

Male Interviewer: Just to start off with then.

Female Interviewer: Can I just be reminded of people's names because I missed it first time?

Female Respondent 1: [name]

Female Respondent 2: [name]

Female Respondent 3: [name]

Female Respondent 4: [name]

MI: [name]

FI: [name]

FR1: So your class was part of Narnian Virtues, what was it like is the first question?

FR1: Mine enjoyed reading the text, just the actual story of it, the theme of the picture coming to life, going on a voyage, looking at even just little intricate things about the names of things on the ship they were quite interested in.

A lot of the boys in my year 8 class identified with Eustace and thought he was quite humorous, liked his sulking. I think quite a few of them liked the character of Caspian, especially the freeing the slaves moment, and enjoyed linking the virtues to their own experience that came partway through when they were more comfortable discussing that, so that worked well if they could actually take a virtue, self-control or lack of self-control that applied to their situations.

FR3: I think mine were definitely the same, they didn't enjoy it as much as they enjoyed The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, they preferred that, but they did enjoy the character of Eustace.

I think the only thing that we struggled from in terms of a curriculum point of view is that it was a 12 week programme, and we were trying to fit in our English skills as well, and the reading of the book, it just wasn't possible because we had other pressures, we were doing a LAMDA examination, preparing them for that, so I think in that term we struggled to be honest with you, it took us a lot longer than the 12 weeks, I think it was probably about 16 weeks, probably something like that.

FR1: Definitely agree with that.

MI: Is that a fair reflection?

FR2: Yes, I think that maybe this wouldn't be applicable in other schools, but because some of the, obviously the way it works, the virtues they build up in the tasks, and from the last booklet there were slightly more linked to GCSEs, but then the expectation was that they needed to read sometimes 20 pages, do some new learning and then write an essay, and if you've got quite a weak class, and maybe some classes here are much more weaker and haven't got that support at home, that would maybe take two hours to even go through what's required to write an essay, a newspaper article, they wouldn't know, they don't even know what a broadsheet newspaper is, so all these things took time.

And then as well, maybe in this context they wouldn't necessarily go home and read the book with their parents or even do it independently, so there isn't as much, whereas in other schools that might have been really, really successful and just letting them have the book and go home and reading it.

FR1: I think the assumption was, from the booklet, was that they know how to write a broadsheet, but a lot of ours didn't

FR4: I agree, like the build up when it came to the essay task, we spent three, four lessons going over the expectations of how to write, it again is just time consuming, we have to embed other skills on top of that.

MI: Did you feel a bit like it was eating into your time that you need for other urgent things?

All: Yes.

FR3: We had to rush some of the tasks that were part of the workbook.

MI: I think you're right to bring up, in some schools that's the time they do this, especially in the second year they might have done the skills around newspapers and therefore this was reinforcing, but other schools hadn't have done that yet.

FR3: Yes, because some of them they won't actually ever need, like I said, more for GCSE, they wouldn't have done the essay and stuff, we wouldn't necessarily teach.

FR4: Because we were talking about the dual narrative before, a lot of our curriculum now is linked to the GCSE, so they'll never have to write actual narrative.

FR3: Even though it's a really nice task, but then obviously a dual narrative, they had absolutely no idea, so then some of us had to go away and look at some dual narratives because that's something they've never been exposed to before, whereas a child that might have read more or had that

at home, that might have been much more easier for them to access I think.

MI: That was clearly an issue in Year 8, was that also an issue in Year 7? Do you feel like it was taking time away from the skills they need to learn for GCSE in Year 7 as well, or is this something distinctive about being a year older?

FR3: I think yes it was, because this time you've obviously taken the feedback and a lot of it you tried to link it in with the skills that they needed, whereas in Year 7 it was just the virtues that, there wasn't really any of the teaching of the English, so we had to embed that into the tasks that were created in that booklet.

FI: Did you feel almost the combination of the two might have been better with skills being introduced?

All: Yes.

