

Consistency in Values:
The Transition from
Primary to Secondary School

Character in Transition

Report Summary

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learningforlife
exploring core values

UNIVERSITY OF
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This booklet is to be launched at Barton Court School, Canterbury, on Friday 26th February 2010 by Julian Brazier MP.

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A copy of the full report and references can be found on
www.learningforlife.org.uk



FOREWORD

I am proud of our local schools. Canterbury has some of the best schools in the country, secondary and primary. This study of pupils in transition from primary to secondary schools in Canterbury presents us with some very interesting findings and I commend the commitment which went into gathering a wealth of survey data from the children and teachers. The report is right to start from the premise that education is not just about the acquisition of academic credentials and social skills, but also, crucially, about active character development. Its study produces some revealing findings about pupils' views on virtues and values.

At a time when the United Nations tells us that Britain is now the worst of the twenty-one industrialised nations in which to grow up, many of the findings are heartening. Most children are proud of their families, enjoy school, have high academic aspirations and value trust and honesty.

Nevertheless, there are also grounds for serious concern. One of the saddest findings of this study is that Year 7 pupils (i.e. those in their first year at Secondary School) did not have a positive view of their teachers. The surveys suggest that they were less likely to think their teachers cared for them, or helped them with their school work. I found this hard to reconcile with the schools I have visited so often locally. The key, I suspect, lies in the marked shift towards seeing other children as role models. The figures show that they were also less likely than younger children to perceive their teachers as people who helped develop their attitudes and behaviour.

There is much food for thought here. We can't sell our children short today and expect to enjoy a better tomorrow. My congratulations to the John Templeton Foundation for this insight into the minds of the next generation.

Julian Brazier MP
Canterbury

CHARACTER, VALUES AND THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION

Schools and the wider educational systems in Britain are subject to an understandable pressure to provide skilled people equipped to meet the increasingly competitive demands of employment. In doing so, however, schools may ignore or take for granted another critical dimension of education – encouraging students to become aware of themselves as responsible people.

We believe that education needs to be seen as a total lifelong process involving families, schools and employers in a political and social framework concerned with personal well-being, moral sensitivity and the flourishing of human society. A reinvigorated conscious focus upon character education in schools is essential if a proper balance is to be restored to the educational process.

All dimensions of education are essential if students are to assume their personal role in society equipped with the personal qualities, dispositions, attitudes, values and virtues to take responsibility for themselves and to contribute to the common good. Good habits encouraged in the process of education underpin the ability and inclination to engage in the necessary business of further lifelong personal development and learning.



Moreover, while employers repeatedly call attention to lack of skills and relevant knowledge in their new employees, they also point to the missing dimension of personal 'character'.

Character is about who we are and who we become. It is an interlocked set of personal values and virtues which normally guide conduct and includes the virtues of responsibility, honesty, self-reliance, reliability, generosity, self-discipline, and a sense of identity and purpose. This entails active character development, which is not simply about the acquisition of academic and social skills: it is ultimately about the kind of person we become and want to become. This process is not achieved within a vacuum; in order to become a person, an individual needs to grow up in a culture, and the richer the culture the more of a person he or she has a chance of becoming. The importance of cultural influences on the lives and aspirations of young people in Canterbury will become apparent below.



CHARACTER IN TRANSITION

Consistency in Values enquires into the nature of and changes in pupils' understanding of values in the transitional phase of school from primary to secondary education. Pupils in this project include 10- and 11-year-olds in their final year of primary education, known as Year 6 (Yr 6), and 11- and 12-year-olds in their first year of secondary education, known as Year 7 (Yr 7).

This project discusses pupils' understanding of character and the moral values they hold. It also seeks to find out who or what influenced their moral values, and to examine which individuals, institutions and situations might have hindered or promoted their development.



The experience of transition from the familiar, nurturing and supportive ethos of what is very often a small primary school to the more impersonal, larger, and quite possibly intimidating secondary school can be a challenging phase in pupils' lives. Essentially, the period of transition is a time when pupils will be removed from one secure environment, with its familiar values, rules, routines and structures, to a new environment with its own (and often very different) values, rules, routines and structures. Due to the importance of this period in the development of a child's character, the *Learning for Life* project has chosen to research the transition from primary to secondary school as part of its focus.



INTRODUCTION TO LEARNING FOR LIFE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Learning for Life involves a series of major research projects, largely funded by the John Templeton Foundation and Porticus UK. It is an ambitious and groundbreaking initiative with few parallels in the UK. Indeed, this is the first coherent exploration of character development that studies all educational age groups and on into employment. Within the overall project, Learning for Life, Consistency in Values is one of five separate studies:

- (a) A character perspective in the early years;
- (b) Consistency in values - the transition from primary to secondary school;
- (c) The values and character dispositions of 14-16 year olds;
- (d) The formation of virtues and dispositions in the 16-19 age range; and
- (e) Values in higher education and employment.



The overall sample involves tracking more than 4,000 children and young people, 300 parents and 100 teachers over a two-year period in Birmingham, Bristol, Canterbury and London, together with a series of group interviews and case-study observations. In addition, the sample of this report contains in-depth interviews with over 85 undergraduates and 65 graduate employees. Additional case studies of particular issues have also been undertaken. Each project has a dedicated full-time research fellow working over a two to three year period.

For a short literature review of the origins of character education the reader should consult the previous report - Character Education: The Formation of Virtues and Dispositions in 16-19 Year Olds with particular reference to the religious and spiritual – referred in this report as the Bristol report (www.learningforlife.org.uk).

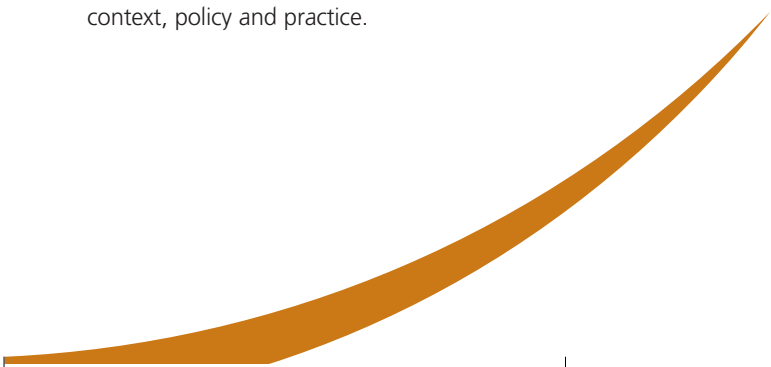
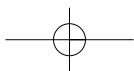
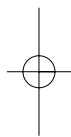
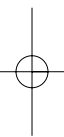
INTRODUCTION TO CHARACTER IN TRANSITION


The Character in Transition research was undertaken over a two-year period during 2007 - 2009 in five primary schools and six secondary schools in a city in south-east England. It enquires into the nature of and changes in pupils' understanding of values in the transitional phase of schooling from primary to secondary education, as well as the consistency of provision made by schools to support pupils' character development.

