

# Values Project St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School

The values project began in 1997. It has continued since then with teams of teachers and higher education researchers all contributing to the process, through action research, development and training. The project fulfils one of the school's development priorities – to develop a whole school approach to **citizenship** and the **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**. It has had the support of the headteacher and senior management team, as well as the governing body. The project has been funded from various local charitable bodies, as well as the Teacher Training Agency, through the Teacher Research Grant Scheme.

## What was the purpose of the project?

Over the course of the project the team has addressed three key research questions.

### **Research Question One**

*What is the particular educational vision of this school community and what **core ethical values** do pupils, teachers, parents and governors believe to be important?*

### **Research Question Two**

*How can this school's core values provide a vehicle for citizenship education and for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils across the curriculum?*

### **Research Question Three**

*What are the links between values education within the curriculum and 'learning to learn' and higher order thinking skills?*

## How did the project team work together?

The project team met together after school on a regular basis each term. This team meeting included the higher education researchers, members of the senior management team and governors.

The team would devise practical research activities that would provide answers to the research questions. Teacher would then carry out these activities in their classes and beyond, and report back their findings to the team. Each team member offered something different to the process – some liked writing up the ideas, others preferred the practice and still others were interested to keep track but did not have the time to contribute specifically.

## Findings

The findings of the research project are summarised on the following pages, linked to the research questions. The ideas are offered here in the hope that they may be useful to other schools – stimulating ideas and further development rather than providing a blue print.

### **Research Question One: Which Values, Whose Values?**

*What is the particular educational vision of this school community and what **core ethical values** do pupils, teachers, parents and governors believe to be important?*

### **Step One**

The teachers embarked on a school wide consultation about those core ethical values that really mattered to the school community. A sixth form sociology team participated in the consultation with the pupils, and elicited the views of over 900 pupils. Similarly teachers were consulted, as were parents through a questionnaire and pupil homework. The governors held a working morning to address the issue, and to consider the particular requirements and responsibilities of the school's church based foundation.

### **Step Two**

The team also wanted to know whether what the community **said** was important in terms of core ethical values, was consistent with how the community **lived and practised**. In order to answer this question a particular research instrument was administered to a sample of pupils and staff. It was analysed by the research team and the sociology students.

### **Core Values**

The following core values emerged from this process as important to pupils, teachers, parents and governors.

**Valuing ourselves, valuing others, stewardship, trustworthiness, fulfilling our potential, justice, forgiveness, faith in Christ.**

The process of consultation took a whole academic year. It provided an important dialogue for the whole community. At the end of the process the research team could say with some confidence that these particular core values were ones which had the support of the whole community. It resolved the perennial dilemma about WHOSE values should the school promote – these are not values that are 'indoctrinated' into pupils from an outside agency such as the church or the state. They are values which the community itself considers to be of central importance.

A **pupil version of the values**, and an explanation of them was provided for each classroom. However it is important to note that these values need to be revisited as the school community grows and changes over time.

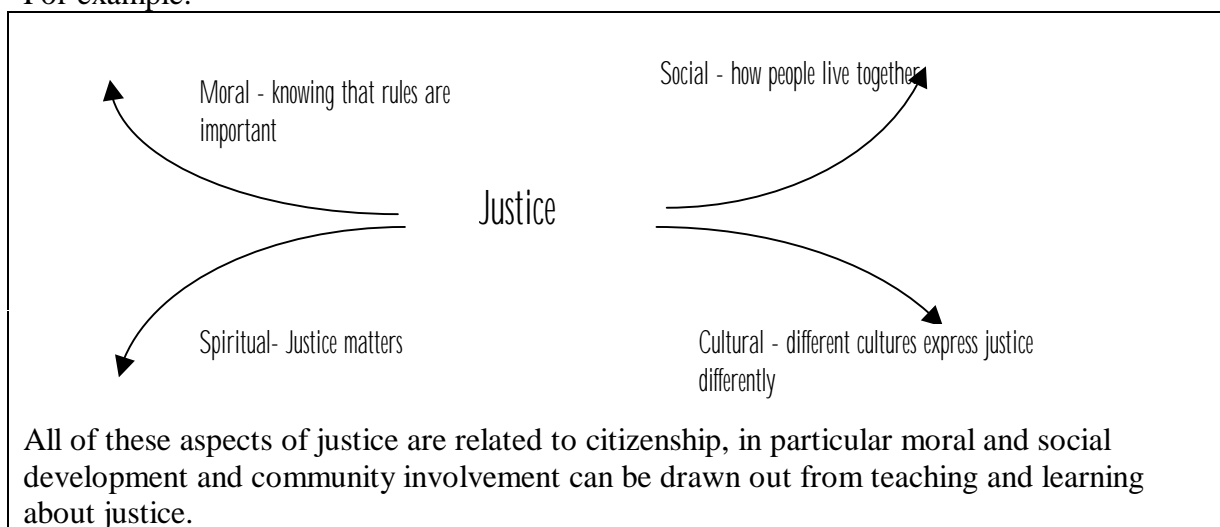
Consider how these values are similar to, and different from **the statement of values in the National Curriculum**.

