Know your value: Character in a knowledge rich curriculum

Using Character Education to inspire purpose, aspiration and self-belief in young people.

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How do you assess a person’s worth? How do assess their value?

“My sister is my rock. She is always there for me, often before I even have to ask. Nothing is too much trouble, and with everything she does she puts me and our family first.”

“My colleague and the co-founder of our company. There’s no job that’s too big, no problem too challenging. Whatever issues we run into I can trust him and rely on him not to give up until we’ve resolved them.”

“My best friend is invaluable to me because of her honesty and her integrity. They are the greatest qualities a person can have.

“My nan is uniquely generous. ‘If I’ve got it, you can have it’, was her answer whenever I asked for something or needed something growing up. She’d happily go without so that we would not.”

“My boss. He’s the one person I’ve worked for in my life that I would call a true leader. He takes on the greatest challenges and the biggest portion of every workload so that we are affected less by the stress and ‘politics’ of our job.”
What is it that you want for your children?

- To be a good role model for their children
- To be happy
- To take care of their family and understand responsibility
- To have the strength to get back up when life knocks them down.
- To work hard to make a life for themselves with what I’ve given to them
- To be loved
- To know they are loved
- To have the confidence to follow their passions and build the life they deserve.
What is Character Education?

‘[Character education] is the explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people develop positive personal strengths called virtues’.

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues

‘The intentions and actions that benefit both the individual and others’

Character Lab

The building blocks of character

‘A set of personal traits that produce specific emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct.’

Character education is an umbrella term for all explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people develop positive personal strengths called virtues.

Association for Character Education
The intention of Character Education is not just about making those individuals better persons but to create the social and institutional conditions within which all human beings can flourish.
Prioritising these ‘soft skills’ takes away from academic attainment, which is the main reason children come to school.
You can’t measure it.
It’s a nice bonus but it’s not a priority.

We’ll do it if we have time but it’s no big deal if we don’t.
UK pupils among the world's unhappiest

New Pisa report also finds UK teenagers are more anxious about testing than their counterparts in almost any other country including South Korea and China; and have high internet usage associated with poor test scores.

By Helen Ward
19 April 2017
“It is not enough to teach our students to have a vision, we must instil in them the faith that this vision will manifest into reality”

Many of life’s failures are people who did not realise how close they were to success when they gave up.

Thomas Edison
It’s not our job, this should be taught at home.
The most important scientific discovery of self control is that it can be taught.

Walter Mischel
“The world is waiting to be redefined by the biggest, smallest, boldest, quirkiest, bravest, most inspiring and most brilliant ideas from around the world”.

TED Ed
LESSONS WORTH SHARING

AN OPEN CHAPTER
'Walsall ranked 206th (bottom) for community spirit, last again for where people can be themselves, 205th for friendliness, 191st for a ‘sense of belonging’ and 189th in terms of a place for people to earn enough money to live comfortably.'

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Is Walsall really the most miserable place in the country?
expressandstar.com
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead
“What can we do?”
What can we do?
Watch your thoughts for they become your words,
Watch your words, for they become your actions,
watch your actions, for they become your habits,
watch your habits, for they become your character.

~ Lao Tzu
Where to begin?

* If you had one minute and the attention of the world, what would you say?
* What issues are we not talking about that bother you?
* What things cannot wait to be changed?
* What makes you truly come alive?
* If you were in my shoes, teaching history 100 years into the future, and a student asked ‘how did people let this happen?’ what do you think they’d be referring to?
* Is there a scenario in which we could say ‘we didn’t, we fought to change it?’
Moving forward

* A deep sense of self-worth
* Increased aspiration and self-belief
* An appetite to grow
* The desire to do good
* An understanding of purpose and fulfilment
* A genuine interest in others
* An understanding of their true value beyond academic attainment
Character education in schools is needed and it is necessary and it is helpful. It cannot, however, be taught in isolation.

We are more than an encyclopaedic resource and our job is far greater than ensuring the meticulous construction of future encyclopaedic resources.

Character development and academic performance are not mutually exclusive.

Beyond individual triumph is a need for collective victory if society is to flourish. If we agree that human behaviour is at the core of societies problems, then it stands to reason that the ability to modify and guide that behaviour is the core of the solution.