

Values-based Education Blueprint



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The Values-based Education (VbE) Blueprint sets out the core thinking of Dr Neil Hawkes, founder of the International Values-based Education Trust (IVET), on the VbE approach to teaching and learning. The success of VbE is based on evidence that confirms that students learn about positive human values effectively through first hand experience. Values-based schools agree to model the values that members of the school community decide are important to them. Authentic modelling is crucial to the learning process and depends on teaching and support staff understanding the essence of VbE. The Blueprint provides the essential background knowledge of VbE, which schools can then successfully implement its principles and practices. A comprehensive account of VbE is contained in Neil's book called, *From My Heart, transforming lives through values*.

Thinking points

The Valuing Philosophy of Education, as expounded by Dr Neil Hawkes, underpins the life and work of school communities, colleges, and other settings, including the home so that they are values-based. The term values-based implies that every aspect of life, both personal and professional is based on the way that values are lived. It is transformational, in that it invites cultural change that is based on equity and respect for all. It is challenging, as it calls us to ask what we can give to life, as opposed to what can we get from life? It promotes a way of being that values the self, others and the environment. It is simple: yet profound in its effects. It is a developmental process that connects with the intrinsic qualities of human beings and actively nurtures them. It invites the individual to be aware of the potential power of their inner world of thoughts and feelings; how the way that these are used affects our own well being, that of others and potentially the world. It sees the purpose of education as the flourishing of humanity. It is soundly based on research, which shows the positive effects on students, both socially and academically, when educators model and teach about universal, positive human values. The purpose of adopting the philosophy is to inspire young people to adopt positive values in their lives so that they can be the best people that they can be and actively demonstrate the values in their daily lives, thereby creating a sustainable world.

Values-based Education occurs when universal, positive human values underpin everything a school or other organisation does.

Values Education is any activity, which promotes the understanding of positive values, developing the skills and dispositions of adults and students so they can live the values as active members of the community.

Values are the principles, fundamental convictions and standards that act as the general guides to our thinking and behaviour. They include: Peace, Justice, Respect, Love, Patience, Happiness, Caring, Trust, Honesty, Humility, Courage, Compassion, Tolerance and Hope.

Blueprint

The blueprint for VbE has become an inspiration for schools worldwide and is founded on the original innovative work of West Kidlington School in Oxfordshire, UK. The key elements about how to introduce VbE are as follows:



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1. Why VbE?

Be clear about why you want to develop as a values-based school. It is imperative that the leadership of the school is fully committed to the development of a values-based school. Have you seen one, read about one, or considered the research evidence for introducing VbE? Who will take the lead or will a mixture of people lead VbE from the school and community? Are you prepared to invest the necessary, time, energy and resources? Think about timescale for implementation, success criteria, monitoring and evaluation. Have colleagues realised that Values-based Education is about cultural transformation and challenges personal assumptions and mindsets about the nature of education and schooling? It is important to audit how things are at present. For instance, with their full agreement audit the staff's personal values and their perception of current and desired values of the school. To achieve this consider using the tools of the Barrett Values Centre and the survey on the VbE website www.valuesbasededucation.com. The surveys will give staff a greater understanding of the school's current culture. Ensure that you think about the current climate for teaching and learning; relationships; level of synergy/cooperation in the staff; the level of cultural entropy (aspects of the school that work against it being values-based). Ask, how does our school currently impart values to pupils? What are these values? Are they taught implicitly or explicitly? What do we hope the benefits will be for adopting the values-based approach?

2. Shaping Policy

The whole school community (staff, pupils, parents and community representatives) is involved in shaping a values-based education policy. A process of values understanding/identification takes place involving the school's community. A meeting/forum is set up to facilitate this process. The forum will propose that the school adopt universal, positive human values such as respect, honesty and cooperation. These are chosen through a careful process that involves thinking about what qualities (values) the school should encourage students to develop. These values are then circulated to all parents for consultation and endorsement so that everyone is aware of the values that have been agreed. This is the most effective way of engaging the community in the values process.

3. Ethical Intelligence

The school works to ensure that everyone understands that effective Values Education is based on the understanding that pupils will develop ethical intelligence, if they are introduced to an ethical vocabulary, based on positive values words (e.g. respect honesty and cooperation). The model that colleagues and Neil developed at West Kidlington School has 22 values, introduced over a two-year cycle (no value for August when the school was on holiday/vacation): one value being the focus for each month. Schools may decide to have fewer values with a longer focus time but it is important to have enough values to create a common ethical vocabulary. Neil believes that this vocabulary, if adopted at national level, can be the basis of a transformational common language bringing peace to the world. In secondary schools that build on the work of their primary feeder schools, it is advisable to have a fewer number of values with supplementary values that are the focus for the development of character traits such as fairness, perseverance and honesty. Working in and with the

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community in service learning programs creates opportunities for living the values and character traits. By the time students leave secondary school they will have developed what Neil refers to as personal holistic competence (PHC), which is the ability to deal with the complexity of life in an ethical and empathetic manner, whilst maintaining personal well being.