FR3: Or even if the tasks were lessened, because I know that the feedback last time was for example, the scripts, they never ever have to do that really, and then repeating them again, but if the tasks were built up, if they built up the skills and then had a go at it, because I noticed one essay came up and then a newspaper, so they learnt all that and then only had a go at it once really.

Some: Yes.

FI: If we're making a legacy pack that's something to bear in mind.

Some: Yes.

FR3: In our group perhaps that's then going to be useful for them within that and then also GCSE.

FR2: The comprehension questions, they were like language focused, that wasn't a core activity.

Because we didn't have time.

FR4: [Overtalking] we just focused on the activities, but they were really good, they focused on language techniques.

FI: But then that would have taken even longer.

All: Yes.

MI: What do you think that the Narnian Virtues curriculum was trying to achieve? What was the point of it?

FR1: I found it was trying to get the kids to reflect on their behaviours and actually change the way that they think, change the way that they react to situations at home and in school. And in some of our students it probably did have an impact, for some they've remembered for a while and then they forgot.

FR4: I completely agree, I think it was nice with my class because we were having nice conversations and I think I got on with them better because of it, but I think that it would work really well, even maybe better than it worked in the classrooms here, if you've got a more flexible form time, or even with a child at home when you're reading, to help them think about what they're reading I reckon, that's what I thought about it, it would be nice.

FR2: I think some of the virtues are our school values, so integrity is a school value, and I taught my class three times a week then they had a different teacher on the one lesson, and they were being silly, repeatedly being silly, and then after a while that other teacher had a lesson and said, "Do you know what, they were all really good", so I could give them a positive for integrity, so maybe over time it's having an impact on their behaviour in lessons and applying that type of behaviour in school.

MI: It's interesting, that overlap between school values and the virtues, because obviously with this, because it's research and because of the novels we picked, we predefined which virtues were picked.

One of the things that some have people have said in the past is, "Could there be a greater connection?", essentially could a class pick the virtues that they want to pick out of the novel, and for the case with this that wasn't going to work, but in the future could you imagine using, not even The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, could you imagine using novels specifically to also help reinforce school values rather than a predefined set?

FR3: I think we do that anyway when we teach them literature, so Macbeth, An Inspector Calls, so we do do it but not explicitly, but it is taught, and the kids do understand character vices and virtues, so not necessarily maybe through the Narnian, because what one of the criticisms of this was is that the curriculum has to be challenging, and with The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe it wasn't challenging for some of our kids.

FR1: Some of them read it at primary school, because it is a primary text.

FR3: That's one of the criticisms that we're not supposed to be repeating literature that they're being taught, it's supposed to be challenging. I don't know how [other teacher] feels because [she] had top set, but The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, for some of our kids it's not challenging enough.



FR1: They enjoyed the story, they definitely did, identified with characters, but now they're doing Romeo and Juliet.

FI: They're enjoying that better?

All: Yes.

FR1: They are, getting into the characters more, there's more questions about what they're doing. I do think your question about, "Could you apply values, virtues to any area of the curriculum", not necessarily just literature because we do a section for language where they've got to write an expressive point of view, so often you could link that to ideas about integrity, social responsibility and that kind of thing.

FR4: I think that would be interesting, looking at the wider curriculum or the wider implications of those virtues, because I did feel like they didn't come across any concepts, I didn't have to stop once for a word or an idea, they knew everything because they'd come across it before, they're familiar with it, so I kind of felt like apart from the tasks where they needed to know about what a report was, what a newspaper was, there wasn't really anything, apart from obviously self-reflection, any new knowledge that they came across.

Some: Yes.

FR1: Did we have to teach it as explicitly as we did, we can just do it through some of the literature text that we are teaching, and the language as well, it doesn't have to be explicit in the way that we were doing it.

FR3: Lord of the Flies they could have picked up, Jack's vices.

MI: What kind of ways would you do that naturally through the text?

FR3: We've been studying An Inspector Calls, and the last term we were looking at the characters and the vices, Sheila and Eric, and one of my Year 11's actually said to me, "Miss I get it now", I said, "What do you get?", she said, "I get it now, it's teaching us about being better human beings", and it was through those characters and the context that they understood that this is how we should behave.

