



The rationale behind the award

The need for teachers and parents/carers to develop children's personal skills to live in a rapidly changing world has been recognised in educational research. It forms the basis of UNESCO's drive to teach global citizenship skills to children and young people starting with early years education. It argues that education today requires a specific focus on education which can develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable. In addition, education requires the development of certain soft skills:

'social skills such as empathy and conflict resolution, communication skills and aptitudes for networking and interacting with people of different backgrounds, origins, cultures and perspectives; and behavioural capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly.' (Keevey, J. and Chakroun, B. (2015) *Level-setting and recognition of learning outcomes: The use of level descriptors in the twenty-first century*. UNESCO: Paris).

There is therefore a growing awareness in education that the development of pupils' personal development skills has significant long-term impact on academic outcomes, long-term success and happiness. Research into this area, however, is relatively new in this country but more advanced in the US. The Primary National Strategy's SEAL curriculum was a well-used approach to developing pupils' social and emotional skills. The resources for this is archived [here](#). It provides a very useful whole school approach to developing pupils' personal development from early years through to Year 6.

While academic success is one aim of schools, preparing young people for life in an increasingly complex world, so that they can manage their lives, understand their responsibilities towards themselves and others and make a positive contribution to society are key aims which will sustain them in the long term. Actively developing pupils' life skills so that they can be critical thinkers, creative, tolerant and empathetic people are necessary characteristics for citizens of our modern society. Employers recognise that developed personal skills are sometimes sorely lacking among young people, hindering their chances of employment and progress. This award is more than an approach to developing citizens of the 21st century, it is a way to ensure young people are equipped with the personal skills which will help them manage risk and setbacks in their lives, as well as enhancing their wellbeing.

One of schools' greatest tensions is to develop a curriculum which develops pupils' life skills and personal growth, while at the same time meeting

increasingly challenging academic targets. Truly successful schools remain true to their values, aims and ethos and ensure that the whole child is nurtured and developed. This is integral to their core purpose. Indeed, a key feature of all hitherto Ofsted frameworks has been the focus on pupils' personal development and community and societal responsibility. These are essential components of a well-rounded education.

This award is ambitious, ground-breaking and exciting. Once you have completed this award successfully, it is hoped that you will have reviewed and improved a range of aspects of your school's provision to improve pupils' personal development and skills. Your school will have implemented systems to monitor the effectiveness of this work and thereby leadership skills will be strengthened. Your school will be responsive to pupils, parents/carers, partners and other stakeholders, so that further improvements can be made. Most of all pupils will be much more aware of themselves and others; respectful and empathetic. They will have a developed sense of responsibility towards their community, the environment and the world in which they live. Importantly, they will be prepared for life beyond school.