



Association
for Character Education

ACE Organisation of Character Quality Mark

Welcome



QUALITY
MARK

Thank you for your commitment to character education and for your interest in the ACE Organisation of Character Quality Mark.

The **Quality Mark** is an accreditation awarded to organisations that can demonstrate an explicit, planned and reflective approach to the cultivation of positive character qualities in children and/or young people. The Quality Mark criteria outlines a robust standard of character education where character is taught, caught and sought.

The award is provided to organisations that take a 'whole-organisation' approach to the development of character, with the purpose of enabling the flourishing of the individual and wider society.

If successful in meeting the requirements of the award you will receive an Organisation of Character plaque and digital logo. You will also be provided with a full report detailing strengths and areas for further development to support the ongoing evolution of your character provision. Re-accreditation is required every three years.

In this pack, you will find;

- ♦ An overview of the full Quality Mark process
- ♦ Experiences from organisations who have undertaken the Quality Mark
- ♦ The Quality Mark criteria

Not sure if you're Quality Mark-ready?

Get in touch with us via admin@character-education.org.uk to arrange a 1:1 consultation with one of our expert associates who will be able to support you in deciding your next steps.

We look forward to working with you.

Kindest regards,



Tom Haigh
CEO



Gary Lewis
ACE Chair



Michael Fullard
ACE Trustee Secretary

The Quality Mark Experience

The purpose of the award is not only to recognise outstanding practice in character education, but to ensure the experience has lasting value for the organisation.

Below Quality Mark organisations share their experience of achieving the award.



Amazing People Schools is absolutely thrilled to have been recognised by ACE with an Organisation of Character Quality Mark. We have developed and built all we do around character, and worked very hard to ensure it is truly embedded. The process was so well-designed, worked brilliantly and was a very positive experience for us as a team. The Quality Mark adds huge value to our organisation. We felt so well supported by ACE throughout and found the feedback that came from the process really positive and useful. We were also really pleased that teachers and students that benefit from our resources could also be part of this important process.

Frances Corcoran, Managing Director,
Amazing People Schools



Receiving recognition from ACE is hugely helpful and we are proud to be awarded it. It has provided rigorous re-assurance of our effectiveness. We are committed to supporting lasting character development - but this may not be clear to those who see us as purveyors of exotic adventure. This award underlines our core purpose - to help build stronger futures for young people including those most likely to be disadvantaged.

Honor Wilson-Fletcher, CEO,
British Exploring Society



Going through the application for the Quality Mark has been rewarding; it's given us the opportunity to reflect on our practices and consider where and how they can be strengthened further. As a company rather than a charity, we were seeking external recognition and accreditation of our approach and values, and the ACE Organisation of Character Quality Mark of has given us just that.

Louise Treherne, Director of Education,
Role Models



We were delighted to receive the Organisation of Character Quality Mark from ACE, arguably the leading character education body in the UK. The Quality Mark endorses the quality, credibility and impact of what we currently do, through the Young Leaders Award in primary and secondary schools, demonstrating our commitment to quality character education provision for schools. In summary, the Youth Trust looks forward to collaborating with ACE and other organisations in ensuring our children and young people receive top class character education and we were very impressed with their clear, rigorous and comprehensive process of accreditation.

Dr Nick J. Watson, (former) Chief Operating Officer,
Archbishop of York Youth Trust

ACE Organisation of Character Quality Mark Process

1

Undertake a Self-Evaluation

Use the criteria outlined in this pack to undertake an audit of character education in your organisation.



2

Complete and Submit Your Application

Once you feel that your organisation is meeting the majority of the criteria submit your application form.



3

Application Reviewed

ACE will review your application and confirm a date for the assessment, the schedule for the day and a checklist for your evidence-base. If ACE feels you aren't quite 'Quality Mark Ready' we will provide guidance and support to get you there.



4

Submit Your Evidence Base

Fourteen days before the assessment visit, you will need to share some documents with ACE as part of your Evidence Base, based on a checklist provided.



5

Enjoy Your ACE Quality Mark Assessment Visit

A Quality Mark Assessor will visit your organisation to triangulate the evidence provided. If the organisation's staff are based remotely this process can be undertaken virtually. The outcome of the assessment is shared on the day, along with feedback and recommendations.



6

Celebrating Your Success

Post-visit you will receive the digital Quality Mark logo, a Quality Mark plaque and a detailed report of your organisation's character provision. The report outlines strengths and clear recommendations with next steps to help further develop your provision.



7

Sharing Your Expertise within a Network of Character Schools and Organisations

As a Quality Mark organisation, we may encourage you to share your expertise in character education to help support others on their character journey.



Cost

Organisations with an annual income below £150k the cost is **£700**

Organisations with an annual income above £150k the cost is **£950**

Character

Taught, Caught & Sought

Developing character requires a holistic approach and so ACE has chosen to structure its Quality Marks through the three areas of character taught, caught and sought.

Children and young people need to develop a language of virtue and have a conceptual understanding of what it means to have good character and why it is important for their flourishing and wider society. For this reason, character needs to be explicitly taught.

As highlighted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues www.jubileecentre.ac.uk, character is largely '**caught**' through role modelling and emotional contagion, meaning culture and ethos are also critical. Therefore, character needs to be '**caught**', as well as '**taught**'.

Finally, providing practical opportunities for children and young people to develop their character is essential. This includes supporting them to develop habits that encourage them to purposefully and intentionally 'seek out', experiences that develop their character, as they journey through life. This is what is meant by character '**sought**'.

The need to engage parents, train staff and evaluate the impact of the organisation's character provision are also a part of the criteria.