FI: Were they relating that to the Narnian Virtues or something else?

FR3: No, because it was Year 11, it's the play for their GCSE, An Inspector Calls. So I never really told them explicitly, but they understood.

MI: It just happened through natural engagement with the text, that it clicked, it wasn't actually taught as a learning objective in any sense?

FR3: Yes but they understood.



MI: Why do you think your school committed to doing Narnian Virtues?

FR1: I think character education and developing, that is a priority, something that we're trying to promote school wide.

FR4: I was listening to the news the other day, I think something that the Education Secretary wants a lot more of is character building.

MI: Yes it is, it is character building. [overtalking] His version of character building. Our version isn't exactly the same.

FR2: I think some of our students have quite a narrow view of the world as well, it's school, it's home, it's mosque, there's not much in between, so there's sometimes maybe a lack of emotional intelligence and empathy, and this definitely gives a chance to build on that.

FR4: Some of mine were really affected by the fact that Reepicheep sits with Eustace when he's a dragon even though he swung him round by his tail, and they could see that and explore that and pick that apart a bit.

FI: What did they get from that?

FR4: Just the idea that he hasn't held a grudge, and Eustace as a dragon is big and powerful and could actually overpower Reepicheep, but you've got these unlikely allies I suppose.

MI: When you first heard about the project which I guess was a couple of years ago now, what were your initial expectations?

FI: It's also fine if you don't have any.

MI: Or can't remember that far back.

FR4: It was Year 7, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, I remember loving that text at their age, I suppose hoping they'll be enthusiastic about the characters and the story, and a lot of them were, so they met that part, that expectation, they enjoyed the characters and the story.

FR2: I was teaching a top set, but I felt the lack of anticipation because they knew the plot, they knew the story, they said, "It's Lucy, she's so honest isn't she?", and they just felt quite bored towards the end after a few weeks of teaching, the last few chapters.

MI: And had you essentially pre-empted that when you heard that you were doing The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, did you assume that they would have come across that earlier?

FR2: I didn't at all, because I had no idea that it was a primary text, so I wasn't made aware that the kids had probably read it in primary school, that they'd done it before.

FR3: I remember my Year 7's being nicer as a class when we were doing The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, then we started poetry and they were just difficult, I don't know whether that was a difference in challenge, or if the fact that I wasn't explicitly explaining to them and going back over values and behaviour, they just seemed to sort of revert back a bit when we moved away from that.

FR1: I think mine in Year 7 were really keen, I think they took quite a lot of pride in the workbooks because they are presented really, really nicely, and it is quite aesthetically pleasing, but I think when it came to Year 8, I think they were slightly, it was quite a lot of repetition for them, and I think they had really enjoyed, I guess it is they have read the books but it's looking at them in a different way to ways they hadn't looked at them before, but they did know the story and they'd seen all the films before.

I think when it came to Year 8 it was lost, they'd lost their motivation.

FR2: The characters are quite similar, Edmund and Eustace, quite similar in terms of vice, it was just repetitive sometimes.

MI: So the repetition is between the books rather than within the book or is there repetition within The Voyage of the Dawn Treader and the material as well?

FR2: I think it's repetition as in, I guess the application is different, but the virtues are very similar.

[Overtalking]

FR2: In that sense they're not learning anything new, either about the virtues or vices or themselves, they're just looking at them in different characters but in similar scenarios, I guess.

FI: Would you have preferred to have just taught one year of one or the other?

Some: Yes.

FI: Which one?

FR2: I think Year 7.

FR3: I think Year 7 as well because that's first when they come into a secondary school as well, and that's probably where it has the most impact.

MI: Our questions are going to change tact a little now, so we've obviously been asking lots of people for their opinions across the last three years including parents, teachers, the initial people [names] who devised the whole idea, and we just want to put to you

some of the things that were important to these different groups to see what extent, is that your experience, do you agree with it, is your experience different.

