

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



THE
JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

CAN WE TEACH CHARACTER?

www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/charactereducation





Exploring the place of character in the education of young people

A major focus of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues' research has been on investigating the place of character education in schools.

The Jubilee Centre has surveyed pupils and teachers, designed and trialled interventions, and evaluated provision in schools across the UK. Recent research has also looked at how character is developed in non-mainstream provision.

For more information about the Jubilee Centre's research in character education please visit:

www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/charactereducation

PARTICIPANTS



>225
TEACHERS



30,110
STUDENTS AND
YOUNG PEOPLE

- 'Character education includes all explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people develop positive personal strengths called *virtues*.'

'Character is a set of personal traits or dispositions that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct.'

'CHARACTER EDUCATION IS MORE THAN JUST A SUBJECT. IT HAS A PLACE IN THE CULTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF FAMILIES, CLASSROOMS, SCHOOLS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS.'

AIM

'The ultimate aim of character education is the development of good sense, or practical wisdom; the capacity to choose the right course of action in difficult situations.'

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CHARACTER

INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES

Character traits necessary for discernment, right action and the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding

Autonomy; critical thinking; curiosity; reasoning

MORAL VIRTUES

Character traits that enable us to act well in situations that require an ethical response

Compassion; courage; gratitude; humility

CIVIC VIRTUES

Character traits that are necessary for engaged responsible citizenship and contributing to the common good

Citizenship; neighbourliness; service; volunteering

PERFORMANCE VIRTUES

Character traits that have an instrumental value in enabling the intellectual, moral and civic virtues

Confidence; determination; perseverance; resilience

PRACTICAL WISDOM is the integrative virtue, developed through experience and critical reflection, which enables us to perceive, know, desire and act with good sense. This includes discerning, deliberative action in situations where virtues collide.

Flourishing individuals and society

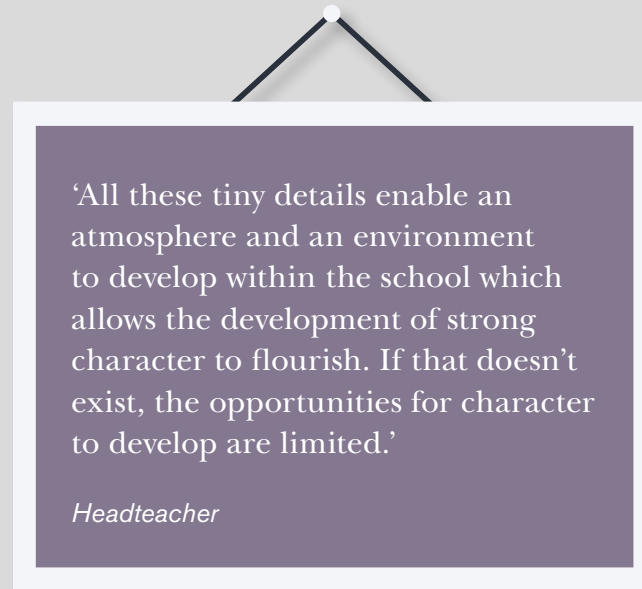
CHARACTER CAUGHT

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY OF BOTH STAFF AND STUDENTS PROVIDES THE EXAMPLE, CULTURE, AND INSPIRATIONAL INFLUENCE IN A **POSITIVE ETHOS THAT MOTIVATES AND PROMOTES CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.**

The Jubilee Centre's largest study in character education examined moral development in over 10,000 UK secondary school students and assessed what measures can assist in the cultivation of character. Key findings showed that:

- 'Whole-school ethos' and the role of 'character leads' were particularly effective (a teacher designated responsibility for character education provision, who actively champions this)
- Character education can be effectively delivered in all school types: state, independent, faith and non-faith

