FUNDAMENTAL BRITISH VALUES: ARE THEY *FUNDAMENTAL*?

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Introduction

Since its re-emergence as a political yardstick, by now, fundamental British values (FBV) would be expected to be securely embedded within the fabric of life in English schools. The two pronged policy strategy from the Department of Education (DfE) may be considered as the main contributing factor for raising such expectations as the requirement to actively promote FBV became part of *being* a teacher (DfE, 2011), and, later, post the Trojan Horse affair (THA), in making FBV the centre piece of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). Thus, it becomes significant for us all to examine in-depth the issues related to teaching and learning.

The chapter will examine, as background, the historical development of nebulous FBV to demonstrate the origins being outside educational discourse; namely in counter-terrorism. As part of this, a critical analysis of the Prevent agenda will be undertaken and the implications of both of these on the educational sector considered. A section of the chapter will present a descriptive analysis of the notions of FBV and deliberate their controversial nature to assist engagement with the social, cultural, ethical and pedagogical issues related to teaching the primary curriculum.

Introducing Fundamental British Values

FBV are defined as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. From the perspective of the curriculum, the government advise schools to teach them as part of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural

(SMSC) development of pupils and provide specific suggestions for their delivery (DfE, 2014). An immediate issue raised by Eaude (2018, p.72) is that a significant number of people would not subscribe to the four highlighted as being fundamental to Britishness, either in the sense that those selected are fundamental or that others are omitted. Others argue that the values chosen create confusion, as those listed are considered part of universal human rights (Elton-Chalcraft, et al., 2017; Struthers, 2017), and yet there is no reference made to human rights and a failure to acknowledge the United Kingdom's commitments to international human rights treaties (Struthers, 2017).   Some have argued that these 'values' are actually not values but 'legal ethics' (Mansfield, 2019; Struthers, 2017) and that the root problem is that Britons often see themselves as Scottish, Welsh or (Northern) Irish and to a lesser extent English first, but not necessarily British (Mansfield, 2019, p.43).

A further concern of course, is that if teachers do not move beyond a narrow and restricted conceptualisation and application of FBV to widen the scope of discussion in classrooms, the outcome might be to place Britain on a 'higher' pedestal in relation to other nations. This troublesome notion was further exacerbated by the then Prime Minister, Theresa May, who declared the need to 'assert "the superiority" of British Values' (Travis, 2017, p.8).

Some years ago, the Ajegbo Report accentuated the complexity of understanding diversity and inclusion and recognised the different understandings of the term 'British' and that defining the term is problematic (Ajegbo, 2007). The Report also acknowledged that people construct identities in multiple ways and revealed that some respondents were concerned that the term 'Britishness' had the potential to be divisive. At that time, some academics had appealed for the vague term 'Britishness' to be replaced with citizenship and equal rights (Bhopal and Rhamie, 2014; Khan, 2007; Parekh, 2007). These concerns have persisted into

the debate about the active promotion of FBV. Though the definition of British values

accords with the findings in the above mentioned report, even then, critical questions were

voiced as to whether democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, fairness/equality, respect

and tolerance are actually values distinctive to Britain (Maylor, 2016, p.315). In fact, many

other democracies have similar values and freedoms enshrined in their constitution (Beck,

2018; Eaude, 2018; Kymlicka, 2010).

Before going on to examine FBV and the issues surrounding them in more depth, the next

section will discuss the Prevent Strategy and the Trojan Horse Affair, as these are often

mentioned in connection with FBV and their influence needs to be understood.

Role of the Prevent Strategy and the Trojan Horse Affair

As part of a counter-terrorism strategy, the *Prevent Strategy* was introduced in 2006 as a

cross-governmental initiative to ensure that young people were not radicalised and did not

engage in acts of violence. It involved the police, education and health professionals and

local communities. It had four aims: to prepare for attacks, protect the public, pursue the

attackers and prevent radicalisation in the first place (Miah, 2017).