I think I'll start with parents, so we've been doing telephone interviews with parents in the past and one of the things that they said was that the curriculum provided informal opportunities to be able to discuss the virtues and character, so it wasn't so much about doing the character passport, it was actually that that opened up conversations in other areas, do you have any thoughts or reflections on that?

FR4: I have had some parents put that "It was nice to learn this about my son or daughter", "It was a good task to do to get to know about this", some of them have enjoyed doing that.

FR1: I think I kind of put my parent hat on as well, as a mother I saw it from their point of view, and I was saying to them, "I'm practicing this with my daughters at home as well, you do it with your parents", and when some of them were bringing their passports back they were actually saying to me, "We've had this conversation with our parents, we never used to do this before", so they did enjoy that, talking about making time, things that they don't normally do with their parents. And I think in some ways this kind of forced them to have that dialogue with their parents that they don't normally have.

FI: Do you think all of the students talked to their parents?

Some: No.

FR2: I think there's more barriers here than other schools.

FR1: Yes definitely.

FR2: Because there's at least, in my class, seven people at least, they had to use sisters or brothers because parents work really long hours.

FR3: Or the kids are at mosque.

FR4: Barriers to English as well, some kids they come back and say, "My parents don't understand English, they can't read it."

MI: That reflects some of what the students told us as well.

All: Yes.

FR3: But the ones where it was done properly done well, whether it was understanding, there was some lovely comments.



FR2: I think all of them have someone they could speak to, whether it's a parent, they do have someone they can discuss it with, but I guess it would be less effective if it's an older sibling.

FR4: I think it's out of their comfort zone as well, if they're not used doing it, it was alien to them.

FI: Do you mean the parents or the kids?

FR4: I think a bit of both to be honest with you, they don't normally speak to their child in this way.

MI: It's interesting, but [name] who's from the States is the person who did most of the character passport work and the way we had to, we ended up toning it down quite a bit because there was a cultural divide between the kinds of things American perhaps middle-class American parents, the way they might talk to their children and the way we might talk to our children, and there was a not enough sarcasm in it for us, and irony.

One of the other common themes, and parents told us a lot, but one of the other common themes that came through from some parents was actually this character passport wasn't necessary because they already talk to their children about issues to do with character, you didn't get that?

All: No.

MI: That's interesting.

FR1: And a lot of them actually seemed to latch on a bit to the virtue of hard work, so they could say they'd done chores for their parents or things around the house, practical things rather than emotional conversations.

MI: That's interesting, so they're more performance related, seemed to be easier to talk about.

FR1: Which was nice, it's nice to see them show appreciation and hard work in that way, but just interesting that they're showing it in a practical way rather than anything based on feelings or emotion.

FI: Did you hear anything negative from any of the parents?

Some: No.

MI: That's interesting, not that we've had a huge amount of negativity, but we have had some parents in other schools that have said, "This isn't for us", or even, "This isn't the school's remit", interesting that there isn't here.



Thinking about the students, one of the common themes that came through past rounds in student interviews was when they're being asked about whether this has made a change to their lives, haven't particularly said it's affected what they've done, some of them have, but that it has affected the way that they see situations, so whereas they might have just got frustrated with something before, they will now be able to articulate that that's an issue to do with justice and that's why they feel frustrated, they didn't use those words of course to us, but that idea, again is that seeing students see virtue and vice outside of the English classroom, is that anything that has come up here?

FR1: I can say with one of my Year 8 boys, he was acting in a really disappointing way, in the top set, really bad misbehaviour, disruption, and we started to get somewhere with his behaviour, and he said, "Well if I'm good can I go to the trip?", because we were looking at rewards and rewarding people to go to a theme park, and I said, "Look you should care about doing the right thing", he went, "Because it's a way to show integrity not just because I'm going on the trip", and he could answer, finish the sentence for me, so he was starting to, I think, relate it not just to immediate rewards, but to the fact it was the right thing to do in the lesson, and he has settled a lot.

FI: That's really interesting.

