

ON A ROLE

When teachers demonstrate shared values, the whole school community benefits, says *Shona Colaco*, head of Knightsbridge School

When many of us were at school, the hope was that our education would send us out into the world as individuals ready to slot into a role in the workplace. There were clear routes into professions and trades, and the criteria for success was based on knowledge and skills that were readily measurable. Careers for life were commonplace. The challenge for contemporary educators is that the careers our pupils may graduate to are evolving at a rate that is gathering momentum. Some of the most useful skills and aptitudes for workplace success are not measurable by national qualification and many of the jobs the children may go on to don't yet exist in the 2022 workplace. Increased globalisation necessitates greater levels of cultural awareness and for us to move meaningfully towards a fairer society with greater levels of respect, altruism and compassion.

To thrive in such a dynamic environment will require our young people to have mental agility, problem-solving skills, fortitude or grit, optimism, a commitment to continuous learning and an understanding and acceptance of their social and individual responsibilities.

At Knightsbridge School (KS), we don't have rules as such, rather a set of shared values that are at the heart of all we do. They have been enshrined into 'The KS Code' – a set of values which remain central to the way we operate every day.

The KS Code is a shared language and ethos that we all live by. Words matter and we use consistent language around our values systems; adults and pupils alike use the same words which builds confidence, community and an aptitude to learn.

Key to the success of inculcating the values we wish to see is having appropriate role models; staff who can demonstrate a real commitment to nurturing the children they guide through their school years with care and kindness.

It is important to note that being kind should not in this instance

be equated with being nice, although it is a basic element of kindness. Kindness is about humanity, a willingness to help and support and to act with generosity of spirit and time. By treating our pupils and one another with respect and courtesy these values permeate the whole organisation and bind the community together.

In addition to teaching our academic and engaging formal curriculum, we encourage our pupils to embrace diversity in all its manifestations and gain insight into what they need to succeed in all their endeavours. Each week there is an area of focus such as honesty, loyalty, determination or gratitude.

Assemblies and reflection time give space for consideration and discussion of each value which is linked back to the KS Code and woven through interactions that week. Through these, over time the children develop the vocabulary and tools to be good friends, to build trusting relationships, to become caring and thoughtful contributors to the school and community, and exercise the self-care needed to work sustainably.

Study and organisational skills are delivered via the Life Skills curriculum. Through this, pupils are equipped with an understanding of their own learning preferences and what they need to maximise their learning and other opportunities on offer. Through practical application of these skills, pupils embed good work habits and develop and practice the learning dispositions to achieve well.

Anyone who walks through the doors at KS will feel a buzz, a palpable and positive energy that flows within our walls. This energy results

from the hard work we do to create a real community, one that is based on kindness and sharing the same values. It is a fantastic energy that buoys our pupils up to work hard and achieve their full potential. Our approach isn't just about preparing children for the next stage of their education, it's about more than that – it is about committing collectively to be responsible, positive and humane leaders of others and oneself. ■

