



COURAGE - INTEGRITY - RESPECT - KINDNESS - RESPONSIBILITY



OUR MISSION

To develop in each of our students the academic skills, intellectual habits, qualities of character and leadership traits necessary to succeed at all levels and become successful citizens in tomorrow's world



INDEPENDENT LEARNERS

who understand their strengths, abilities and interests and are capable of utilising and applying critical and creative thinking to reason through and solve complex problems.

INTELLECTUAL HABITS

such as fierce concentration, thoroughness, accuracy, reflection, strategic thinking and intellectual volition in all that they undertake.

STRONG CHARACTERS

who develop clear established principles that, acted upon consistently, produce virtuous behaviours, compassionate acts and honest answers and decisions in facing up to life's challenges.

SUCCESSFUL CITIZENS

who through communication and other relevant academic activities make a positive contribution to the academy and, eventually, to the wider community and the world.

KING'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY - WHERE ASPIRATIONS BECOME REALITY

SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER





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Introduction

'Good character is the basis for individual and societal flourishing. Schools and teachers play a fundamental role in developing the character of young people.'

Framework for Character Education, 2013

There is a growing interest in character and character education in England. Many Head Teachers and governors are rightly seeing the advantages of developing policies and practices that place character at the heart of their school. Michael Gove the Secretary of State for Education, has recently talked about the importance of character virtues in education and Tristram Hunt the Shadow Secretary of State for Education, has spoken about the need for schools to develop 'moral purpose and character in young people'. In addition, a Populus Poll have shown that parents think that schools can and should teach character. Evidence shows that the character of young people matters, and furthermore that schools should have a role to play in its development.

Belonging to a school community is a deeply formative experience; it shapes students' character. Character education, both implicit and explicit, permeates all subjects as well as the general school ethos; it cultivates the virtues of character associated with common morality. All schools should enable students to become good persons and good citizens, able to lead good lives, as well as to be 'successful' persons. Most schools recognise this responsibility and some form of character education takes place in every school in England. However, it is important that the character education is intentional, planned, organised and reflective, rather than assumed, unconscious, reactive and random. This publication showcases seven schools, both private and state, that make character education a conscious part of their day to day practice.

James Arthur and Tom Harrison

April 2014

<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/471/character-education/populus-survey>



The Case Study Schools

Many schools across Britain could have been selected for inclusion in this publication. There is a great deal of exciting, innovative and in some cases exceptional educational practice on character development taking place in schools across the country. However, the seven schools selected for this publication were chosen as they showcase a variety of approaches to character education. All of them make character education central to their vision and aims, but they also meet the criteria, as identified by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, to be considered a 'school of character'.

The criteria include...

- Character education as a visible part of the day to day practice of the school
- Character seen as a pre-requisite to better attainment and behaviour
- Ensuring that core values drive every part of the school
- Understanding that character is largely 'caught', but that it can also be 'taught'
- Ensuring that the culture and ethos of the school is conjunct to character education
- Ensuring that all students have a right to character development and that it is at the heart of what constitutes good education
- Knowing that character education is not only the responsibility of schools, and working in partnership with parents, employers and other local organisations.

'Character is not best taught through adversity - its study belongs in the supportive, dedicated and aspirational communities that the best schools provide. What is clear is that this is about more than bolting on some music lessons or sports clubs to the school day. No, this is about learning from the rigorous academic discipline that is character education and implementing a holistic approach that goes beyond extra-curricular activities and into the classroom.'

Tristram Hunt, Shadow Secretary of State for Education¹

The schools featured in the publication are:

- Eton College, Windsor
- Kings Langley School, Hertfordshire
- King's Leadership Academy, Warrington
- King Edward's School, Birmingham
- Topcliffe Primary School, Birmingham
- Wellington College, Berkshire
- West Kidlington Primary School, Oxfordshire

These schools are all different: some are primary; some secondary; some are independent; some are state and one is a free school. However, they all have one thing in common - a belief that the development of their students' character comes before everything else. They believe that if good character is successfully nurtured in their students then everything else important, including good exam results, good job prospects and good behaviour, will follow.

The case studies aim to provide both inspiration as well as examples for other schools seeking to develop their character education provision. All of the case study schools were visited during 2013.

What type of character?

The seven schools featured in this publication emphasise different aspects of character. Some prioritise the promotion of moral character virtues, others the performance, intellectual and / or civic virtues. Likewise, the schools all approach the development of character in different ways. Some place a greater emphasis on making character education explicit and communicating messages about character development visibly, whilst others simply see it as an integral part of the school fabric and their daily practice. Some follow traditional approaches to character development whilst others pride themselves on being innovative. It is these different approaches to character education that the case studies seek to highlight.

'The other element I count as essential in a rounded education - is the development of character. I don't believe any person is truly educated unless they have learnt self-discipline, self-control, self-reliance, respect for others, how to work in a team, how to defer gratification, how to cope with reverses and the importance of service to others.'

Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education²

How the case studies were developed

The case studies are based on members of the featured schools' own descriptions of their character education practice. Interviews with the Head Teachers as well as teachers and students were carried out in each school to construct the case studies. During the interviews the participants were asked to address the following questions:

- Why is 'character' important for your students to develop?
- How do you define the type of character that you hope to develop in your students?
- How do you establish an ethos at school conjunct to character development?
- What activities do you run that best develop the character of your students?
- Is 'character' taught anywhere in the school? If so, how and why?
- Are parents involved with your character development activities?
- Are other organisations - community groups, employers - involved with your character development activities?
- Do you celebrate good character shown by staff and students?
- How do you know if your character development goals are successful?

In addition, further evidence was gathered through internal and external communications, Ofsted reports, the school website, along with relevant reports from other organisations.

The case studies are designed to highlight the most pertinent features of character education in each of the schools. These features are described with reference to the interview transcripts as well as the supporting evidence. We hope that each case study provides a snapshot of the practice within each school.

'The evidence makes clear that people are not just born with or without character and resilience traits. Rather, a person learns to develop and use these abilities throughout their life. They can be taught and learned at all stages of life.'

