

READING

In British schools children aged 5-11 are now being taught how to be "nice". They have special lessons explaining how to make friends, how to resolve disputes and to control their tempers, for example. They also learn how to express envy, how to say "Sorry", how to compliment other people and how to listen to other people's problems with a sympathetic ear. In one session children talk about their different emotions and play a game called "Guess what I'm feeling", and they also build an "emotional barometer" to show their feelings. In another lesson they write words like "generous", "sensible" and "honest" on bricks and then they use the bricks to build a "wall of friendship".

The government, which is spending about ten million pounds on this initiative, believes that many children no longer learn these things at home, so schools have to provide the emotional and social guidance that they need. School inspectors emphasise that bad behaviour and indiscipline in many secondary schools is affecting teaching and learning; the government hopes that this new project will improve the situation. But some people think that only a small minority of children need this sort of help and that these lessons will use up valuable time that should be spent on academic subjects. Nick Seaton, the head of the Campaign for real Education, says these lessons are absolute nonsense: "Parents do not send their children to school to have them spending their time talking about their emotions in this way. They send them so they can learn to read, write and add up."

What do you think? Would lessons like these be a waste of time in your country? How would students in your class react if such an initiative was introduced into your school?

1. Read the text and answer the questions in your own words.

- A) Who are the lessons aimed at?
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- B) What are these special lessons about?
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- C) What is the purpose of the game "Guess what I'm feeling"?
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- D) Why does the government think these lessons are necessary?
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- E) Does Nick Seaton agree with the government's opinion?
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2. Say if these statements are true or false. Give evidence from the text.

- A) These special lessons are mainly based on human relationships
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