FR2: I think that's one of the most positive things from it, is then relating those virtues which seem quite abstract in the book often, either to their own personal experience or things that are going on in the world, because I don't think a lot of our students know the things that are going on in the wider world that relate so much to virtues, so saying, "Well this is actually happening here, you could find examples in school, in your own life, and this is how you might change or this is how you might look at it differently", because I think they are quite narrow minded here, they won't have that understanding of what's wrong.

FR4: They don't transfer often, so they remembered how to behave while we were doing the virtues, but sometimes, now we've stopped doing it they've kind of forgotten, it's about reinforcing some of the things, the expectations, integrity, the hard work.

FI: How would you go about reinforcing?

FR4: It's just reminding them, we looked at this last half-term, "You need to be doing this now as well, it's not something that's done and dusted", you've got to keep reinforcing and realising it's important.

FR1: Like linking it to school systems, so I said to mine, "From September you can get", we give positives and you give them points for different positive things they've done.



FI: Some of them were talking about that.

FR2: And I said, "You can get three every lesson for respect, responsibility, effort", so really that is, I suppose responsibility is another word for integrity in a way, effort, hard work, so it's maybe synonyms or some of the virtues that we've looked at.

MI: Our last question is thinking about the design of the curriculum which was aimed at ultimately helping students develop their sense of character, and we did that in three areas, I'm sure you're familiar with "Head, heart and hand" is [name]'s model, to what extent do you think ultimately this curriculum might have influenced them in those areas?

FR2: I personally think that if it was taught as maybe a PSHE and taken English out of it, I think it would have been more beneficial to them, because then that way we're just bombarding them this idea of being this kind of a person and not the English skills, and I think sometimes that kind of took away from what we were trying to do. They were thinking with their heads, they were thinking about it, but then when that pressure of the English skills came on, they kind of, it wasn't as effective, that's how I found, I'm not sure what everybody else thinks.

FR3: They could have a lot more discussions as well, if they had that with their parents they could bring it into the classroom, we obviously didn't have time for that, to talk about the vices or for them to talk about the difficulties that they've had.

FR1: It would be really getting somewhere with forgiveness and understanding that, and then we've got an assessment next week, so it was kind of we were chopping and changing.

FR4: I think it would also be quite nice for a Year 6 transition, so if you know that you're going into a big secondary school, learning those vices that you need to show and replicate in a bigger setting, because they would be able to access it in Year 6, and if those were then reinforced by the secondary school they're going to, "I know you've looked at that, I know you've liked that", I think that would almost be quite nice if it could be fitted in there. I don't think it necessarily, especially because of the fact that it is so top down with exams, necessarily fitted in, it was almost if we were, I'm don't know if you agree with this, we were trying to fit it in.

Some: Too many things.

FR1: I would have loved to of taught it as in terms of a PSHE, but to teach the combination of the two, it kind of took away some of that love of the book, some of the love of the English, all the pressures, the pressures we had as well.



- FI: Do you think it's feasible to have this as a joint project between English and PSHE?**
- FR4: We don't do PSHE in terms of, it's done in tutor time, so it's 15 minutes once a week, and that's another issue.
- FR1: And there is already quite a solid programme.
- FR2: I think that's the government really, things you have to deliver.
- MI: I hadn't realised it was so little now, it's 15 minutes.**
- FR1: It used to be an hour a long time ago.
- FI: I could see that this could be fitted around SMSC and British values and stuff.**
- FR1: Yes definitely.
- MI: I think we've come to the end of our pre-prepared questions, is there anything else that we should ask you? What else do we need to know about Narnian Virtues that we haven't had a chance to articulate yet?**
- FR1: It would be interesting to know what some of our students said.
- FR4: I was about to say the same thing, I would be interested to know because it's difficult to get an honest gage in the classroom.
- MI: Yes, okay so I think, how do we sum up our dominant theme from students?**
- FI: It was quite mixed.**
- MI: It was quite mixed, we had some students who didn't enjoy the second novel but they enjoyed the first, there seemed to be repetition that you've mentioned, it came up there as well, students saying, "We should have picked different virtues", or, "We should have not done virtues", or, "We should have done the same virtues but not with another Narnia book."**
- FR2: I'd agree with that
- FI: Some of them were saying that they could see the virtues and vices in Romeo and Juliet, which was quite nice.**
- FR4: That's kind of what we were saying anyway.
- FR2: Mine did that with fortitude, we were talking about Mercutio speaking to Romeo and saying he had fortitude, and will he end up with Rosaline,



give up look at other women, they just completely used that, and it's nice that they remembered.