Baroness Claire Tyler, All Party Group on Social Mobility³



Eton College



Kings Langley School



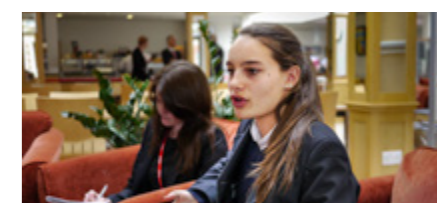
King's Leadership Academy



King Edward's School



Topcliffe Primary School



Wellington College



West Kidlington Primary School

¹ <http://press.labour.org.uk/post/7636667202/schooling-for-the-future-tristram-hunt-speech>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/what-does-it-mean-to-be-an-educated-person>

³ <http://www.appg-socialmobility.org/>



Eton College

Type: Independent Boarding School
Age range: 13-18
Head Master: Mr Anthony Little
Location: Windsor, Berkshire

Background

The King's College of Our Lady of Eton beside Windsor - usually referred to as Eton College - was founded by King Henry VI in 1440. There is a strong identity with the location: the original school room (Lower School) has been in continuous use since the 1440s, as has College Chapel since its completion in 1482. The school occupies an extensive site that includes a number of historic buildings.

Eton College is an all boys boarding school with 1300 pupils on the roll, aged from thirteen to eighteen, with a sixth form of more than 500 boys. The school is organised into 25 boarding houses, each of about 50 boys. Eton selects its intake by means of computerised assessments and interviews at the age of eleven. The selection process is designed to measure academic potential as well as ensuring that the school takes boys with a balance of talents. The school seeks to foster self-confidence, enthusiasm, perseverance and integrity. The character development of all students is seen as an integral part of the school's mission.

Introduction

Eton students describe the College as a family that cares deeply about the character of all its members. The Eton community is characterised by excellent teacher / student relationships that are built on mutual respect and trust. It is these relationships, the sense of community they bring and the opportunities provided, that enable most students to leave the College with a belief that they have the character to take on any challenge in the future.



High expectations

Eton has high expectations for students both in their academic achievements and in the development of their characters. They expect students to leave with a well-rounded character, built on high ideals and gained through fulfilment in all areas of their school life.



'The school's main aim is to provide a broadly based education to enable boys to discover their strengths, and to make the most of their talents within Eton and beyond. The school is committed to promoting the best habits of independent thought and learning, to engendering respect for individuality as well as the importance of teamwork, and to supporting pastoral care that nurtures physical health, emotional maturity and spiritual richness.'

(ISI Report, 2010)

'Our primary aim is to encourage each Etonian to be a self-confident, inquiring, tolerant, positive young man, a well-rounded character with an independent mind, an individual who respects the differences of others. By the time he leaves the school, we want each boy to have that true sense of self-worth which will enable him to stand up for himself and for a purpose greater than himself, and, in doing so, to be of value to society.'

Anthony Little, Head Master





‘Controlled chaos’

Eton students are treated as adults from the day they arrive at the College. Through relationship with teachers and invited guests the students get numerous opportunities to mix with adults. From their first day they are expected to find their own way and direct their own learning. Very little ‘prep’ time is included in the school day and the students must make time between other activities to complete their homework. Self-discipline is seen as an essential character quality needed to survive at the College. The Deputy Head Master describes the situation as ‘controlled chaos’ as the College allows the students to have the freedom to make and then learn from their own mistakes.

‘If you back youth they will always perform.’

Deputy Head Master

Teacher / student relations

Trusting relationships between teachers and students are seen as essential to the ethos of the college. House Masters of the boarding houses are significant makers and shapers of the students’ characters. All students also have a personal tutor whom they meet with every week, normally in the Masters’ own houses. During weekly tutorials PSHE topics

such as wellbeing, responsibility and identity are discussed. The pastoral care provided by the boarding house and tutors is undertaken on a personal level and based on each student’s own needs and characters. House Masters and tutors write a letter about each of their boarders every term, focusing predominantly on the character of the student.

‘Eton aims to have support pastoral care that nurtures physical health, emotional maturity and spiritual richness.’

School website

Extra-curricular activities

There are so many extra-curricular opportunities on offer at Eton that it is almost impossible for students to avoid undertaking activities that are going to be character building. For example there are nearly 6,000 sports matches every year (many of which are organised by the students themselves); every week at least a dozen well-known speakers are invited and on average there is a play performed every two weeks. In all these activities the students are encouraged to go outside their comfort zone and attempt things such as taking on challenging parts in a play. They are expected to take a risk, and normally gain a sense of pride through this achievement. In addition, all Lower 6th students undertake social service or the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and many students get at least the silver Duke of Edinburgh award.

Citizens of Eton

The students are encouraged to consider themselves as ‘citizens of Eton’ from the day they arrive at the College. This is especially important as the school dominates the village of Eton and the students and Masters all live in houses within it. The students are expected to develop strong moral values and attitudes during their time boarding; respecting and showing care for the other students they live with is seen as especially important. The students are also encouraged to be active in the local community through undertaking voluntary and community service activities.

Coaching character through sport

The Head of Games is clear about what matters in sport. The students are taught that winning is not everything, but that participating fully and enjoying the game is the most important thing in sport. Sport is therefore seen as a learning experience and an excellent opportunity to develop character. The College is currently appointing a new director of coaching, whose role will not be about making the teams better but will be focused on ‘coaching the coaches’ to get the most out of the students. The College wants all sports coaches to see themselves as ‘character instructors’. A strong emphasis is placed on humility, playing fair and good sportsmanship. Sports masters are encouraged to ask questions like ‘did you enjoy the game?’; ‘what did you learn?’; and, ‘how did you play?’, rather than ‘did you win?’. The Head of Games also thinks that sport gives the students a chance to ‘learn how to fail’ successfully.



'The Christian values of justice, love and respect form a firm moral foundation to build upon. In our oversubscribed, hard-working school, students develop a real determination to make the most of the opportunities provided and feel supported at each step as they develop into confident, articulate and academically successful young people.'

School website

Kings Langley School

Type: Community Comprehensive
Age range: 11 - 18
Head Teacher: Mr Gary Lewis
Location: Kings Langley, Hertfordshire

Background

Kings Langley School (KLS) was founded on the values of justice, love and respect for all members of the KLS community. These values underpin everything that the school does. KLS views each person as special and unique, recognises and responds to their gifts, their needs and their aspirations. The school seeks to show love and care for all individuals, celebrating achievement and providing support when difficulties are experienced.

Under the leadership of the Head Teacher the school has developed a reputation both locally and regionally as a centre of excellence and has received many accolades and awards including those for Arts College Specialist School, Arts Mark and Healthy Schools Plus. KLS converted to Academy status in December 2012.

