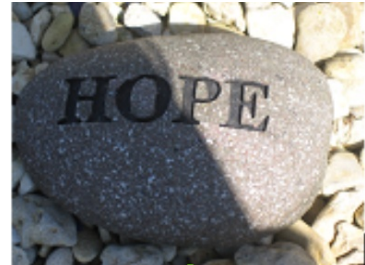


A Values-based Curriculum Guidebook for Our Future

The Why?

When thinking about a curriculum design for our schools, are we really asking, 'So, what do we want our children to be and become?' Values-based Education, uniquely, offers a curriculum focus on ethical and emotional intelligence and values, that gives pupils the very best chance of personal happiness and wellbeing, and academic success. Through creating a strong learning environment, it enhances academic attainment, and develops personal and interpersonal skills that last beyond schooling and throughout entire lives.



As seen in over a hundred VbE Quality Mark schools, it creates a strong learning environment where pupils' academic diligence is heightened. It supports the development of personal and interpersonal skills that last beyond schooling and, potentially, throughout entire lives.

The purpose of a values-based curriculum is to help the school community think about the values important to them. It opens debate and encourages personal responsibility. In so doing, it secures a positive emotional and mental outlook, promoting spiritual connection through personal reflection. In turn, this builds individual and community resilience and well-being.

Typically, a school embarking on the Values-based journey will have worked with their community to identify a unique set of core values which are most relevant to their context. They then focus intently on one value each month. Pupils are encouraged to consider and question values in different contexts, deepening their understanding and engagement. Learning is continually reinforced throughout the month.

Rationale

Aims:

- To enable pupils, through exploration, to gain a deep understanding of a value.
- To enable pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make sense of the impact of the values in their lives, their relationships and their understanding of others.
- To help pupils to develop the ability to reflect upon values and make connections with their own lives and with their understanding of other values.
- To help pupils to grow their understanding of values in relation to themselves, the world and human experiences.

What this resource offers:

- A conceptual basis for teaching and learning about each value.
- A clear outline of the building blocks that make a secure knowledge base for developing Values-based Education.
- A framework for the sustained development of both knowledge and understanding of Values.
- Opportunities for planning and assessment, enabling pupils to make progress from surface learning to deeper learning at all ages.
- A clear set of steps to introduce Values-based Education

What it is not:

- A definitive curriculum for values-based education: it offers an approach to a values-based curriculum
- A complete lesson plan: there are many ways to approach the teaching and learning of values and teachers need to respond to how well pupils grasp new concepts.
- Necessarily easy! Teaching and learning about values can be demanding – it combines academic rigour with deep emotional learning and literacy.

How do we introduce VbE to our school?

Consult with staff in the first instance, so that they feel an ownership of this process.

Discuss how to consult all the school community. You can hold an event and invite all staff, parents and governors to share the discussion.

Pupils will also need to be participants in this process.

Follow the steps below:

1. Share the vision for Values-based Education in your school with other school leaders.
 - Watch Neil's videos and TEDx talk
 - Share the Guidebook
 - Read 'From My Heart' and 'The Inner Curriculum'
 - Familiarise yourself with the website
 - Register for Updates and Resources
 - Decide, as a staff, to embed a Values-based culture and curriculum in your school
2. Consult the school community (all staff, pupils, parents, governors/trustees) and select the Values for focus
 - Coffee morning/ evening session to share vision with parents
 - Whole staff meeting to share with whole staff (including administrative and support staff). Discuss what VbE means and discuss the Values that are important to you as individuals and as a school. Develop a shared understanding. Now, in groups, select around 20- 22 values and rank them in order of importance. This is a great way to deepen the understanding of each Value. Carry out a similar exercise with pupils. From this, you will now have a list of the most important Values based on the ideas of all stakeholders.
3. Agree the order in which the chosen set of values will be introduced.
 - Consider matching to national and international dates and events.
 - International Values Day (October)
 - Earth day (April)
 - International Day of Happiness (March)
 - International Day of Friendship (July)
 - Many more ideas can be found on the UN website.