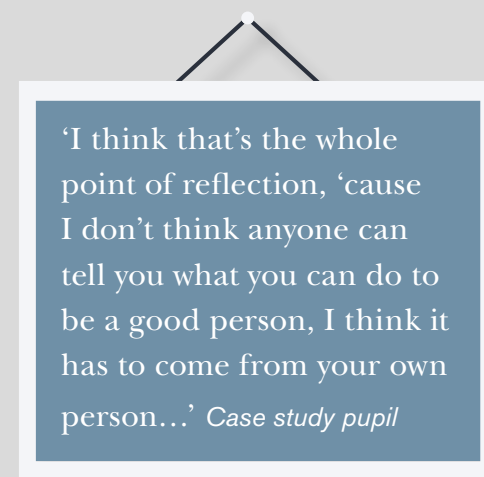
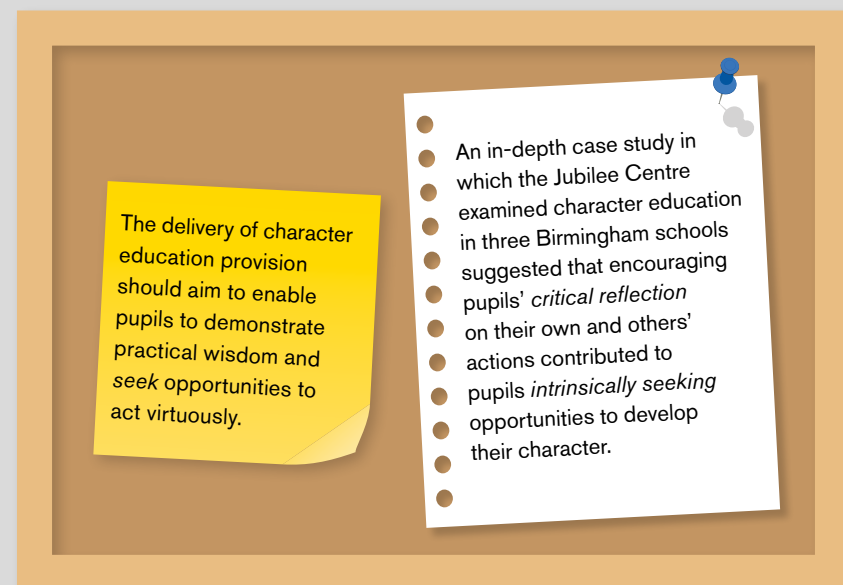
A case study of three schools in Birmingham demonstrated that each school had a vision of character education bespoke to its own context. Key to this vision was the identification of core virtues.



Research that explored character education delivered by non-mainstream educational organisations recommended they develop a culture and ethos of character and virtues.

CHARACTER SOUGHT

THE SCHOOL PROVIDES **VARIED OPPORTUNITIES** THAT GENERATE THE FORMATION OF PERSONAL HABITS AND CHARACTER COMMITMENTS. THESE HELP STUDENTS OVER TIME TO **SEEK, DESIRE, AND FREELY PURSUE THEIR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.**



CHARACTER TAUGHT

THE SCHOOL PROVIDES EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM THAT EQUIP STUDENTS WITH THE **LANGUAGE, KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES THAT ENABLE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.**

The Jubilee Centre has examined how character can be taught through and within subjects at primary and secondary level, using a bespoke curriculum, and through individually developed programmes.

The Knightly Virtues programme uses classical stories to introduce virtue concepts to pupils. A trial of the materials with 3,272 pupils nationwide found that the programme enhanced 'Virtue Literacy' (knowledge, understanding and usage of virtue terms) in 9–11-year-olds.

The Jubilee Centre's findings have contradicted some widely-held beliefs about the types of activity that build character:

- Contrary to the perception that sport builds character, British students who participated in sporting activities did not demonstrate better moral reasoning abilities than those who did not
- However, students who were involved in music, choir or drama outside of school demonstrated better moral reasoning abilities than those who did not



80% of teachers stated that the British assessment system 'hinders the development of the whole child'



TRANSFORMING CHARACTER EDUCATION PRACTICE

The Jubilee Centre has developed and trialled a variety of teaching resources underpinned by its research findings. Primary and secondary level programmes of study, a handbook to guide schools through the evaluation of their character provision, and bespoke resources for both mainstream and non-mainstream settings, have been widely used in hundreds of schools across the UK and internationally.

See the Jubilee Centre's range of character education teaching resources at:
www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/charactereducationresources



JOHN TEMPLETON
FOUNDATION

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About the Jubilee Centre

The Jubilee Centre is a pioneering interdisciplinary research centre focussing on character, virtues and values in the interest of human flourishing. The Centre promotes a moral concept of character in order to explore the importance of virtue for public and professional life. The Centre is a leading informant on policy and practice in this area and through its extensive range of projects contributes to a renewal of character virtues in both individuals and societies.



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