The Strategy proved very controversial and, consequently, it was adapted. Despite this, it

continues to be a source of considerable debate and anxiety. Although it was emphasised that

Prevent was applicable to all communities and that in any area individuals may be open to

radicalisation, the danger was generally thought to be greater in some geographical areas,

notably in larger cities (Holmwood, 2018). Two main concerns apply in this respect. First,

although possible radicalisation of young people by right-wing, ultra-nationalistic groups was

recognised, the perception among Muslim communities and more widely was that the

Prevent Strategy concentrated on and targeted mainly Muslims (Awan, 2018; Busher, Choudhury, Thomas and Harris, 2017; Miah, 2017). Secondly, schools and college staff (and other adults) were expected to report students perceived to be at risk of radicalisation, so that an assessment of appropriate support – and if need be intervention – could be made. This has had an impact on the role of staff becoming part of a bigger 'surveillance' team across the country and goes against the idea that the primary role of teachers is to *educate* their pupils, not to view them automatically as suspects and potentially dangerous (Healy, 2018; Sant and Hanley, 2018). It is also noteworthy that the *Prevent* duty required publicly funded registered early years childcare providers to have due regard to the need to prevent pupils from being drawn into terrorism. This enforced a political agenda of securitisation onto such practitioners and those working directly with pupils (Lander, 2016). This role was made ever more untenable by evidence which suggested that radicalisation nearly always happens outside school or college, either through the internet or involvement in groups in young people's local communities (Eaude, 2018).

The five FBV are seen to be an attempt by government to define Britishness in opposition to a perceived extremist threat to wider society and to the next generation of citizens being educated in British schools (Mansfield, 2019). Research suggests, however, that the *Prevent* strategy in its policy directives on the teaching and learning of FBV has served to produce responses by schools that validate 'whiteness' as power, dominance, normativity and privilege (Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe, 2019, 67). This will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter.

Something which propelled FBV to a new height in the public consciousness, especially in schools, was the so-called Trojan Horse Affair. Media reports unfolding in Spring 2014

alleged that some academies in Birmingham were being targeted by hard line 'Islamists' to be 'taken over' and where, allegedly, radicalisation and extremism were being promoted. These allegations appeared in an anonymous letter, the authenticity of which was questioned (some deeming it to be a forgery) (Awan, 2018; Richardson, 2015). Despite the suspicious nature of the letter, several investigations into the matter took place and lifetime bans from teaching were imposed on a chairman of an education trust and more than 10 teachers.

Subsequently, a report by Birmingham City Council's Review Group led by the Independent Chief Advisor Ian Kershaw found 'No evidence of a conspiracy to promote an anti-British agenda, violent extremism or radicalisation in schools' (Kershaw, 2014, p.4). Along similar lines, a study by Mogra (2016) of 21 Ofsted inspection reports of these non-religious schools revealed no evidence of a concerted and deliberate plot to promote radicalisation of Muslim children in these schools. It is worth emphasising that a House of Commons report had concurred with such findings (HM Government, 2015b).

Nevertheless, a few individuals were found to be trying to introduce an intolerant and aggressive ethos in a deliberate and sustained way. As a result of this, the THA raised many issues about the accountability of academies, school governance, leadership, school ethos and improvement, curriculum and equality, the relationship between religion and education, and political ideology and systems of education. Later, the National College for Teaching and Leadership panel hearings found an abuse of justice by the Department for Education's legal team. They had withheld interview transcripts from key witnesses which meant that the senior leadership team had their bans overturned and were free to return to the classroom (Adams, 2017; Awan, 2018).

Despite the outcome of this affair, the role of schools and teachers in the prevention of extremism and radicalisation was brought into sharper focus. At least three differences can be noted in relation to FBV:

- *all* schools were required to address FBV as the Government took unprecedented steps to further embed FBV in independent schools (HM Government, 2014);

- Initially these values were to be respected but now they were to be *actively* promoted;

- To ensure compliance, Ofsted's inspection framework was revised to check and ensure that schools were compliant and also the criteria for unannounced inspections were broadened (HM Government, 2015b, p.16. S38).

Though the allegation to operationally and ideologically take control of these schools remained unproven, it did give government agencies impetus to intervene and pursue an assimilationist agenda conceptualised as national identity in the form of FBV (Poole, 2018).

