

Enhanced VbE Quality Mark Report for
Phoenix Primary School, Chatham



Values-based Education
VbE Enhanced Quality Mark

VbE Adviser: Tracey Smith

Date: 30th April 2024

Introduction:

Tracey Smith was invited to carry out a Values Quality Mark Audit on **30th April 2024**.

The purpose of the audit was to determine the extent to which Values-based Education (VbE) is being successfully implemented and whether the school meets the criteria of the International Values-based Education Trust's (IVET) criteria for its Enhanced Quality Mark.

What is VbE?

Values-based Education 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 wellbeing, 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 pupils, both socially and academically, when educators model and teach about universal, positive human values. The purpose of adopting VbE 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 helping to create a sustainable world.

Terminology

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 pupils 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.

School Information			
Name of School	Phoenix Primary School		
Status of School (Maintained/Academy/Free/other)	Academy	No of pupils on roll:	373 as of today (13.03.2024)
School Postal Address	Phoenix Primary School Glencoe Road Chatham ME4 5QD		
School Phone Number	06134829009		
Local Authority/MAT	Medway Beyond Trust		
Headteacher: Name and Email	Melissa Ireland-Hubbert headteacher@phoenixprimary.com		
Values Leader: Name and Email	Sarah Farne sfarne@phoenixprimary.com		
Date of Previous VbE Quality Mark	2018		
How did you hear about Values-based Education?	Historical – previous Headteacher brought it into the school		
Other Relevant Contextual Information	The school has recently become an all-through primary school		

1. A Values-based Ethos

Criteria in addition to the standard VbE Quality Mark	Possible Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils, staff, parents and governors review and reconsider the school/setting's chosen values, including (if in England) the British Values and, where appropriate, develop these into new themes. • The values-based education approach is readily and widely articulated and evident in the ethos, curriculum and general work of the school. • All staff have regular high-quality professional development opportunities to further their values-based education approach. • Every step is taken to ensure that no adult or pupil is inadvertently marginalised through the structures and routines of the school. Each person is valued for his or her intrinsic value. • The school community understands that thinking about and living universally held, positive human values affects consciousness; leading to the expression of 'super' values such as altruism and wisdom, which transform human behaviour and potentially society. • The school/setting works in partnership with parents, community and external organisations to promote this approach in every aspect of its work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of staff meetings • Minutes of Governor meetings • Records of CPD • School Improvement Plan • OFSTED Report • SIAMS Report • Displays of children's work • Reward/award systems/certificates • Interviews with staff, pupils, governors and parents • Staff, parent and pupil questionnaires • Values Policy • Photographs
School's Comments	
<p><i>We are currently reviewing our values in collaboration with the whole of the school community, as we are determined that they will be as relevant as possible for our current school community – children, families and the wider community. We work very closely with all of our stakeholders to provide the very best value-based education that we can, as we aim for our pupils to become the very best citizens they possibly can be. Recent comments from the wider community have reported to us that they are aware of who the Phoenix pupils are because they are so thoughtful and polite. Pastoral team (SG and EB) support children raised by SLT and teachers. In addition to this, there is a mindfulness programme and a range of outside agencies that come in to support children raised by class teachers. The school behaviour policy is constantly under review to outline the behaviour we expect from children, this is consistent across the school and the language (mini scripts) being used. An ethical vocabulary is consistent throughout the school.</i></p>	
Assessor's Comments	
<p>A comment from a Parent Governor during the audit was: <i>'This school has so much empathy, understanding and respect. Teachers bend over backwards for the children and the school.'</i> Positive human values explicitly underpin the entire life of the school and pervade its ethos. Children are not afraid to make mistakes and there is a strong sense of community and belonging throughout this school. There is conscious and explicit attention paid to the mental health and wellbeing of staff, pupils and their families. This is shown in the curriculum provision and all decision making in school. Staff understand that the school's special values-based ambience is created by a focus on being calm, peaceful, and purposeful. Staff have been given time to reflect on the ways that they will model the school's values. The individual is valued - all staff and pupils are shown care and respect. Staff are self-aware and conscious of the impact they have on others. Staff are authentic, give unconditional positive regard and empathy to all pupils and each other. Classrooms are enabling environments, where pupils and staff form positive relationships, enabling pupils to self-regulate their emotions and build self-esteem. Staff are conscious of the need to focus on mental health in all aspects of school life. The wellbeing of all stakeholders (staff, pupils, parents, Governors/Trustees) is acknowledged and enhanced wherever possible.</p>	

