

Male Interviewer: The first question is really, have you been part of Narnia for two years?

Male Respondent 1: Yes.

All: Year 7 and Year 8.

MI: In Year 7 as well?

MR1: Yes.

Int: What was Narnian Virtues like, and you can be as honest as you want?

MR1: Then, or the entire thing?

MI: The entire thing.

MR1: At first it was strange, because we were introduced with new words, and I didn't know what a virtue or a vice was, so it was learning what these words meant, and then learning [inaudible 0:00:46].

Male respondent 2: It was quite interesting, because in the first year it was interesting to learn about the virtues with the Narnia book, and then the second year it was interesting, but then it was kind of like the same thing again. It was interesting, but it was the same as Year 7.

MI: Excellent, did you have anything you'd like to add?

Male Respondent 3: It was very repetitive as in, the first year was really interesting because no one really knew what the words were, but we were all learning something different and we were really open about the conversations, but then in Year 8 it dropped, the conversations weren't as interesting.

MR1: Probably because everyone said everything in Year 7.

MR3: Yes, everything was said in Year 7, and then in Year 8 it was like, "Lets just get on with it", kind of attitude.

Male Respondent 4: It was definitely really interesting reading the books and how the characters developed, but it felt like we weren't developing our own characters anymore than we did in Year 7, but we still learnt about the characters and what not.

MI: That's really, really interesting, and really helpful.

Just to make sure I've understood, first year it was good because it was new and different and you were learning loads of new words, second year it was a bit repetitive, the book, the story was good and

seeing the characters, but actually the work kind of felt like you were doing the same thing again?

All: Yes.

MR3: It was like exactly the same.

MI: I should have said at the beginning, part of why we're talking to students like you is because we're going to make a final version of the material that then gets let out to everybody to use, not just a few schools like we have at the moment, and we're trying to make it as good as it can be, so what would you do to make it less repetitive, or would you just keep it to one year?

Female Respondent 1: I'd keep it to one year, or maybe different books, not just from one series, because the series does teach you a lot, but eventually you're just repeating it because the books are very similar.

MI: Okay, so can you just give me some ideas of other books that you think would work well, rather than Narnian Virtues? Something else Virtues?

MR2: Hogwarts Virtues.

MI: Hogwarts Virtues?

MR2: I'm not that big of a fan of Harry Potter, but I know that they're very interesting books, and there's probably quite a bit of character development in the books.

MR3: There's a lot of two-sided opinions on arrogance and bravery, confidence and bravery, things like that.

MI: I see what you mean, well maybe I don't see what you mean, but in Harry Potter books, discussing the difference between somebody being brave and being arrogant, or having confidence and being arrogant?

Some: Yes.

MI: Okay, excellent.

Any other ideas of books we could use?

MR4: I'm just thinking about all the books I read, I don't read many stories, I read a lot of Star Wars books.

MI: There is nothing wrong with that.

MR4: Yes I know, but it's literally, it's just the novelisation of the movie, and it doesn't show anything, the characters don't change at all, the only thing

you might see is that Luke is really scared at the start and then he's more confident at the end, but that's it.

MR2: I guess in the Maze Runner books, I don't know if they'd be appropriate to read because they're a bit scary or something, but then in the first book there's character development, when they get more brave going to the maze.

FR1: Because they get thrown into that situation.

MR2: Going into groups.

FR1: What about Hunger Games?

MR3: The Hunger Games, that has [inaudible]

Some: Yes.

MR2: It actually has a lot of development.

MR1: She definitely changes.

MR3: Probably Hunger Games or Mazinger.

MI: Hunger Games throws up lots of questions about morality and when is it okay to kill, and really quite difficult questions.

Some: Yes

MR1: Kind of like a general RE lesson.

Some: Yes.

MR2: It would be cool because it's about virtues.

All: Yes.

MR3: Because my parents, when I showed them the passport and stuff, the biggest question was, "Why is it based on this book, you've already read it?", and I was a bit, I kind of agreed with them, because it was a book I read when I was really, really small, so reading it again in class was a little bit repetitive again.

MI: Was that The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe or The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, or you read them both when you were little?

