

“At the heart of the Church of England’s vision for education is the message given in Jesus of ‘life in all its fullness’. The Archbishop of York’s Young Leaders Award is already enabling hundreds of schools to educate for wisdom, hope, community and respect, and I’m delighted that the Awards are reaching out with Good News to some of the most vulnerable in our society”.

The Revd Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer for the Church of England

Introduction

The Young Leaders Award (YLA) supports the Church of England Vision for Education by offering a programme that is rooted in our vision to enable young people to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. The Awards focus on developing the whole child; heart, soul and mind, providing opportunities for all pupils to discover their potential as young leaders; build habits of servant-hearted leadership; and to become agents of change in their communities.

Educating for wisdom, hope, community and dignity is central to the Awards; providing opportunities for pupils to understand, explore and serve the common good. Pupils investigate what it means to follow the example of Jesus and be servant hearted leaders in the world around them. They evaluate and develop their own leadership skills and character virtues; examine social issues that affect their communities; and take part in practical action projects to ‘*be the change they want to see*’.

As outlined in the SIAMS Self Evaluation Form (SEF) there are three key questions for schools to consider as they articulate their Christian vision: Who are we as a school?, Why are we here? and How then do we live? The YLA contributes in particular to the last two questions, supporting schools as they apply their distinctive Christian vision and associated values to help pupils flourish.

Strand 1 Vision and Leadership

The decision by leaders to run the YLA shows that a school seeks to develop and embed distinctive Christian values. The YLA embodies values such as service, compassion, humility, endurance, justice, wisdom and hope; helping pupils to explore, reflect on and apply these values to their lives. Through the lesson content of the Award pupils creatively and imaginatively investigate these values and what it means to apply the Christian principle of serving others. At KS3 pupils learn

about a variety of Christian leaders and how their faith has inspired and influenced them to take action and bring positive change to others.

The Award helps schools to facilitate pupil led action, as they plan and implement social action projects to meet needs both within the school community and in their communities on a local, national and global scale. The Award materials support teachers to act as facilitators enabling pupils to take the lead and to follow their own ideas and passions as they seek to bring positive change to their communities. The transformative nature of the Award is measured through critical thinking and reflection following pupils' involvement in action projects. Through this learning process pupils see the impact their actions have had on them as individuals and on those whom they have served.

The YLA provides opportunities for schools to enhance their relationships with their local church and community by creating partnerships through the pupils' action projects. Many of our schools work together with their local parish church, community groups and charities to break down barriers, build community and bring hope to those in need. Schools are able to reflect their Christian vision and associated values, through which the learning of both pupils and those they serve is enhanced.

Case Study

Young Leaders from a school in the North-West helped to design and build a prayer garden for their local primary school, creating a space for younger students to sit and reflect and building a bridge between primary and secondary school pupils. They also proactively supported their new local church as part of the Diocese mission to establish fifty new congregations. Pupils designed and delivered leaflets to advertise a new Friday Praise service for them, speaking with members of the local community about the service and helping to break down barriers between the church and local community.

Ask your church how it serves the local community and see how your Young Leaders can get involved.

Strand 2 Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills*

The Award is an engaging and creative addition to a school's curriculum, designed to support the Church of England's vision to educate for wisdom, knowledge and the skills and habits needed to be effective servant leaders. Opportunities are provided for pupils to consider their place in the world as unique individuals and to evaluate their leadership and character strengths and areas to improve. Through participating in acts of service they grow in confidence and emotional intelligence and use their creativity and leadership skills to impact

others. The flexibility of the resources allows teachers to follow their pupils' curiosity and ideas, enabling more meaningful discussion, learning and action.

The lesson materials support pupils' spiritual development, actively enabling them to reflect and explore spiritual and ethical issues including prejudice and injustice, poverty, isolation and loneliness, respect and tolerance from a Christian perspective. Enquiry-based activities allow pupils to think critically and creatively, ask deeper questions and respond in meaningful ways to problems facing society. Many of these activities are pupil-led and encourage responsibility, a growth mindset and a belief that they can affect change.