2. Values-based Pedagogy and Learning

Criteria in addition to the standard VbE Quality Mark	Possible Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils and staff regularly engage in reflective practices to develop their internal worlds - the 'inner curriculum'. Emphasis is given to the development and nourishment of Self-energy that nourishes Self-leadership. • School culture is assessed to ensure it is consistent with VbE. • The curriculum is values-language rich; pupils and staff use it comfortably and widely across the curriculum. • Pupils are regularly involved in peer-interactive strategies and co-operative learning to enhance and deepen their cognitive and emotional understanding. • Establishing good interpersonal relationships is central to VbE. Adult-pupil and pupil-pupil affirmation is abundant. • Pupils are actively encouraged to engage with moral dilemmas and the curriculum actively fosters the development of moral reasoning. • Pupils are actively encouraged to engage in altruistic acts of compassion and be of service to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with staff, pupils, governors and parents • Curriculum planning • Pupil's work • Case Studies • Staff, parent and pupil questionnaires • Displays/photograph
School's Comments	
<p><i>All classes complete mindfulness after lunch and some after break depending on the needs the class. Coffee mornings have been offered to parents for general support, support with RSE Support we offer to parents: Triple P, Early Help, Parental agreement with school, NEFT workshops Support to staff: Trust Well-being Day, Staff survey, Staff shoutout, Benenden Healthcare for counselling and medical support, CareFirst package from Trust for staff, Supervision counselling sessions with Paula M. All Hub (curriculum) documents include all values as they are throughout all of our learning. Our school displays show pride of our stars of the term, value champions of the term, stars of the week, school values council, prefects. Dojo points and house points are how we reward the behaviour we expect to see in school and the values that children are showing. Children are very competitive when it comes to the House points competition. Governors are supportive of SLT and staff members offering support time (Rob Wilkin). Vision and ambition is for school to be part of the community rather than one-off visits and bolts and what happens to them afterwards looking at key drivers from the curriculum to link to our vision for the school. The curriculum intent already reflects this, so may be amended to be more explicit, when the impact is seen.</i></p>	
Assessor's Comments	
<p>The 'inner' curriculum is expressly taught at Phoenix and reflection time is built into assemblies and curriculum time. Pupils and staff regularly engage in reflective practices to develop their internal worlds. Emphasis is given to the development and nourishment of reflection and mindfulness. The school culture is regularly reflected upon and assessed to ensure it is consistent with VbE. The curriculum is values-language rich; pupils and staff use it comfortably and widely across the curriculum. Pupils are regularly involved in peer-interactive strategies and co-operative learning to enhance and deepen their cognitive and emotional understanding. There are encouraged opportunities for pupils to support each other for example in the playground (play leaders) and across the curriculum. Establishing good interpersonal relationships is central in this school and pupils talk confidently about this. Adult-pupil and pupil-pupil affirmation is abundant and seen in classrooms, assemblies and the playground. Pupils are actively encouraged to engage with moral dilemmas and the curriculum actively fosters the development of moral reasoning. Please see the school's Values-Based and Character Education Policy here. This outlines many aspects of the school's approach to values-based curriculum and learning.</p>	

