

Spotlight on social and emotional intelligence in Church schools

There is no such thing as a neutral education, states a [discussion paper published today](#) by the Church of England, which explores what character education should look like in schools.

The paper, from the national education office, also suggests that development of character must be far more than the traditional virtues of grit and resilience - essential though these maybe - and should see the development of intellectual, spiritual, moral and physical attributes as equally essential. It adds that education is not just about producing increasingly efficient economic units: it is about developing people who can flourish in all areas of their lives.

The paper also emphasises the importance of character education being embedded in 'the implicit web of relationships that characterise schools' and not just in the formal teaching.

Speaking today at a Church of England conference on character education, the Bishop of Ely, Stephen Conway, Chair of the Board of Education said: "We need an expanded and expansive vision which does not restrict our hard-won freedoms but which invites us to be committed fellow citizens of developed character and loving purpose."

The paper, which contains case studies, has been written in partnership with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, based at Birmingham University. It aims to offer perspectives and some key questions on what character development may look like in schools and how this might be received by Christians and those of other faiths and none.

Earlier this year the Church of England received a Character Education grant from the Department for Education to pilot work on character education in the classroom. The project is piloting 'What If Learning', a cross-curricular model developed by an international partnership of educators. It aims to equip teachers with a practical approach to promoting the development of positive virtues and character traits in the classroom, which lead to success in learning and increased engagement in community and voluntary activities.

Notes

- [Read Bishop Stephen's full speech](#)
 - [More information on church schools and academies](#)
 - [More information on DfE grant](#)
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