MR1: I think once again, I think the books were really interesting, and it was fun to, if we had a full lesson just reading and then the next lesson we talked about what we read and how they changed and everything, but one thing that I would do, maybe if you weren't going to change the type of book, you could do a different activity, because sometimes in lesson we do

these little drama bits, because we have these anthologies which might have different mini stories in, and then we might have Frankenstein, and it's a script, I think it would be really cool if we, because we've done hot seating on Narnia, I think it would be quite interesting if we did a few more, putting yourself in the characters' shoes.

MR4: Because you really get to know the characters.

MI: Excellent.

What do you think Narnian Virtues was trying to achieve? What do you think the point of it was?

MR2: I think a lot, the teachers were saying, from what I got from it, character building for me, because you read about the characters in the story, how they developed with their wisdom and bravery, and then it made you think, "Maybe I could do that in my life", so character building for me.

FR1: It was like, "If they can do it, well so can I."

All: Yes.

FR1: If someone can go from being a horrible, selfish individual to caring about others, then I could probably be a bit better in my life, and it really makes you think about how you use your time and if you're really using it in the right way.

MR1: I think as well as being about building character, which is what I think the main theme was, it was also about analysis skills, you look at the text and then it's, "He said this to this person, so he thinks about this when he's talking to this person", or, "He thinks about this person in a certain way, so he treats them in a certain way, and how he is changing that to become a better person", so I think analysis.

MI: A bit of character, a bit of English skills as well, do you think if that's what it was aiming to do, how well do you think it achieved that? How well do you think it met its aims?

MR4: Quite well actually, because the book, because after reading the whole book from the beginning, one character, so Edward, at the start of the first book he was quite selfish, and by the end of it he wanted to help people, and he was willing to share.

MR3: He had compassion.

MR2: I think it worked well.

Some: Yes.

MR1: I think with that book, it started with him being quite jealous of Peter and not honest, and then it got to the point at the end where, there was one page where he went into battle with the White Witch and then he struck her staff or something with the sword, and he was being really brave and everything, so I think when, Narnian Virtues, when we did it, we were thinking about how they're developing, and then how, when you're out talking to someone, you're not thinking, "I need to show kindness to this person", you kind of do it automatically, and just reading the book just put it into your head, encouragement of how you talk to people and how you treat them.

FR1: It makes you think, "I should probably make sure I am that kind of person."

MR2: It was influential I think.

Some: Yes.

FR1: And it puts it into your brain automatically, even if you're not thinking about it, you find yourself being a little bit more compassionate, having more empathy.

MI: Do you think that's something that other people in your class would share? Do you reckon that it's had any impact on people in your class generally?

MR1: I think it's had different impact on different people, because it's how people use that information and process it.

MR3: Yes, so you're going to do the lessons anyway, but if you want to take something from that, you can take something from that by all means, and if you don't want to, that's fine too, but it's a better usage of time if you do, and not everyone does take everything from the lessons, but I think it really helps if you do.

MR2: If you were quite stubborn, you would think, "Well I'm me", or.

MR3: "I don't want to change."

MR1: "But this isn't real."

All: Yes.

MR2: There was that group of people, and most of the class has probably taken a good take on it.

MR1: They're right, it isn't real, but you can still link it to real life and how you do anything really.

MI: Excellent.

Grace mentioned character passports briefly, so did you do any of it at home? Because I know you don't have to do homework here in the same way that some schools do.

MR1: We just changed the required for learning now, so we do have to do some.

MR4: It's like homework.

FR1: I did some of it.

MR2: In Year 7 I did more than I did this year, I still did a bit of it this year, but I didn't get to finish it.

MR3: I did a lot in Year 7, and then when I got to Year 8, I looked at the passport and it wasn't the same tasks, but the tasks were really similar, and it made me think, "Ah".

MR1: I showed it to my parents and they were like, "That's quite interesting, why are you doing it?", and I'm like, "It's Narnian Virtues, it's meant to help build your character", but then I was like, "Mum, can you do this with me?", and she was like, "It's your homework, you need to do it by yourself", and I'm like, "Um."

You're meant to do it with your parents anyway, so it was a bit annoying, because I found myself doing two or three pages, and then stopping it, just because my parents didn't do it with me. Because I know in Year 7 it was like, "How long did this take you?", and, "Did a parent and carer help?", and it was like, "They didn't help", and it didn't feel like I was doing it with anyone, so I didn't really bother to be honest, after a week.

MI: How typical do you think your example is, do you think you were a one-off, or do you think other people in your class found it difficult to get parents to engage as well?

MR4: I don't think we were a one-off.