FI: With the character passports some of them were just saying, "It was a waste of my time", or, "My parents couldn't help me", for whatever reasons, and then some saying, there was one student who was saying that her family really took it on, siblings and everyone as well as her parents.

MI: And a couple that said they didn't do it with their parents they did it with friends or cousins, but they found it really beneficial that they were supporting each other. I think one used the term, "They were bringing each other up", I think they meant that in a positive way, not where they're neglected at home, it was like they were helping each other. And I guess they are moving or in that stage where they're moving away from parents as primary caregivers, to looking at peers.

FI: There was one saying that they wished they'd done more role-play, a few of them said that.

MI: "If you give us specific things."

FR2: I think that's another thing, because obviously I've only been teaching this is my second year, but some of the tasks, especially there was one at the first, it was about a press conference, and I think that would be really, really good in a classroom where you've got really good behaved management, but I just felt that I was not confident enough to do that at all.

I know some people in the department didn't like it, I did do it but I structured it slightly differently, and I think that would really work, but I could just see it being absolute chaos in my classroom, so I think maybe that can be taken into consideration. Some of them enjoyed it but I felt that I wasn't confident enough to do it.

MI: It's probably worth saying that one of the things that we'll change is the whole idea of core tasks that you mentioned, was also that there's consistency between schools, when this is an actual curriculum there won't be any such thing as core tasks, because just like any other curriculum then it will be up to teachers to decide what's used, what's adapted, what isn't.

FI: We're trying to keep moving to curriculum areas.

MI: My mind's kind of gone blank about the rest, we've just kind of been bombarded for hours.

FI: Such good kids, but some of them could talk.



MI: Which is perfect for obvious reasons, but ask a question and let them go, it was great.

FI: I just had a thought I'd quite like your opinion on, so if we were say doing resources of the legacy outcome, how would it, in your opinion, would be if you did The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe as this one version for Year 6 and one for Year 7, would that be something you think that teachers would find useful?

FR1: So you mean keeping as it is for Year 6 and maybe adding in a challenge for Year 7?

FI: Yes, or just tweaking them so they fit in with the curriculum or schemes of working, it just popped into my head as we were talking.

MI: Or if we're being brutally honest, actually is The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe just not going to work with Year 7's generally speaking?

FR4: I think it is very easy, because when I was trying with the text to build in anything that I would normally do with Year 7's, so not even GCSE things but looking at language, language features, and because it is so simple, there really isn't much of that.

At least with The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe they had a look at evacuees and that kind of stuff, but it doesn't really go beyond that, and in terms of even just description stuff, it's quite basic I'd say.

FR2: It's vague.

FI: But then is there a problem in doing The Voyage of the Dawn Treader isolated, or do you think you need to have seen The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe first?

FR2: Maybe.

FR3: The reason I think it would be so good for primary school is because I know they're massive of inference for SATs, and I think it's really good for inference but not so good for analysis as a novel.

FI: What other novels do you think would be good, because some of the kids were saying, "I wish it had been different novels"?

FR1: We do Lord of the Flies with Year 7.

FR2: Even something like The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, because that's got that element of an outsider or uniqueness in society, which is perhaps really quite relatable.



FI: That's the only book I've ever read in one sitting, I just sat there and read it all night.

MI: Do you have anything else you haven't had a chance to get off your chest?

FI: Be as brutally honest as you like.

R: [No response]

MI: In that case thank you for your time, that is really helpful.

[CLOSE]