Origins of FBV

The origins of FBV lie in the political landscape of the UK, where the concept of British values has been fluid and amorphous. To illustrate, when Tony Blair became the prime minister in 1997 he announced that such values included fighting poverty, securing justice and opportunity and being a compassionate society. Later in 2000 his conception changed to fair play, creativity, tolerance and an outward-looking approach to the world, which led Struthers (2017) to note that successive governments have struggled with determining British values. The initiative to teach about 'traditional British values' in schools was initially mooted by the New Labour government minister in 2006, Bill Rammell, and Michael Gove eventually enacted it in 2014 in response to the THA (Vincent, 2019). The definition of FBV currently used has existed at least since 2011. Crucially, it was not a direct attempt at

defining the values; rather, it was a reaction to the phrase embedded within the explication of extremism which stated that, 'Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs' (Richardson, 2015; Tomlinson, 2015). This explanation of extremism was set out in the government's *Prevent* counter-terrorism strategy (HM Government, 2011, p.107; HM Government, 2015a) – in other words, the context was far from being educational as it was conceived from the viewpoint of national security and international policies of the Home Office. Thus, there is an evident link between anti-radicalisation, anti-extremism and the requirement to promote FBV in the education sector. Concurrently, it is also the justification for positioning FBV within what is considered to be 'safeguarding' of children (Vincent, 2019).

The introduction of FBV into education, needs also to be examined within its broader socio-political and historical contexts. This includes a history of Britain that embraces colonial exploitation, imperialism, racial arrogance and oppression, and militarism which may affect how discussions of so-called British values is received by minority ethnic groups (Vincent, 2019; Beck, 2018). It is important to be mindful that the FBV tend to be presented as a 'new' curriculum policy. However, Winter and Mills (2020, p.47), employing a psycho-political approach and informed by anti-colonial work, highlight the often-silent workings of power within the BV policy. They propose that the underlying rationale of FBV duties are symptoms of the much-older colonial education-security relationship, and thus, of white British supremacist subjectivity deployed by Government to defend white privilege. Therefore, ethically, for some British citizens, 'British' represents *un*-freedom, *in*tolerance, *denial* of democracy and oppression of indigenous religions. Though there are divergent views about the legacy of the empire, deeply held views co-exist which are unlikely to be

resolved (Beck, 2018). Unsurprisingly, some have argued that FBV have been selected to promote a particular ideology that opposes dissent from the current political norms and is grounded in a traditional view of Britain's political past: one that claims Britain as a bastion of perpetual progress and elevated civilisation (Mansfield, 2019, p.43).

A further issue which needs to be appreciated is that the foregrounding of the British values rhetoric is an element of a broader agenda seeking to address wider concerns about religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in the twenty-first century, with some arguing that these divisions are deepening seriously (Beck, 2018).

The policy: the problem

Criticism immediately emerged. To begin with, the policy itself was wanting in conceptual clarity as it represented a random selection of values. Richardson (2015) contended that the definition of extremism, wherefrom the FBV originated, lacked any explanation, illustration, rationale, or discussion. It was conceptually unclear because its key terms – 'rule of law', 'liberty', 'democracy', 'tolerance' – are notoriously open to conflicting interpretations, and over the years have had different meanings at different times and in different contexts (Richardson, 2015, p.41). Secondly, the government was criticised for adopting a simplistic assumption that radicalisation results mainly from contact with and indoctrination into extremist ideology, whereas, the reality is that the pathway to violent extremism involves several factors including psychological, socio-economic, religio-political factors and a process of indoctrination into an ideology (Panjwani, 2016, p.331). Indeed, Arthur (2015) posits that there is difficulty in understanding extremism and radicalisation fully because both words lack an objective or universally accepted definition. Radicalisation can be viewed as a process by which someone adopts an extreme position, but it may not involve violent

behaviour in support of the position adopted (Arthur, 2015, p.313). Significantly, the meaning of *undermining* is also left undefined. Unsurprisingly, school leaders in Revell and Bryan's (2016) study expressed uncertainty in its interpretation, and in the absence of a sophisticated discourse to discuss undermining FBV, an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty characterised their perspectives.

Another problem with the policy is its duality. On the one hand a separate guidance was issued and applied to independent schools, free schools and academies (DfE, 2013). Independent schools are regulated and inspected by bodies different from those which regulate and inspect publicly funded schools and are privately funded whereas free schools and academies, while publicly funded, are not under local authority control, but are inspected under the Ofsted Framework. Eaude (2018) questioned why something 'fundamental' should be treated in different ways when the schools are otherwise similar. This anomaly, he suggested, without this being stated explicitly, meant that certain types of school, especially independent Muslim schools, were regarded as particularly likely to encourage radicalisation and so were in need of separate guidance (Eaude, 2018, 70).