## Research Question Two

*How can this school's core values provide a vehicle for citizenship education and for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils across the curriculum?*

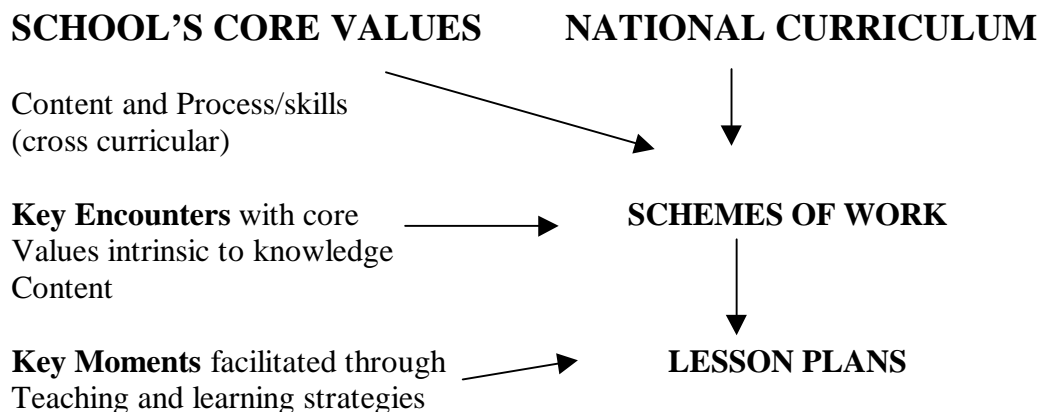
Having identified a set of core values, the research team began to ask how they might be useful in teaching and learning and in the content of the curriculum. The team realised that the school's core values were not 'extras' to the curriculum or to the community, but were potentially embedded in all aspects of school life, including the content of the curriculum. In addition it was clear that these core values have spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions to them, which are difficult to separate out.

For example:



The team then undertook an audit of the curriculum and found that teachers readily found values inherent in their schemes of work. For example it is impossible to learn about geography without encountering issues of stewardship and justice, or to learn about science without considering the nature of truth. In addition particular teaching and learning strategies encounter values in the process of teaching and learning – trust is a key value in the relationship between teachers and learners.

The next step was to devise lesson plans, with learning objectives that included an encounter with one of the school's core values. The process is described in this diagram:



Some of the actual lesson plans, with outcomes and pupils' work can be viewed in the '[how to do it](#)' section of this site.