CHARACTER
TAUGHT



CHARACTER
CAUGHT



CHARACTER
SOUGHT



Quality Mark Criteria



Mission and Purpose

The development of character will be a central part of the organisation's mission and will be driven by a coordinated and organisation-wide plan.

The organisation will be able to demonstrate that character is embedded into the fabric of the organisation and isn't simply a 'bolt on.' Its character provision will be driven by the organisation's leadership, and will be shaped and underpinned by relevant character-based theory. The purpose of the organisation's character provision will include the development of moral virtues/values and will support children/young people to do 'the right thing for the right reason.' The language of character will be explicit throughout the organisation and its curriculum*.

* Curriculum refers to any materials that are used by Facilitators/Teachers/Mentors and the children or young people participating in your programme (session sheets, resources, reflection booklets, PowerPoint slides etc).

Character Taught



The organisation will have a character-based curriculum which has the objective of developing character. This curriculum makes explicit reference to character and virtues/values throughout its materials.

Research and theory in character development, underpins the materials of its character programme and its theory of change.

Character and virtues/values are embedded across the whole 'curriculum,' and are not isolated to specific sessions.

If there are various 'curriculums' for different aged children/young people, the teaching of character is appropriately scaffolded so it matches the intellectual and emotional maturity of the child.



Character Caught



The organisation has a set of values which are designed to underpin the organisation's culture.

Leaders take planned and purposeful action to make the organisation's values 'lived,' so they shape and inform staffs' conduct and relationships between colleagues.

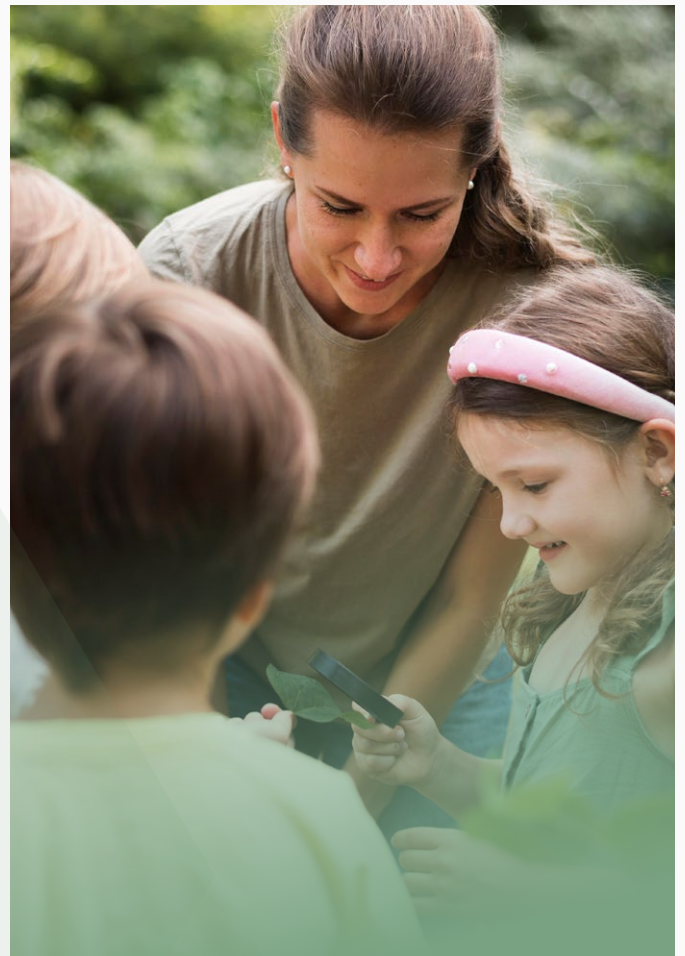
Character and virtues/values are a part of the recruitment process, allowing staff to be recruited based on their character as well as their ability to perform the role. Examples may include using moral dilemmas during interviews in order to understand the candidates' levels of moral reasoning.

Character and values feature as part of the induction for all new staff.

Staff are supported and actively encouraged to focus on the development of their own character. For instance, this can be achieved by including character and virtues/values in staff appraisals. Other examples include having staff recognition initiatives which include the rewarding of staff who have demonstrated the organisation's values.

If the organisation has office space their values are displayed on walls, in meeting rooms and communal spaces.

If the organisation has a behaviour policy, for when staff work with children/young people, it is virtue-led and not sanctions driven. The policy will contain practices that facilitate the rewarding of virtuous behaviour and support staff to use the language of character when discussing transgressions in expected behaviours with the children/young people they work with.



Character Sought



The organisation's character provision facilitates the development of habits that support the children/young people to 'seek out' opportunities that will continue to build their character beyond the programme it runs.

There are reflection-based practices that support the children/young people to reflect on how their character has developed through the practical experiences the programme has provided.

Links are made explicitly between activities that are run through the organisation's programme (e.g. volunteering, sport or outdoor pursuits) and how they aid the formation of character.

Children/young people are actively encouraged to go beyond their comfort zone in order develop their character.

The leadership qualities of the participants are honed and developed through the organisation's provision.



Parent/Carer Engagement

The language of character is embedded within the communications with parents. This can be in relation to promotional material, emails/ letters, or correspondence about rewards or informing them of any challenging behaviour.

The development of character is central to the organisation's narrative on its website, reflecting the extent to which it is a core part of its purpose and delivery.

Training

Staff are trained so they have a conceptual understanding of what it means to have good character, why it is important and how to effectively develop it.

The organisation shares with staff the theoretical basis on which its character programme is based.

Evaluation

The organisation is able to demonstrate the extent to which its character provision has impacted on its participants. This could be through self-report surveys, evaluating changes in how its participants make decisions based on moral reasoning or qualitative feedback from parents or teachers for instance.





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for Character Education

www.character-education.org.uk

Association for Character Education Ltd.

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