This study discusses what pupils understand by character and sets out to ascertain the moral values held by a group of pupils aged between ten and twelve years old. The study sought to question who or what has influenced their moral values and examined which individuals, institutions and situations might have hindered or promoted their development. Some of the issues and concerns which arose - for example, relations with neighbours, the matter of local and national pride and questions of trust - may seem not to impinge upon character education per se. The data is nevertheless presented here because it constitutes important evidence, and its potential significance will be taken into account in the final report based upon all five separate studies of the *Learning for Life* project on Character Education and Development - context, policy and practice.

As far as possible, the research strategy was designed to explore the ways in which young people describe how they think, feel and behave. It is difficult to report on and analyse their thinking without introducing ideas and perspectives that originate from the research team (rather than the data); but the intention was to be honest with ourselves and with others about this. A large number of concepts arise in this project: values, morality, virtues, duties, and principles. However, there is no consensus either on the meaning of these words or on how they should be fitted into a single system of thought. Moreover, there is little agreement on how education does or should impact on these concepts. For a detailed account of the research assumptions adopted, please refer to the full report.

It is, however, worth mentioning by way of background that the tradition of virtue language has been eroded, and as a result an impoverished discourse on character has contributed to a lack of coherence in the rationale of the educational system.





There is a lack of clarity in the moral objectives that schools set themselves, especially in the area of personal responsibility and practice in this area is rarely evaluated. Government initiatives to enhance character education remain patchy, narrowly focused and marginal rather than brought into mainstream provision. There is little support or training for teachers. Socially excluded groups of young people are least likely to be involved in character development initiatives such as volunteering. Moreover, while employers repeatedly call attention to lack of skills and relevant knowledge in their new employees, they also point to the missing dimension of personal 'character'.

Schools and the wider educational systems are subject to an understandable pressure to provide the economy with functionally competent persons equipped to meet the increasingly competitive demands of employment. In doing so schools may ignore or take for granted another important dimension of education – the encouragement into critical self-consciousness of the process by which a student learns to become aware of himself or herself as a responsible person.

All dimensions of education are essential if pupils and young people are to assume their role in society equipped with the personal qualities, dispositions, attitudes, values and virtues to take responsibility for themselves and to contribute to the common good. Good habits encouraged in the process of education underpin the ability and inclination to engage in the necessary business of further lifelong personal development and learning.

BACKGROUND TO THE AREA

An individual pupil's values will develop as a result of a combination of personal and social interaction with parents, carers, siblings, other relatives, neighbours, teachers and friends, each of whom may espouse or model certain values and qualities of character. The pupil's values are nurtured and developed within and outside the home in a variety of contexts including school, sports, the arts and youth groups. This leads to the development of values and qualities such as friendship, generosity, trust, loyalty, determination, respect, love, responsibility and so on. Such interactions not only help develop a child's character, but also their aspirations and self-image.

The experience of transition from the familiar, nurturing and supportive ethos of what is very often a small primary school to the more impersonal and larger secondary school can be a challenging phase in pupils' lives and is a significant milestone in the child's development. It is also a time of considerable change and with the onset of the challenges of adolescence. Hence, this period of transition can frequently prove stressful. Pupils often face more rigorous academic standards, unfamiliar teachers, a subject-based curriculum taught by specialists, new sets of school rules and usually firmer methods of discipline. Taken together such changes are likely to be daunting for the most resilient of pupils. They now find themselves the youngest and probably the

smallest pupils in their new school and are unlikely to know the majority of the other pupils in their new classes. They will need to forge new friendships while possibly experiencing a sense of loss of the friends their primary years.

Academic changes between primary and secondary phases will test a pupil's character. For example, in the first weeks in secondary school Year 7 pupils will need to get to know up to approximately a dozen teachers, all with their own rules, routines, systems, and teaching style. They have to learn the geography of the larger school and organise themselves to be at the right place at the right time with the right kit. It is therefore not surprising to

learn that the academic attainment of pupils drops following transition to secondary school.

While there are clear academic and pedagogical differences between primary and secondary schools, there are also significant social, cultural and affective aspects of primary schooling that support and nurture pupils prior to transition that are likely to be absent from many secondary schools.

Moreover, primary teaching methods contrast markedly with the more specialised approach of secondary schools where subject specialist teachers 'deliver' the curriculum to different groups of pupils in a year group of up to 180 pupils in any given week. Hence pupils are likely to be taught by between eight to ten different teachers. By contrast, much of



the pupils' working day will be self-directed in most primary classrooms, with pupils expected to take a good deal of responsibility for their own organisation and academic work. They can approach the teacher or learning assistant for support and guidance as needed and when appropriate.

Conversely, pupils are likely to be far less autonomous in their daily lives after transition to secondary school beyond having to carry a large bag of books around the school campus to separate subject lessons. Once in class, pupils will probably be expected to sit and work at a desk or table throughout the lesson with the teacher taking responsibility for the pattern and manner of learning. This means that pupils are largely disempowered compared with their previous experiences in primary school.

A number of studies have also indicated a decline in pupil self-concept, which has been found to be at its highest in Year 6

when they are the oldest in the primary school. At this stage of their primary school careers pupils will be very well known to staff and to other pupils. They may well hold a position of status and responsibility in the school as a key member of a school sports team, or artistic or musical group.

The transition has a negative impact on key components of self-concept, which include perceived scholastic competence, social acceptance, physical appearance, behavioural conduct and global self-worth. Our study focuses on behaviour, such as the degree to which pupils like the way they behave, do the right thing, act the way they are supposed to, avoid getting into trouble, and do the things they are supposed to do. We also looked at the global self-worth component, namely the extent to which Year 6 and Year 7 pupils like themselves as people, are happy with the way they are leading their lives, and are generally happy with the way they are. These two components are underpinned by the pupils' values and qualities that will help to sustain them and to meet the challenges they experience during the process of transition from primary to secondary school. We explore below the differences between pupils' experience of character formation and development in the last year of primary schooling and in the first year of secondary school.



