

THE STRAITS TIMES

Getting pupils to put values into practice



Ms Low with Rulang Primary School pupils Dora Ong Qianxue (second from left) and Zheng Gang Wei (right) at the launch of the Values in Practice programme yesterday. The pupils are using programme booklets that contain "missions" for pupils, through which they learn core values. PHOTO: LAU FOOK KONG

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Values are often taught through community service projects or during character and citizenship lessons in primary schools.

But a new pilot programme, launched yesterday by Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Education Low Yen Ling, aims to go beyond that by giving teachers and pupils resources to teach and learn about seven core values through lessons as diverse as physical education (PE) and music.

Two schools in the South West District, Rulang Primary and Xingnan Primary, will join the six-year Values in Practice (VIP) programme. Costing \$80,000, it is being led and funded by the South West Community Development Council and voluntary welfare organisation Bringing Love to Every Single Soul (Bless).

At the lower primary levels, for example, pupils will run around the school hall to pick up bean bags as part of the PE programme to develop their psychomotor skills.

Under VIP, teachers will hold a class discussion after the PE lesson, prompting pupils to think about responsibility and care for the environment by asking them to imagine that the bean bags that they picked up were pieces of litter that had been strewn about.

There will also be a greater focus on putting values into practice outside the classroom.

Programme booklets will give pupils "missions" to carry out - such as getting Primary 1 pupils to pack their own schoolbags to learn about responsibility, or asking Primary 5 and 6 pupils to start their own community projects.

Mr Chan Cheong Cheong, vice-principal of Rulang Primary, said VIP builds on the existing Values In Action scheme in schools, which focuses on the inculcation of values through community involvement.

"This programme appeals to the masses as everyone can initiate their own projects," he said.

VIP will be reviewed annually and may be extended to the other 31 primary schools in the South West District.

Housewife Subramanian Lakshmi, 37, who has a daughter in Primary 6 at Rulang, welcomed the programme. "It will teach her how to be responsible when she takes care of her siblings," she said. "She is sometimes busy with studies but still reads books to her younger brother."

• **Additional reporting by Rachel Oh**