

## **How are schools teaching British Values? An enquiry into the SMSC requirement on schools**

The Liverpool World Centre, with Liverpool Hope University is conducting a research project into the requirement to promote fundamental British values as part of SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) education in schools, in England.

Five primary schools in the Liverpool area, along with student teachers and research students from Hope, have gathered data on how schools are implementing this requirement.

The main areas of interest are:

- How schools view the purpose of the requirement to promote British values
- How schools have acted on the requirement
- What further support they may need, in the light of their experiences.

### ***Issues schools and students have raised:***

**How to teach about British values?** Schools are taking different approaches, including having special days and events which focus on fundamental British values. Many schools are addressing the pupils' understanding of democracy through enhancing the role of a school council. However, there is currently a lack of materials for schools to use.

**Perceptions of Britishness:** Material available encourages stereotypes of life in Britain, which tend to focus on how being 'British' appears to tourists. There is focus on London, monarchy, historical traditions e.g. afternoon tea, and class distinctions, e.g. cricket and opera. Schools find this conflicts with what children see as modern, diverse Britain; and so they are also having to challenge stereotypes that surround being 'British'.

**Alignment of values:** Many schools have their own expressed values. Some have found it a challenge to incorporate their existing values with the British values.

**There is a mood of feeling *uncomfortable*:** Schools work hard to help pupils learn about difference and diversity in their schools and communities. They feel concerned about how to approach what they see as a sensitive issue. Some schools opt to focus on values in general, rather than emphasising 'British' for example, presenting democracy as a global value, rather than simply British.

These ideas are being shared at a conference in June, at Warwick university.

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