Janmaat (2018) highlights another oddity in that the government concentrated on primary and lower secondary education and not on 16–19 colleges, although the latter were still obliged to engage with the Prevent duty. In the absence of any specific guidance from the DfE on how to deliver FBV for this group of education providers, they were advised 'to train staff to help them "exemplify British values" in their management and teaching, "challenge extremist ideas" and decide when to share information about individuals at risk of radicalising' (Janmaat, 2018, p.251-52).

The mandate to promote FBV can be conceived as a liberal (or civic) nationalistic approach to citizenship (Vincent, 2019), the key ingredients of which are the creation of a shared national identity. FBV has thus shifted from shared universal and common values (Lander, 2016). Some leaders of the Early Childhood Education and Care sector in the UK are also critical of the nationalistic focus within FBV and questioned the relevance of the emphasis on 'Britishness' to children, their families and practitioners in nursery settings (Robson, 2019, p.101). People are more likely to demonstrate widespread trust and solidarity when they identify with each other as compatriots, beyond the specifics of their gender, ethnic, cultural or religious identities (Miller and Ali, 2014). Hence it would seem that the phrase 'British values' has a nationalist flavour to it with the aim of arousing patriotism within the school population for nation building which might result in an intertwined net of simplistic stereotypes about race, ethnicity, multiculturalism and religion.

At a time of considerable uncertainty and upheaval, the imposition of FBV with limited diligence, consultation and debate is viewed by some as being part of a higher scheme in determining the relationship of the state and the public. Some Muslim teachers in the study of Panjwani (2016) did not find any conflict between FBV and Islam. Nevertheless, they were still critical of the FBV project and its implementation. Their criticisms ranged from claims of the moral deprivation of contemporary society to sophisticated observations such as the widespread perception among them that Western establishments displayed double standards in practicing democracy and human rights. In addition to the arbitrary choice of values, some felt that they would be deprived of their role of creating critical minds through a fear of criminalisation. A respondent thought that the encouragement to follow rule of law was nothing more than an attempt to create a compliant citizenry when such laws were being made under the shadow of corporate and economic lobbies (Panjwani, 2016, p.337).

Reconsidering 'fundamental' and 'Britishness'

It is important to bear in mind that the values themselves are not being questioned *per se*; rather it is their portrayal as 'fundamental' and 'British' which is seen as unfitting and contentious (Janmaat, 2018). Thus, it is argued that such conceptualisation might lead to the alienation of some among minority communities, especially Muslims (Bolloten and Richardson, 2015; Tomlinson, 2015) and to exclude a sizeable minority of pupils of minority backgrounds from the current historical narrative of Britain as delineated by the National Curriculum (2013) (Mansfield, 2019). It is crucial to minimise any sense of and perception of alienation experienced by pupils in school and in society. A pathway to radicalisation is the search by individuals for an identity and sense of belonging. Social identity theory, in part, suggests that radicalisation develops as a result of individuals being confused about their identities and their search for meaning of their role within society. Within the discussion of British values, in Awan's (2018, p.207) research, some children expressed feelings of lacking a sense of identity and belonging. 'Kamran stated that: "I must confess I have started to question what it means to be British. I honestly feel like I don't belong here anymore".'

In addition, Smith (2016) advanced the view that the policy might instil fear among teachers of addressing sensitive themes in the classroom, pressuring them to avoid or close down open discussions of topical social and political issues. As a result, this could seriously undermine the dialogic and democratic processes of teaching and learning – the very ideas that the government purports to promote.

Significantly, there are philosophical problems in determining a fixed set of values in a diverse society. Eaude (2018, p.72) questions whether FBV can reasonably be described as

being *fundamental* on the basis that there exists two sets of guidance for different types of schools. He goes on to highlight difficulties in relation to situations when any individual or group is not prepared to subscribe to one or more of the statements, and, how they are interpreted. Eaude (2018, p.72) contends that 'As soon as someone questions whether they espouse any fundamental value, this may bring into question their patriotism and commitment to the nation.' He submits that such a position may not be a source of great concern to someone like himself, 'who is British-born and white-skinned, about whom no serious questioning of [his] Britishness is likely.' However, for those born outside Britain, or perceived not to be, and whose religion and culture may lead to their Britishness being open to question may experience more scrutiny; a serious issue. Thus, he concludes that 'any statement of values can easily become exclusive, even when it claims, or seeks, to be inclusive; and those likely to be excluded are those whose membership of a group is already in question.'