KEY FINDINGS

All the evidence gathered from interviews with pupils and teachers, questionnaires, written reflections and school prospectus, suggests that 10 to 12 year olds were characterised by a strong sense of values and character. Pupils had high academic aspirations and a general awareness of the importance of caring for the environment.

The key findings of this project include:

MORAL AWARENESS

Pupils in the survey manifest a high level of moral awareness and are concerned about values and character development.

There are no obvious differences in the values held by Year 6 and Year 7 pupils, but younger pupils tended to have more definite ideas of right and wrong. Older pupils, on the other hand, tended to look at moral issues in degrees of 'rightness' or 'wrongness'. This is partly a reflection of the school curriculum and school ethos, and partly a result of moral development.

THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN VALUES DEVELOPMENT

Teachers interviewed believed that it was the role of the school to help pupils develop values. There was a greater emphasis on moral issues in the primary schools.

Secondary school teachers viewed their role in pupils' values development within the context of the curriculum. The focus tended to be on academic achievement, personal responsibility and individual development.



KEY VALUES

The most important values to the pupils were trust and honesty. Courtesy and tolerance, on the other hand, were seen as the least important of values. Year 6 pupils, however, appeared to display a higher level of moral justice. They were more likely to state that they would report incidents of bullying, admit their mistakes and were less likely to cheat in tests or homework.

Pupils generally perceived a good person as one who is kind, caring, helpful, trustworthy and loyal.

RELIGION AND MORALITY

Most pupils did not believe that religion had an important influence on moral development. School and religion made little difference to whether pupils were likely to live up to their image of a good person.

Few pupils thought having a religious faith was an important characteristic of a good person. Pupils in the survey also showed a superficial awareness of environmental issues.

SELF-IMAGE

A notable proportion of pupils were tentative about their self-image. However, in comparison to Year 7 pupils, Year 6 pupils were marginally more likely to have a low opinion of themselves, but were more likely to have good opinions of other people. Although they were more likely to state that they were generally optimistic and cheerful, they were less likely to be optimistic about the future.



Only half of the respondents stated that they knew what being 'British' meant, and slightly over half indicated that they understood the British way of life. A notable proportion was not sure, suggesting ambivalence in their understanding of such issues.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents were the people pupils trusted most. While younger pupils were likely to trust their teachers more than secondary pupils, older pupils by comparison were likely to trust the police and their neighbours more.

Parents, in particular mothers, were seen as most influential in helping these young people develop moral values. Teachers appeared to have more influence on younger pupils' character development than older pupils'. Younger pupils had a more positive view of school and their teachers as instruments of character formation.

Most of the pupils were proud of their family background, confirming the influence of the family on pupils' personal and social development. Year 6 pupils were more likely than Year 7 pupils to be involved in school-organised charity work.

Friends, mothers, teachers and TV personalities had some influence on pupils' moral development. Most pupils indicated that their parents had the most influence on their lives as they were the ones they had most contact with.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP

Friendship was highly valued by all pupils. When asked what they enjoyed about school, almost all mentioned friends. This was a consistent theme.

Friendship was an important contributing factor to primary school pupils' happiness and positive experience of school. Many looked forward to making new friends in secondary school. The positive experience could partly be due to the effective preparation by their teachers, who were seen by many as an influential instrument in helping them to develop their character.

What Year 7 pupils most liked about school was having friends. They also liked the greater freedom, a wider range of activities, having different teachers and being treated like adults. They did not particularly like doing schoolwork such as homework, revisions and exams. They did not find school particularly boring.



ELEMENTS OF THE TRANSITION

The fear of bullying and school work were the two things that primary school pupils dreaded most about secondary school.

Secondary school pupils were less sure about their school experience. Over half indicated that they were happier in Yr 7 than in Yr 6, but only a third indicated a preference for primary school. A quarter of them were unsure. This is perhaps because their experiences of primary and secondary schools were quite different and thus difficult to compare.

Year 7 pupils did not have a positive view of their teachers (they experience many more at secondary school). They were less likely to think their teachers cared for them, or helped them with their school work. They were also relatively less likely to perceive their teachers as people who helped develop their attitude and behaviour.

ENJOYMENT OF SCHOOL

Overall, boys and secondary school pupils were less likely to report enjoying school.

Primary school pupils were more likely than secondary school pupils to report enjoying school.

Pupils in different types of schools have the same likelihood of enjoying school life. It was not the type of school, but the individual school itself that made a difference to whether pupils were more or less likely to enjoy school life.

ACADEMIC ASPIRATIONS

Pupils reported that they had high academic aspirations. There was little difference between sexes, ethnicity groups and year groups in terms of academic aspirations. The most important difference was found between pupils in different schools. There is a suggestion that it is not so much the type of schools as the intake of the schools that make a difference in pupils' aspirations.

The following quotations from pupils and teachers sum up some of the key findings on pupils' values, their views of a moral person and positive influences in their lives:

Mrs. D, she helps us, [...] because she cares. She always supports us.

Everyone's kind, but not all the time because everyone gets annoyed at some time.

Johnnie as well, because he's always helping the little ones. Johnnie knows what to say and he knows not to hurt your feelings.

You get a nice feeling that you've helped someone

[...] if you are around with good people you want to be like them so you naturally 'be' more of a good person...if you are around with bad people, then I don't think your instinct would be to be good.

I don't have a religion. I'm not sure if it helps you or not.

I think I care more for the environment now than in Year 6 because now I am aware of the consequences of pollution and of littering

[...] the people who influence me the most are my parents because I see them every day and I spend a lot of time with them.



Teachers influence you and teach you what you need to know in life and boost your confidence. They also help you understand who you are.

I think my friends influence me more now than in Year 6 because they have become more mature and more supportive of me.... Now I have more friends. We also respect one another.

Having lots of friends makes me feel cheerful and happy.

People trust people they like. If you break the trust they won't like you.

I think I can trust people more now than I could in primary school. I think this is because I have more friends in secondary school.

You don't really talk to teachers here. It's not so easy.

