels of empathy towards their peers. Bullying incidents are rare and quickly addressed where they occur. This includes incidents taking place online. Again, due to the vulnerability of our pupils and the important role online social networking plays in lives of our young people, (whose disabilities may make it more difficult for them to access other social opportunities), we make the most of opportunities to reinforce key safety messages through specific science and technology lessons, participation in events such as Internet Safety Day and, most importantly for our pupils, context-specific incidents that may occur at home or at school.

Tolerance and acceptance are central to our academy's ethos. Diversity and difference are actively celebrated. Everything we do in school is designed to not only accommodate but celebrate pupils' individuality and unique skills and talents. This ethos is not in addition to the teaching and learning that goes on in school but thoroughly embedded into all aspects of school life from the assessment systems we use to the way we deliver our curriculum. The annual review process, so key to everything our pupils do at school, is totally child-centred and reinforces our core belief that everyone can achieve and has something unique to offer, that everyone has a fundamental right to be fully included in society and treated with respect and dignity and that everyone has their own thoughts, feelings and experiences which are no less nor more important than anyone else's.

Pupils learn about mutual respect through lessons, (e.g. our SEWB curriculum focuses heavily on relationships) through modelling, (staff team-working is highly valued at TWOA and collaborative working practices are not only preferable but essential to meet the complex needs of our pupils) and through the caring and supportive atmosphere and ethos of the academy as a whole. They practice it in a wide variety of ways appropriate to their age and level of understanding. These range from simple turn-taking games to participation in national sporting competitions where the principles of good sportsmanship and fair play are paramount. It is not uncommon to receive positive, unsolicited feedback from the organisers of external events commenting on the conduct of our pupils when they are out of school. People have referred to their polite manners and the way they support each other and the respect they have for each other and the people they meet.

Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

Respect and tolerance for all people of all faiths and beliefs, both within and beyond the academy community forms part of our general culture of respect for diversity and difference. Pupils are given specific opportunities to discover, engage with and celebrate both their own beliefs and those of others however through the curriculum and special events. Pupils learn about celebrations in a range of faiths from Christmas to Diwali to Eid and we encourage pupils and families of these faiths to share their experiences with the academy community, children and staff alike.

Pupils may learn about other faiths and beliefs through educational visits, e.g. to local places of worship, through visiting speakers or specialised resources such as the faith dolls. Communication skills are integral to all parts of the curriculum at TWOA and pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and thoughts in ways appropriate to them. Pupils are given lots of opportunity to develop their own understandings and beliefs, listen to and process those of others and reflect and modify their ideas based on new information. This may be done through a variety of means from classroom discussions to fully researched debating sessions for the most able. Alternatively it may be done in a more experiential way through music, art or other creative activities: through making a mandala or Rangoli pattern for example, singing a gospel song or practicing Buddhist meditation techniques.
