



Character Education

LINKS:

DATE: 2nd October 2025

POSTHOLDER RESPONSIBLE: CEO

TRUSTEES/GOVERNORS COMMITTEE: Ethos and Education

AUDIENCE: all employees of the Trust

STATUS: Ratified

DATE RATIFIED: 13th October 2025

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: October 2026

Summary of Changes

Version	Section	Description of Changes
September 22	All	Baseline document
September 23	1	UCARE values updated
September 24	All	Policy reviewed with no changes
September 25	All	Trust Vision updated throughout, references to new Ofsted Toolkit added and minor wording/typographical changes

Contents

1. Trust Vision & Values	4
2. Background	4
3. Legal background/Equality.....	5
4. Scope.....	5
5. Definition	5
6. Aim of this policy.....	6
7. Principles.....	7
8. Trust expectations.....	8

1. Trust Vision & Values

- 1.1. The development of 'character' in the Quantock Education Trust is central to our vision and values, incorporating Christian* and British values, and is integral to all aspects of a child's educational experience across our schools.

**in church schools where applicable*

- 1.2. Our vision is: Building Character and Shaping Futures
- 1.3. Our mission is: To deliver high-quality education within an inclusive and safe community, inspiring every learner to achieve their full potential and make a positive impact on the world
- 1.4. Our values are:
- Uniqueness; we commit to respecting and protecting the diverse and unique qualities of each individual and of each school in our Trust community.
 - Community; we listen to, influence and play an active role in our communities
 - Aspiration; we raise standards and provide opportunity for developing talents in all areas of life
 - Respect; we respect and celebrate the value and preciousness of each individual
 - Equity; we aim to enrich the unique life opportunities of all, overcoming barriers and achieving goals

2. Background

Taken from Department for Education [Character Education Framework Guidance 2019](#) (page 4).

- 2.1. Education for character is already integral to the work of excellent schools. In these schools there is no tension between a rigorous and stretching academic education on the one hand and outstanding wider personal development on the other. Indeed, these and other aspects of the school's work all contribute to forming well-educated and rounded young adults ready to take their place in the world.
- 2.2. Schools have a statutory duty, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, to promote the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life². Character education contributes to this duty to promote SMSC. The duty applies to academies and free schools through the Independent School Standards.
- 2.3. The Relationships, Sex and Health Education Statutory Guidance (which applies to all state funded schools) makes clear that this is most effective when schools also actively promote good behaviour and positive character traits, including for example courtesy, respect, truthfulness, courage and generosity.

- 2.4. Schools have an important role in the fostering of good mental wellbeing among young people so that they can fulfil their potential at school and are well prepared for adult life. Schools with clear expectations on behaviour and with well-planned provision for character and personal development can help promote good mental wellbeing.
- 2.5. Whilst the latest Ofsted Toolkit published in September 2025 does not include any explicit references to 'character education', the importance of schools' provision for character education through its inclusion in the judgement on Personal Development, in the previous Ofsted Handbook helped provide some external validation of our provision previously.
- 2.6. The new Toolkit's section on **Personal development contains the elements that character education normally targets**. The toolkit's grading criteria for personal development/wellbeing includes: a coherent personal development programme across taught curriculum/wider opportunities; pupils developing spiritually, morally, socially and culturally; pupils being "confident, resilient and independent" and "behaving with integrity" (this is very similar to common definitions of character). So the *substance* of character education will be evaluated — even if the word isn't used.

3. Legal background/Equality

- 3.1. Schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Further guidance is available for schools in [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#). Schools should pay particular attention to the public sector equality duty (PSED) (s.149 of the Equality Act).
- 3.2. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics).
- 3.3. Schools should consider the provisions of the Equality Act when making decisions on aspects of character education and co-curricular provision so that pupils are not unfairly inhibited from benefiting from this aspect of education on the basis of the protected characteristics.

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy applies to all employees of the Quantock Education Trust.

5. Definition

- 5.1. QET's Definition: Personal growth for an enriched and fulfilling life through the planned holistic design of a child's educational experience.
- 5.2. Our Trust definition seeks to align our vision, beliefs and values with the DfE statements listed in 5.4. Our current vision is 'Building Character, Shaping Futures'.
- 5.3. We believe that developing the character of each young person in their formative years is as an essential 'building block' for shaping their academic and personal development. It encapsulates a child's appreciation and sense of self, others and the world.

Although there is no blueprint for character education, it is our belief that it is the contextual needs of the children, families and community that need to inform our Trust approach.

