



SECTION 1

PLANNING AN EVALUATION

This section is an introduction to evaluation, and outlines important principles, limitations and procedures.

It also provides an overview of the nature of character and character education.

It is important to read this section before planning an evaluation.

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This handbook provides advice, guidance and tools for the **evaluation** of character education provision in schools. It is intended that school staff will use the handbook to formatively **self-evaluate** their own practice and provision. It is not intended to be used for summative and/or external evaluations of a school's provision.



1.1 BACKGROUND TO SCHOOLS' SELF-EVALUATION

School self-evaluation is a process by which members of staff in a school reflect on their practice and identify areas for action to stimulate improvement in the areas of pupil and professional learning.

Chapman and Sammons, 2013, p.2

Self-evaluation involves a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach to change, locating power and control with those actually tasked with securing improvements. It is increasingly viewed as being central to school improvement efforts and ensuring the professional judgements and experiences of teachers are at the heart of improving outcomes for children and young people. Self-evaluation is about seeing teachers, alongside other members of a school community, as the key agents of change in their schools. Perhaps most essentially, it is formative in nature and is defined by MacBeath (2008, p.4) as 'a process of reflection on practice, made systematic and transparent, with the aim of improving pupil, professional and organisational learning'. This formative nature makes it distinct from self-inspection, and the differences have been characterised by MacBeath (2005, p.46) as:

SELF-INSPECTION	SELF-EVALUATION
Top-down	Bottom-up
A one-off event	Continuous
Provides a snapshot	Offers an evolving picture
Time-consuming	Time-saving
Accountability-focused	Improvement-focused
Based on a rigid framework	Flexible and spontaneous
Uses existing pre-determined criteria	Creates relevant criteria
Can detract from teaching and learning	Improves teaching and learning
Avoids risks	Takes risks



1.1.1 Overarching principles of self-evaluation

The following list contains the principles that are deemed to be most relevant to self-evaluation of a school's character education provision.

Self-evaluation should:

- * be grounded in a clear and accessible framework that is defined by individual schools, shared with all staff and based on the priorities of the students they serve;
- * have a clear purpose – one that is formative rather than summative in nature;
- * involve the whole school community – including governors, teachers and other school staff, students and parents;
- * start with an identification of what matters most to students, teachers and parents;
- * involve some outside 'critical friends' – such as a colleague from another school;
- * utilise a variety of methods and tools to gain evidence;
- * be embedded and integrated into a school's regular practice;
- * be broken down into manageable segments, with varying focus at differing times of the school year; and
- * be developed in collaboration with colleagues, to provide mutual support and guidance to each other, both within specialisms and across department areas.

School improvement is a process, not an event. Teachers and school leaders are the key change agents for improvement and self-evaluation is a necessary but insufficient ingredient to stimulate school improvement.

Chapman and Sammons, 2013, p.8

The overarching principles for self-evaluation have been compiled from the following sources: Chapman and Sammons (2013); Chapman and Gallannaugh (2008); Department for Education and Skills and Ofsted (2004); Ofsted (2013); MacBeath (1999); MacBeath (2005).





1.1.2 Why self-evaluation of character education?

A belief in the importance of character development in education is shared by parents. Some 84% of UK parents believe teachers should encourage good morals and values in their children (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013b) and 91% of parents said it is important that schools help develop good character (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2014a).

This view is shared by the Department for Education (DfE) in their white paper, *Educational Excellence Everywhere* (DfE, 2016a). The Education Strategy Overview (DfE, 2016b) highlights the importance of preparing students for adult life, whilst making building character and resilience one of the DfE delivery priorities. In support of this goal, the DfE has pledged to support schools to develop pupils into ‘well-rounded, confident, happy and resilient individuals to boost their academic attainment, employability and ability to engage in society as active citizens’ (DfE, 2016b).

Developing students’ character is not new - it forms the time-honoured backbone of a school’s and a teacher’s role. With the recent interest and resurgence of work on character education, it is good practice for schools to engage in a self-evaluation of their own character education provision. Research by the Centre has shown that current self-evaluation methods for character education provision are sparse and that if schools are beginning to self-evaluate their character education provision, it is more often than not included as a side-note within their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) self-evaluation. With the importance of character education being more widely recognised, it is increasingly important for schools to embark on a self-evaluation process of their character education provision.

In *A Framework for Character Education in Schools* (2013a), the Centre outlines a successful way to implement character education within a whole school setting. The framework established that, ‘good character is the foundation for improved attainment and human flourishing’ (p.8). Human flourishing is the widely accepted goal of life and therefore this should be the ultimate aim of any character education provision, to enable students to fulfil their potential and live flourishing lives.

Human flourishing requires moral, intellectual and civic virtues, excellence specific to diverse domains of practice or human endeavour, and generic virtues of self-management (known as performance virtues). All are necessary to achieve the highest potential in life. Character education is about the acquisition and strengthening of virtues; the traits that sustain a well-rounded life and a thriving society.

Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013a, p.1



1.2 THE NATURE OF CHARACTER AND CHARACTER EDUCATION EVALUATIONS

1.2.1 What is character and character education?

Character is a contested term and different people have different understandings of it. The premise from which this handbook is written is that character comprises a reason-responsive, morally evaluable and educable sub-set of a person's overall personality, incorporating a number of different virtues or qualities of character that enable the person to lead a flourishing life. The easiest way for schools to operationalise their definition of character is by deciding which virtues (see table on page 14) they think are most important for their students to develop (this should be regularly reviewed as schools and communities develop). Schools are best placed to know their students and should draw up their own list of priority virtues. It is recommended however that this list includes moral, civic, performance and intellectual virtues. Further information about this can be found in A Framework for Character Education in Schools (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013a).

The recent tendency in schools has been to emphasise performance virtues (such as resilience, grit and self-confidence), both because they are easier to implement and evaluate, and because many practitioners consider them less controversial than the other virtues. However, surveys of parents' attitudes indicate that they view the moral virtues (such as honesty and compassion) as equally, if not more, important than performance virtues, and when people are asked what virtues they associate with good character, they usually mention honesty, compassion and gratitude rather than resilience (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013b). To rectify some of the imbalance in current practice, and in line with A Framework for Character Education in Schools (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013a), many of the examples in this handbook will be drawn from the areas of moral and civic virtues.

CHARACTER EDUCATION TAUGHT AND CAUGHT: A NOTE ON MEANING

Character education is both implicit and explicit in nature. What is meant by this is that character education can be conveyed through both the direct teaching of character, or picked up through the general ethos of a school. The Centre conceptualises character education in terms of character caught and character taught and this is explored in more detail below.

CHARACTER CAUGHT

Caught approaches to character education recognise that character can be developed through the myriad of environments and contexts to which we are all exposed. Consequently, the ethos and atmosphere of any environment, be it the home, school, or the wider community, has a profound effect on character development. Caught approaches to character education foreground the importance of quality relationships between students and staff within all school activities and emphasise the importance of teachers acting as positive role models for their students. As stated in A Framework for Character Education in Schools, it is not so much a case of whether character education occurs, but rather if it is 'intentional, planned, organised and reflective, or assumed, unconscious, reactive and random' (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013a, p.2).

CHARACTER TAUGHT

Taught approaches to character education are the explicit approaches to developing students' character, for example, through discrete lessons focusing on character and virtues, or through embedding character education within subjects. A Framework for Character Education in Schools provides the 'rationale, language and tools to use in developing character elsewhere in and out of school' and gives time for pupils to think about their own character development and the moral dilemmas they face (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013a, p.2).



As previously noted, the goal of any character education provision is to lay the foundations to enable students to lead flourishing lives. To do this, character virtues from all four domains must ideally be caught and taught in schools, but for students to fully develop their character, they must gradually develop ‘good sense’. This is the virtue that the ancient Greeks called phronesis. This is the ‘quality of knowing what to want and what not to want when the demands of two or more virtues collide, and to integrate such demands into an acceptable course of action’ (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013a, p.3). Living with good sense entails: ‘considered deliberation, well-founded judgement and the vigorous enactment of decisions’ (p.3). It should be the aim of any character education provision to encourage, develop and reflect on students’ incrementally developing phronesis, enabling students to be critical thinkers who demonstrate and model ‘good sense’.





1.2.2 The language of character

The vocabulary and definitions used throughout this self-evaluation tool are taken from A Framework for Character Education in Schools (2013a) and other work within the Centre. It is obviously not compulsory for a school to use this vocabulary within their own character education provision, but it is recommended that these areas of character education are covered, discussed and reflected upon in the school setting.

The virtues emphasised within A Framework for Character Education in Schools are intended to be fluid, but they must be given meaning within an individual school context. A school's specific set of core virtues and their meanings should be decided upon by the full school community. Often, different virtues can have similar meanings within different school settings. Within these settings, different virtue terms can thus be used to demonstrate the same characteristics; e.g. resilience, determination or perseverance. It is also possible that different schools may have different definitions for specific virtues. For example, the intellectual virtue of curiosity can have different meanings if discussed within a science lesson than in a physical education lesson. This must be taken into account when completing the self-evaluation. It is part and parcel of the Centre's approach to virtues – drawing on Aristotelian virtue ethics – that just as an individual's ideal set of virtues may differ according to their developmental level, psychological constitution and social role, so different institutions and communities may prioritise virtues differently, depending on their specific history, ethos and needs.

Here are some specifications of key terms:

Virtues – The qualities that sustain a well-rounded life and a thriving society. Virtues may also be called values, traits, aspirations, qualities etc. within different school settings. Character education is about the acquisition and strengthening of virtues.

Civic virtues – Character virtues that are necessary for engaged and responsible citizenship. Examples: service, citizenship and volunteering.