As a reaction to the movement of people, integration of minorities, social cohesion, radicalisation and terrorism, the constitution of Britishness has become an increasingly visible part of the political discourse throughout this century (Beck 2018; Vincent, 2019). The attachment of the adjective 'British' to FBV has attracted the most controversy and debate in diverse ways and at various levels as it embraces the notion of insider/outsider Britishness. This is where the outsider is cast as the deficient, racialised 'Other' and who is 'not quite British enough' which is an attempt to centre whiteness. In other words, it could be conceptualised as an exercise to reinforce the privilege and status of whiteness. This concern was highlighted in the research by Elton-Chalcraft et al. (2017) who evidenced that some students, with strongly held values of their own, were able to evaluate FBV as being a government instrument created to 'control' a particular section of society and impose an

assimilationist view of Britishness (Elton-Chalcraft, et al., 2017, p.41). Within an assimilationist agenda, there is concern that this might lead to an entrenched prejudiced outlook among teachers who may feel justified in their quest for the development of Britishness in pupils, and, to assume that some pupils are deficient for not embodying Britishness enough (Smith, 2013, p. 443).

The assumption of associating Britishness with Whiteness exposes a further dilemma. In their interviews with thirty trainee teachers in the UK, Bhopal and Rhamie (2014) found that when trainees discussed White identities, they talked about them in relation to being privileged, advantaged and in powerful positions unlike those who were Black. Whiteness, they discovered, was considered the 'norm'. It was from this 'norm' that all other non-White identities were judged and it was considered to be the point of departure from where other identities were defined. Moreover, it was the single identity, which was considered acceptable and the norm not only for British society but globally. They concluded that Whiteness carried a universal connotation of acceptance and privilege (Bhopal and Rhamie, 2014). Another investigation of white teacher trainees reported a dearth of reflexivity about white privilege and lack of assertiveness in dealing with race related issues in school (Lander, 2011). This would suggest a lack of problematisation of notions related to British values and their role in promoting social cohesion. Furthermore, some RE and citizenship teachers in another study appeared to be disappointed as the word 'British' places an ownership on these values when they were attempting to teach children about a global world (Vincent, 2019). Significantly research over the years has shown that children's notions of who is, and is not British is based on skin colour with some holding the view that only white people born in Britain could be British (Barton and Schamroth, 2004; Elton-Chalcraft, 2009; Elton-Chalcraft, et al., 2017, pp.41-43; Maylor, 2010; Roberts-Holmes, 2004).

Since the definitions of 'Britishness' are unclear and consist of multiple interpretations, Rhamie, Bhopal, and Bhatti (2012), based on their study with secondary students, suggested that the normalisation of Whiteness and its associations with 'Britishness' and power contributes to some students struggling with their identity and connectedness to 'Britishness' and schooling. Thus, the term 'Britishness' in FBV could potentially exclude as well as include (both White and minority ethnic) students. In their research, Bhopal and Rhamie (2014) reported the complexity of students' own experiences of diversity, 'race' and inclusion, which led them to suggest the need for further opportunities for trainees to address these issues in depth rather than relying on the often superficial and simplistic approaches. A sophisticated understanding of 'Britishness' would minimise its potential of being both exclusionary and inclusive. In part, a complex conception can be created by challenging the assumption that minority ethnic students are all immigrants rather than some being British born and by recognising the diversity which exists among the White majority and, that the self-definition of people varies and may be in a flux. In other words ignoring a sensitive and nuanced exploration of 'Britishness' in FBV has the potential of different groups feeling excluded rather than included (Maylor, 2016, p.325). Many teachers and others have expressed particular reservations regarding the perceived targeting of British Muslims within this policy and its divisive nature as it is making some of them question their presence in England and is developing perspectives of 'us' and 'others' and of being seen as a 'suspect community' (Awan, 2018; Farrell and Lander, 2019; Poole, 2018; Vincent, 2019).

It is clear that from the outset, the concept of Britishness created debates about identity, race, colonisation, imperialism, integration and assimilation. Panjwani (2016, p.331), reflecting on subsequent discourses and debates, suggested that the focus on the adjective 'British' stole

the limelight leaving very little space to discuss more important issues around the utility and adequacy of the proposed values themselves. Richardson (2015, p.41) thought that considerable agitation could have been avoided if a general phrase such as 'the fundamental values and principles which underlie public life in the United Kingdom' had been adopted. Beck (2018) seems to concur asserting that many people would consider these as noble principles and that they ought to be foundational in a liberal pluralistic society. However, it was suggested that they need closer specification and institutional embodiment to be effective and, to insist that these are *British* (sic), in his view, is likely to do more harm than good (Beck, 2018, p.232).

