

**‘Loddon’s legacy will be that our children are confident and determined to make a positive difference to our ever-changing world.’**

In April 2013 Loddon Primary School began its journey to become a Values-Based Education (VbE) School after attending a conference led by Mrs Julie Rees (aka Julie Duckworth author of ‘The Little Book of Values’). Our decision to follow the principles of VbE stemmed from the belief that it would support us in our aim to develop a community of resilient learners, who work their hardest to achieve well across a broad range of skills and knowledge. It also, we felt, had the potential to unite us in a common philosophy for our whole school community which, in turn, would strengthen our ethos and improve team work and well-being.

At Loddon, we recognise the truth of the words ‘Intelligence *plus* character – that is the goal of true education’ – Martin Luther King Jr; (this quote also appears as the opening statement within ‘The Inner Curriculum’ by Neil and Jane Hawkes). At a time in education when it can feel as if demands, at both national and local level, narrow the curriculum and aims of schools to a small suite of testable outcomes the approach VbE offered for us gave the chance to secure our long-term vision that: ‘Loddon’s legacy will be that our children are confident and determined to make a positive difference to our ever-changing world’. In the words of one of our Year 6 Values Ambassadors ‘It’s like a map which guides you and shows you the way to be a better person,’ this we see as the greater calling of education.



At Loddon we have agreed 22 Values on a two-year cycle, 11 values per year, these include: respect, resilience, peace, caring and tolerance to name but a few. The Values are displayed in each classroom and presented in themed weekly assemblies. A specific monthly values lesson is delivered, to further develop the children’s understanding of each. The values are also integrated into our curriculum being woven into all areas of learning so that they are continually reinforced and revisited by the children. Children also complete a monthly piece of Values home learning which, alongside our newsletters, offers parents/carers the opportunity to reflect on the values alongside their child.

Since 2016 we have had a specific VbE working party at Loddon. This group comprises volunteer representatives from across the school and is responsible for producing and evaluating action plans in relation to VbE. The formation of the working party has been invaluable in ensuring our VbE work remains focussed and is central to driving our behaviour and thinking at Loddon. Each year the working party will agree a small number of VbE areas to particularly focus on, for example next year the group will oversee further school improvement activity to strengthen our ‘Inner curriculum’ in relation to getting to know the brain and self-reflection. Previous action plans have focussed on sharing the values with parents, values within the school environment and the introduction of house gems to support positive behaviour.

## Daily Peace Boost



*'The school overall is much calmer than before  
the Values' Key Stage 2 Teaching Assistant*

Of course VbE is not only about the children but also the adults in school. Staff well-being and development are high on the agenda at Loddon. The positive ethos which has been created through VbE means staff are supportive of each other, welcoming, friendly and keen to contribute to team work as positive role models. In 2018, as part of plans for our 'Every Adult Matters work', we will be offering an 8 week mindfulness course to all staff at school. This we hope will support us as adults to 'access and self-regulate our inner worlds, empowering our self-energy.' We recognise that if we are to develop further as role models for VbE we must take care of our own well-being and practice the approaches we expect of our children.

Finally, I would like to comment on the positive benefits we have experienced from being a member of the wider VbE community. This year our Values Ambassadors (Y5 and Y6 children who have shown exemplary VbE behaviour) have visited another school to share their experience of VbE at Loddon. This has proved a great opportunity in public speaking for these children and also offered valuable insight into a local community other than their own. As staff we have visited other VbE schools and hosted visits to our school sharing ideas together and strengthening practice on both sides. Some of our pupils have even been able to exchange letters with a VbE school in Scandinavia where VbE formed the common language to facilitate an international link. Due to the shared philosophy of VbE schools and the network which exists between these schools - <https://www.valuesbasededucation.com/> - we have been able to work with a broader range of partners than our usual networks may have allowed. VbE in this sense has opened, for us, the doors to a new and diverse community.

During the last 5 years of our VbE journey we have been able to create a culture and ethos of high expectations in which staff and pupils strive to do their best. VbE it is at the heart of all we do; driving our thinking and behaviour and underpinning our entire school ethos. We have become more resilient as learners and certainly have a shared philosophy and culture now due to VbE. As Ofsted commented in January 2018: *'A central feature of what the school provides is the 'values-based' education to which all stakeholders and pupils subscribe. This is reflected in the comment made by one parent who wrote: 'The school has given our children the joy of learning, while teaching them crucial values and skills.'*

We are delighted with the progress we have made so far and the positive impact that VbE has had at Loddon in creating a positive school culture in which children and adults may thrive.