

# A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

## VIA CLASSIFICATION OF STRENGTHS

WHAT?

'Strengths' or 'Character Education' have been around in education for a while. Often somewhere in the background of PSHE or SMSC although sometimes ill-defined and vague. There is strong evidence to show that done well (as part of the ethos of the school, in the curriculum or in targeted individual / group work) can make a significant impact on pupil wellbeing and social emotional learning.

Character Education is now a key part of what Ofsted looks for under Personal Development and Wellbeing.

**The Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Character Strengths** is a framework based on research in 'positive psychology' by Martin Seligman, Christopher Peterson and others. The framework identifies 24 universal positive traits that are valued across cultures, such as curiosity, kindness, perseverance, and gratitude. It provides a common language for understanding and developing these strengths.

WHY?

A strengths-based approach to education, helps students focus on what they do well rather than just their weaknesses. This boosts their self-esteem and confidence, encouraging them to believe in their ability to grow and handle challenges. It also supports resilience, allowing students to cope better with setbacks and maintain a positive attitude. By highlighting strengths, teachers create a more positive and supportive learning environment that benefits students' social-emotional development and well-being.

SEL?

Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness	Relationship Skills	Responsible Decision-Making
<p>VIA strengths such as <b>curiosity, perspective, and self-regulation</b> help children learn to notice and name their emotions, thoughts, and actions.</p> <p>Activities like a "Strengths Spotting Journal" or "My Superpower" help children recognise what they're good at and what matters to them.</p> <p>Helps build a positive self-concept and encourages a growth mindset.</p>	<p>Children can reflect on strengths like <b>perseverance, self-regulation, and hope</b> to manage emotions and behaviours.</p> <p>Using strengths in real scenarios (e.g., "What strength could help you calm down when you're frustrated?") builds emotional literacy and coping skills.</p>	<p>Strengths like <b>kindness, fairness, and empathy (social intelligence)</b> teach children to respect others' feelings and perspectives.</p> <p>Class discussions and stories can be framed around noticing these strengths in others.</p>	<p><b>Teamwork, gratitude, forgiveness, and humour</b> are key relational strengths.</p> <p>Peer activities (e.g., strength-based compliments, group projects) help students appreciate others' strengths and build trust.</p>	<p>Strengths like <b>judgment (critical thinking), prudence, and honesty</b> guide children to make thoughtful, ethical decisions.</p> <p>Using strength cards or scenarios, children can explore: "Which strengths do we use when making a difficult choice?"</p>

"Developing pupils' character so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others" (Ofsted, 2025).

FIND OUT MORE

- [DfE 'Character Education Framework Guidance'](#) (2019)
- [VIA Institute website](#) (including free to access VIA Youth Survey)
- [Martin Seligman](#) (Positive Psychology website)
- [Strengths Gym](#) (introduction to the Strengths Gym Teachers' Manual based on the VIA framework (cost involved)
- [Worth-It Positive Education](#) has the VIA Character Strengths as a key part of their (paid for) offer. They do have FREE blog articles and resources worth exploring.
- **Brilliant ME! in Action [Strength Spotters Toolkit](#)**
- **Books**
  - Fox Eades, J M. *Celebrating Strengths (Building Strengths-based Schools)* 2008
  - Proctor, C. & Fox Eades, J M. *Strengths Gym Teachers' Manual* (2007)