I think the best way I teach pupils in my class is by modelling myself. I will over model kindness and it has an enormous effect on the pupils, because I am their teacher and they almost subconsciously imitate and take their role from me. And if I am very kind, polite and very considerate it has an enormous effect on how the pupils react to that.

RESEARCH PROCESS AND FOCUS

This study explores the nature of and changes in pupils' understanding of values in the transitional phase of schooling from primary to secondary education as well as the consistency in provision made by schools for pupils' character development. The key purpose is to explore appropriate, effective and consistent ways in which to support the development of pupils' character across primary and secondary schooling. The following questions underpinned the research process:

- What difference does the transition between primary and secondary schools make to values held by 10-12 year olds?
- How do the 10-12 year olds participating in this study understand values (in the context of human qualities/characteristics)?
- What values do 10-12 year olds hold as important?
- How do their teachers understand values?
- How do primary and secondary schools make provision for character education?
- What factors in and/or outside the school appear to influence the character formation of the 10-12 year olds participating in this study?

The project comprised a case study of five primary and six secondary schools in one community, including grammar and non-selective schools. The area that defines the locality was broadly typical, both of the region and the country as a whole, although as a whole it is socioeconomically just below the national average and significantly below the regional average in the South-east of England. Although

Canterbury is regarded as a relatively prosperous city, there are some areas of considerable deprivation and a relatively high proportion of 12.5% residents claim unemployment benefits. Over 96% of pupils were white and the majority saw themselves as being of English nationality.

Phase 1 involved a preliminary group interviews with pupils and teachers and a questionnaire survey. The teachers selected included form teachers/tutors, teachers of citizenship education and those who delivered the PHSE programmes. The preliminary phase enabled researchers to map the nature of character formation in the last year of primary school and the first year of secondary school, thus providing an empirical and theoretical base to inform the design and construction of a questionnaire to be used in Phase 2, which also involved focus group interviews with Year 6 and Year 7 pupils. Further interviews were held in order to clarify provisional interpretations. Emergent findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 interviews were used to inform the construction of the second questionnaire.

The interviews were designed to find out students' understanding of 'good' character and the kind of values they held. In addition, they seek to discover the origins of their particular character traits and the sources that had influenced their core selves. Character was discussed not only in terms of what values they held, but also what action they took. Clearly, conclusions drawn about their actions need to take account of problems associated with self-reporting and with self-presentation within a group context. In the groups the students talked about 'values' and 'character' rather than the unfamiliar concept of 'virtues'.

PHASE ONE: STUDENT FINDINGS

WHAT DO STUDENTS PERCEIVE TO BE QUALITIES OF A 'GOOD PERSON'?

In order to elicit a working definition of goodness from the students they were asked to consider the qualities of one or two people they had identified as 'good' people. The most frequently mentioned qualities were in ranking order:

- helpfulness
- caring
- a sense of humour
- kindness
- consideration for others
- loving
- fairness
- supportiveness
- friendliness
- intelligence

Pupils identified 49 different qualities, which were mentioned a total of 190 times across the eleven group interviews.



Table 1 shows there were differences between Year 6 and Year 7 in the qualities pupils highlighted as belonging to a 'good' person. For both Years 6 and 7, the most frequently cited quality was 'helpfulness'. Other than 'kindness', which ranked higher by Year 6 pupils, the qualities cited as those belonging to a 'good' person varied between the year groups. Year 6 and Year 7 used different words to describe the same quality, which is probably a reflection of the students' vocabulary development as they progress from Year 6 to Year 7.

TABLE 1
MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED QUALITIES BY YEAR GROUP

YEAR 6

Helpful
Sense of humour
Kind
Supportive
Fair
Loving
Determined

YEAR 7

Helpful
Caring
Trustworthy
Kind
Considerate
Friendly
Understanding

The change in framework within which Year 7 view 'good' qualities supports findings from research studies within the field of transition from primary to secondary school.

There is an interesting shift in the terms that students used to describe qualities of a 'good person' as they move from Year 6 to Year 7. For example, in Year 6 students used *'does not give up on others'* to mean supportive; while those in Year 7 take *'always there for someone'* to mean trustworthy when the two terms could mean the same thing. *'Caring'* and *'loving'* also connote the same quality but one term was used by Year 7 while the other by Year 6 students. Older Year 7 students do not see qualities like having a *'sense of humour'*, *'being fair'* and *'determined'* as important in a good person as they do for Year 6 students. On the other hand, qualities like being considerate, friendly and understanding which were not mentioned by Year 6 students featured in the responses among Year 7 students.



WHAT KIND OF BEHAVIOUR DO STUDENTS THINK MAKE A GOOD PERSON?

The most cited role models were their teachers, parents and school friends. To Year 6 students kind people are *'helpful'* and *'would not hurt your feelings'*. They are *'supportive'* and *'want the best for you'*. They are *'brave and positive'* like 'superheroes'.

Year 7 pupils saw good people as *'friendly people who make jokes'*, *'are always quite happy'*, *'smile at you and always say hello'*. Kind people were perceived by the pupils as being those who would *'give you time'*, would be *'helpful'*, *'put others first'* and are generous.

HOW WOULD STUDENTS RESPOND IF THEY HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN HELPING AN ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR AND GOING TO PLAY WITH YOUR FRIENDS?

In order to explore the extent to which pupils shared the positive thoughts and behaviour they had described as being those of a 'good' person, they were presented with a dilemma. Pupils were asked to choose between going to a local shop to buy milk for a retired neighbour, who had asked them for help, or to go and play with their friends. Most felt that they would help as their elderly neighbour's need was greater than their friends'. Although the majority of the pupils displayed a strong sense of compassion and empathy for the neighbour, there were some who said they would undertake the errand to 'be guilt free' or in expectation of some reward. Interestingly, almost all the pupils did not see the two actions as mutually exclusive. They would undertake the errand for their neighbour and either take their friends

along, or ask their friends to wait for them. When asked, 'Would you get the milk if your friends refused to go with you and refused to wait for you?' the pupils were emphatic that they would do the good deed for their neighbour.

WHAT DO STUDENTS PERCEIVE TO BE KINDNESS AND IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE KIND ALL THE TIME?

Pupils were asked to consider if they believed that people with the quality of kindness were kind all the time. The majority of pupils recognised the difficulty of trying to be kind all the time. Year 7 pupils tend to consider the issue at a deeper level where outward behaviour may be caused by a particular situation,



while some students equate kindness with love and compare it with the love from their parents.

