

Promoting fundamental British Values in the Early Years

Inspectors should consider how well leadership and management ensure that the curriculum.....

“Is broad and balanced, complies with legislation and provides a wide range of subjects, preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life in modern Britain.....and actively promotes the fundamental British values...”

SMSC Policies (Ofsted School Handbook 2015)

What are the fundamental British values?

- Democracy
- Rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

What does this mean in the context of Early Years?

The Department for Education (DfE) statutory requirements for Early Years are clear that the fundamental British values are already implicitly embedded in the 2014 Early Years Foundation stage.

“For children in the early years, this is about learning right from wrong, learning to take turns and share and in practitioners challenging negative attitudes and stereotypes”

Recent DfE interpretation

Some practical examples of how British values can be promoted through everyday practice in the Early Years

Democracy: making decisions together

- Encourage children to know their views count
- Value each other’s views
- Talk about feelings
- Making decisions about things that affect daily activities e.g. choosing role play themes
- Activities that involve turn taking, sharing and collaboration
- Opportunities for critical thinking and questioning

Rule of law: Understanding rules matter

As part of the focus on managing feelings and behaviour (Personal Social and Emotional development)

- Activities where children understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences
- Distinguishing right from wrong
- Creating shared classroom rules/ common codes of behaviour
- Promoting an understanding that rules, e.g. tidy up time, apply to everyone

Individual liberty: freedom for all

As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness and people and communities (Personal Social and Emotional development) and Understanding the World

- Encouraging children to develop a positive sense of themselves
- Opportunities for developing self-knowledge, self esteem, and increase self confidence through e.g. encouraging risk taking on climbing apparatus, celebrating individual successes
- Activities which encourage the language of feelings and an appreciation of the feelings of others e.g. through the use of persona dolls
- Activities which encourage discussions and celebration of all our similarities and differences
- Creating an ethos which encourages and respects different opinions

Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated

As part of the focus on people and communities, managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships (Personal Social and Emotional development and Understanding the World)

- Creating an inclusive environment and ethos where everyone is valued and differences are portrayed positively
- Positive relationships promoted with parents/carers and the wider community
- Activities which encourage an understanding of and respect for one's own cultures and beliefs and that of others; an appreciation of similarities and differences among families, faiths, communities and traditions
- Activities which encourage positive social behaviours such as sharing and kindness towards others
- Activities and resources which promote diverse attitudes and challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotypes and value the diversity of children's experiences and lifestyles through e.g. persona dolls

A minimum approach, e.g. having notices on the walls or multi faith books on the shelves will fall short of "actively promoting".

What is not acceptable:

- actively promoting intolerance of other faiths, cultures and races
- failure to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregate girls and boys
- isolating children from their wider community
- failure to challenge behaviours (whether of staff, children or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs

Other possible ways forward with British values

- Carry out an audit of Early Years provision for Equal Opportunities, Anti- Discrimination and Fostering good relations.
- Develop the whole school/setting's "shared values" involving **all** staff and children. Share these with parents/carers. What are their aspirations/values? Can these be combined and displayed? Are the "British values" incorporated within these?
- Carry out an audit of existing resources. Do they actively challenge stereotypes and promote acceptance of differences in a natural way?