Introduction

Kings Langley School attributes much of its recent academic success to a dedicated and passionate commitment to developing the character of all its students. In 2002 the school was placed in the bottom 3% of maintained schools nationally. Over the following ten years, the school has been utterly transformed and this year is placed in the top 29% in the country (without equivalences) for GCSE results in virtually every category. Gary Lewis, the Head Teacher who has been in charge since 2003, says that concentrating on traditional standards, such as uniforms, helped the school come out of a slump but it was only when he started to introduce character education that the school and its students really started to flourish. He believes that character education at Kings Langley School is both taught and caught, and that this is why it's so effective.

'Character development is a key aspect of our ethos and culture.'

Gary Lewis, Head Teacher



Core Values

As well as the values of justice, love and respect upon which the school is founded, there is a particular commitment to three core values; stick-ability, self-regulation and empathy. The students learn that these three character qualities are the basis of success in all aspects of their lives. The school believes that these traits can be nurtured and that it is the teacher's mission to do so. Senior staff send regular communications to both students and teachers about how they can ensure that their character traits are nurtured throughout the school. This ensures that the three core values are woven into the school's fabric, as well as into everyday lesson planning and delivery. This immersive approach, which is backed up by related assemblies, PSHE lessons and extra-curricular activities, ensures that both staff and students are constantly exposed to the core values and character development themes.

Extra-curricular activities

The school pays staff to stay on after school and run additional activities for the students, which creates a thriving extra-curricular programme. This includes a popular Duke of Edinburgh programme and also regular visits to an outdoor education centre in Wales - both activities proven to build character. The students are constantly reminded to think about how they can help others. They are expected to show compassion, and are provided with a number of opportunities to do so, such as 'pledge an hour' (where the students make a regular commitment to give an hour of their time as volunteers to a cause) and a 6th form service learning programme.

*'Every student deserves a happy, positive environment in which to learn.
Our goal is to achieve the happiness of every child in our care.'*

School website

Teaching character: PSHE and resilience lessons

All students have resilience lessons as part of their PSHE programme. The lessons are based on the Penn Resilience Programme (PRP), an evidence-based approach to teaching young people critical life skills. The programme is designed to enable young people to flourish and thrive. All teachers attend special resilience training sessions to learn how to deliver the programme. The amount of time given to the PSHE

lessons has been recently doubled as a demonstration of the school's commitment to the subject, while classes are half their normal size to ensure that the character related themes dealt with in the subject can be explored in smaller and more intimate groups. The smaller group sizes and increased time allow for challenging topics to be properly addressed.



Teacher buy-in

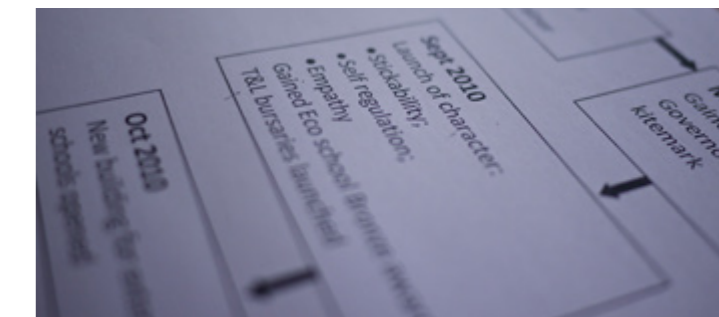
Staff at KLS believe it essential that teachers buy into the character mission, and do not see themselves as technicians simply delivering a curriculum. Teachers and students are encouraged to reflect on and, if necessary, develop their characters together. They are encouraged to go over and above their duties, to take on extra commitments and run additional activities that will build the character of the students. The teachers are reminded regularly that they are role models and exemplars of character. Inset days and CPD sessions regularly focus on character.



Mr Gary Lewis, Head Teacher

Communicating the character goal

The senior management team see it as very important to have a coherent vision for character education and that this is communicated clearly and visibly. This includes posters round the school, assemblies, letters home and the use of social media. The communication demonstrates that the school is value driven and that character is given equal prominence to academic attainment.





King's Leadership Academy

Type: Free and Independent State School
Age range: 11 - 18
Head Teacher: Mr Shane Ierston
Location: Warrington

Background

King's Leadership Academy is a new Free Independent School in the state sector, established in 2012, and founded by Sir Iain Hall. The school aims to bring together the best international practice to serve urban and deprived communities with educational excellence. Currently the school has around 200 Y7 and Y8 students and is relocating to a new school site in 2015.



'We believe that our school curriculum should be based firmly on traditional values, with a focus on outstanding learning. Our students will have access to a wide variety of enrichment activities and an extended school day which will ensure that none falls behind.'

Mr Shane Ierston, Head Teacher



Introduction

King's Leadership Academy is a values-led school. It places a considerable emphasis on ensuring an ethical ethos and a strong values system permeates everything it does. The school prioritises character education, which is taught through a structured programme of character and leadership development. The school holds a number of core beliefs that are central to its practice, including that all students must learn to be resilient on their

educational journey in order to achieve these ambitions; and they must become confident contributing citizens able to develop a passion for both learning and character development. Parents are seen as partners in the academic and character development of their children and Ofsted recently reported the ethos and value system of the school as exceptional.

ASPIRE:

The values-led approach to education is based on seven core values and character qualities. These are aspiration, achievement, self-awareness, professionalism, integrity, respect and endeavour. Combined they comprise the acronym ASPIRE and encapsulate the core values and character qualities they want their students to develop at King's. These character qualities include performance virtues such as endeavour, which encourages students to make every effort and work hard, and moral virtues such as integrity, which is about self-pride built on honesty and being true to beliefs. Based on these values, the school places a great emphasis on the building of strong character traits in all of their students. The ASPIRE values permeate every aspect of the school and curriculum. In addition, PSHE has been renamed ASPIRE and the students are taught the ASPIRE values alongside the traditional PSHE curriculum for one hour every week.

King's Leadership also promotes seven habits of effective students which the school hopes to inculcate in all students. These habits include knowing one's strengths as well as where one needs to improve, having the highest standards of oneself and being honest and truthful at all times.



Character Counts

The school has outlined its approach to character education in a publication called 'Character Counts'. The publication outlines the core beliefs of the school, such as that character is best developed through dialogue and role modelling. The school also places a great deal of emphasis on the constant application of regular routines and rituals that help to codify behaviour. For the school, good

structures liberate learning. The distinct routines that punctuate the school day are seen as the best way to develop positive habits and behaviours in all students. One such routine is the daily line up, which is completely managed by the students themselves and helps to ensure the students are focused and ready for class after break and lunch times.

'Character education is like Blackpool rock, it runs through the core of everything we do at the school.'