MR1: I think some people would have wanted their parents to do it and then the parents would have helped them, because you can tell if they come and show it to the teacher.

FR1: I think some people just didn't want to do it, full stop.

MR1: You have different types of people, people who want to do it with their parents and their parents do it with them, people who want to do it with their parents and the parents don't do it with them, and then people that don't want to do it at all.

FR1: And the parents are really enthusiastic.

MR1: Yes, with the first people, their parents are enthusiastic, and then the second people, the parents might not have time, and then the third, they just won't show it to their parents at all, so it all depends on your look on it, and if you can be bothered to do it with people who are there to do it with you.

FR1: I think the tasks shouldn't just be with your parents and, "Do this and this with your parents", I think there should be more of a variety, things you can do on your own.

MR1: Yes.

MR2: Because it is good because it's nice to do it with your parents, but then it's almost a bit unfair for people who couldn't do it, their parents are working late or they had something else to do, and then they couldn't actually do the task because their parents weren't there.

MI: The idea behind the character passport is that parents, or the assumption is that parents affect the character of their children, to what extent do you agree with that at your age?

MR1: From a younger age you're a very impressionable person, and the person you spend the most amount of time with, you're going to end up being quite like them, but then when you get to your teenage years, you're going to end up being more yourself, but you still have character traces of your parent.

FR1: It's different when you were younger, because the age of 0 to 5 is the most impressionable age, so you're going to get a lot more from your parents than you want, or you think you have.

MR3: I think in Year 7, it did make me think about trying to be, self-control or something, not spend as much time on the PS4 or something, that's just an example, but in Year 7 I did actually think, when I was sitting with my parents, in order to tick, "How much do you think you use this virtue, one to five", I think that was useful, because it made me think about, "I should probably be doing this more", or, "Actually, I do quite well in this", but in Year 7 I felt like, it was still interesting, but I felt like it was, I don't know, a bit repetitive.

All: Yes.

MR1: With parents affecting you, without Narnia, you take things from your parents and your friends and people around you anyway, but then when it came to Narnia, if your parents are enthusiastic about it, and they're edging you on, and they can really encourage you to do the project and do better when you're talking to people and when you're in class and everything, so I think without Narnia, it happens anyway, whether your parents are, have a good impression or a bad impression, but then with Narnia, if your parents are enthusiastic and they want to do it.

FR1: Then it gives you an edge.

MR1: Yes, it just rubs off on you.

MR2: Also Narnia makes you think less about how other people are making you act and more about how you're making yourself act, because you really have time to stop and go, "Wait a minute, what am I doing with my life, I'm never kind to anyone?", and you can't really blame it on anyone, even if the reason why is because your parents aren't the nicest people in the universe, but it's still, "Oh wait, I need to change it my way if I don't want to be like my parents."

MI: So tell me if I'm putting words into your mouth, but it's kind of like it's helping you to take responsibility?

Some: Yes.

MR2: It's like, "This is my life, not anyone else's".

MR3: It's kind of like, "He hit me, so I hit him back", Narnia would help you prevent that.

MR2: Self-control.

MR3: Yes, self-control, so if someone hits you and you get angry, you just step back for a minute and then just think, "Why am I doing this?", and then you just think about it.

MR1: Of if you were to, I don't know, strike someone, and then you were to go, "Oh yes, but they were annoying me", it's a bit like, "No, I've done something wrong, they've done nothing wrong to me."

MR3: It was kind of like that.

MI: When you talk about Narnia in this context, do you mean the character passport or the stuff you've done in class, or a bit of both?

MR4: For me reading the book was, it was a bit of both, because reading the book, you saw the character change in the book, and that almost encouraged you or influenced you in your life, and then when you did the passport at home with your parents, then you thought, "Maybe I should do this more", "I should probably work on that."

MR1: Personally for me it was, the stuff in class was much more effective than the stuff out of class, because it's not like you're talking to your parents when you're doing it in class, when you're out of class you're talking to you parents, so if they're encouraging you then you're going to do it, but then when you're in class it's actually, you're learning it and you're testing

it at the same time, because you're talking to other people around you, your friends and your classmates.

MI: So there's something important in actually talking to people about it and hearing from them?

MR1: Yes. And not just your parents, a variety of different people with different views.

MI: Was there much discussion in your class? Were there many differences of opinion when you were talking about virtues?

