



THE
JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

CASE STUDY: Stockport School and Our Involvement in The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues 'My Character Project'.

Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues

University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT United Kingdom

T: +44 (0) 121 414 3602 F: +44 (0) 121 414 4865

E: jubileecentre@contacts.bham.ac.uk W: www.jubileecentre.ac.uk

One of the initial attractions of the My Character project has been the way it sits nicely beside some of the topics we cover in our KS3 curriculum. The concept of future-mindedness is very relevant to teaching and learning within PSHCE at Stockport School with regard to preparation for and accepting responsibility for students' own education. One of the roles of a successful school is to allow students the space and time to develop a character identity and to discover what is required to be a success in the future. Making an active, successful contribution to society runs parallel to the government's Every Child Matters policy and in creating an identity, a sense of purpose is developed. Then students realise how important it is to be able to interact successfully with each other to maintain and achieve this identity and purpose. My Character, and in particular future-mindedness, sits very comfortably with this.

Being consulted and asked to attend a day at the University of Birmingham was definitely enjoyable and helped me to understand more of the project's aims and methods. It prompted a higher level of involvement as the more I saw the more I bought into the project. Meeting other colleagues from the participating schools helped share ideas and, more importantly, share some solutions. Our current Year 11s were also heavily involved with the research and development stage of the project. They spent two full days with the project team, working on the design and layout of both the theme and content of the website and how best to encourage other students to explore future-mindedness and character virtues. Our Year 8 students involved with the trial were impressed to recognise some Year 11s appearing on their computer screens as part of the web based resources!

Once the trial in school was underway, I think that all the students were very impressed with the quality of the website. Its layout and navigation with the different themes were easy to find and follow. The compass was certainly distinctive but many students were unsure why it was there. Once explained, most saw its relevance and understood more about the aims of the project as a result. I think that the 'personalised' first page was a masterstroke and certainly involved the students right from the start – indeed; many spent a surprising amount of time getting their theme 'just right.' Without this, the students would certainly have struggled with some of the following pages and tasks. The percentage

calculator to show how much work is completed was used a lot. This was a useful tool but perhaps indicated that the students' interest was flagging towards the end.

The Year 7 class with whom I used the journals were totally impressed by the weight, size and quality of the journal; students wanted to take it home and keep it somewhere safe. They were also impressed with the range of people used as case studies; they were very interesting and definitely broadened the students' knowledge base.

'I didn't know about these people featured in the biographies – it was good to be introduced to them. I could relate to them.' Student, Stockport School.

Some students did struggle with the length of the journal and with the difficult language. This is especially the case with younger (Year 7) students. I think editing the journal down and making the language easier would help.

As the link teacher at Stockport School I was impressed with how well the whole project seemed to be organised and put together. The students who were quizzed about the design, layout and to some extent, the content matter were certainly very well managed – and subsequently very motivated and keen to assist, especially with the filming side of things.

There were definitely some challenges faced by the teaching team, as mentioned above. However the benefits certainly outweighed the difficulties and on the whole our students both enjoyed and learned from the experience. It illustrates how important it is to have positive character traits and helps to create an awareness that how the students interact and think and what they decide will have an impact on their future. I look forward to seeing the results of the trial.