Sir Iain Hall, School sponsor and educational advisor



'At King's we believe that education is not just about academic success. We believe that it is also about developing excellent character qualities in our students. We believe that in developing these qualities you will become a much better person; a person who can balance academic success with personal and social responsibility; a person who understands the need to be truthful and honest; a person who will work hard and never give up; a person who fully understands his or her own strengths and areas for development and becomes, eventually, a leader within our future society.'

Extract from King's Leadership publication 'The seven habits of effective students'

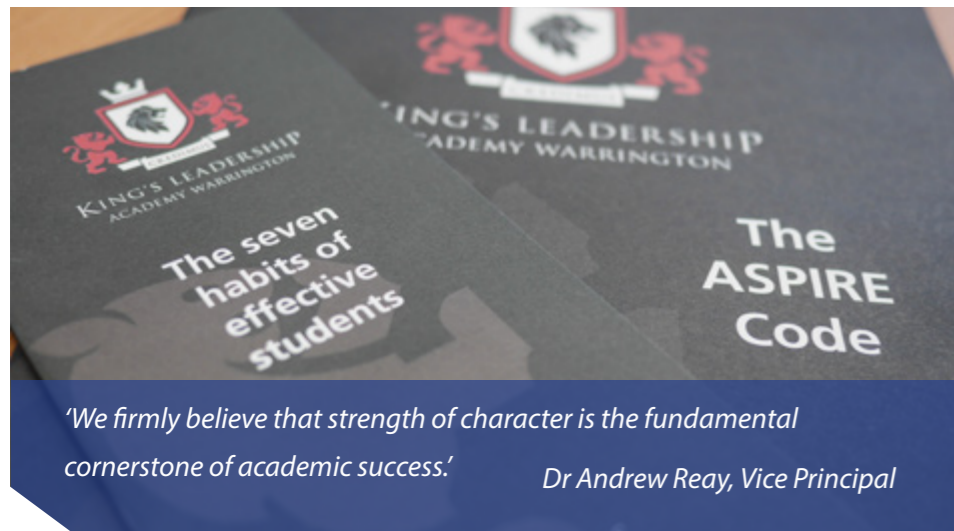


Founder and Sponsor Sir Iain Hall

Leadership

King's Leadership Academy is a leadership specialist school. The school's mission is to develop values driven leaders of the future. The school teaches 90 minutes of leadership to every child every week, a programme endorsed and accredited by the Chartered Management Institute and written by a school governor, Director of TFL education. They also run an annual leadership residential programme in the Lake District, which is aligned to the Duke of Edinburgh award. All students have the chance to achieve the Gold award before they leave the school and the minimum expected standard is silver. In addition, students are given leadership opportunities such as 'leader of the day' who coordinate the daily line ups, duty leaders who ensure the community standards of the school, and daily greeters who greet visitors as they

enter the classroom and lead the daily mantra. The focus of character building starts at the transition stage. The school's lead on transition completes the 6-week Chartered Management Institute 'First Steps to Leadership' programme in eight local primary schools, and this programme focuses on character qualities such as social responsibility and teamworking. The school also has an active student parliament, which also operates as a student court and deals with issues of behaviour. The aim is to give all the students real leadership opportunities where they get the opportunity to test their character strengths. Adventure and challenge are seen to be inextricably linked to character development at the school, and any failures are always treated as a stepping-stone to success.



Academic, Creative & Leadership Arcs

The school has a longer school day (7.45-4.30), smaller class sizes (24 or less) and a large enrichment programme of accredited awards. The school teaches the academic core in the morning, but in the afternoon they teach the creative and physical subjects most aligned to character development. These are taught by qualified teachers backed up by external experts known for their excellence in their profession. Individual sports are given priority, so no student can hide and all have a chance to shine. For example, every child at King's completes an accredited 18-week

programme of Sword Fencing every year - led by an Olympic fencing coach - a 9-week programme of martial arts led by a sensei and 9 weeks of swimming and lacrosse led by members of the Great Britain team. Drama and music are taught by experts from the national theatre, whilst accredited programmes in first aid, lifesaving and outdoor survival are undertaken annually, including their bespoke cadet programme called the 'King's Officer Troop'. A programme of public speaking, designed to develop confidence, is built into the curriculum.



Character passport

The school places a strong emphasis on all types of achievement, both character and academic, and the school sees its core mission as preparing students for university, a professional career and lifelong success. All activities that the students undertake during their time at school that contribute to this mission are recorded in a personal character passport. The passport is also designed for students to reflect on the wider key skills developed through any given experience. Access to character development programmes is seen as an entitlement for all students.

All students at King's set their own university & career trajectory (titled a 'Flight Path') where they set personal targets and milestones to complete between Year 7 and Year 13 and beyond. Time is also set aside once per week with a personal tutor to review their flight path, set targets and record achievements. King's student career programme is then personalised to every student's flight path with university visits, career talks and career mentors being aligned to a student's personal aspirations and ambitions from Year 7 onwards.



King Edward's School

Type: Independent Day School
Age range: 11 - 18
Chief master: Mr John Cloughton
Location: Birmingham, West Midlands



Introduction

Students are proud to be at King Edward's School. They say they are proud of the history and tradition of the school, but also proud that they attend a school that encourages them to be the best they can be. The sense of pride, the students report, comes from the care and attention given to every student and their individual characters. The school emphasises that every student should get the opportunity to develop their character whilst at

school. The Chief Master understands that character alongside attainment is the basis for the students leaving as well rounded and responsible young people ready for the challenges ahead. He also believes that he does not have to think too hard about character education because it is embedded in the experience of the school. Character building is, in the words of the Chief Master, 'just part and parcel of the fabric of the school'.

Background

King Edward's School, Birmingham is an independent day school for boys founded in 1552 by King Edward VI. The school prides itself on its long tradition of excellence, both academically and in character development. The school's stated aim is to 'make available to the widest possible range of able boys an educational experience that is the richest, most diverse and most exciting possible in an atmosphere that provides support, encouragement and care for everyone'. It wants all students to 'leave prepared for all that human life has to offer'. The school is aware that a student's character is just as important as their exam results when it comes to future success.



Emphasising traditions and the importance of aspiration

'King Edward's has always had a reputation for developing young people with the character and values required for a successful life after school. The school believes in placing a big emphasis on its own traditions as well as setting high aspirations for all its students.'