Year 6 pupils tended to consider this question from a personal point of view and think of what might cause them to be unkind. For many pupils, any unkind behaviour would be the result of their mood or feelings. Pupils acknowledged that kindness is important and can be developed, but sometimes external circumstances can cause a person to appear to act unkindly, while retaining a core of kindness. Some Year 7 pupils believed that a justification for the need to be unkind was a matter of reasonable self-defence.

STUDENTS' REACTION TO A CONFLICT SITUATION. (IMAGINE YOU HAD TO GET A LOT OF WORK DONE AND ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS KEPT TALKING TO YOU. HOW WOULD YOU REACT?)

Here again students were able to demonstrate a level of maturity with regard to handling a conflict situation. Both Year 6 and 7 pupils valued friendship highly, and while they were aware of the importance

of getting schoolwork done, they were also careful not to damage their friendship and felt that kindness was very important.

PUPILS' SELF-PERCEPTION IN RELATION TO BEING GOOD

When pupils were asked if they believed that as an individual they were a 'good' person, the majority believed that they were 'good', but acknowledged that good or bad behaviour was influenced by their 'moods'. Although they acknowledged that being 'good' was a matter of choice, there was no recognition that they might have to control their feelings or moods when interacting with others.

REASONS PUPILS GAVE FOR WANTING TO BE A GOOD PERSON

Pupils said they liked doing 'good' because of feeling good and in the hope of a returned favour:

*It makes you feel warm inside.
(Year 6 pupil)*

*I feel good because it makes him
[pupil's father] feel good.
(Year 6 pupil)*

If you are nice other people will be nice back.

(Year 7 pupil)

You get a nice feeling that you've helped someone.

(Year 7 pupil)

However, many pupils said that they '*did not want to be good all the time*'. As George Orwell remarked: '*On the whole, human beings want to be good, but not too good, and not quite all the time*'. Their comments suggested that they perceived being good all the time as the opposite of fun and that such behaviour might make them unpopular.

For the majority of pupils, the term 'good' was seen within the framework of *doing good* as opposed to *being good*. They interpreted *being good* with obedience: doing the things that adults wanted them to do, when the adults wanted them to do them, for example doing homework, tidying a bedroom, not talking in class, not running in the corridor. A number of pupils perceived certain personal advantages of being good, for example, achieving academically and having more friends. However, when pupils were asked to consider the qualities they had identified as those belonging to a 'good' person in

the negative (e.g. unhelpful, unforgiving, unloving etc.) and to apply them to themselves, they all agreed that they would not like to be that sort of person.

PEOPLE THAT PUPILS BELIEVE INFLUENCE THEIR GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Role models are central to moral development. Pupils were asked to consider who and what had helped them to be a good person. For both year groups the biggest influence cited by pupils was family or parents. Pupils perceived that the influence involved both the love of the family/parents, and the examples set by parents, grandparents or siblings. Similarly, friends were perceived as having some influence. Some pupils were also influenced by quite self-oriented feelings such as being praised for doing good, their reputation and the personal satisfaction gained from doing a 'good' deed.

In summary, pupils in the study were able to identify 'good' characteristics and to recognise corresponding behaviour, actions and thoughts, for example: qualities such as helpfulness, kindness, loyalty, and friendship, among others. Pupils were able to see that people who display such qualities are likely to: ***be approachable; put others before themselves; encourage others; not expect anything in return for kindness/help and be good natured/happy.*** In addition, many pupils recognised that individuals can choose to be 'good', i.e. choose to develop a particular quality, but that moods and feelings can affect their behaviour and action. Although these pupils said they understand that an individual can choose to be 'good', none mentioned '***self-control***' as an influential factor on an individual's decision to be good.



TEACHER FINDINGS

TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF AND VIEWS ABOUT, VALUES

All teachers recognised the importance of their roles as curricular educator and moral agent, and had a strong understanding of the 'good' qualities of human character, with no general difference across primary and secondary phases. However, there were some specific differences between teachers at different schools. Teachers saw 'good' qualities as one or more of the following: *patience, tolerance, empathy, compassion, kindness, respect, trustworthiness, honesty, being caring, helpful, sharing, hard working, being able to work with others, having a knowledge of right and wrong which should be reflected in one's behaviour, being able to create a stable environment for others and being true to oneself (for example, not being led by others when the individual disagreed with others' opinions).*

Teachers viewed the teaching of moral, spiritual, cultural and social values within the context of teaching values generally. They expressed a strong belief that values should be a cross-curricular element as well as a discrete curricular subject and one secondary teacher commented on the importance of embedding character education in the whole ethos of the school.

Primary school teachers who were interviewed do not generally use words like 'values', and even less 'virtues', when addressing values, qualities and dispositions with their pupils because they believe that pupils would not understand



the words. This produces a somewhat self-fulfilling prophecy, because without explaining and using these words the pupils are unlikely to understand their meanings.

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOW VALUES WERE, OR COULD BE, COMMUNICATED THROUGH THEM

All teachers interviewed stated that they believed one of the roles of the teacher is to help pupils to develop values. However, many commented on the need for support from the school, the example or support of other teachers, support of senior management and/or parental support. A number underlined the importance of being a good role model for the pupils by exemplifying the behaviours they wished to see in their pupils, or in society at large. For primary school teachers this involved developing a good relationship with the pupils, being firm but fair, modelling kindness, making pupils aware of what may be achieved through hard work, giving time to pupils and positively reinforcing pupils' acts of politeness or courtesy.

The majority of secondary school teachers viewed their role in pupils' values development within the context of the curriculum: the extent to which they provided appropriate and challenging work, the way they taught the lesson, or the extent to which they addressed team work or sharing in the ways in which pupils worked together. A number commented on the importance of role modelling and the need to develop good relationships based on trust and respect.

In relation to discipline, teachers were asked to consider how they would teach a pupil not to be unkind to others. Both primary and secondary teachers stated the need to help pupils to see the situation from the victim's perspective. Some commented on the need to spend time with pupils in order to discuss the issues involved in this type of situation and many commented on the need for teachers to consider possible underlying issues that may have influenced the outward behaviour of the perpetrator.

