

NEWSLETTER 50 - Spring 2021

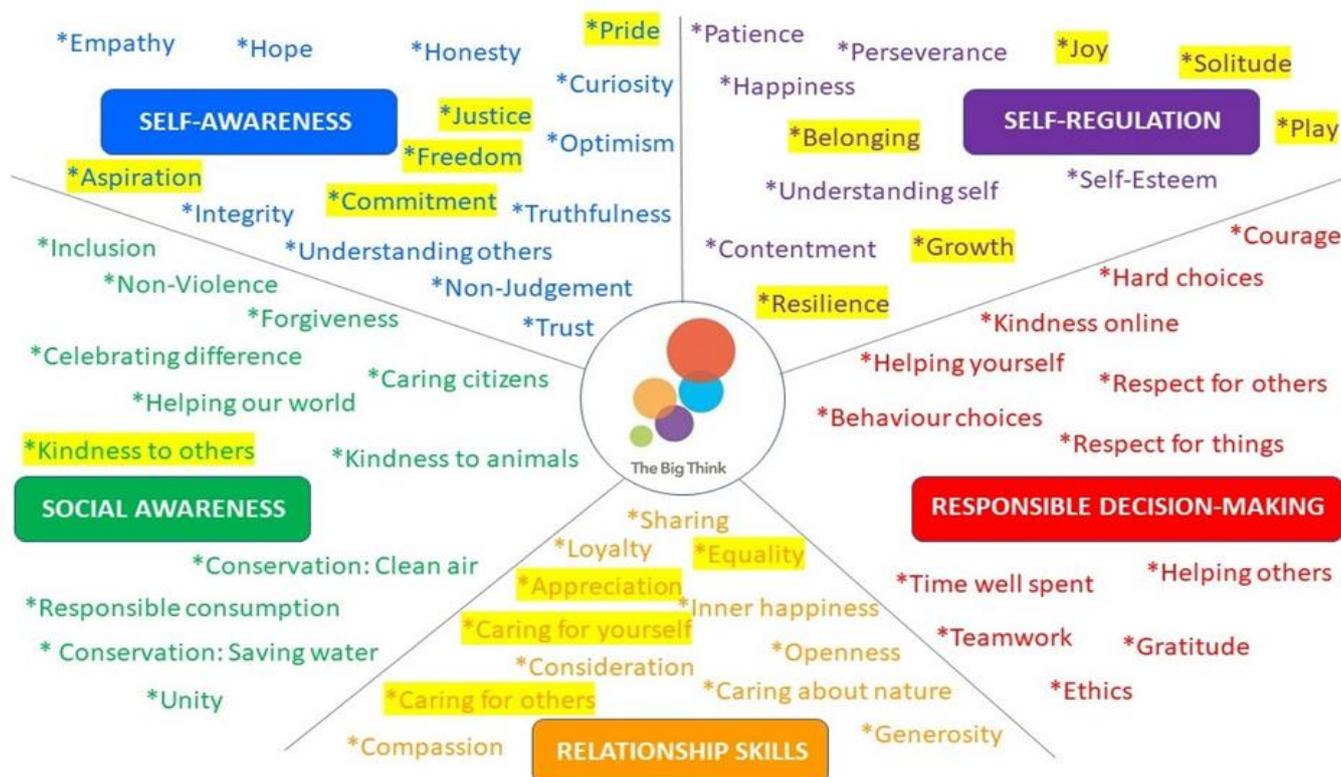
What it is to be human and value life!

The past 12 months have been a year like no other! We hope you have been able to remain safe and well.

Expanding The Big Think

For the last few months while schools were closed to almost all their pupils, we took the opportunity to embark on a major expansion of our cornerstone programme for primary schools, [The Big Think](#).

Funded in large part by a special grant from the Social Enterprise Support Fund, our Curriculum Developer, Sarah Pengelly, supported by a team of writers, illustrators and designers and by the editorial skills of our CEO Rosemary Dewan, added 32 assembly and lesson kits to the 88 that had been developed for the launch of the programme in 2019.



The Big Think: our 2-year Social and Emotional Learning Values-themed programme

These new resources were designed to meet the government's Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) requirements, which are now compulsory for all primary schools, as well as addressing the wider Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education expectations and boosting children's overall wellbeing.

The Big Think therefore comprises 120 practical and innovative lesson kits, 60 for children aged 5 to 7 and a further 60 for those aged 7 to 11. This means that primary schools can use it as a comprehensive and ready-to-deliver 2-year rolling programme that will enable them to meet RSHE and PSHE obligations in creative and exciting ways, avoiding the dismal box-ticking that can so easily infest the statutory parts of the curriculum.