Character First

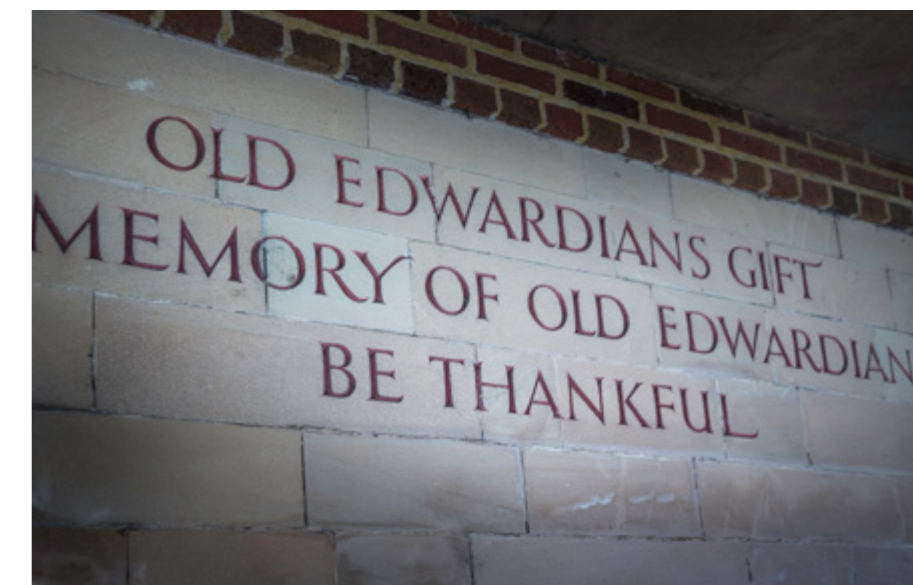
Independent learning, and the character strengths required to be independent learners, is encouraged throughout the school. The teachers understand that their role is primarily to develop the students' performance and intellectual virtues, and that good grades will be a by-product of this. The school aims to establish a culture of pride in taking responsibility for one's own development. Being creative,

active and showing service (C.A.S.) are requirements of the International Baccalaureate and the teachers believe that this provides an excellent framework for the development of character through the curriculum. The school also teaches philosophy, free thinking and ethics to encourage the students to think about big questions such as how best to live.



'The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. They develop well spiritually and have a clear awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs and values. They are highly respectful of each other's faiths. Their self-awareness and their self-confidence develop well, aided by their involvement in the excellent programme of extra-curricular activities.'

ISS Report, 2011





'I believe that the development of character in this school comes from the culture of the place, the relationships within it and the richness of the experience that the boys get. We hope that everyone can find something to inspire them, or at least cheer them up.'

John Cloughton, Chief Master

Opportunities for all to flourish

At Kings Edward's everyone gets a chance to do something they enjoy and are good at. This requires numerous extra-curricular activities being offered to the students, and new ones are started every year. By getting a chance to be good at something and to feel what it is like to flourish, the students develop their character. The Chief Master believes that everyone should have 'their moment in the sun'. He also believes that there should not simply be a small number of winners but that all students should get an opportunity to shine at some point during their school careers.



Care for the students

Pastoral care of the students is high on the school's agenda, and building strong, close and trusting relationships between teachers and students is the key to this. The house system encourages both friendly competition and the chance for senior boys to lead younger ones and there are many other ways in which senior pupils support and guide the young ones, in academic mentoring, in sport, in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and in leadership. The array of out-of-school activities on offer also enables strong teacher / student relationships. For example, every year there are cycling trips which involve staff, pupils and parents.

Character through leadership

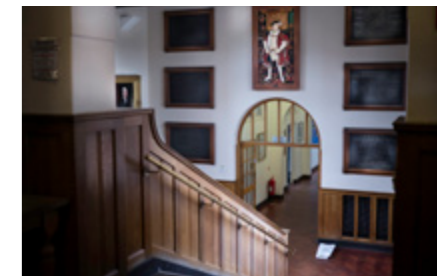
Leadership is an important character strength that students are encouraged to develop. Every Friday afternoon the timetable is suspended and leadership activities are undertaken. The activities include a popular CCF programme and a leadership club. In the leadership club the older students lead classes every week for younger students. The teachers say the students learn a great deal through the opportunity to plan and lead a lesson. They learn a lot from when things have not gone well and they have to show resilience, determination and the ability to bounce back from failure.

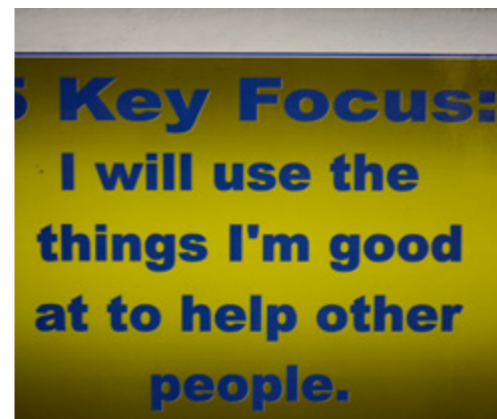
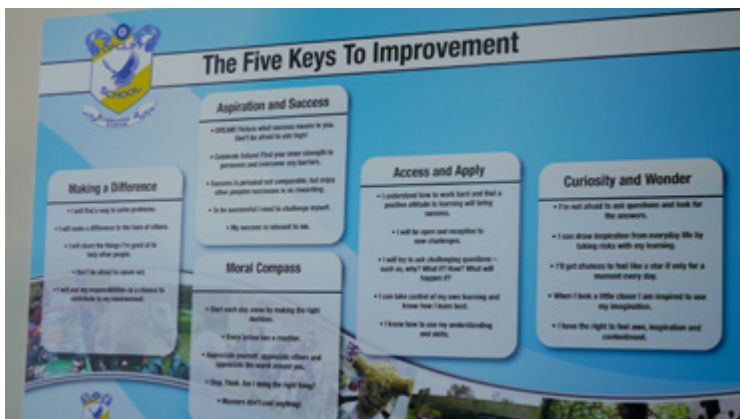
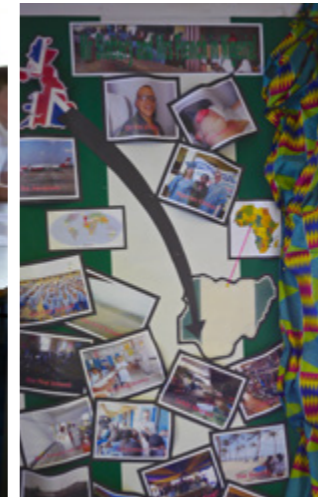


Mr John Cloughton, Chief Master



King Edward's School





Topcliffe Primary School

Type: Primary
Age range: 4 - 11
Head Teacher: Mr Ian Lowe
Location: Castle Vale, Birmingham

Background

Topcliffe Primary School is an average-sized primary school situated on the North East side of Birmingham on the Castle Vale housing estate. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and on free school meals is well above average, as are the numbers with statements. Topcliffe prides itself on providing a full education for all its students. The teachers understand that SATS grades are important, but for their students so much else, not least their characters, is also vital. For this reason many of the activities in and out of school are geared towards helping the students think about who they are and who they want to become.