Teachers stated that 'knowing the good' was most likely developed in particular curricular areas, such as PHSE, Citizenship, Religious Education. However, in relation to 'loving the good', 'wanting to do and doing the good', responses differed between phases. In the majority of primary schools, there was a strong emphasis on praise, encouragement and reward. In secondary schools, there was a stronger awareness

of helping pupils to be able to make good choices, taking ownership for projects and their personal decisions.

HOW WERE VALUES ADDRESSED BY THE SCHOOL?

Across phases teachers interviewed said that it was the role of the school to help pupils develop values. Primary school teachers said that circle time and PHSE sessions were a valuable means of engaging with pupils. In addition they said they used stories with moral themes and encouraged pupils to follow the school's behaviour codes and commonly agreed values.

In secondary schools a number of teachers believed that they should be role models for the pupils through their actions, behaviour, interaction with others and treatment of pupils. A common theme was the need to help pupils develop respect partly through a just discipline system and partly through a supportive school ethos.



QUESTIONNAIRE ONE

SURVEY FINDINGS

The purpose of Questionnaire One was to explore the theoretical framework with a larger sample and to consider similarities and differences between pupils in Year 6 and Year 7 relating to the acquisition of values and character development. It also aimed to find out what students thought influenced their character development and their attitude towards values like trust, determination and care for the environment.

Under half of the respondents professed to have a Christian faith (C of E, Catholic or other Christian), the other half had no known religion. Over half (57%) of Year 6 pupils professed to have no known religion compared to only 48% of Year 7 pupils. The majority of students indicated that they like school.

The following five themes relate to pupils' understanding of the extent to which values and character are an integral part of a person:

- Pupils' understanding of what makes a good person.
- Pupils' perception of themselves as a good person.
- Pupils' identification of a good person's attachment to religion and good thoughts.
- Pupils' concept of virtuous behaviour as a matter of choice, recognising that human weakness can make the practice of virtue difficult.
- Pupils' perceived influences on their behaviour.

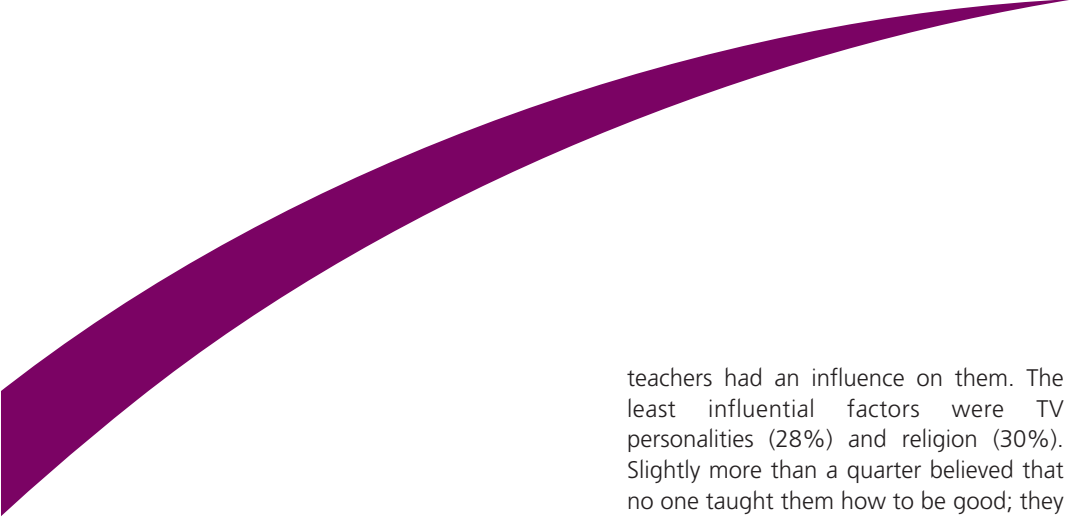
These themes help answer the following questions:

- What do pupils' perceive as a good person?
- Do pupils' see themselves as a good person?
- Do pupils think that a good person is someone with a religious attachment and good thoughts?
- Can good behaviour be a matter of choice (i.e. can it be influenced by moods)?
- What influences good behaviour?

Here are the five characteristics that most students believed make a good person:

- A good person is kind, caring and loving (87%);
- A good person thinks before he/she acts (83%);
- A good person is friendly, helpful and welcoming to others (87%);
- A good person is trustworthy and loyal (82%);
- A good person is responsible (79%).

Of these five characteristics, the highest proportion (73%) believed they are responsible. 69% believed themselves to be are friendly, helpful and welcoming, while 66% thought of themselves as trustworthy and loyal and 64% saw themselves as kind, caring and loving. Only 38% of them said they think before they act, and many realized that they lacked this good characteristic. A large number also indicated that 'doing good acts is important' (72%)



When asked which of these characteristics they had or aspired to have, many of the pupils in the focus group interviews considered personal qualities within the context of achieving what they wanted out of life - for example, frequent responses included, *'an enjoyable/good/well paid job'*, *'a big house'*, *'to be happy'*, *'to be successful'* – without necessarily considering the types of personal characteristics needed to achieve these desired outcomes.

The least important characteristic of being a good person is having a religion. The majority of students did not believe that a good person necessarily had to have a religion. Only 15% believed that having a religious faith or attending a place of worship makes a good person. Senior family members like mother, father and grandparents were seen as the most influential factor in helping students to understand how to be a good person. Mothers/female carers/guardians were seen as having the most influence (88%), followed by fathers/male carers/guardians (78%) and grandparents (73%). Approximately half said their school and

teachers had an influence on them. The least influential factors were TV personalities (28%) and religion (30%). Slightly more than a quarter believed that no one taught them how to be good; they just knew how to. 'Friends' was the next important influencing factor, with 60% saying their friends helped them to act like a good person.

In summary, pupils generally identified a good person as one who is kind and caring, thinks before they act, is friendly and trustworthy.

Another theme thought to be relevant to citizenship and character development was 'caring for the environment'. In the focus group sessions, Year 6 pupils displayed a very strong commitment to the environment and all pupils commented positively. A relatively high proportion of pupils in the secondary school group interviews stated that they cared more for the environment than they had done in Year 6 because they had a greater understanding of what was happening to the earth.

