  

**Research Question/focus**: How can Cultural Education delivery the British Values Agenda?

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**Your organisation/alliance:** Tor View Teaching School- East Lancashire Inclusion Partnership (ELIP)

**Your Cultural Partner(s):** More Music, Morecambe.

**Date completed:** 21/09/17

**Introduction:**

Rationale for the research question?

In November of 2014, the Department for Education published advice for headteachers and other staff of maintained schools about the promotion of fundamental British values as part of Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Mental and Physical Development (SMSC) in schools. In particular the DfE states that ‘schools should **promote** the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs’ (DfE 2014:5). This was a shift from the previous DfE guidance which stated that schools were simply required to ‘**respect** fundamental British values’. This change from **respect** to **promote** was highlighted from September 2014 by Ofsted, who took this requirement into account during inspections.

Many Prime Ministers have, in the past, attempted to define what it is to be British.

John Major in an address to Eurosceptics, promised Britain in fifty years would endure as “the country of long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pool fillers and as George Orwell said ‘old maids bicycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist’. (Telegraph 10 June 2014)

British Values includes inventiveness, fairness, charity, resilience and a “mustn’t grumble” attitude, Gordon Brown said. (Telegraph 10 June 2014)

Tony Blair, in a speech attacking opponents of devolution and nationalists seeking to break up Britain, defined British values as “creativity built on tolerance” and “work and self-improvement”. (Telegraph 10 June 2014)

The British Values agenda has been a hot topic since 2014 and the countries response to the “Trojan Horse” scandal. Schools obviously play a strategic role in delivering the governments agenda but is it any wonder schools today are still battling with what British Values are? What is Britishness? How do schools go about promoting British values?

Brian Lightman, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders described the values as ‘universal values’ he added ‘these values are embedded in the ethos of any good school - from the way teachers speak to pupils, pupils speak to teachers, people relate to each other in the community, school assemblies, celebrations and different festivals. All of these things are embedded in every school’.

Throughout the project, discussions around what British Values are… were regular and dynamic. School leaders are happy to accept the importance of promoting British Values but struggled with the title having the work British in. The school leaders and cultural partners tended to favour “Human Values”. It was felt that by adding British to the title politicised the values.

School leaders, involved in the project, were challenged by how to deliver the values. Ofsted “rumours” suggested that various approaches where commended and criticised, leaving a sense of confusion.

**Context:**

For the purposes of this report the Specialist Leader in Cultural Education will be referred to as the SLiCE.

This project involved 3 schools from the East Lancashire Inclusion Partnership Alliance (ELIP) and More Music, Morecambe as the Cultural Partner.

East Lancashire Inclusion Partnership is strategically led by Tor View School, a school for pupils aged 4-19 years with a wide range of learning difficulties. The Alliance is made up of at least 25 schools that include Mainstream Primary and Secondary School, Secondary, Primary and all age Special Schools and Specific School provision – Emotional Behavioural Difficulties Schools.

The schools involved in the project were targeted by the SLiCE as they serve areas of deprivation.

Census data 2011 for Bacup stated that the town has suffered recent years as is evident from a 2008 housing study for the Council, which commented: ‘Bacup and Stacksteads has a long-standing ‘stigma’ attached to them, such that residents who are familiar with the Borough do not choose to live in these towns. Bacup is also affected by a range of long-term, ingrained social problems (such as high crime rate)’. It goes onto to say ‘ high proportion of people living in the wards have no qualifications or only a level 1 qualification, and such individuals find it harder in securing a job, or if they are in employment this is likely to be low paid.’

The pupils who took part in the project represented the demographic of the schools they attended.

**Britannia Community Primary School, Bacup**

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| The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. (Ofsted report January 2017)Britannia’s project involved a year 6 class, 30 pupils. This group explored an ‘issue based song writing’ approach to address the British Values agenda. They worked with an artist once a week for an hour for 10 weeks.  |

**St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, Bacup**

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is more than double the national average, and is high. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school part-way through their education is high when compared with the national average. Over a third of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 joined the school at other than the usual times. (Ofsted report June 2016)

St. Mary’s project involved half a year 4 class, 15 pupils. This group explored a Musical Cultural Experience approach to address the British Values agenda. They worked with an artist once a week for an hour for 10 weeks.

**Tor View School**

Tor View is a generic learning disabilities school that provides education for pupils aged 3−19 with a wide range of special educational needs, ranging from moderate learning difficulties to severe and complex learning difficulties, including profound and multiple learning difficulties. Throughout the school several pupils have additional needs arising from physical disabilities and sensory impairments. Pupils are mainly drawn from the Rossendale area but also from further afield including neighbouring local authorities. Nearly all pupils are of White British backgrounds with a small proportion of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage pupils. The proportion of students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, is well above the national average. (Ofsted report Dec 2013)

Tor View’s project involved 2 of the most able groups in the school, one Key Stage 3 and one Key stage 4 group. The Key stage 3 group (11 pupils) explored a Cultural Experience approach and the Key Stage 4 pupils (10 pupils) explored an Issue Based writing approach. Both groups worked with an artist once a week for an hour for 10 weeks.

**More Music**

More Music is a community music and education charity based in the West End of Morecambe, working throughout Lancashire, the North West and internationally. They provide a year round programme that covers a breadth of music making activity involving people of all ages and all backgrounds. They are one of the longest running and most highly regarded community music and education organisations in the UK.