3. Values-based School Improvement

Criteria in addition to the standard VbE Quality Mark	Possible Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school/setting's self-evaluation has identified areas for enhancement which are addressed through a value-based approach to improvement. • It adopts a consistent philosophy for all its work and can detail how this approach is borne out in areas it has identified for development. • Well-being – including physical, mental and emotional health - for pupils and adults is central to the school's ethos and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with staff, pupils, governors and parents • Curriculum planning • Pupil's work • Case Studies • Staff, parent and pupil questionnaires • Displays/photograph
School's Comments	
<p><i>Curriculum planning and Hub (curriculum) documents are linked to values and the ethical vocabulary to be taught is identified. We know these are firmly embedded. Major impact in social interactions of children towards children and children towards adults, many parents say they use these values in their home. Lots of parents did not have a positive experience of education. So we are shaping them from the very beginning, so it fits in with the community curriculum - inspiring the children to want for themselves pride and determination. We ask what they want to be but also WHY, HOW are you going to get there? Connecting the aspiration with what comes with it. So not just educational ambitions, but also part of the person they are. How we expect adults, parents etc to conduct themselves. Fits in with behaviour policies and also inclusion policy and mental health and wellbeing policy. Learning from that in restorative conversations is powerful and we see this every day.</i></p>	
Assessor's Comments	
<p>The school's self-evaluation has identified areas for enhancement which are addressed through a values-based approach to improvement. This is why the curriculum intent is linked so closely to values and why a current re-evaluation and enhancement of the values-based curriculum is currently underway. It adopts a consistent philosophy for all its work and can detail how this approach is borne out in areas it has identified for development. Well-being — for pupils and adults is central to the school's ethos and practices. This includes physical, mental and emotional health, which are priorities for the school to maintain. Not only is this important to be maintained amongst the pupil community, but the school takes every measure to ensure the good mental and emotional wellbeing of its staff and families too. A parent struggling in the school reception area with an online form was told 'if you have any problems, come back to us and we can help you to complete it'.</p>	

4. Commitment to Working with Disciplines Related to VbE

Criteria in addition to the standard VbE Quality Mark	Possible Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school/setting actively fosters a focus on values- based links between subjects, helping pupils to understand the values generated by different areas of study, and reflect upon the potential for each area of academic study to grow human wisdom, and encourage altruism. • The school/setting’s self-evaluation processes have identified where working in combination with other disciplines, including those endorsed by Values-based Education (e.g. Philosophy for Children; Mental Health groups, Emotional Literacy) can enhance the experience and development of individuals, groups or all its pupils. • The school/setting’s leadership is outward-looking and adopts a discerning approach to embracing strategies and disciplines consistent with the school’s values-based ethos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with headteacher/Values leader • Case Studies • School/Setting Development Plan • Lesson Observations/monitoring records • Pupil testimony
School's Comments	
<p>Curriculum Intent Statement (see website): <i>Phoenix Primary School is a proud accredited Centre of Excellence with enhanced VbE and Character Education accolades. With VbE at the heart of our curriculum we are developing ethical vocabulary and ethical intelligence, which could be argued is the most important intelligence for the sustainability of our world, enabling Phoenix children to be educated citizens, helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.</i></p> <p><i>As VbE underpins everything we do, we have carefully designed a relevant curriculum, which prepares the pupils for the world in which they will live and work. Through our curriculum, we aim to provide the pupils with the knowledge, skills, habits and character traits that can be applied across all traditional academic subject areas an in all educational, career and social settings throughout their life.</i></p> <p><i>We provide rich opportunities for the pupils to explore citizenship and real-life issues, which at times they may have to grapple with and make sense of, working together to develop ‘real life’ values such as collaboration and communication, respect, justice, courage, compassion and forgiveness. As these values and skills shape the way that we live together and our response to the issues that we will encounter through our global curriculum.</i></p>	
Assessor's Comments	
<p>The intent for the Phoenix curriculum is as stated on the school's website (see above). This is fully implemented in lessons, as seen on learning walks throughout the school, as pupils are constantly reminded of the values-based expectations, or they remind each other. Emphasis on values such as resilience, determination and self-leadership are fully embedded in such a way as to place the onus on pupils for their own educational success and they rise to this challenge. Expectations for Year 6 results are high – all are expected to meet age-related targets and this is a hugely successful outcome for pupils with a high percentage of FSM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time is given for daily reflection in assemblies and classrooms. This is consistent throughout the school. • The school teaches reflection as a key approach to thinking and learning and through this, pupils develop the confidence to challenge, question and consider. • Staff understand the benefits of mindfulness activities in developing control over the limbic system. • Pupils are able to discuss the impact of reflection on themselves. • Staff understand that this ‘Inner Curriculum’ nurtures a secure sense of self, by enabling us to be aware and in harmonious control of our internal world of thoughts, feelings, sensations, and emotions. 	

