

Character

Character education is intended to ensure all our pupils develop qualities and life skills for adulthood. It helps them not only to be a good person but to go and do something great with their lives and be a positive contributor to our society. These skills include self-belief, motivation, persistence, self-control, and coping mechanisms, which help them bounce back after a disappointment or setback, along with virtues like compassion, curiosity, civility and determination. Our senior chaplains use our act of kindness award to nominate a pupil each week based on the key values, e.g. love, charity, perseverance, resilience. The key principles are:

- A good life one in which a person develops and practises virtues.
- Character can be caught, taught and sought.
- Character traits develop through habits.

As well as giving them a good foundation for their future lives, character education can improve children's school experience. Children who receive character education have been shown to have fewer absences from school, (St. Mary's CVA New Mills has significantly higher attendance figures than the national average even during COVID) and show greater emotional wellbeing and lower levels of distress. The Education Secretary set out five key areas that help children develop good character:

- Sport e.g. pupils engage in quality PE, morning runs, mental health walks and sporting competitions
- Creativity e.g. Enrichment clubs in wrap around care, vibrant art displays
- Performing e.g. Stronger together (Trust), weekly assemblies, worships, class assemblies and whole school productions
- Volunteering and membership e.g. Senior chaplains run lunch time clubs, involvement in church activities, visiting old people's homes, carol singing in New Mills, membership of local clubs, helping the homeless, charity, First aid training
- The world of work e.g. enterprise scheme, visits from other professionals

However, character education can be entwined through just about every curriculum subject. For example, working on maths problems can help to develop children's focus, and studying the life of Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa or Rosa Parks could teach them about resilience.

Character education is also delivered through activities such as circle time, assemblies, school councils, buddy schemes, community projects, and lunchtime or after-school clubs. The pupils have all designed their own mission statement and through whole school assemblies identified the values of our school.

Supporting character at home

Supporting them with homework, helping them process their worries, praising their efforts and successes, encouraging kindness to siblings, signing them up for clubs like Brownies and Cubs, taking them to visit older relatives - all these and more will help your child develop character virtues.