

At Balshaw's C.E High School we are proud to be an inclusive community that values diversity, providing outstanding education for all children irrespective of their race, religion, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation knowing that they will succeed in our school as each child is unique in God's eyes. Every child is treated as an individual and given the nurture, care and many forms of support they need pastorally, socially, emotionally and academically to thrive and fulfil their own potential.

It is for this reason we began our journey to become a 'Schools of Sanctuary' as we believe their values encompass our own Gospel Values of Love, Patience, Respect, Tolerance, Forgiveness and Trust in our caring school environment and we want to ensure all of our school community welcome everyone and provide a 'sanctuary' for many.

What is School of Sanctuary?

Schools of Sanctuary is an initiative which aims to:

- Promote positive attitudes within schools and their communities around people seeking sanctuary.
- Support schools to take positive steps and to be proud of being places of safety and inclusion for all.
- Recognise and celebrate schools that are committed to welcoming and supporting people seeking sanctuary.

Why are we becoming a School of Sanctuary?

Part of our work to become a "School of Sanctuary" is based on our vision to strengthen our links with the local community and increase student voice and active citizenship. We want to create a sense of safety and inclusion that is beneficial to all members of the school community. To support us in doing this, we feel that becoming a School of Sanctuary supports our vision and ethos.

We started our launch with a pledge to the Sanctuary Foundation which we have displayed in all classrooms in school

School of Sanctuary update

We are halfway through our twelve month process to become a School of Sanctuary

What next?

- We have plans to invite a young man into school who is an Afghanistan Refugee to talk to students about his experiences and how he has managed since leaving his home country and having to totally readjust his life here.
- We have activities and plans for Refugee Week 17-23 June 2025 which is the world's largest arts and culture festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking asylum
- In Summer term we are aiming to submit our bid to be recognised as a School of Sanctuary and continue to live out the values of the Sanctuary foundation by continuing to raise awareness of the experiences of people seeking safety and to continue to advocate for kindness and compassion for all our school community. We are proud to be part of a growing community of schools whose aim is to build a better, fairer and kinder society for everyone as these are also our School Gospel Values

We will keep you posted next term with more events and activities as we continue on our Sanctuary journey.

Iftar celebration

On Thursday 20th March we held an Iftar celebration in school and welcomed twenty-six residents from the Leyland Hotel who were able to use our kitchens to cook food for themselves after Ramadan at sunset and then share the meals they had cooked together. We were also delighted to welcome a large number of our school families, who brought their own food and shared prayer, food and celebration post sunset.

The evening was absolutely fabulous and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The feedback from our school families was very pleasing to receive and they praised school for putting on such an event to allow them to meet, share food and get to know each other. We had lots of Balshaw's children helping out at our event and members of the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze group volunteered, planned games for children attending and helped with the mass tidy up after everyone was finished.

In addition, we have had this email from Sophie Fosker, Resettlement and Integration Case Worker for Lancashire County Council who helped co-ordinate the event.

Hello

I just wanted to say a massive thank you to all the staff and pupils that supported the event last night. It was a wonderful evening, and the hotel residents were really happy and grateful to be able to cook their own food.

Thank you to everyone who came along and to our students and staff who helped out on this special evening.