### **Research Question Three**

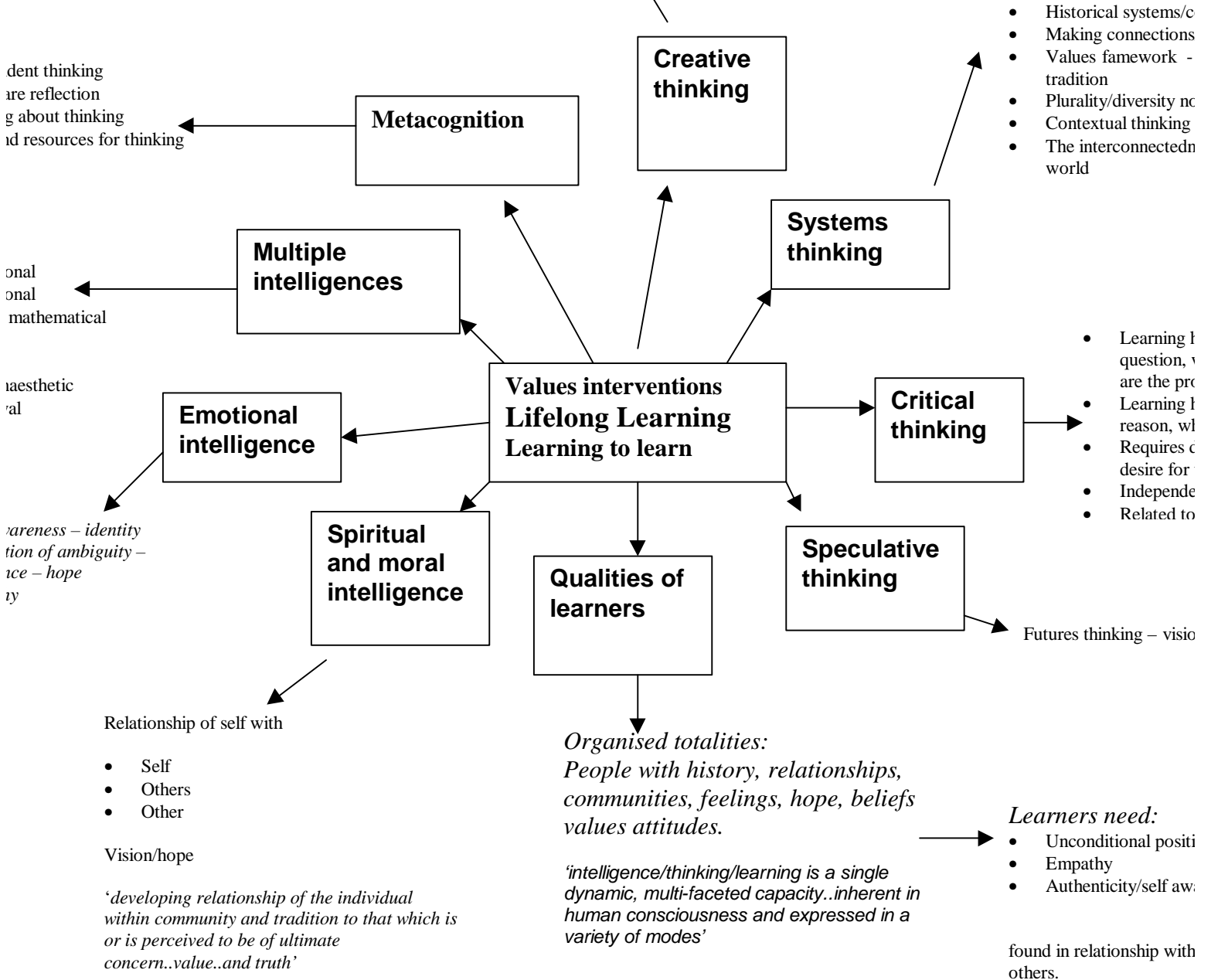
*What are the links between values education within the curriculum and 'learning to learn' and higher order thinking skills?*

During the second and third year of the research the teachers began to systematically introduce '**values interventions**' into their lessons. In one year, five teachers introduced values interventions into their classes in Geography, Science, RE, French and Music, and they were able to compare the outcomes of these classes with parallel classes which did not encounter values.

Overall the team found that values interventions did make an important difference to pupils' learning. They found that values interventions do encourage the **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** of pupils, that they do promote important **learning to learn skills and attitudes** and that values interventions also provide a means of offering important aspects of **citizenship education**.

After two years of trialling this approach to values interventions, the team of teachers identified the sorts of higher order thinking skills, attitudes and dispositions which were present in their values interventions lessons. These are all important components of 'learnacy' or of 'learning power'. These findings are summarised in the following mind map.

*Independent thinking, includes feeling and thinking, stimulus-exploration-planning- activity-review, requires a mental framework*





## Appendices

| St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School Values | Definitions for Pupils   |
|--|--|
| Valuing Ourselves                          | Treating myself with respect; valuing my own feelings; knowing what I like and dislike; knowing what I think and feel; taking care of myself; taking care of my body; knowing what I want to do when I leave school; knowing how I learn; being committed to learning. |
| Valuing Others                             | Respecting other people; valuing other people's differences; taking care of other people; valuing our family, friends and communities.   |
| Trustworthiness                            | Being trusted by others; doing what you say you will do; keeping promises; being a good friend.  |
| Forgiveness                                | Being sorry and putting it right; letting go of being angry with someone when you have been wronged; starting over afresh.   |
| Justice                                    | Being fair; understanding and respecting the rules; treating all people and groups equally; taking care of people and groups who are disadvantaged.  |
| Stewardship                                | Taking care of the environment; managing money carefully; conservation; taking careful responsibility for all my talents; gifts and belongings.  |
| Truth                                      | Telling the truth; trying to find out what is really true; knowing how to think about complex issues; keeping an open mind; listening to other people's ideas.   |
| Fulfilling our potential                   | Finding out what my gifts and talents are; doing my best in everything; setting myself learning targets; planning what I want to do when I leave school; learning how I learn.   |
| Faith in Christ                            | Having a faith of my own, or knowing why I don't; Knowing about the Christian faith; learning from the Christian faith ;; understanding who Christ was and what the Christian story means for human society in 21C.  |