Schools and FBV

Prior to the introduction of FBV, values education has had a long history in British education, and has always been loaded with controversy (Deakin-Crick, 2002; Eaude, 2018; Halstead and Taylor, 1996). In relation to the curricula of schools, this controversy has been exacerbated by the positioning of the active promotion of FBV within the existing requirement for schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils. Ministers described the inclusion of FBV in schools as a decisive shift away from moral relativism in the classroom (Adams, 2017). In other words, teachers would be expected to adopt a particular stance, the scope of which would be left to individual teachers to determine, even though contextually, it is only assumed that FBV builds pupils resilience to radicalisation (Vincent, 2019), with doubts regarding the impact of 'regular encounters' with FBV in the school context and how this is able to ensure pupils develop a sense of belonging at a national level (Vincent, 2019, p.28).

FBV curriculum policy is not a separate curriculum strand or a discrete subject in the school curriculum; rather the active promotion of FBV permeates the curriculum to form part of the requirement for pupils' SMSC development. In other words, all curricula in school have a contribution and role to play. Confusingly, however, the DfE requires headteachers, on the one hand, to help pupils 'distinguish' the difference between 'right' and 'wrong', while on the other hand, acknowledging that, 'different people may hold different views about what is 'right' and 'wrong' (DfE, 2014, p. 4; Elton-Chalcraft, et al., 2017, p.30). For successful FBV, schools must now demonstrate deliberativeness in their planning and engagement and 'challenge opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to fundamental British values' (DfE, 2014, p.5) and to move from the minimal level of promotion (passive) to maximal (active) level (Healy, 2018).

Empirically, based on nine case study schools, both primary and secondary, Vincent (2019) found four hybrid ways rather than discrete approaches through which FBV were promoted. The first was *Representing Britain* and consisted of two elements. One had posters and displays listing FBV, usually with the Union Jack-themed decoration. The other focussed on teaching about symbols commonly associated with Britain such as cups of tea, the Queen, Shakespeare, and so on rather than on values (vide Beck, 2018; Elton-Chalcraft, et al., 2017). Vincent (2019, p.23) reported that this approach has been criticised by Ofsted's Chief Inspector of Schools who argued that 'crafting a picture of the Queen out of sequins' was 'charming' but 'not teaching children about our common values'. However, despite such criticisms, such features persist and, in some cases, Darwin, Dawkins, famous British sport personalities and landmarks are added with bunting hanging around the display frame.

In the second approach, nearly all their case study schools had '*Re-packaged*' their current activities to some extent. In other words, schools present their existing practices as evidence of their work. For instance, the long-established school councils were merged with FBV. For Vincent (2019), this showed the ability of these schools to absorb the FBV policy. It was also noted that some organisations who offer support to schools recommend auditing current practice and to use a cross-curricular approach to FBV.

The third approach '*relocating FBV as school values*' describes schools which had particularly strong values frameworks. According to Vincent (2019), in this approach a school signals particular values on its website, and disseminates values such as respect and resilience throughout its practices, teaching those values explicitly (sometimes called character education). In such schools, the tendency is for FBV to be absorbed into their general values work.

The fourth approach '*Engagement with FBV*' adopts a critical stance in terms of the values. Here, pupils critically examine the advantages and limitations of democracy. Although some components of this approach were sometimes implemented by some of the case study secondary schools, these were found not to be systematic, and none followed an explicit programme of engagement with FBV, instead they tended towards absorption (Vincent 2019, p.24).

The research by McGhee and Zhang (2017) into the enactment of FBV policy analysed school websites. In response to the introduction of the securitising instrument in school and a retreat from multiculturalism, they found some schools deploying 'local discretion'. The work of these schools and colleges was innovative and defused some of the securitising

features by celebrating the UK as a multi-racial, multi-faith and multi-cultural society. These schools also ensured that their promotion of FBV was consistent with their own existing values and ethos which included the SMSC development of their pupils.