Character development has many facets, many of which overlap, but all are integral to and threaded through the culture, climate and ethos of our schools. Each has a clear tangible impact, being heard, seen, or felt across a school environment.

5.4. The DfE defines character education as follows:

- the ability to remain motivated by long-term goals, to see a link between effort in the present and pay-off in the longer-term, overcoming and persevering through, and learning from, setbacks when encountered
- the learning and habituation of positive moral attributes, sometimes known as 'virtues', and including, for example, courage, honesty, generosity, integrity, humility and a sense of justice, alongside others
- the acquisition of social confidence and the ability to make points or arguments clearly and constructively, listen attentively to the views of others, behave with courtesy and good manners and speak persuasively to an audience
- an appreciation of the importance of long-term commitments which frame the successful and fulfilled life, for example to spouse, partner, role or vocation, the local community, to faith or world view. This helps individuals to put down deep roots and gives stability and longevity to lifetime endeavours

5.5. The DfE refer to a series of 'enabling character traits which can improve educational attainment, engagement with school and attendance'. These include:

- High self-efficacy, or self-belief, is associated with better performance, more persistence and greater interest in work
- Highly motivated children (linked to tenacity) driven internally and not by extrinsic rewards show greater levels of persistence and achievement
- Good self-control (or self-regulation, the ability to delay gratification) is associated with greater attainment levels
- Having good coping skills (part of being able to bounce back) is associated with greater well-being

6. Aim of this policy

- 6.1. To demonstrate our whole Trust commitment to the development of character.
- 6.2. To build on and highlight all aspects of character development which are already embedded in the culture of our schools.
- 6.3. To convey our understanding of what character development is and of its potential for raising achievement through a process of promoting character attributes in line with our Trust vision and values.
- 6.4. This Trust policy does not aim to prescribe how character education should be delivered – it aims solely to set the Trust principles and expectations.

7. Principles

- 7.1. Character education is not a 'bolt on' element of the curriculum – it should be integral and recognised as being part of the 'DNA' of the school.
- 7.2. It must be understood clearly by students, staff and parents.
- 7.3. The design of programmes and activities should be planned conscious and deliberate, with the assumption that character; can be 'taught, caught and sought'.
- 7.4. There should be a common language relating to character development.
- 7.5. It should have an explicit and strong link with wellbeing = relating to the promotion of a healthy mind, body and soul.
- 7.6. It should be evident in every lesson and used to 'frame' pupil activities and foster independent thought, confidence and learning resilience.
- 7.7. It should not be part of a bureaucratic process.
- 7.8. It should be developed 'with' the staff and not 'done to'.
- 7.9. It should be responsive to external circumstances e.g. COVID and global events
- 7.10. It should incorporate a clear progression from age 4 through to 18.
- 7.11. It must be consistently applied across the curriculum and by all staff.
- 7.12. All adults must act as role models.
- 7.13. The Trust expects character development to be explicitly threaded through the following aspects of a child's education experience:
 - Curriculum design including content and sequencing of knowledge and skills, teaching and learning and assessment
 - Safeguarding
 - School culture and ethos
 - Behaviour management
 - Enrichment and extra-curricular activities
 - Spiritual moral, cultural and social development
 - Rewards and sanctions
 - Support of the local school community
 - Relationships, Sex and Health education

Ultimately the outcomes of a programme of character development will be evidenced through the culture of our schools with children and young people clearly 'choosing' to behave well and knowing instinctively how to make good and appropriate choices.

- 7.14. The Trust does not recommend a formal assessment process relating to the impact of our character development programme, but does expect each school to evaluate the impact using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures including:

- Performance outcomes – attainment and progress
- Attitudes to learning
- Participation in extra-curricular activities
- Attendance statistics
- Exclusion statistics
- Enjoyment of learning
- Pupil confidence
- Feedback from pupils, staff, parents and visitors
- Volunteering and commitment involvement

7.15. The Trust will use its website and socials to showcase school achievements relating to character development.

8. Trust expectations

- 8.1. QET will support each school in working towards 'ACE School of Character Quality Mark', accreditation for a high-quality Character Education offer - <https://character-education.org.uk/#kitemarks>
- 8.2. Ensure regular reinforcement and reminders about the significance of character education and how it relates to the school/Trust vision and values.
- 8.3. Plan for evaluation of the impact of character education using a range of measures (see section 7.14) and to reflect on an annual basis considering the current situation and next steps.
- 8.4. Each school has a named lead for Character Education and or their School Values/Ethos Lead
- 8.5. The school lead for Character Education ensures that all staff undergo regular training and receive updates on Trust shared practice, supported by the QET CEO.