Over half of the pupils surveyed indicated that their behaviour was influenced by their moods but interestingly the older pupils appeared more likely to be influenced by their moods (58%) than their Yr 6 counterparts (45%). However, although older pupils in the survey



indicated that they were more likely to be influenced by their moods, pupils in the focus group interviews said they felt that they had greater control over their moods now than they had in Year 6, partly due to having a greater understanding of the consequences and caring more. And 80% of pupils in the Year 6 group interviews stated that their moods influenced the way they behaved towards others, a far higher figure than in the initial survey. Some of the responses from Year 6 pupils reflected an understanding that people do need to control their moods, but sometimes emotional weakness prevails. However, these younger pupils did not comment on the differences between moods and feelings. They were not able to differentiate between having moods and allowing their moods to control their behaviour.

Younger pupils seemed less confident about themselves, with 34% of them saying that they felt badly about themselves compared to only 23% of older Yr 7 pupils. On the other hand, they were more likely to believe in the goodness of other people while older pupils tended to be more sceptical. And while they were less confident about themselves, younger pupils were more optimistic and cheerful. Only 29% of Yr 7 pupils said they were always cheerful and positive compared to 46% of Yr 6 pupils.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YEAR GROUPS AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The most influential factor affecting pupils' behaviour and their understanding of a good person was their parents/carers and guardians. About three-quarters of pupils indicated this was the case, but there were differences in the responses of Yr 6 and Yr 7 pupils, with the younger pupils being more likely to indicate that their teachers helped them develop their character and to agree that it was their teachers who helped them to know how to be a good person (72% compared to 50% for Yr 7) and how to act like one (66% compared to 51% for Yr 7).

Secondary school pupils also compared various factors that they felt had contributed to their character development. They believed that having a single teacher in Year 6 had helped them to build trust in that person. In secondary school they believed that even though they had more than one teacher, they could still trust the teachers and they were forced to *'think more'* about various matters. This highlights the importance of the support of the family and the change in relationship with their teachers.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Because of the small number in some categories, the nine-category variable was collapsed to five categories (Church of England, Roman Catholic, other Christian, other religion and no known religion). Those with no religion and missing data were included in the last category.

The study found evident differences between Catholics and other religious groups. Catholic pupils were more likely than all other groups to believe that a good person was mindful of the way they behave, was cheerful and optimistic and had values. To them it is important to be good in all situations. Catholics were also more likely to think of themselves as someone with values. Pupils from other religious faiths, on the other hand, were more likely to believe that an important characteristic of a good person was doing good acts. However, it is the evangelical Christians (other Christians) who were more likely to agree strongly that it was important for them to do good acts. Catholic pupils were also the most resilient in facing hardship. Only 15% of pupils surveyed agreed that a good person had a religious faith. However, pupils of other religious faith (i.e. Hindus, Muslims and Jews) were more likely than all other groups to think that a good person is someone with a religious faith.

Both interview data and questionnaire survey suggest that pupils' understanding



of what it means to be a person of character varied, although they had a strong sense of values associated with a person of character and the corresponding actions or thoughts. Pupils appeared to have a sense that character is relational and can also be influenced by mood changes and context: how a person thought, felt and acted could be influenced by their own situation and by other people. A common theme was the idea of a gap between the holding and practice of values, while self-control of emotions was generally not seen as an issue. Across year groups, pupils acknowledged the strong influence of family/parents and friends.

The next question to ask is: to what extent do pupils live up to their views of a good person? Which pupils were more likely to live up to their concept of a good person?

DO PUPILS LIVE UP TO THEIR OWN EXPECTATIONS OF A GOOD PERSON AND WHY?

Two categories emerged from our analysis:

- Category 1: pupils whose view of themselves either matched or did not fall particularly short of their views of what a good person is;
- Category 2: pupils whose view of themselves fell substantially short of their concept of a good person.

In total, 55% of pupils fall under Category 1 and the remaining 45% fall under

Category 2. In other words, pupils are almost evenly split in terms of whether or not they live up to their concept of a 'good' person. In this model, it appears that Hindus and other Christians were as likely as those from a Church of England background to be in Category 1 (i.e. more likely to live up to their own definition of a good person). Muslims and those with no known religion were less likely than those from a Church of England to be in Category 1. Pupil background variables like sex and their national curriculum year, on the other hand, were irrelevant to this outcome. It became clear that the intake of school and thus the kind of peers they had was a more important determinant of whether pupils were more likely to be in Category 1 or not. Evidence from group interviews suggests that the influence of school on pupil character development varies according to the school.

The questionnaire data suggested that the most influential factor on pupil's character development was the significant people in their lives. The key to explaining whether pupils were more likely to live up to their concept of a good person was the influence of family members, friends, school and teachers and the media. Almost all the pupils surveyed indicated that their mother was the most influential person in helping them to understand how to be (88%) and how to behave like a good person (85%). The reason is probably that mothers spent more time with the pupils in their developmental stage than other members of the family. However, the factors that



determine which pupils were more likely to be in Category 1 or Category 2 are:

- teachers;
- school;
- being friends with good people;
- father/male carer/guardian;
- friends;
- people on TV.

This supports government policy over the last decade which has focussed strongly on the development of partnership working between pupils, parents and schools.

If we take into account religion and school, then differences between pupils can be explained by the above supportive variables. Pupils whose parents, in particular their mother, had the strongest impact on their behaviour were most likely to behave like their concept of a good person.

Those who said that their teachers helped them develop their character were less likely to be in Category 1. Pupils who believed that TV personalities helped them to be a good person were also less likely to be in Category 1, the survey data shows that pupils rank the influence of TV at half of that of teachers and much less than family members.

In summary, pupils who had teachers as role models were less likely than those who had friends as good role models to live up to their own image of a good person. Friends, parents (particularly mothers) and teachers all had an important influence on pupils' moral development than school or religion.

PHASE TWO: STUDENTS FINDINGS

Research has highlighted the difficulties for pupils in moving from primary to secondary school and the impact this had on their well-being and achievement. The aim of Questionnaire Two was to find out if pupils at schools in Canterbury - and particularly during the transitional phase of education - were happy and had hopes and aspirations for the future.

Ideally, we wanted to track pupils as they moved from primary to secondary school to see if there were any changes in character development during the period of transition. However, due to administrative and logistic difficulties, only 9% of the pupils involved in the first survey took part in the second survey. Because of the difficulty of tracking pupils as they moved schools, this study was only able to provide a snapshot of primary and secondary school pupils' experiences rather than a longitudinal perspective.

