

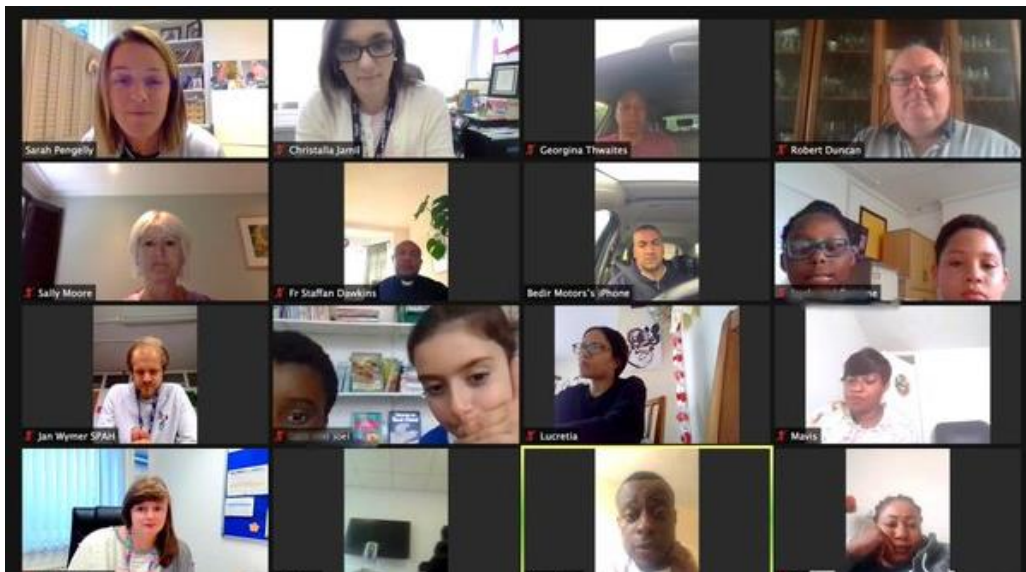


NEWSLETTER 51 - AUTUMN 2021

The Big Think online workshops and training

The Summer term proved to be a testing time for teachers as they endeavoured to restore some form of normality in their schools. As the coronavirus was still of major concern, we were unable to resume face-to-face contact and opportunities for selling The Big Think programme and providing training continued to be severely hampered.

However, it was clear teachers were seeking assistance in addressing the mandatory consultation with parents about their schools' Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy. We therefore offered Zoom sessions so that school leaders, governors, children, parents, carers and others closely associated with a school could come together and discuss productive ways forward.



On 28 June, the Executive Head of St Paul's and All Hallows' Church of England Schools tweeted her appreciation with several shots showing attendees and slides used in the presentation by Sarah Pengelly, who developed The Big Think for us:

“So proud of our children, parents, governor, vicar of St Paul's Church, staff and the school's advisor for the London Diocesan Board for Schools, who came together for our RSE consultation today. Effective discussions. Brilliant community spirit. Huge thanks to Sarah from The Big Think.”

Sarah has also been holding free workshops once a fortnight, principally for school leaders and those responsible for RSE and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, to demonstrate how The Big Think's supportive, whole-school approach places values and social and emotional skills

at the heart of all learning. A number of attendees took advantage of the opportunity after the online session they attended to explore the programme for a 2-week trial period, and this has led to several schools taking up The Big Think.

These workshops have continued successfully during the current term, even though teachers are undoubtedly still very pre-occupied with practical problems in their schools, and by the pressure of helping pupils to catch up on all the learning so many of them have missed during the last 18 difficult months.

The story of an outstanding values-led village school

Since funding is allocated on a per capita basis, it can be difficult for small schools to afford the subscription for a high quality personal development teaching resource like The Big Think so, as children in such schools are just as deserving of excellence as those in larger ones, we are very grateful to the Shanly Foundation for a grant that enables village schools in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, West Sussex and parts of Surrey, Kent and Hampshire to benefit from The Big Think.