Introduction

In its Ofsted reports for 2009 and 2013, Topcliffe received a 'good' rating, an improvement from the 'satisfactory' rating received in 2007. The Head Teacher puts this down to meeting the specific needs of the students through the development of a creative and inclusive curriculum with a focus on character. The cornerstone of the curriculum is the 'Five Keys to Improvement Manifesto', which has an emphasis

on character development. The 'Five Keys' offers Topcliffe the ideal mission statement for use in the everyday running of the school. Used both by staff and students, the 'Five Keys' provides a framework that inspires and enhances both mental and physical wellbeing whilst enriching the children's learning experiences.

'We don't sit and tell children off, we sit and ask them what the trigger was, what caused it, why they did it. Immediately we go to the five keys – did you stop, think, am I doing the right thing? No? Then why?'
 Ian Lowe, Head Teacher

The Five Keys to Improvement

The school was searching for ways in which the students can develop independence and responsibility and at the same time instil a sense of aspiration and joy of learning. The 'Five Keys' were developed by the whole staff and enabled the whole school community to have a clear and precise understanding of how to achieve these goals.

The Five Keys are:

- Making a Difference
- Aspiration and Success
- Moral Compass
- Access and Apply
- Curiosity and Wonder



The 'Five Keys' are incorporated into lessons, assessment and reporting, conversations with pupils, parents, staff and governors. It is what drives the school forward and provides the foundations for sustainable pupil and school improvement. As a result, the school has made dramatic strides forward in developing a curriculum and ethos that truly has the child and their individual characters at the centre of everyone's thoughts and actions.

Topcliffe firmly believes that through committed and caring teaching all the students will be able to reach their full potential. Each week's assembly focuses on one of the 'Five Keys', and certificates are awarded to pupils for achievements in each category.

'We have the five keys, which are embedded in what we do on a daily basis. It actually means something, it's not just an ethos, it's actually a way of life. The five keys do link in with as much as possible, with everything that we do.'

Tom, teacher

Emotional diaries

Students at Topcliffe use a moral and emotional learning diary to help them take responsibility for their own learning, and for reflecting on their own wellbeing and character. The students decide what their daily focus will be, and then complete their diaries first thing in the morning and again at the end of the day, to say how they're feeling and why. The diaries are regularly reviewed so that there's an opportunity for the teacher to comment, and for support to be tailored as required.



'So if you've got a child that you know is angry or circling anger you actually know you're wasting your time starting a lesson with that child because 1) they're not going to take it in and 2) they're likely to kick off, and then that's going to disrupt everyone else's learning.'

Ian Lowe, Head Teacher

Finding something that children are good at

Topcliffe believes that every child has a talent, and although it might not necessarily be academic, it will be something they can give to the world. The focus on individual talent is often a focus on individual character strengths. The students build self-esteem when good qualities in their characters have been recognised and rewarded.



'You can speak to your teacher any time, if you're upset or anything, and your teacher will help you and sort things out.'

Emily, student



Mr Ian Lowe, Head Teacher

'To be honest, it's like we're a family.'
Dajon, student

Topcliffe
Primary
School



Wellington College

Type: Independent Boarding School
Age range: 13-18
Head Master: Master Dr Anthony Seldon
Location: Crowthorne, Berkshire

Background

The College was founded in 1859 by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, as the national memorial to the Duke of Wellington. It was to provide schooling for the orphaned sons of British soldiers killed fighting for their country. As the school was *in loco parentis* of the young people, it has a long tradition of character development. Wellington College values are based on a commitment to leadership and service. It endeavours to provide a transformative experience, developing to the full each of the pupils' 'Eight Aptitudes', including their intellectual, artistic, sporting, spiritual and social intelligences. It also seeks to ensure that each child grows to understand that serving and caring for others brings the highest rewards in life and the greatest likelihood of long-term happiness and fulfilment.



Introduction

All students know that the mission of the school is not simply academic excellence, but also about developing students into well rounded independent learners with good character. Like many public schools, the development of character was previously rooted in the four pillars of chapel, house, games and the CCF. However, new innovative character development approaches have been adopted and combined with the traditional ones, providing a potent mix.

'The school has become much calmer, kinder and more purposeful since new approaches have been adopted.'

Dr Anthony Seldon, Master

Five key character values

The school is grounded on five core values chosen by the students and teachers. These are courage, integrity, kindness, respect and responsibility. The five values are regularly discussed with the students to ensure that they become, in the words of the Head Master, 'living signposts'. Extra-curricular opportunities are provided throughout the College for the students to experience these key values and to ensure they are actually 'lived' by the students and don't just remain words on a wall.



Developing service as a mindset

Service is central to the College's aims. The College believes it has failed if students leave without understanding the need to serve others. Therefore undertaking service is an integral part of the tradition of the College and is built into everything it does. The College offers various service opportunities with the aim of developing good and compassionate leaders. All students who attend the college are expected to undertake regular service activities, of which there are many on offer, including the Physically Handicapped Able Bodied (PHAB) programme and several volunteering opportunities in the local community. The commitment to service is demonstrated by the recent appointment of a member of staff especially dedicated

to developing a new service learning programme.

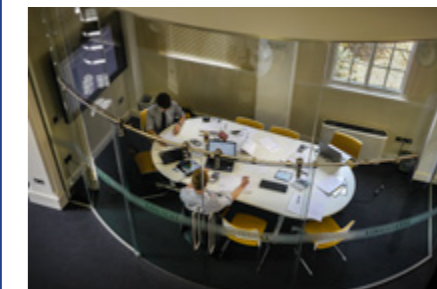
One aim of the service learning programme is to encourage the students to have a go at new things and try different activities outside their comfort zone. In signing up for these activities they are expected to show courage and try something new. The teachers understand that character virtues are often developed through the numerous opportunities that the school offers. The school believes passionately in the concept of experimental learning and it is hoped that, through volunteering and being of service, core character virtues such as compassion and self-discipline will be developed.

'We have an extensive volunteering programme. Service, we remind ourselves, is not a week's trip abroad to help in a village school, but is a constant attitude of mind.'