4. Plan assemblies (when the whole school comes together) to introduce the Value for each month (see appendix 1 & 2). Decide who will be delivering these and ensure that all staff are supporting them. These do not have to have a religious content, but can do so if that is appropriate in your school. Positive human Values form the basis of every faith.
5. Look at the systems and practices in the school and ensure that they are Values-based
 - Are the routines of everyday school life in line with VbE? Are pupils treated with respect at times of transition?
 - Consult with pupils to improve playtimes and lunchtimes.
6. Produce displays and visual prompts to remind all the community about the Values. Examples can be found at www.valuesbasededucation.com
7. Plan how VbE will be incorporated in the informal times, such as playtime and lunchtime.
 - Outside displays, friendship bench, quiet area for reflection.
 - Playtime buddies or playleaders, children as leaders and role models.
8. Plan how the current value can be incorporated in the formal curriculum (literacy, maths, science, etc) (See Appendix 4 'A Values-based Education Policy')
 - Talk about the values shown by characters in a story
 - What Values do the children use to solve a problem in Maths?
 - How can Values be depicted in Art, PE, Music, Science, etc?
9. Plan Circle Times for values to allow deepening discussion of the Value of the month. [Resources](#) to support this can be found on the VbE website.
- 10 Consider the Seven pillars of VbE and how they will be implemented in your school. Produce an Action Plan (See appendix 5 for an example)
- 11 Include Values in all policies. Review current policies in the light of VbE. Does the school Leadership reflect Values in both style and in the sharing of responsibility?

How do we Embed VbE in our School?

The Seven Pillars of VbE

There are seven 'transformational properties' or 'pillars' that make up the process:

- **Modelling** –The most important way in which the value is shared is through the modelling of expected behaviour and attitudes for each other. This ultimately supports human flourishing by establishing a sense of belonging, of being valued and of togetherness. Modelling is the first aspect. It involves all members of the community. In order for pupils to understand the Values, they need to experience what they look like when modelled by the adults around them. Being a role model for Values is certainly a challenge and, while we acknowledge that no one is perfect, all must be willing to do their very best.
- **Inner Curriculum** – As a result of an immersive experience in a values-based culture, pupils are able to develop self-awareness. When this is continuously nurtured, it can rapidly develop into self-leadership, whereby the individual can recognise, manage and control his or her own emotions in order to govern attitudes, thinking and behaviour. This in turn equips students to develop their capacity to live in harmony with others. It develops compassion, emotional intelligence, mutuality, sense of togetherness and sense of self-worth. (See appendix 3 for further exploration of this important element of VbE)
- **Reflection** – Pupils are taught how to use the inner life of the spirit or imagination. Through this comes a calm and alert state for learning, and inner wisdom. Periods of reflection are introduced into every day. Often these follow the more informal parts of the day and help children to prepare for the next period of learning. They also offer pauses in the day for pupils to reflect on their learning. Whether they are referred to as mindfulness, meditation or silent stilling, they are essentially an opportunity for pupils to become more self-aware and in touch with their inner self.
- **Atmosphere and Ethos** – a school's ethos nurtures, strengthens and supports the individuals. This values-based approach builds positive vibrations, resulting in the sense that, as a visitor to one values-based school described it, 'everything here just smiles at you.' The physical environment also reflects the Values, through high quality displays, sculptures and posters highlighting the current Value. Examples can be seen on the website, at www.valuesbasededucation.com
- **Curriculum** - refers to everything the school does to support VbE both implicitly, as described above in the description of atmosphere, and explicitly in ensuring that every aspect of the school's life and work reflects and is underpinned by the school's chosen values.

All school policies are reviewed to ensure internal consistency with the school's values. (See Appendix 4 for an example Values-based Education Policy.) The curriculum encompasses the formal, informal and hidden curriculum. The formal curriculum, ensuring that values are explicitly and experientially taught about in lessons, not only discretely in values lessons but as an element in all aspects of the curriculum.

The informal curriculum includes how break times are managed and resourced. It also includes the after-school provision.

The hidden curriculum reflects the school's culture and can be seen in the expectations (school uniform), routines (movement around the school) and practices (sports days, parent/staff meetings) of the school. All these aspects are considered to be the responsibility of the school's leadership.

- **Leadership** – when leaders are inspired and motivated to sustain a values-based curriculum, they inspire whole communities. When children return home, they express the values concepts and behave in values-

based ways. It inspires families, who in turn, inspire their neighbours! When individuals become aware of how they can develop and express their values in their own lives, the values-based curriculum has been a success. The combination of awareness of the value, and experiencing it first hand, is enough to transform students to become supportive, positive contributors to the community.

- **Ethical Vocabulary** – children develop an ethical vocabulary through which they are able to describe, recognise and control their emotions. This is empowering, enabling them to develop sophisticated emotional literacy. One aspect of values-based curriculum is its focus on the expression in words of our deepest human needs, desires and hopes. They provide the means by which we can articulate our preferences that determine how we understand ourselves, each other and they drive our behaviour. It equips people to develop deep emotional literacy and interpersonal relationships.

Developing and Deepening Values in the Curriculum

So, let's take a closer look at how you can implement a values-based curriculum in your school.

Helping children to define what they are learning in values enables them to later reflect on what they are learning, and transfer skills learnt from one experience into another. Our teaching about values follows a constructivist approach, facilitating and opening up ideas and possibilities, and scaffolding learning as children make their paths that will take them on a lifetime's journey.