FR1: I think there was a general opinion, virtues are good and you should use them, but then there were different opinions on how and when you should use them.

MR2: They had different takes on it, because I think some people didn't really get the message of using the virtues, and some people took it differently to me, I thought, "I should use them in my life", and then they thought, some might have thought, "The characters can do better at this", and not really think about the results.

MR3: The actual transfer of the virtue.

MR4: It's good to read the book and it's good to write about the text, but sometimes you don't think about how it can transfer, that's the next stage, and some people would just skip it entirely and focus completely on the book, so honestly, I think we should spend more time in class talking about it, and maybe the homework is that we read it at home or something, and then we have a lot more time in class to discuss what we've read, it would be more productive.

MR1: But the thing with that, if you're going to be reading it at home as homework, what about the people who don't do it, they're going to come into class, they're going to be like, "Oh no"

MR4: I think if that's all you're talking about in the English class, it pushes you to read it.

MR1: Yes okay, fair enough.

What you find when you just read the book, you'll come out of lesson, there will be some people going, "Alright, next lesson, let's go to maths", but then there'll be people going, "What do you think Edmund's going to do next?", not necessarily using the technical terms, "Is Edmund going to start showing kindness?", it's a general conversation that might last two minutes, just about what you're thinking about it, so even sometimes it will come out of lessons slightly, even when you're talking to your friends, not doing the passport, so it's quite good.



MI: One of the things that we are doing, we're doing this with lots of schools at the moment, talking to quite a few groups of students and teachers, and one of the things that we are doing is basically taking what other people have said and asking other groups whether they agree or disagree or what they think about it, so one of them was, a group of students said that doing Narnian Virtues in class made them feel quite vulnerable because of the way they had to talk about their private lives, is that anything that you would?

MR2: I can understand that, but in my opinion, from what we do in class, we're not pushed to give our private life away, let's say, "I don't want to give any example", the teacher will say, "Would anyone like to give an example?", you don't have to if you don't want to.

FR1: She'll never go, "You can give an example", she'll say, "Does anyone want to?" A lot of teachers might choose at random, then everyone gets [inaudible], but I think there is a lot of teachers who would do this, but our teacher goes, "Who would like to give an example?", because they know that our lives are quite sensitive and personal, and I think when we do [overtalking] stuff, there is a certain percentage of people who just don't want to share, and a percentage of people who do.

MR1: In our class we're generally quite open people and we like to talk about it, but in other classes they might not be like that, but in our class we're all comfortable talking to each other, it don't matter if we're put in a group of two with a random person or a group of four with just random people, we'll get it done, and we'll do the job.

MR4: Lots of people, especially in our school, are much less sensitive, depending on which class you go to, some people want to keep a reputation, and sharing personal stuff, that's not going to help.

MR1: Because if people have a very nice home life, or they might have some examples, but I can understand how they'd feel vulnerable if they're being told to give those scenarios or those scenes in their life.

MI: Do you think as long as they have a choice, what they share or whether they share at all?

All: Yes.

MR1: I think it's okay because it's a choice and not mandatory.

MI: One thing that some parents said was, and we've talked a little bit about parents and developing children's character, but they said that almost that they felt, things like the character passport, was stepping into their role, their job, almost like it's a parents' job to help their children develop character and not really the schools' job, what do you think about that?

MR2: I do kind of agree with that, and I think honestly it could be, it wasn't really in my parents' eyes, but I know how they would feel, "Oh yes, you need to improve your child's character more", it demeans you as a parent.

FR1: It's almost patronising.

All: Yes.

MR2: "The school can do this, you don't actually have to", and then the parents are like, "Wait a minute, that's my job, not yours."

MR1: I think that the parents and the school both play very important roles, so let's say, for example, my baby brother, he's 2 years old, my mum childminds, there's a new little girl who is also 2 years old, she's got his toy car, he goes up to her, smacks her on the head, my mum would come up to him and be like, "You can't do that, that's not good", so I think the parents will lay down the basics, and then, let's say, the parents lay down the foundations, but then school builds the building.

FR1: Wow, metaphors.

MI: You will see across Narnian Virtues material across the world that quote at the bottom, with anonymous students, you'll get no credit.

FR1: If you want to put that you said that now.

MR1: Yes, yes I want to say that.

FR1: Go on, go on, go on.

MR1: I, [name], totally made that up.