Dr Anthony Seldon, Master



Wellington
College





House system that emphasises personal best

As students board at Wellington, there is a need to provide extensive and exceptional pastoral care. The Master states that the main focus of this pastoral care is on character development, enabling all the students to flourish at the College. All students have a dedicated House Master or Mistress who see their role as developing and reinforcing key character virtues such as tolerance, compassion, respect for others and humility. The house system encourages all students to be 'the best they can be'.

Character before knowledge

Throughout the College, there is a deep commitment to a belief that character must come before attainment. The school uses techniques such as the Harkness method to encourage students to become independent learners and to develop their intellectual virtues. This method involves classes being held with all students sitting round one table, motivating and controlling their own discussions.

In all activities the students are encouraged to participate, but not in a competitive way. Rather, they all share in the responsibility and the goals, much as any members share in any team sport. Independent learning is also encouraged - for example the school runs an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme where all students who take this option (they could also select a GCSE pathway) must also take responsibility for their own learning and meet their own goals.

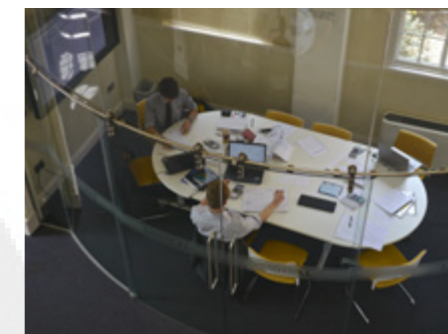


Happiness and wellbeing

The College believes that if the students are happy and well, they are more likely to be successful and engaged members of the school community but more importantly also more likely to be happy and flourish in themselves. All students in Years 9 to 12 take part in wellbeing lessons. These lessons are timetabled and seen as integral to the curriculum core, and are taught for one hour per fortnight or 60 hours over 4 years. The aim of the course is to learn about the moral and performance virtues of living well. Teaching methods vary from traditional classroom activities to the use of slacklines and high ropes courses in the woods surrounding the College. The course covers six strands:

physical health, positive relationships, resilience, engagement, sustainable living and meaning and purpose.

Throughout the College students are encouraged to question themselves and their behaviour, thinking about their actions and reflecting on their character strengths and weaknesses. They are taught how to deal with stress and become more resilient, with mistakes not being deemed catastrophes but rather as positive events providing new opportunities for learning. These classes are predicated on a belief that character and virtue are ends to be learned, developed and practised.





West Kidlington Primary School

Type: Primary
Age range: 4-11
Head Teacher: Mr Eugene Symonds
Location: Oxfordshire

Background

West Kidlington is larger than the average-sized primary school situated in West Kidlington in the outskirts of Oxford. The school believes that values-led learning is crucial in promoting children's social, emotional and academic welfare, and explores values such as peace, happiness, courage, respect, honesty and unity, throughout the curriculum. These values help to shape the decisions they make in their behaviour, relations with others, and the way in which they approach learning.

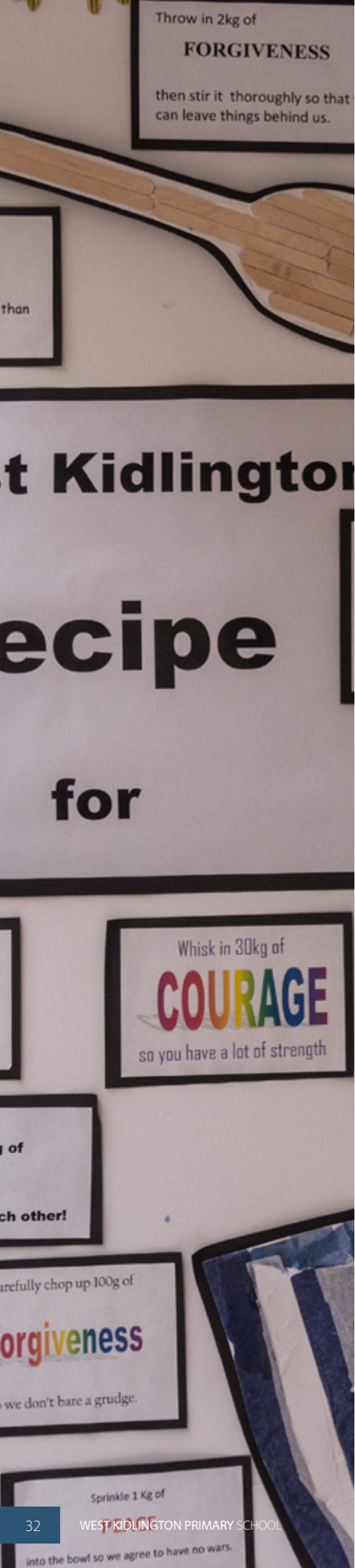
Introduction

West Kidlington primary school has developed, over the last decade, a national reputation as a 'values-led school'. The school believes it is important to not only teach young people how to get along with each other but also to offer them a vision of what it means to be a good person. The school takes pride in developing what it calls a creative curriculum to ensure the students learn about values in an engaging but, most importantly, meaningful way. The overwhelming commitment to core values runs through everything the school does, and features heavily in both the school improvement plan as well as their approaches to learning. The school takes a realistic approach to the challenges in life and staff believe that it is their duty to develop good character and strong values in their students so that they are equipped to deal with those challenges.



'We believe that values-led education is crucial in promoting children's social, emotional and academic welfare.'

[School website](#)



Core and satellite values

The school has adopted a set of core values. These values are seen as the scaffolding for life in and out of school and everything else is built around them. As the school is not religious, the chosen values are those that they believe are common to all of humanity, and include respect, trust, patience, courage, humility, gratitude and hope. Each month a different core value becomes the focus. In addition, a set of satellite values are developed to support the core values. Although the core values generally stay the same, the satellite values change to reflect what is going on at that point. These values are designed to help the students deal with real life situations that might be going on within the school, locally, nationally or globally. The satellite values allow the teachers to grab the moment, and address issues that are on the students' minds. It is believed that a wholehearted focus on core values, supported by the satellite values, will equip young people with the emotional tools to deal with life. These values are often referred to as a toolkit for life.

'The way we have structured it here is asking everybody who has a stake in this school to come up with words that they believe should be something we expect of each other. So traditionally words like respect and appreciation, trust, cooperation come up and those are the words that form the language of this school.'

Eugene Symonds, Head Teacher

The school believes in introducing the core values to the students from a very young age. Although the students at the age of 3 and 4 will have limited understanding of some values, such as humility, they do know what love and peace are. Over time they develop an emerging understanding of values such as trust and cooperation. The idea is to ensure the words and meanings are routinely and systematically introduced throughout the time the students attend the school. Improved behaviour and attainment are cited as evidence that the school's approach is working.