Robson (2019) researched the way in which the new requirement to promote a pre-determined set of FBV as a specific measure to counter terrorism has been mediated by the ECEC sector practitioners in their pedagogical practice in England. Some practitioners adopted a critical perspective regarding the selection of resources where there was an explicit strategy of avoiding symbols of nationalism. In examining displays of children's (aged 2-4) work in ECEC, Robson (2019) found that they were part of a deliberate process of evidencing compliance and although the practitioners were clear about the rationale for the displays - an explicit public commitment to FBV – they were nevertheless afforded lower status relative to other aspects of the visual environment. Values education was found by Robson (2019) to be embedded within their pedagogy. In all her research settings, practitioners planned with parents and the communities and the visual record of these meetings were displayed as a way of validating and celebrating children's contribution to planning. The practitioners felt these meetings gave opportunities for children to learn about the FBV of democracy.

The research by Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe (2019) examined the use of imagery on display boards in 27 primary schools across the country. They found that generally they projected dominant white British majoritarian perspectives and discourses of British identity. However, the data from their teachers shows them producing a mixture of shared and different responses in their interpretations of FBV that construct a sense of British identity. Teachers interpreted most of the dominant images of common icons and symbols of traditional British culture as not representing fundamental British values. Moreover, the display board chosen

by all teachers as being least representative used images that were icons and symbols of an ethnocentric traditional and stereotypical white British culture (Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe, 2019, p.66). In other research, Mansfield (2019) reflected over the relationship between history in the National Curriculum and the active promotion of FBV within SMSC. He found that FBV were confusing, contradictory and exclusionary. He argued that pupils cannot be compelled to respect Britain's history or its democratic system of government if they are to learn how to be independent and generate 'self-knowledge'. In his experience, when applying the SMSC guidance and offering 'balance' the teacher is essentially policing free speech and thought. Mansfield (2019, 44) suggested that in the case of SMSC, FBV are presented as though they are correct and alternatives are erroneous and 'undesirable'. In such a situation, if schools are to promote 'self-knowledge' and independence, then pupils ought to be given a range of information and safe environments to discuss such views in order to decide for themselves (Mansfield, 2019).

Summary

This chapter has highlighted key elements of the requirement to actively promote FBV in primary schools. Hopefully, it has facilitated deliberation of these controversial yet important values to assist an engagement with the social, cultural, ethical and pedagogical issues related to their inclusion in the ethos and life of schools. There is a long history of values in education in Britain and it is a contested phenomenon, with the origins of FBV lying outside educational discourse and in the securitisation agenda. The THA in Birmingham provided further impetus to strengthen FBV in the curriculum and to hold schools accountable for them through inspections. The policy has been problematised to expose the tensions that exist not only between policy and practice but also in terms of how teachers can become instruments of the state and affect their autonomy. As educators, we need to think about our own values

and our role in shaping the worldview of pupils growing up in modern Britain. We need to challenge and debate our understandings and interpretations of the terms 'fundamental', 'British' and 'values' with a view to broadening our conception of Britishness and its political nature.

Questions for reflection

To what extent does the definition of FBV meet your expectations of FBV?

How would you defend the teaching of FBV on educational grounds?

How would you describe the relationship between SMSC and FBV?

Further Reading and Resources

Caroll, J. Howard, C. & Knight, B. (2018) *Understanding British Values in Primary Schools: Policy and Practice*, London: Learning Matters.

This text considers a whole school approach as being the best way to teach British Values. It offers a variety of ideas to assist teachers to take ownership and embrace the agenda. In addition to case studies, it also provides a useful audit of statements, evidence and impact.

Elton-Chalcraft, Revell, L & Lander, V. (2018) Fundamental British Values: Your Responsibility, to promote or not to promote? in Cooper, H. & Elton-Chalcraft, S. (eds) *Professional Studies in Primary Education*, (3rd ed), London: SAGE Publications.

This is an important chapter which invites critical reflection about the rationale to promote FBV and asks you to examine your own values. In fact, it questions whether student teachers should be promoting FBV. Based on their own research, the authors highlight the problematic nature of adhering to governmental instructions. A section offers some practical ideas for engaging with the requirement to promote and not to undermine FBV.

Salter, L & O'Shaughnessy, S. (2018) *British Values: Getting it right in a week*, St Albans: Critical Publishing.

This A5 sized small book is a practical guide accessibly written with the aim of deepening and extending the impact of work on FBV using proven strategies. It provides some useful reflective tools for questioning, auditing, evaluating, planning and implementing FBV in school. The examples are linked with active citizenship and taken from across all sectors.

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