When Li-Juan Ellerton was appointed the Head Teacher of Waltham St Lawrence Primary School in Berkshire in 2012, it was rated 'Good'. Thanks to the Shanly Foundation, we were able to give it our original programme, Education in Human Values (EHV). Mrs Ellerton embedded EHV deeply into the culture of the school and it was a contributory factor to it achieving an 'Outstanding' assessment in 2017.

When we started developing the successor to EHV as an online, multi-media resource, Waltham St Lawrence school was one of our pilots. Drawing on their experience of values-led education, both the children and their teachers made extremely valuable contributions to the development of the new programme.

Now Li-Juan Ellerton is absolutely delighted that, thanks to the Shanly Foundation once again, the cost of TBT is economically feasible at the rate of £1 per child for the year. As Mrs Ellerton commented, ***"TBT is an innovative programme for children's social and emotional development. WSL has become what it is today because of the Values Education / The Big Think programme. I/we feel extremely honoured and privileged to be a part of The Big Think family!"***

World Values Day 2021 and Big Stories for Empathy workshop

As part of the all-day programme of events on this year's World Values Day, Sarah Pengelly led a practical workshop on Zoom exploring how our Big Stories about real events can help children feel safe, understood and motivated to act.

With a number of teachers (including this year's TES New Teacher of the Year Alysha Allen) and children from Brimsdown and St Paul's & All Hallows' primary schools in North London we explored how mindfulness, stories, dialogue and reflection can support children to reconnect with themselves, each other, and the world in the aftermath of the pandemic.



Big Stories workshop: Sarah Pengelly (top centre) and Maisie Chan (top right) with teachers and children from Brimsdown and St Paul's & All Hallows' schools

Children's writer and The Big Think lead author Maisie Chan read one of her stories, "Dear Belly" and the children had a lively and informative discussion about the values shown in the story and how these values had been put into action in their school projects in the community.

The shift towards more relevant, life-enriching education

The experience of teachers, parents and pupils during the past 18 months has highlighted the need for a values-led rebalancing of the scales towards Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

The Big Think's fully-resourced experiential learning modules save teachers hours of preparation as they plan their schools' schemes of work to fulfil the new curriculum for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), which has now become a compulsory part of children's development. Many feel the need for training in handling the children's emotions in their classrooms so they are delighted to discover that the training we offer extends their skillsets, building confidence in facilitating the development of positive attitudes, essential life skills and know how that young citizens require to be able to fully flourish throughout their school careers and thrive in our increasingly complex and uncertain world.

As Jean Gross, an education expert, who has led many national initiatives aimed at improving the learning, attainment and wellbeing of disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs, commented, ***"I love the way The Big Think combines oracy development and social and emotional learning – both incredibly powerful ways of increasing children's attainment and life chances. Such great resources too – books, assemblies, lesson plans and mindfulness tracks."***

In September, following a survey on social and emotional skills, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published its report entitled 'Beyond Academic Learning'. Their findings outline why it is so important for educationists to strive for a holistic development of young people and proposed means of measuring social and emotional skills in reliable and comparable ways.

Also in September, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) issued guidance on improving social and emotional learning in primary schools.

We are delighted that The Big Think is so on message. For example, there is growing use throughout the world of five categories of SEL competencies: **Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Relationship skills, Social awareness** and **Responsible decision-making**. The Big Think groups two sets of 60 teaching packs (one for ages 5 to 7 and another for ages 7 to 11 to ensure continuity of progress) under five core values of **Truth, Peace, Love, Community** and **Responsibility**.

The EEF had reviewed the best available research so their guidance offers school leaders six practical recommendations to support good social and emotional learning for all children. It advocates the use of a range of strategies to teach key skills. The table below illustrates just how well The Big Think chimes with the suggestions put forward for the effective teaching of social and emotional competencies.