So far as the sample is concerned, the gender balance is fairly even with 58% male and 42% female. Of the total sample 52% said they were Christian, 11% were from other religious background and 38% had no known religion. Over half (53%) of Yr 7 students professed a Christian faith compared to only 31% in Year 6. Over a quarter of Yr 6 pupils were from other religious background (28%) compared to only 9% of Yr 7 pupils. The majority of the sample (87%) was white, 13% were non-White. Pupils reported that about third of their parents had attended university, about a quarter went to college and 20%

went straight to work. Pupils in the survey showed high educational aspirations with about three-quarters of them indicating their wish to go to University.

Of the six values (tolerance, justice, loyalty, trust, honesty and courtesy) presented to students, **trust** was the one value that pupils were most likely to rate as important to them (68% of primary pupils strongly agreed that it was important; 70% for secondary pupils). This was followed by **honesty**, then **loyalty** and **justice**.

Courtesy and **tolerance** were not deemed as important, although


good manners appear to be more important to pupils than **courtesy**. In the group interviews pupils considered different aspects of 'trust', varying from the extent to which they thought themselves to be trustworthy through to the extent to which they trusted others. Some Year 8

pupils suggested that they **'trusted more'** in Year 6 because there were **'fewer people'** and **'only one teacher'**.

On the other hand, some pupils noted that the **'adult'** nature of secondary school helped them to trust others and in being more trustworthy. Teachers were perceived as less trustworthy in secondary school than they were in primary school. Questionnaire responses also suggest that both primary and secondary school pupils were more likely to trust the police than their teachers. They were least likely to trust their neighbour.

For most of the pupils in the survey, friendship was particularly important to them. Older pupils were more optimistic





about the future than their primary school counterparts. In terms of character development, it was not clear what pupils understood by the concept. 64% of those surveyed thought 'to have character' is to have a set of qualities that make one a rounded person but 30% were not sure.

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Secondary pupils were more likely than primary pupils to see the importance of religion in general, but they were less likely to think that religion was important to them personally. However, Yr 6 pupils were more likely than Yr 7 pupils to believe in the power of religion in making themselves and people in general better people.

INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL ON PUPILS' MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Almost all the pupils surveyed thought education was very important for their future, but Yr 6 pupils were more likely to agree strongly with this statement. Primary school pupils were more positive about school and their teachers than those in the first year of secondary school. They were more likely to see the school as an institution that helped to build their character. They had more favourable views of their teachers as someone who would listen to them, seek their opinion and reason with them when they make mistakes. They were also more likely to show a higher level of moral justice than the older pupils, with a higher proportion of them saying that they would speak up when they witness bullying. Secondary

school pupils were more likely to witness violence in school, with a third of them saying that conflicts were often resolved with violence.

Pupils generally understood the difference between right and wrong, but younger pupils tended to have definite ideas of what is right and what is wrong, whereas older pupils were more likely to look at moral issues in degrees of 'rightness' or 'wrongness'. This is partly a developmental phase, but also perhaps a reflection of the curriculum and the school ethos. It is clear that explicit emphasis was placed on moral issues in the primary schools, while the teaching of moral values is not explicit in the secondary schools, and there is a focus on individual development, personal responsibility, self-esteem, positive attitude and academic achievement.

CITIZENSHIP AND COMMUNITY

An important attribute of a good citizen is voluntary service and involvement in their local community. Pupils in the survey did not display a strong national or community feeling, with slightly over half of the sample reporting being proud of Canterbury and Britain, and only half saying that they knew what being British meant to them. Only 62% indicated they understood the British way of life - it is possible that pupils were not clear about what a British way of life was, so were not able to give a convincing answer either way. There were no clear differences between primary and secondary school pupils, although primary school pupils were more positive about their pride for

the nation (Britain) and their local community (Canterbury). A quarter of them could neither agree nor disagree, suggesting ambivalence in their understanding of such issues. However, the majority of the respondents were proud of their family background, reinforcing the importance of the family in influencing pupils' personal and social development. Year 6 pupils were also more charitable than Yr 7 pupils in terms of helping out in voluntary work in the school and their local community.

INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA

The Phase 1 Questionnaire survey showed that the media was the least important factor in influencing pupils' understanding of what a good person was. Over a quarter of the sample perceived a TV personality as having an influence on them. In the Questionnaire Two survey, over a third of the respondents believed that the television had an influence on their behaviour. Similarly, only a third believed that playing games on their own on the Internet could influence their behaviour. There was little difference in the responses of Yr 6 and Yr 7 pupils. A slightly higher proportion of pupils were also not sure if the TV had more of an influence on their behaviour than the Internet. Here, opinions were divided, with a third agreeing and a third disagreeing. Interview evidence, however, indicated that pupils perceived the TV to have more of an influence on their lives than the Internet.

YEAR 6 PUPILS' EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL

Primary school pupils were generally happy about their experience in school.

They enjoy doing well in school and being with friends, but nearly 40% of pupils did not find school fun because of schoolwork and the same proportion thought school was boring. Many reported looking forward to going to secondary school. The main attraction for them was the possibility of making many new friends. Again their main apprehension was school work and bullying. The positive experience could partly be due to the effective preparation by their teachers, who were seen by many as influential in helping them develop their character.

YEAR 7 PUPILS' EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL DURING TRANSITION

Over half the respondents said they were happier in Yr 7 than in Yr 6. However, they were less likely than pupils in primary schools to report enjoying school and also less likely to have a positive view of their teachers. A high proportion of pupils were unsure in this respect and many were ambivalent about their secondary school experience. This is possibly because of the fact that there were many different teachers involved in their school life, and because secondary school was a relatively new experience for them. Most of them enjoyed having friends. What they liked about secondary school were the greater freedom, the wider range of activities, having different teachers and being treated like adults. They did not like the school work, such as homework, revisions and exams. Interestingly, when pupils were asked in the focus group interviews what made them cheerful, many of them cited school as a major influence.



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THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS:

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Chaucer Technology School
Kingsmead Primary School
Parkside Community Primary School
Pilgrims Way Primary School
Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys
St Anselm's Catholic School
St Thomas Catholic Primary School
The Archbishop's School
The Canterbury High School
Wincheap Foundation Primary School

Professor James Arthur
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A large graphic element consisting of several overlapping, curved bands in shades of blue, purple, and red, arching over the logo text.

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