4. Deciding Principles

In the light of the values identified, the school decides the principles that will guide the way adults behave. Elements will be discussed to determine these such as:

- how adults will care for their well-being and mental health and be mutually supportive;
- how adults will be consistent in their behaviour, leading to consistency of behaviour across all members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) i.e. students will experience the same care and respect from all members of staff;
- the emotional, intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual needs of the students will be considered to ensure that the curriculum is holistic i.e. nurtures all aspects of the pupil;
- the way pupils are treated, in terms of the school's relational (behaviour) policy – sanctions and rewards.

5. Role Models

Adults in the school must be willing to commit themselves to work towards being role models for Values Education. Its success, in terms of improved standards and school ethos, will only come about if the school Principal/Headteacher and all staff (teaching and support staff) understand that it is primarily through their behaviour, in modelling the values that sustainable improvements will develop in the school. The adults therefore identify and agree positive behaviours that will model the values e.g. to remain calm when dealing with challenging student behaviour; to invest time in really getting to know their students; to helping students to sense and shape their future by finding meaning and purpose for what they do; all times being respectful. Such an agreement may be recorded in job descriptions and form part of performance management.

6. School's Values

The school's institutional values i.e. how the school is perceived by the community through aspects such as how parents are welcomed, school signage, state of the buildings and grounds, cleanliness, sports days, concerts, parents' meetings are reviewed to ensure consistency with the values education policy.

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7. Reflection

The school considers how it will encourage the key skill of reflection (sitting silently and focusing mental energy) that nurtures greater self-control, emotional balance, better relationships, responding appropriately to others and their own conscience, which will lead to values-based behaviour. Time needs to be devoted to understanding and training in this important skill, as in many schools it will be seen as something outside of the normal work of the school and only linked to faith communities. Neil cannot over emphasise the importance of this skill that has the backing of scientific research (see Dr. Dan Siegel's *The Mindful Brain*) as well as thousands of years of human wisdom.

8. Experiential Programme

An experiential programme is established for learning about values, which may include:

introducing and deepening the understanding of values in a programme of well constructed assemblies; one value being highlighted each month or other agreed period of time e.g. January= Respect ; each class teacher (primary schools) preparing one values lesson each month; the value of the month being the subject of a prominent display in the school hall, reception area, Principal's/Headteacher's office and in each classroom; values being an integral part of tutor time, all subject lessons, and a specific area of the curriculum (secondary schools) lessons having a values focus as well as a learning intention;

the language of values used implicitly in all lessons e.g. well done, you showed great respect to each other. Thank you for cooperating/caring/being tolerant etc;

Reflection should be a key component of lessons e.g. let's have a minute of silence so that we can be fully present in our lesson; let's pause and check out in a few moments of silence what we are thinking and feeling in this lesson and what will make our learning more productive, etc;

pupils are encouraged to be involved in action teams, using a values perspective to consider school and community issues e.g. how can we improve our break time experience? What can we do to make our learning experience both pleasurable and effective so that we get the most out of school life? In what ways can we encourage our parents and community to be more involved in the life of the school? What can we advise the council to do about litter in the shopping centre?

regular newsletters sent to parents, explaining what the value of the month is and how it can be developed at home.

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9. Integrate Curriculum

Aspects of the curriculum (everything that the school does) are identified that could make a specific contribution to values education e.g. Philosophy for Children (P4C), Learning Power, Enquiry-based projects, Technology supported Learning, Service Learning, Sports Program, School Concerts/Shows and other events. The range of skills, knowledge, attitudes and understanding to develop from Values Education is established. Of crucial importance is to ensure that the process of developing Values Education is well planned (construct an action plan) and that there is continuity and progression in the student's school experience, which is monitored, evaluated and celebrated in order to keep the process alive and constantly under review.

10. Values Statement

The school agrees a Values Statement that may be prominently displayed in school and included in the school's prospectus/website. It considers working towards achieving the International Values Education Trust's (IVET) Quality Mark for being a values-based school. Finally, it celebrates being a values school and continues on a process of continuous school improvement.

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Values Education Resources List and Suggested Reading

1. From My Heart: Transforming Lives Through Values, by Neil Hawkes
2. How to Inspire and Develop Values in Your Classroom, by Neil Hawkes
3. A Quiet Revolution II by Frances Farrer (about the values work of West Kidlington School).
4. The Little Book of Values by Julie Duckworth £8.99.
5. www.valuesbasededucation.com
6. Suggested further reading:
Man's Search for Meaning by Victor Frankl
The Courage to Teach by Parker J. Palmer

For more information and help, contact info@valuesbasededucation.com