More Music has a history of over 20 years of national and international projects that demonstrate flexibility, belief, imagination, partnership and connection.

More Music aims to build confidence and spirit in individuals and communities through creative arts activities, particularly music

**Values**

**Access**: To create opportunities for people from across the social spectrum including people from diverse communities and those with different needs

**Imagination**: To create new and innovative work of the highest quality that gives individuals an opportunity to discover and share their unique voices

**Community**: To lead on work that transforms communities and develops practice that uses the arts to transform people's lives

**Methodology**

The research project involved 2 artists (commissioned by More Music), school staff, pupils and the SLiCE as lead researcher. The study explored if and in what ways schools can promote British Values when working with a Cultural Partner. When answering in what ways, the lead researcher wanted to investigate 2 different approaches;

* Musical Cultural Experience
* Issue Based Song Writing

These approaches played to the artists strengths. The Primary schools chose which approach they felt would suit their pupils and Tor View School took both approaches with 2 different groups.

Discussions around how to collect data to demonstrate impact concluded in deciding upon Mind Maps;

***Mind Mapping*** *is a useful technique that helps you learn more effectively, improves the way that you record information, and supports and enhances creative problem solving. By using* ***Mind Maps****, you can quickly identify and understand the structure of a subject.*

([Mind Maps®: Learning Skills from MindTools.com](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm))

Pupils completed a Mind Map pre and post project and these were analysed by the SLiCE.

Qualitative data was also collected from the lead teachers and the artists. They were asked to collate reflective notes and highlight when progress was made and give their professional opinion why that occurred.

**Findings and Analysis**

The SLiCE has analysed the data from the Mind Maps in three ways:

* Compared the amount of words the pupils wrote pre and post project
* The amount of words that related to the British Values agenda
* Compared the 2 approaches ; Musical Cultural Experience and the Issue based Song Writing approaches

64% of the pupils who took part in the project were able to write more words on their Mind Maps post project.

100% of pupils who took part in the project increased the amount of words they wrote on their Mind Map that related to the British Values agenda.

According to the DfE document…

*‘Actively promoting the values means challenging opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to fundamental British values. Attempts to promote systems that undermine fundamental British values would be completely at odds with schools’ duty to provide SMSC.’ (*Promoting fundamental British Values, DFE Nov 2014)

Some of the shift from pre to post Mind Maps demonstrated a progress in this area. For example one pupil on his pre Mind Map listed “British food, gaming and cheaper to go on holiday” on his post Mind Map quoted that British values meant that “everyone can make a choice and no one should make that choice for you”. This demonstrates a shift from the pupils narrow understanding of British Values revolving around what happens in his home to directly relating to the DfE guidance;

* *Schools should enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.*

(Promoting fundamental British Values, DFE Nov 2014)

When meeting with the class teachers involved in the project I asked them key questions to draw out why they thought this shift took place, what did the artist do to enable this shift?

The two approaches differed in their subtlety when addressing the British Values agenda. The Musical Cultural Experience provided an opportunity for the pupils to explore an unfamiliar country- India. The Issue Based Song Writing approach was more direct in the fact it discussed the topics raised in the departmental advice. Key themes were addressed:

* how would you like to be identified/defined?
* how can you bring about change in your world
* it is ok to have different opinions/beliefs/lives
* what you like and where is it from? Looking at where items are made in the world eg coffee/clothes
* family trees and how our own families might help us to think about being open to other cultures
* the election- examining democracy/the electoral process
* rule of law- how it keeps us safe…how do we fit in?

Towards the end of the project one particular “wow” moment was captured. The group were asked “What rights should we all share in Britain?” one pupil responded with “to feel accepted regardless of nationality, religion, culture and lifestyle”. This is a radical change from a pre mind map where he wrote “we should speak British and that’s it”.

At the evaluation event the SLiCE asked the 3 schools involved in the project to identify a strategy that the artists employed that they felt had the greatest impact. The schools reported that their artistry excellence brought energy and creativity; they widened horizons; established and capitalised on pupil ideas.

**Summary of implications for future practice**

On the basis of the findings, I offer the following implications for schools to develop their offer to address the British Values agenda.

1. The DfE guidance for schools does not specify how schools should deliver the agenda and this gives schools an opportunity to be creative in their approach.
2. Working with a Cultural Partner, and in this case Musicians, allows the British Values agenda to be addressed in an exciting and fun way. The themes addressed in the DfE guidance could be seen as “dry” and challenging to engage. By engaging with a Cultural Partner these themes can be explored and differentiated access points created.
3. A subtle approach to the themes ie giving the pupils a Cultural Experience develops tolerance and appreciation of other cultures.
4. Having a purpose to explore the British Values themes develops an authentic experience. The Issue Based Song Writing approach allowed pupils to explore through creation.
5. An opportunity to perform in public gives a sense of pride to the work and encouraged deeper understanding. By performing at an all-inclusive (multicultural, multi-ability) event allowed pupils to generalise their knowledge and skills in a practical way.
6. Schools working together on a common aim provided time to network and share good ideas. School leaders grew in confidence that their approach to British Values was the right one for their setting.

**References:**

DfE (2014) Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools: Departmental advice for maintained schools. DfE

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