EEF SEL recommendation	THE BIG THINK: SEL in practice
Self-awareness Expand children’s emotional vocabulary and support them to express emotions	Children can use the age-related My Big Feelings Compasses to identify and express a range of difficult and helpful emotions
Self-regulation Teach children to use self-calming strategies and positive self-talk to help deal with intense emotions	Every lesson begins with a few minutes of Silent Sitting . There are 15 tracks of gentle, calming music, each with a relaxing visualisation
Social awareness Use stories to discuss others’ emotions and perspectives	Central to each lesson is a story that provides a safe way of leading children into discussion about contemporary matters and skills for coping effectively
Relationship skills Role play good communication and listening skills	In each classroom, an instructive Values-in-Action poster helps maintain safe and respectful behaviour patterns, communication and listening skills
Responsible decision-making Teach and practise problem-solving strategies	After every story, the series of Big Questions promote problem-solving followed by considering how to apply new understanding and skills in real life

THE BIG THINK – shortlisted for innovative SEL teaching

During the summer an organisation called HundrED, in partnership with the LEGO Foundation, invited those with innovative resources that develop children’s social and emotional capabilities to apply for recognition of their work under their Spotlight scheme.



Bringing about change through care.

The Big Think

United Kingdom

How do you inspire young people to care about Equality, Justice or Inclusion? Starting with the Self, then others, then the world, The Big Think activates an inherent need within every human to care. Our whole-school programme embeds a community of practice using shared human values to activate the 5 key SEL skills so that young people are motivated to care & take action to improve our world.

CRITICAL THINKING, LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS, SELF-ESTEEM, STUDENT VOICE AND AGENCY, WHOLE-SCHOOL MODELS

Recognising that in our fast-changing world, education must adapt to help children thrive and that around the world there are plenty of inspiring innovations, the Spotlight awards enable providers to spread awareness of their impactful and scalable offerings beyond their immediate environments. We are proud that we were amongst the 137 shortlisted applications and reached the next round with 36 other applicants.

HVF Annual General Meeting on Sunday 21st November

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be on 21st November at 11am. It will be conducted online on Zoom. If you are a Member and would like to attend the AGM, please let Rosemary Dewan know at yes2values@hvf.org.uk and we will send you a Zoom link nearer the time.

As is our usual practice, we are inviting Members, Friends, supporters and other interested parties to attend a **post-AGM session** on Zoom from 11.30am to 1.30pm. There will be a presentation from Sarah Pengelly about The Big Think, how it is being received in schools, and how we are continuing to develop it to meet the needs of schools. We will then be discussing our current and future strategy and in particular how we can most effectively promote The Big Think to more schools across the country (and in due course overseas). We would very much welcome your contribution to this discussion.

If you are interested in attending the post-AGM Zoom session, please contact Rosemary Dewan at yes2values@hvf.org.uk and you will be sent a Zoom link for the session closer to the day.

Supporting the HVF

In the wake of the pandemic, teachers have found it hard to handle all the issues and challenges that have arisen and our income from subscriptions for The Big Think has been severely impacted by school closures and disruptions. However, with the easing of pandemic limitations and the widespread need for systematic, high-quality teaching of social and emotional skills, we look forward to continuing to advance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning and moving the dial forward to bring about the necessary changes in how and what children are taught.

We are indebted to all who have so generously made donations during this exceptional period, including the trustees of The Tony Metherell Charitable Trust for their regular donation, the trustees of the Barleycorn Trust, the Shanly Foundation and The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust. Your grants translate directly into improvements in the wellbeing of teachers, pupils, parents and carers and in higher attainment levels and better life chances for many children.

Thank you very much indeed to all our loyal subscribing Members and Friends. Your kind donations enable us to go on enhancing the quality of schoolchildren's lives. For all the generous donors who wish to remain anonymous, please accept our heartfelt thanks. We are most grateful to the following for your support: Roger Arthur, Jill Bell in memory of our dear former Trustee, Kevin Bell, Alyson Carter, Joy Carter, Kayleigh Fazan, Tim Lipscomb, John and Mary Margaret Miller, Anthony and Nicola O'Flaherty, Bertie and Pat Owen, Phyllis Price, Mike Roberts, Penelope Sapiro, Geoffrey and Ann Steinberg and Polly Stone – *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 HVF team wishes our readers safe, healthy and happy months ahead.



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

