

## **Character Education at Rush Green Primary School.**

Character education is the active development of character strengths, values and virtues in young people. It enables educators to work with parents and carers to introduce to, model and help children to acquire positive personal strengths, values and virtues, and in so doing, develop the whole child to become a well-rounded and active citizen. Character education enables pupils and adults to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic duty and citizenship, and develop responsibility for themselves and others. The development of these values, virtues and character strengths prepares children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of further study and later life.

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, based at the University of Birmingham, defines good character as the ability to make good decisions and good choices. The acquisition and development of positive values, virtues and good character traits leads to a well-balanced, honourable life and has a positive impact towards a thriving community and society.

Character education equips children to appreciate the importance of commitment to relationships, roles and their developing worldview and/or faith. They develop the ability to persevere and remain motivated by long-term goals, along with the strength to learn and bounce back from any setbacks they may encounter. Children learn about and take on board positive moral values such as courage, integrity, compassion, honesty and a sense of justice. They develop confidence to interact socially with others, to express their ideas and viewpoints articulately, and to listen and behave courteously when listening to those of others, including when that might mean disagreeing with their views. Through character education, children develop a sense of what is ethically important in situations and how to act for the right reasons.

### **Why do we value Character Education at Rush Green Primary School?**

*Strive to Succeed!*

Our school vision embraces the essence of character education, as the development of good character enables all members of the school and wider community to flourish. Character education contributes to forming well-educated, confident, compassionate and courageous young people, who leave Rush Green Primary School ready for the exciting challenges, responsibilities and opportunities that await them at secondary school and in their future lives.

At Rush Green, we acknowledge that parents and carers are the primary educators of their child's character; understanding that the school also plays an important role in this process. Developing character goes hand in hand with high educational aspirations and achievement and the wide range of experiences that the children encounter at primary school has a major impact on their future wellbeing and success. It is for this reason, we have made a commitment in our school to the teaching and development of character traits, attributes, values and behaviours that are the foundation to positive relationships, wellbeing, achievement and success.

## **How is Character Education 'taught, caught and sought' at Rush Green Primary School?**

Character strengths are not all acquired and developed by chance; they require a level of teaching, practice and nurture. Character Education cannot be 'taught and caught' as a discrete curriculum subject. At our school it permeates all subjects, wider school activities, and our school's vision and ethos. Our ambitious, well developed curriculum enables all learners to know more and remember more as they: acquire academic knowledge and skills, grow physically, socially and emotionally; develop their sense of place in the world; and develop in understanding, confidence and strength of character. Development of these facets of the whole child award them with the firm foundations needed to live life in all its fullness.

The fact that our rich, ambitious and inclusive curriculum, is underpinned by our values of 'Honour', 'Endeavour', 'Courage' and 'Determination', ensures that character education is a golden thread throughout the whole curriculum. Aspirational teaching encourages and challenges children to be their best selves, to take pride in their work, and to be positive members of the school and wider communities. Children are part of target setting, challenges and mistakes are taken on board as a valuable part of the learning process, and achievements are acknowledged and celebrated.

Children learn directly about character strengths, values and virtues in PSHE, RE lessons and collective worship and are given opportunities to explore, discuss and practise them. As part of PSHE, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) also actively promotes positive behaviour and relationships. Children are also exposed to the concepts and language of character throughout their wider experience of school in other lessons, learning experiences and activities, including learning

about British values. Opportunities for character building are encountered through experiential learning, discussion, debate, critical thinking, problem solving, asking and exploring big questions, meeting and overcoming challenges independently and with support. These opportunities help young people to explore and express their character and build the skills they need for resilience, empathy and the motivation to achieve their aspirations for the future.

Our curriculum promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners, allowing children to learn and pursue interests and talents whilst growing in character. The wider curriculum covers a wide range of experiences and opportunities that are open to all pupils. Enrichment activities and opportunities include: trips; visits (including residential); workshops; theatre trips; school clubs; competitions (including, art, science and sport); school choir; performances; awareness days and fund raising. Other opportunities such as becoming a member of the School Council, Sports Leaders or Behaviour Leads also allows children more opportunities to take on board responsibility and take action that enables the school community to flourish.

High expectations for standards of behaviour and clear responsibilities of all members of the school community are explicit within the school's Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy and Staff Code of Conduct. Restorative approaches are implemented when addressing any relationships issues. Children are taught how they can self-regulate their behaviours using strategies from the zones of regulation. Expectations for high levels of respect towards others in and beyond the school community are clear, and promoted through the school's values and vision. Adults and children are encouraged to act as role models to each other. By empowering children to become role models themselves, they grow even more in character and shine as they take pride in themselves and our school community.

## **Good Character in Action**

Visitors to Rush Green Primary School will see good character in action all around them at all points of the school day; in how children and adults engage with each other in classrooms, other learning areas, outdoors in structured learning activities and unstructured playtimes, and when our children visit off-site venues.

Our school culture values, respects and supports all members of the school community, with adults also empowered to further enhance their own character. Parents and carers are encouraged to share constructive feedback with school leaders, are listened to and well-supported, either directly by the school team and through information on the school website. Our dedicated pastoral team also signpost parents and carers to other means of support that they can access

independently. School leaders support staff with their wellbeing, management of workload, career pathway and encourage staff to take risks and be inventive with the curriculum, teaching and learning to ensure that our curriculum remains inspirational, relevant and interesting to the children. Governors and staff in our school all support one another.