5. A Commitment to Leading VbE Across School/Community Settings

Criteria in addition to the standard VbE Quality Mark	Possible Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The school/setting is able and willing to be an exemplar for other schools in values-based education. It sees itself as an ambassador for this approach. ● The school/setting leads training for other schools/settings in values-based education. ● The school/setting is pro-active in sharing its values-based approach with its local community and other external agencies. ● The school/setting is able to share resources and ideas it has developed and/or innovated through the VbE website, www.valuesbasededucation.com ● The school/setting is willing to compile a case study of effective values-based practice to be shared nationally and internationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Displays ● Photographs ● Website ● DVDs ● Prospectus ● Newsletters
School's Comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is evidence of the school having an outward facing approach, taking their Values out into the wider community. ● Parents/carers are encouraged to take an active part in the values-based approach. ● Pupils have a high level of autonomy and are encouraged to use values intuitively to do good. ● All members of the school community are encouraged to develop self-leadership. <p>Our behaviour policy and individual behaviour plans support children's needs and what provisions we have in place for all children in order for them to be successful. Our culture and ethos throughout the school enables us to work as a strong united team that support each other and the children. Our behaviour report shows that our supportive language and practice has helped to improve behaviour using our values alongside our policies.</p> <p>Throughout our teaching and learning within the school values are used, whether that is to praise the behaviour we are seeing or to address that change we need to see in behaviour. They are embedded in our learning and culture of the school as they are consistently used everywhere. We are proud of our wider community contributions by supporting 'Caring Hands' with Harvest and Christmas hampers. This is a prime example of how our school and family community have come together to show our school values to those in need.</p>	
Assessor's Comments	
<p>The school/setting is able and willing to be an exemplar for other schools in values-based education. It sees itself as an ambassador for this approach and should be encouraged to do so. The impact of the school's values-based curriculum is as stated on the school website: The outcome of the Phoenix curriculum is self-leadership, which enables everyone to work towards fulfilling their potential. Phoenix recognises that impact can not only be measured in quantitatively evidence, but the context of Phoenix can also often mean that children do not begin school with the same experiences as children in other areas. Our children love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure, they are continuously curious, and the teachers are equally determined that their children will be holistically successful, in lessons and in their participation in extra-curricular opportunities. Leaders have a clear vision and timeline in this journey as they are determined to continually close the gap for these pupils so that the educational disadvantage within the community is removed.</p>	

Suggestions for Next Steps:

Excerpt from Section 5 (above)

- The school/setting is able and willing to be an exemplar for other schools in values-based education. It sees itself as an ambassador for this approach.
I will suggest to the VbE organisation that the school is willing to share their practice with a wider forum, such as VbE conference.
- The school/setting leads training for other schools/settings in values-based education.
I will be suggesting to the Beyond School Academy Trust that they acknowledge Phoenix as a Centre of Excellence and as such, are able (and willing) to model their practice for other schools within the Trust.
- The school/setting is pro-active in sharing its values-based approach with its local community and other external agencies.
Local organisations, such as The Rotary Club and religious organisations such as The Quakers/Society of Friends would be very interested to hear about the values-based education at Phoenix.
- The school/setting's self-evaluation processes have identified where working in combination with other disciplines, including those endorsed by Values-based Education (e.g. Mental Health groups, Emotional Literacy) can enhance the experience and development of individuals, groups or all its pupils. A further suggestion is to have a look at the idea of incorporating *Philosophy for Children* into their values -based approach. See Sapere website [here](#).

Audit Conclusion

It was a privilege to spend the day at A N Other School and I unreservedly recommend awarding the school the Enhanced Values-based Education (VbE) Quality Mark.

VbE's Enhanced Quality Mark certification is valid for four years.

You have permission to use the Enhanced Quality Mark logos on the school's website and on your documentation throughout the certified period.