**Additional information to support this strand can be found in the Curriculum Links documents.*

Award Content

In KS3 and KS4/+16 lessons, pupils take part in enquiry-based activities and ongoing reflection, which spark and facilitate discussion. These include:

- Identifying and evaluating what it means to be a servant leader.
- Practical problem solving, and teamwork activities based on community scenarios.
- Exploring and investigating the work of national and global charities and their Christian vision for serving and facilitating change.
- Exploring and investigating the lives and work of Christians from the past and present within society and how they have brought change to the world around them.
- Biblical texts and key parables, through which pupils consider issues of prejudice, injustice, loneliness and community. **(KS3)**
- Investigating and meeting needs in the local community through planning for Action.
- Pupil reflection time following each session, challenge or social action project, considering the impact they have had on society and the how they have developed individually.

Strand 3 Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy

The YLA takes pupils on a journey of discovery of their character, potential and ability to bring hope to their communities. Lessons encourage pupils to self-reflect and consider their character virtues and how they can use these to 'be the change they want to see'. Lessons highlight positive role models as sources of inspiration and aspiration, including people of faith. Pupils explore how they are courageous advocates for change and how charities too play a significant role in transforming lives and communities. These lessons often act as a motivational foundation for what pupils can achieve during the Award and beyond. Pupils are

encouraged to challenge injustice and become courageous advocates for issues they have identified and are passionate about.

Personal Challenges

A Year 7 pupil after investigating the work of the Red Box Project, raised £60 through baking to purchase sanitary products for young women in schools in her area, who she learnt could not afford these products.

A Year 9 pupil regularly visited residents in a local care home, sitting to chat with them, reading them stories, making cups of tea, and providing help where needed.

A Year 11 pupil decided to speak publicly about the issue of forced arranged marriage at a national charity event, having investigated the issues affecting her community.

Practical group work tasks form a key aspect of lessons allowing pupils to develop both individually and collectively as they draw on character virtues including perseverance, resilience and patience. Through planning and preparing for social action projects pupils often face challenges which can test these virtues, requiring them to overcome barriers and make positive choices, fostering new learning and growth.

The YLA supports schools to provide curriculum opportunities for all pupils to engage in social action and to look beyond themselves and develop a mindset of helping others at home, in school and in their local communities. Some schools choose to focus their projects on national and global issues too. At all Key Stages pupils research and investigate the issues affecting their communities and how they can help the lonely, disadvantaged, vulnerable and isolated.

Social action projects may include:

- Intergenerational
- Environmental
- Fundraising for charity
- Tackling loneliness and isolation
- Improving the local area
- Mentoring and coaching
- Community events

For many schools the above projects form the basis of partnerships with external organisations including the local church, charities, businesses and global organisations

Case Study

KS3 Young Leaders from a school in Cumbria organised a week of activities as part of 'Give a Day to the City' to bring joy and kindness to their local community. This included:

- Celebrating the work of the NHS writing cards and baking cakes which pupils delivered in person to NHS staff at various NHS Centres.
- Hosting an afternoon tea for elderly residents on a nearby estate, serving refreshments and playing games.
- Taking part in a 2-day beach clean-up removing litter and other unwanted items with a national charity.
- Renovating an outdoor space for a local mental-health charity.
- Creating gift bags that were delivered to council staff throughout the city.
- Creating an allotment space for a charity that supports carers.
- Volunteering as guides at a local attraction showing visitors around a sculpture commemorating, and dedicated to, those who had lost their lives in war.

Strand 4 Community and Living Well Together

The Award supports pupils' social development by providing planned curriculum opportunities for pupils to use a range of social skills including communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, cooperation and negotiation. Within the classroom pupils often work with people outside their social group which allows the application of these skills.

The Award seeks to develop pupils' emotional intelligence as they consider the prejudices or stereotypes they may have towards particular groups in society. Pupils are encouraged to think about how their behaviour and actions impact others and how disagreements can be overcome. Working together in this way creates a sense of purpose and belonging, increasing empathy, care and encouragement.