Underpinning values-based learning is meta-cognition, helping children to talk about their learning and understand that by being aware of their own learning they are deepening the experience. Therefore, the starting point of finding out what children already know about an issue or subject and finishing with a chance to reflect on what they have learned is a great way to shape the experience. Thus:

Introduction: "What do you know so far about the value of -----?"

Plenary: "What have you learned that is new today? What surprised you? What did you find the most important thing for you today?"

The following illustrations open up or de-layer a value, creating a natural learning pathway through it. They can be the starting point for planning teaching values throughout the primary curriculum. They show how the value might be enacted – what it looks like in each of its forms and in so doing provides a concrete starting point for exploration. It is divided into basic and higher order skills related to each value.

This exemplification of how values can be un-packed is written from the premise that learning begins and is felt most profoundly where there is a personal, immediate, emotional connection. For learning to be meaningful, it needs to start with the child and recognised experiences. Abstract or higher order thinking can be effective when rooted in a secure understanding from a highly personal base. Threaded through each is also the notion of rights and responsibilities – that through our every and everyday actions we shape the world: everything we do matters.



The Value of Care

Here is an example of how a value is enacted : How could I care?

Values Aspect	'Basic' skills	'Higher order' skills
	So I might at first be able to...	Later, I might be able to...
I care about myself	... recognise what makes me happy/unhappy; recognise what I am good at and what makes me special; ask for help if I need it; want to do my best; develop understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle; understand what harmful behaviours look like and know how to keep myself safe	... persevere so I can get good at things; recognise that when I make mistakes I can learn from them; recognise the feelings that come with this; be aware of my own feelings and when I might need others to help me come up with possible solutions when I have a problem; know how to keep myself safe
I care about my family	.. give them smiles/hugs/kisses; sometimes do nice things for them; use words that are kind and positive; be considerate of their feelings and needs.	... notice what makes them happy or unhappy; see how I contribute to making a good family life together.
I can care for things	... look after my toys/books/clothes; look after school property and treat it with care	
I can care for my pet/a plant/ a living thing	... feed and water it; make sure it is clean and warm; give it attention and love	... watch to see it is happy and secure; notice when it needs different responses
I care about my friends	... try to be a good friend by playing with them and making sure they are not left out; do things with them; listen to them; sometimes do nice things for them; know what makes them happy or unhappy; use words that are kind and positive.	... recognise bullying behaviour – in myself or in others, and ask for help from someone I trust; recognise that I can befriend people who are different to me and see that they have new things to offer me
I care about those around me	... be a friendly person; enjoy their company, including people who are not necessarily like me; use words that are kind and positive; be considerate of their feelings and needs.	... notice if others are feeling glum or down and try to help them; develop understanding that different people look different to me, have different skills and abilities, beliefs, faiths, culture or gender.
I can care about the world I live in	... be careful to look after it by not dropping litter or deliberately damaging my environment; understand that there are caring structures within our society, such as police, health and legal services	... develop understanding of harmful global issues and activities; recognise that some groups of people in the world are left out or treated unfairly; know I can support charities and organisations to make

<p>I can strive to live my life in a caring manner</p>	<p>... recognise when I am showing care, and when others show care to me; learn from caring people who are role models in my family, community and culture; learn from real-life stories about when people have shown care for one another in harrowing or dangerous circumstances (eg during the war)</p>	<p>... develop empathy with people I have never met; begin to understand how I can regulate my responses so they come from a caring place within me and show care to others.</p>
<p>I can recognise when I am caring too much...</p>		<p>... making moral choices: debate, discuss and decide what is worth caring about; understand that, for example, what I look like is not as important as the way I behave or the skills and qualities I work to have, and judge others accordingly; recognise that different faiths and cultures place differing emphases on different things, according to belief systems.</p>

Thanks to Bridget Knight, CEO, Values-based Education www.valuesbasededucation.com

Further Support

Please remember that we are here to help and support you.

You can contact any of the VbE consultants here:

www.valuesbasededucation.com/aboutus/the-vbe-team

Perhaps you would like to work in partnership with a school in the UK. The following schools have achieved their VbE Quality Mark and will be happy to support you in your journey.

www.valuesbasededucation.com/vbe-awards/quality-mark-schools

Finally, we wish you well as you begin your Values journey. We all have a story to tell and we would love to hear about yours. We hope that you will be inspired, as Neil Hawkes says:

"I have . . . reflected on the word inspiration and have realised that it is really the power of the logic and transformational properties behind VbE that is the real inspiration. Humans seem to be longing for a cultural transformation, which is based on a shift of consciousness that will focus on universal, positive human values such as respect, love, compassion and trust."

Dr Neil Hawkes