The recently added values-themed lesson kits are highlighted in the graphic above, which shows the breadth of the programme and how relevant it is for preparing young citizens for life in the modern world.

With schools fully back this Summer term, we will be enthusiastically talking to as many teachers as we can about the various advantages of adopting The Big Think as a vital and effective means for them to bring their schools back together and address their pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and their development as balanced, capable, responsible and caring citizens.

Compassion at Christmas

In the run-up to Christmas we provided parents with a free digital pack called [Compassion At Christmas](#) to help brighten conditions under lockdown, support home-schooling, and to raise some funds for the charity Feeding Britain.

Using many components from The Big Think lessons, there was a pack for families and one for teachers. Each had a song that had been specially commissioned, a story, one of our Silent Sitting tracks that promote relaxation, and some activities to generate thoughts about what people would be going through at Christmas time under the extraordinary pandemic conditions. With so many people experiencing food scarcity, we encouraged donations for this kit in support of Feeding Britain and are pleased to announce that this initiative raised over £900, providing of the order of 2,700 meals.



Connecting Classrooms

During the third national lockdown The Big Think team devised another helpful resource, [Connecting Classrooms](#). It has two sets of five lessons (one for ages 5 to 7 and another for ages 7 to 11) for online learning at home and together in the classroom. These 45-minute multi-media kits are specially designed to support the mental and emotional wellbeing of both primary schoolchildren and teachers during the epidemic. They offer teachers a simple digital format to help bring classmates together in a safe space to reconnect once a week and support the RSHE requirements.

As one teacher commented, *“We had a great response to the Connecting Classrooms sessions and children in KS1 (ages 5 to 7) particularly enjoyed being able to do the 'Silent Sitting' in the comfort of their own home!”*



Financial support for our project that tackles social issues

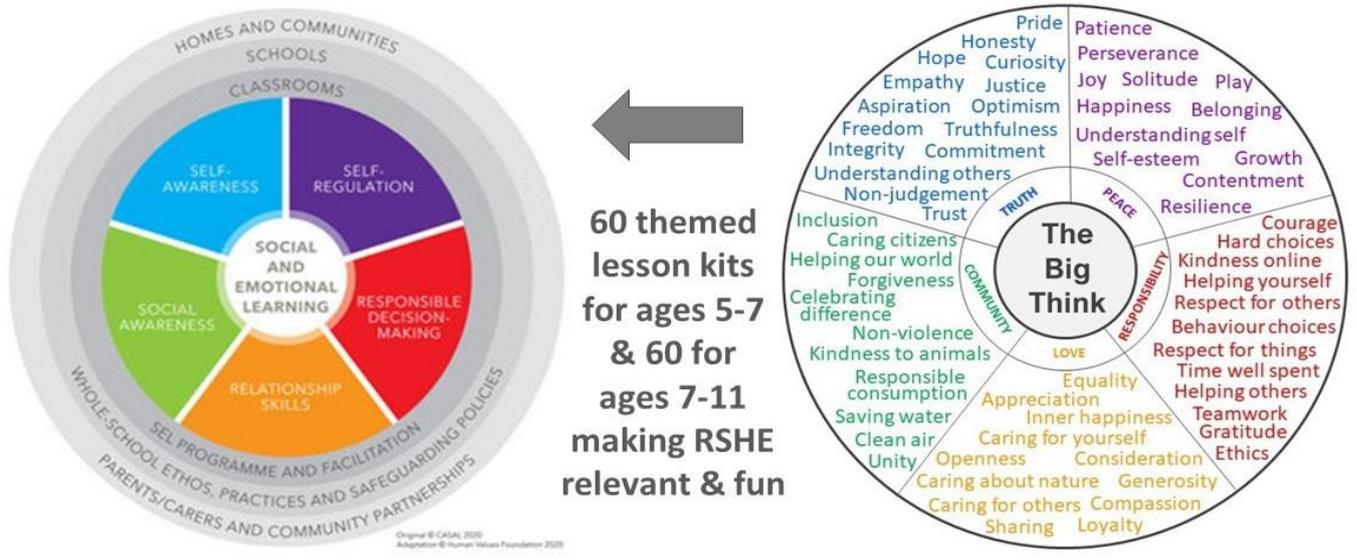
Last autumn, recognising how our work adds to the fabric of society, we were awarded a grant from the Social Enterprise Support Fund and distributed by UnLtd to advance education and skills development by expanding The Big Think. The 32 new modules and extra resources we produced have already begun to positively impact children's learning and competencies during the Covid-19 epidemic. Our thanks to National Lottery players for making these improvements possible.



