



ACE School of
CHARACTER

01/04/2025

Dear Julie, Andrew and the team,

It is with great privilege that the Association for Character Education is able to award Christ's College with the ***School of Character Quality Mark Plus***. ACE would like to express its congratulations and formally acknowledge the significant dedication and commitment that yourselves, staff and pupils have demonstrated, in order to meet the high standards of character education, that this award represents. Please find your Quality Mark Plus report below.

Strengths

- The school's leadership team is passionate and highly dedicated to embedding the culture of good character into all areas of school life, particularly the deliberate approach to praise and celebration of pupils and staff living the core virtues of the school. The school has acted upon, and gone beyond all of the recommendations following the Quality Mark assessment, to ensure that the pedagogy of character education is shared in many different ways, with all stakeholders within the school community.
- The school has become a popular 'school of choice,' due to their reputation locally as delivering a virtues-driven approach and the positive impact this is having on pupils. This was articulated by students themselves who had transferred from other schools, and the school's social media accounts which show evidence of very high levels of engagement, particularly with the celebration of the core virtues, from parents and families.
- The school's virtues permeate all parts of school life in a systematic and consistent way. The school is inclusive in its approach, and use of the language of character is consistent across staff and pupils. This goes beyond the language of the core virtues set by the school, and pupils and staff could use virtue literacy to articulate what it is to have good character in a broad and relevant context.

- There is strong sense pride felt from staff and students, particularly in relation to the journey of transformation and improvement since the school's changes in leadership. Results from a recent staff wellbeing survey demonstrated the high levels of retention and sense of value felt by staff at all levels. Staff are given opportunities across each week to be reflective. Teachers shared that some of their favourite times of the week are the Friday morning reflection assemblies, Monday staff meetings, when they are given time together to share their journeys in relation to the core virtues, and the weekly staff shout outs.
- New staff could articulate the application and induction process being underpinned by the school's virtues, with some expressing that they applied for the posts because of the focus on character education. One teacher shared "Now I have experienced working in a school of character, I would never want to work in another school which didn't have that at its core."
- The school takes a joined up and coordinated approach to the teaching of specific virtues, with clear synergy between what is taught in assemblies, in tutor reflection sessions, and more recently across the core and foundation curriculum subjects. This has facilitated the strong reinforcement of the school's virtues, and how they can be transferred and lived in all areas of everyday life, enabling pupils to see the purpose and relevance of what they are learning.
- All staff have been committed to communicating, defining and celebrating the school's virtues in terms of what they mean and their associated behaviours. As a result, pupils are able to talk with confidence when articulating what the virtues mean in both theory and practice. This was evident across both the primary and secondary age ranges, with pupils being able to talk with enthusiasm about their favourite core virtue and provide examples of when they have demonstrated it, or when they have seen in in others. A Year 6 pupil shared his experience of courage in relation to the recent residential trip. He explained that he had taken part in activities that he had never done before, such as canoeing and rock climbing, and said "Everyone has fears but when you show courage, it means you can push through your fear and do your best plus one."

- The embedded core virtues continue to have a positive impact on pupil behaviour and restorative practice. Virtues are explicitly linked to the school's reward system through praise postcards, virtues badges and the opportunity to win prizes, such as hampers. These initiatives enable virtuous behaviour to be 'caught,' in the moment and then recognised and rewarded. All staff are responsible for praise, positive noticing and being a role model. Pastoral staff shared the impact of character-based reflection tasks forming part of detention, and the language of the core virtues which is used by all staff, including the 'on call team' when having restorative conversations with pupils who may demonstrate challenging behaviour.
- Pupils were able to make links between the school virtues and potential future career pathways, speaking enthusiastically about a recent careers fair and the increase in the school leadership roles and extra-curricular opportunities provided for pupils. The letters of application which pupils wrote when applying for leadership roles, such as Head boy and girl, demonstrate many of the core virtues and how importantly the pupils regard them in being successful. One pupil wrote "I take great pride in demonstrating our school's core virtues – values that guide my daily actions." Pupils from the secondary phase could talk about their high career aspirations, and how having good character can help you to achieve your dreams and goals.
- The school has developed a system for reporting to parents which follows the 'Head, heart, hands' approach, and this includes ways of measuring pupils' 'head' knowledge, as well as the tracking of 'hands' in the form of engagement in extra curricular clubs and interventions. As a result of parents becoming increasingly familiar with the core virtues, a recent vacancy for a teaching assistant was successfully filled by a parent who was able to articulate clearly, at interview, how the core virtues impact the pupils' daily experience of school life.

Recommendations

- During the assessment, teachers were able to give high quality examples of how they delivered subject curriculum through the lens of character. Teachers who are linking their subject curriculum to the school virtues are doing so in both a planned and authentic manner, which is adding value to their teaching. The school shared that this remains an area of focus to develop even further, which will allow students' understanding of character and virtues to align with their progress across all curriculum areas.
- The school has worked hard to implement systems to support children with behaviour through a restorative and reflective approach. To continue to develop and embed the use of pupil reflective journals, opportunities for virtue-based reflection during detention, and piloting the citizenship award, would all provide opportunities for further development.
- To continue to build the opportunities for student leadership across both the primary and secondary phases will enable more roles of responsibility, and the chance for more pupils to put their knowledge of character into practice.

Wishing you all the best on your continuing journey to enable your pupils, staff and school to flourish through the development of good character.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "N. Fielding". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'N' being large and prominent.

Nadine Fielding (Lead Quality Mark Assessor)