Assemblies

Assemblies are at the heart of West Kidlington School's commitment to communicating the core values. The Head Teacher describes them as a vital pillar of the whole strategy. It is during the assemblies that the students learn a moral vocabulary, which equips them for everything else they do in and out of school. Inventive ways to introduce the values are used to ensure that the values are not seen as simply dry words, but 'bubbly and lively'. By doing so, it is believed that the students will really understand the meaning of key value

words and that this in turn will have a powerful influence on actions. Therefore the assemblies are all about encouraging the young people to understand and then internalise the meaning of the different values. At the end of each assembly the students are made to sit in silence and undertake a meditative reflection on what they have learnt. The belief is that the students need space to put something into their heart. This meditative space is a chance to de-clutter their thoughts and to find what is important.

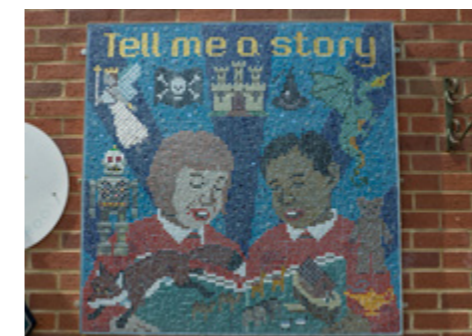


Through the school building

The school takes every opportunity to communicate the core values. They are communicated by posters on all of the school walls, through the website and in communications to parents. Although the signs are seen mainly as prompts and reminders to the students and staff, there is a real belief in the power of messages; the school believes the written messages around the school back up the verbal messages students hear from teachers and other staff. As soon as you walk through the school gates the Head Teacher wants everyone to know that the school is values-led.

Practised through the curriculum

The school's vision is not only to communicate the values message though written and verbal communication, but to make them real through the curriculum. Activities such as storytelling, reflection, and pupil-led discussions about the values are part and parcel of every school day. For example, PHSE sessions will almost always include a reflection and are linked to elements of the curriculum. The older children can be asked think about things from a historical perspective and make a judgement on whether things are right or wrong. In addition, the students are exposed to positive adult role models in and out of school, which help to embed the values as part of children's long-term development.



Mr Eugene Symonds, Head Teacher



'The strategic elements of the school improvement plan sit more easily with the way we have structured our values-led learning.'

Eugene Symonds, Head Teacher

Becoming a School of Character

The case studies demonstrate several different approaches by schools to character education. Despite the differences, there are also many similarities in the approaches and schools can learn from their successes and the challenges they faced. The list below summarises these similarities and suggests ways forward for schools seeking to develop and implement character education.

Vision and confident leadership

- Head Teachers and senior management teams develop a vision for character education and have the courage to realise it.
- Character education is placed at the heart of the schools mission. The mission is based on the belief that young people need to be prepared for the tests of life, rather than a life of tests.
- School management identify a (small) number of core moral values or virtues that form the heart of the school's vision.
- School leaders are ambassadors of character education through everything they say and do, inside school and whilst in contact with all other parties involved.

Critical mass of staff on board

- Everyone in the school understands that their job is to prepare young people for all the roles they will play when they leave school and that these roles, such as parent, neighbour, employee, and citizen, all require good character.
- New staff are selected on the basis of them understanding and agreeing on the importance of character education. Recognising the moral dimension of teaching is as important as subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.
- Time is made during staff meetings and school workshops to discuss the meaning of virtues, and share experiences with character education in the classroom.
- All teachers effectively model virtuous character traits at all times.

School as a community

- The school is a thriving community where teachers, students and other staff all see themselves as 'in it together'.
- The community flourishes as throughout there are excellent adult / student relationships based on mutual trust and respect.

Make character education visible

- The virtues are visible throughout the school (e.g. posters) and external communication (e.g. website).
- The school's character development mission is communicated to parents, and they are on board.
- The school's motto / mission statement is about character development and this should be enforced.

Schools and teachers must understand that they can't create a 'School of Character' in a day – but understand that through incremental changes, based on evidence of what works, change for the better occurs.

Caught and taught

- Character education is explicitly 'taught' through lessons, such as PSHE, citizenship education, wellbeing, R.E and other curricula subjects.
- Existing teaching materials of all subjects are scrutinised to ensure links to character educational issues. New teaching materials and initiatives are developed to illustrate character themes.

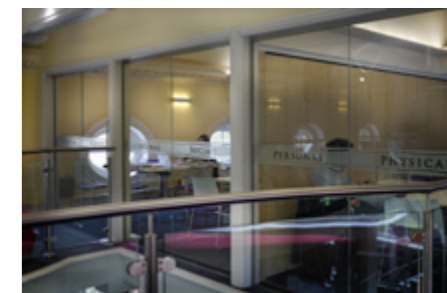


Commitment to experiential learning

- Students are given extensive opportunities to experience the enactment of different virtues such as courage, compassion and humility.
- Extracurricular activities, such as sports, culture (projects about film/ theatre), and outings are seen as opportunities for character building.
- Service learning projects are initiated through which pupils contribute to the wider society, and learn from the experience.

Time for personal reflection

- Time is given to students throughout the curriculum for them to think about who they are and who they want to be.
- Pastoral care is based on the development of the student's character. Form time is structured around issues of character development and the virtues. Teachers see themselves as coaches.
- Resources, such as journals and log books, are provided for young people to think about themselves and record their personal development.



Schools of Character





THE JUBILEE CENTRE FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is a unique and leading Centre for the examination of how character and virtues impact on individuals and society. Based at the University of Birmingham, it has a dedicated team of 30 academics from a range of disciplines: philosophy, psychology, education, theology and sociology.

With its focus on excellence, the Centre has a robust and rigorous research and evidence-based approach that is objective and non-political. It offers world class research on the importance of developing good character and virtues and the benefits they bring to individuals and society. In undertaking its own innovative research, the Centre also seeks to partner with leading academics from other universities around the world and to develop strong strategic partnerships.

A key conviction underlying the existence of the Centre is that the virtues that make up good character can be learned and taught. We believe that these have largely been neglected in schools and in the professions. It is also a key conviction that the more people exhibit good character and virtues, the healthier our society. As such, the Centre undertakes development projects seeking to promote the practical applications of its research evidence.

Find out more about the work of the Centre at www.jubileecentre.ac.uk

The Framework for Character Education and other character education resources can be downloaded for free here:

www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/432/character-education

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