Learning for Life

The vision of Learning for Life is to build and strengthen character in the contexts of the family, education and employment through national evidence based research, developmental work and delivery of character education. We seek to make a real difference to the lives and character development of both learners and the professionals who support them, in character formation. We seek to make an impact based on high quality research work, which provides a sound base for development and dissemination for policy and practice.

James Arthur (/staff/profiles/education/arthur-james.aspx) (Head of School) has been conducting research for Learning for Life since his move from Canterbury Christ Church University in 2009. The project, funded in part by the John Templeton Foundation, has sought to research the influences on young people and character formation, both in and out of school. 5 separate, but linked, studies have been undertaken over the last three years, each focussing on a different age range of young people in nursery, school, further and higher education. These 5 reports have been published under the following names:

- Foundations of Character (0-3 Year Olds)
- Character in Transition (10-12 Year Olds)
- Citizens of Character (14-16 Year Olds)
- Character Education (16-19 Year Olds)
- Graduates of Character (18-25 Year Olds).

Each of the reports presents the findings of each research study, looking at what factors young people perceive to influence their own virtues, morals and character development. The findings are then drawn together, compared to existing theories and studies, with conclusions drawn, and potential things for consideration noted in Professor Arthur's Of Good Character text.

One 'branch' of the project has been the Poster Awards, in which schools interested in the project have got their students to produce posters based on their own perceived character traits. Such has been the success of the number of schools involved, and the quality and quantity of the posters produced, that Learning for Life have held awards ceremonies in Scotland and Wales, at which Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament ministers have attended to award the students for their work.

There is a website for the project (**www.learningforlife.org.uk (http://www.learningforlife.org.uk/)**) which has downloadable versions of the reports, details of dissemination events, and a dedicated Teaching and Learning section, which schools can use to obtain useful resources for the teaching of Character Education in the classroom.

The Project has received a number of endorsements from key figures, including the Prime Minister David Cameron, Education Secretary Michael Gove, local Birmingham MP Rt. Hon. Liam Byrne and Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, to name a few. Mr Byrne was able to attend Saltley School, in his constituency in Birmingham, to plant an oak tree, with Professor. Arthur, donated by HRH Prince of Wales and the Duchy of Cornwall, in recognition of their involvement in the research.

For more information on the project, or for hard copies of the reports, please contact Project Administrator Aidan Thompson on **a.p.thompson@bham.ac.uk (mailto:a.p.thompson@bham.ac.uk)**

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