MI: One of the things that other students have told us, I will ask you because you've already said it, is that it was repetitive, that the two books weren't too different from each other?

MR4: No, they were different journeys, but it was the same concept.

FR1: Concepts.

MR4: From not very nice to very nice, and from not brave to very brave. It was the same virtues, we were studying the same virtues as well.

MR1: It was very similar because in the first book it was Edmund, and we read about his story and how he changed, and then we went on to Eustace, and it felt like just starting from stage one again but with a different person, it felt like their developments were very similar, and it just happened twice with two different people.

MI: Absolutely, I can see that.

One of the things that the people who originally designed the material, they were basing it off the idea that character develops in three areas, “Head”, “Heart”, and “Hand”, so we have to know what we need to do to be good people, we need to want to do it, which is our “Heart”, and then we need to actually go out and do it, which is our “Hand”, of those three areas, what do you think this curriculum helped most with, if any?

FR1: Probably the “Head”, maybe even the “Heart” a little bit, because it made you a bit like, “If I can do it then”, no, “If they can do it, I can too”, and then, “If I can do it, everyone can”, and it made you believe in yourself a little bit more to do the virtues, but then it also made you understand them, what they were really about.

MI: What do you mean by, also you said something in the middle there that was really interesting about, “It makes you want”, I think you said, “It makes you want to do it”, how do you think it increases that motivation?

FR1: Because if you look at, even as a fictional book, you're looking at someone who's gone from being the worst person, the worst individual that someone has ever met to the nicest individual who wants to help someone save the world, and it's a bit like, “I'm not starting from that starting block, I'm starting as a better person than that person, and if they can do that in.”

MR2: However long it took them.

FR1: It was like a week in Narnian times, two minutes in other time.

MR2: I'm pretty sure it was three months of voyage or something.

Others: Yes.

FR1: It was something like that.

MR3: The “Heart” and “Hand” for me, sorry, “Head” and “Heart”, mostly for me, it was all three of them, but mostly it was “Heart” and “Head”, and then for when I could, I remember when it came to my brain.

FR1: It kind of comes natural.

MR3: When it clicks, then it's “Hand” as well, but it's mostly “Heart” and “Head”, just getting it into your system,

MR4: I think that the brain and “Hand” are important, but I think it's probably the “Heart”, because if you know what to do and you can do it, but you still need to want to do it.

MR3: Everyone has the ability to do it, and everyone probably knows that they should be kind, they just don't have the motivation, and by giving an example like, "You can do it, because everyone else in this story has been on a journey from bad to better, and you're not nearly as bad as they are", it's possible, even if it doesn't take three months voyage to do it.

MI: Good point, that's perfectly possible for all of us, we don't all have to go on boat to do it, but you were saying as well that there was a difference, that you can sometimes realise that you can be in a situation where you suddenly realise, "I could behave differently", or, "This is an opportunity to be kind", can anyone give any examples where that's happened, where you've been doing something and then suddenly thought, "Actually this is an opportunity?"

MR4: To be kind?

MI: Or any of the other virtues.

MR2: If I'm, say my brother, we argue quite a bit because we're similar age and that's why we argue, and then, so say if he's annoying me and I want to retaliate or say something back, then at points I'll think, "Actually no, I'll be the bigger person, I'll be the better person and show self-control."

FR1: It's not always, because I have a little sister, and we've got a huge age gap, five years, so we argue too much, and it's like, "I'm going to be the bigger person", and it's not always for the right reasons because, "I'm going to be the bigger person", and then she'll get in trouble and I won't, it's great, but then it's also, in the back of your mind you're doing it for kindness, but you think you're doing it to be the better person for your benefit, not theirs.

MR3: I know what you mean, in the back of your mind you're thinking, "Okay", you start to remember what you've read in class and what you've done in class, what you've read from Narnia, and then you're like, "Actually no, I'll just stop and I'll be the better person, I'll use self-control."

MR1: Mine is not argument based, if I'm waking up in the morning and my brother's already downstairs and I went into the kitchen to get some breakfast, it don't matter if it's scrambled egg and beans or coco pops or whatever, I'll shout out to my brother, "Do you want something to eat?", and he'll be like, "Yes, coco pops", and I'm like, "Alright, yes", and I'll make it for him, because at the end of the day we do argue too much, and I feel like if I show kindness to him, it will help him show it to me.

MI: I feel like we could talk all morning, you've all been excellent.

[CLOSE]