Case Study

A KS3 school in West Yorkshire has developed links and built relationships with the local Ethiopian community as part of the YLA, to foster a better understanding of culture and tradition amongst the students and to provide the opportunity to celebrate cultural differences and promote tolerance and respect. As part of their action project Year 9 Young Leaders prepared and taught sessions for Year 7 students on a range of issues concerning Ethiopia including: Famine; the Aids Campaign, supporting charities and cultural differences. They also held an Ethiopian tea ceremony in partnership with the local Ethiopian community, who cooked cultural food dishes for students to sample. The experiences have allowed students to understand, respect and celebrate the diverse community in which they live and that makes up their school community, breaking down barriers and challenging stereotypes.

Through community action projects, opportunities arise for pupils to meet and work with people from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. These projects promote reconciliation and living well in community.

Stand 5 Dignity and Respect

The vision of the Youth Trust is for all pupils, regardless of background or ability, to be equipped and empowered through the Award to 'be the change they want to see'. The Awards have been designed to enable different levels of progress so that all pupils can flourish. Lessons focus on enabling a growth mindset and belief that there is no limit to achievement. Through taking part in social action pupils have increased self-belief and aspirations about the positive impact and difference they can make to themselves and others.

Case Study

KS4 students from a North Yorkshire school formed a partnership with their local care home, where many of the residents suffer from Alzheimer's or Dementia. The pupils were set the challenge of creating an afternoon of activities suitable for residents with a range of care needs. Pupils led on activities, which included: decorating plant pots and then filling with seeds for residents' rooms; decorating and icing cakes; making hot chocolate mousse packs; and showing a film in the residents' lounge. A strong partnership with the care home has been fostered, with pupils now regularly involved in events that serve this community.

"I think it is a fantastic idea and it is great to see the interaction between the students and residents. They've done extremely well and have been really organised, bringing a bit of the outside in for the residents. It is good and insightful for the young people to see life in a care home, something they have perhaps not experienced before".

Care Home Volunteer

As in Strand 4, pupils identify barriers within society including areas of injustice and prejudice. Pupils consider what it means to be a servant leader and through social action projects seek to bring hope, dignity and respect to people who are often marginalised. Through the personal development of pupils, the Award can also develop the school as a hospitable community.

Strand 6 The Impact of Collective Worship

Many of our church schools running the Award choose to incorporate the skills, themes and values of the YLA into their collective worship. There can also be opportunities for pupils to take an active lead in sharing their knowledge, experience and reflections from the Award with the school community.

Stand 7 The Effectiveness of Religious Education

In delivering a comprehensive RE syllabus that promotes pupils' understanding of Christianity as a living world faith, many schools have come to value the relevant modules and lessons in the YLA that explore the link between faith and leadership. For example, pupils learn about inspirational leaders, including people of faith, who have had a significant impact on the lives of people worldwide. There are also opportunities to extend this learning to include examples from other world religions. Pupils explore the work of national and global Christian charities working to help others. Through this they appreciate how faith is expressed in actions. The KS3 Award incorporates biblical texts, which help pupils consider the impact Christian teaching can have on society and the lives of others.

Award Content

KS3 lessons use Biblical passages to explore:

- How Christian faith influences people's lives and their actions, highlighting the work of Street Angels.
- The impact of the Bible on faith and Jesus' leadership example and teaching on servant leadership.
- St Paul's teaching on community and the role the church plays in inspiring Christians to live out their faith and serve others.
- The influence people of faith have had on changing the world for the better; faith in action.
- The role of Christian charities: Vision into action.
- The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats and what it means to serve.
- The Parable of the Good Samaritan and how we can counteract prejudices in our society.

KS4 lessons explore:

- The principles of servant leadership and what it means to serve.
- The work of a Christian charity and how faith inspired its founder to take action.

The Award activities draw out the skills of enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation, posing challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life and belief, what it means to follow Christian teaching to serve others and issues of right and wrong. Pupils are given a safe space to discuss, debate and critically reflect on these issues.