The Big Think programme promotes Social and Emotional Learning

The coronavirus crisis has forced educators to wrestle with big questions about the current education system and its purpose. For some years, high levels of anxiety experienced by both teachers and pupils has been causing concern.

A shift is beginning to take place to better balance what has become an intense focus on academic outcomes with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) – one of the key features and benefits of The Big Think.



Indeed, schools in England must make provision for the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of their pupils, as set out in the expectations for Personal Development under the Ofsted inspection guidance, and particularly:

- pupils’ Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development, and
- the mandatory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum.

As the title suggests, **The Big Think** programme is thought-provoking, especially because of its dialogic approach that generates lively, high-quality discussions not only in classrooms but staffrooms too! The set of 120 ready-to-teach lesson kits enable schools to develop a well-structured plan to embed a systematic and integrated approach to SMSC, RSHE and the children’s PSHE education. This task is often undertaken by PSHE Leads and delivered as a scheme of work with 3 strands: Relationships Education; Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing; and Living in the Wider World.

New trustee: Lisa Whittlestone

We are thrilled that Lisa joined our board of trustees early in January, bringing her long and extensive experience in both traditional and online marketing. This expertise will be invaluable to us as we address the challenges of bringing our relatively new values-based learning programme The Big Think to the attention of decision-makers at schools in what is likely to remain a very confusing and exacting time for them for many months to come.

For the last two years Lisa has been working on digital and eCommerce marketing for the major personal care multinational Kimberley-Clark, and before that gained a wealth of experience as a senior manager and marketing specialist in a variety of large and small commercial organisations across many sectors.



Supporting the HVF

While teachers found it difficult to operate at the end of 2020 and even more so during the tighter anti-Covid measures from the start of 2021 when schools closed again, our income from subscriptions for The Big Think reduced to a trickle but with the easing of pandemic limitations, we look forward to many more schools using our programme to enhance teaching and learning and moving the needle to bring about the necessary changes in how and what children are taught.

We are enormously grateful to all who have so generously made donations during this difficult time, including the trustees of The Tony Metherell Charitable Trust for their regular donation, the trustees of The Joan Ainslie Charitable Trust and to the member of a family trust. Your kind gifts have enabled us to plan for and continue to extend our work so that teachers can build their confidence in the heightened need for pastoral care in their classrooms and progressively develop children's character strengths and mindsets, empowering them to think for themselves, especially about current social issues, their relationships and the importance of healthy lives and wellbeing.

We cannot thank our loyal subscribing Members and Friends enough. Your continued support means we can go on improving the quality of schoolchildren's lives and their prospects. Some generous donors wish to remain anonymous – please accept our most grateful thanks. We are much indebted to the following for funding we have received: Tony Bull, Brenda and Norman Clarke, Alyson Carter, Joy Carter, Ruth and Mike David, Kayleigh Fazan, Don and Mary Greenwood, Rita Jefferies, Linda Jones, Iain Lee, Tim Lipscomb, Lois Marshall, Ed Mayo, Anthony and Nicola O'Flaherty, Adrian Price, Shrawan Rathore, Mike Roberts, Penelope Sapiro, Geoffrey and Ann Steinberg, Polly Stone and Maureen Watson – *and all who shop online using smile.amazon.co.uk and have nominated the Human Values Foundation as the recipient of donations from Amazon.*

AND FINALLY ...

If you have any comments, suggestions or ideas about gaining sponsorship for our various ongoing projects or would like to have some e-materials about The Big Think programme to share with your family members, friends, colleagues, potential subscribing Friends of our charity and others, please contact:

Rosemary Dewan, Human Values Foundation,
The Coach House, Salisbury Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0AJ

Alternatively do ring 01403 259711 or e-mail: yes2values@hvf.org.uk.

The charity's website is: www.humanvaluesfoundation.com.

The Big Think's website is: www.the-big-think.org.

The Human Values Foundation team wishes our readers a healthy and joyful spring.

Patrons: Sir Michael Morpurgo, OBE, FRSL, FKC, DL;
Prof Kamran Mofid, PhD; Dr Kevin Auton, PhD

Education Advisor: Sir Anthony Seldon, MA, PhD, FRSA, MBA, FRHistS, FKC