Intellectual virtues – The virtues required for the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding. Examples: reflection, focus and critical thinking.

Moral virtues – Character virtues that enable us to respond well to situations in any area of experience. Examples: courage, self-discipline and gratitude.

Performance virtues – Behavioural capabilities and psychological capacities that enable us to put the other virtues into practice. Examples: resilience, determination and teamwork.

Good sense (phronesis) – The quality of knowing what to want and what not to want when the demands of two or more virtues collide, and to integrate such demands into an acceptable course of action. Living with good sense (phronesis) entails: considered deliberation and adjudication, well-founded judgement and the vigorous enactment of decisions – to actually choose the 'right' course of action.



The table below contains examples of the four different types of virtues.

Figure 1: The different types of virtues

CIVIC VIRTUES	INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES	MORAL VIRTUES	PERFORMANCE VIRTUES
Service	Reflection	Courage	Resilience
Neighbourliness	Focus	Compassion	Perseverance
Citizenship	Critical thinking	Gratitude	Determination
Community awareness	Reason and judgement	Justice	Leadership
Volunteering	Curiosity	Honesty	Teamwork
Social justice	Resourcefulness	Humility	Confidence
	Open-mindedness	Modesty	Motivation
	Wisdom	Self-discipline	Ambition
	Creativity	Tolerance	Problem-solving
		Integrity	Communication
		Friendliness	
		Respect	
		Trust	

1.3 EVALUATING CHARACTER EDUCATION: PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES



1.3.1 Purpose of evaluations

Schools are under increasing pressure to demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions, but measuring the ‘character’ of an individual, and how it has developed, is extremely difficult to do. It is for this reason that this handbook does not use the term ‘measurement’ and instead outlines how a school’s character education provision should be evaluated. Researchers and practitioners attached to the Centre have been looking closely at the issue and this handbook contains advice, guidance and practical tools that will help school leaders and teachers consider the indicators of a successful school of character.

A crucial question to address from the outset is what constitutes a valid purpose in evaluating character education provision? Here an important distinction between formative and summative evaluation needs to be made. Evaluation should support individuals and societies to flourish. It should help schools think about their character education approach and how they build a range of virtues that are intrinsically valuable and constitutive of living well as human beings; it should focus on a range of virtues including those that are moral, civic, performance and intellectual.

There are three legitimate purposes of evaluation in the area of character education.

Evaluating how a school's culture and ethos contributes to character education (section 2)

Schools can self-audit or be peer-audited against a set of pre-determined indicators contained within a framework. The criteria are drawn from what is known about best school practice in character education. The evaluative judgements rest upon teachers’ professional judgements. The picture built up by the evaluation provides evidence as to the school’s collective strengths and weaknesses, and would therefore highlight where more effort, resources and time should be directed.

Evaluating the effectiveness of a character education strategy, activity or approach (section 3)

It is important for policy makers, schools and teachers to know ‘what works’ in character education to discover what curriculum strategies and/or activities are effective. Different methods, including pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys, observations and interviews with teachers and students can be applied with some success to gain evidence about the impact of a new or existing character education strategy or activity. Ideally, to evaluate the impact of a character education strategy properly, a randomised, controlled trial is required. However, such trials present researchers with significant challenges (see, for example, Arthur *et al.*, 2014a; Arthur *et al.*, 2014b) and are therefore beyond the scope of many teachers and schools. When using other methods (as described in section 3), it would be preferable to triangulate by using more than one source of evidence (see Arthur *et al.*, 2015).

Self-reflection by students (section 4)

Self-reflection on ‘personal’ character and virtues can be undertaken by students themselves – this process might also be called self-evaluation. These might be recorded at regular intervals during a student’s educational journey in a journal. Examples of self-reflection approaches can be found in section 4 of this handbook. These can be supported with evidence from others who know them well, including peers, teachers and parents.



This type of evaluation should, again, be formative rather than summative in purpose. Handled carefully, the same approach might be useful to individual students to help them consider their own strengths and weaknesses; the results might encourage those students to think about who they are and who they want to become. It is worth stressing that using such a tool to give individual students a character/virtue grade would be inappropriate. This is explored further in sub-section 3.6 Evaluating character education lessons.





1.3.2 Principles of evaluation

The following are a set of core principles about evaluating character education that should be adhered to when using the resources, methods and ideas contained within this handbook.

Undertake formative not summative evaluation

Evaluation should be undertaken for educational purposes to support the building of character in children and young people. It should not be undertaken to give them character grades. By undertaking formative evaluations, either at a school or individual level, a ‘character picture’ can be painted. This will be useful as a starting place for schools and students to think about what actions they might take to build character. The purpose of any good evaluation tool is to encourage reflective discussion and inform development. Therefore any process needs to be framed within this approach and schools need to ensure their evaluations are a work in progress, and can be used in practice as well as principle.

FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE EVALUATION DEFINITIONS

Formative evaluation is a continual process whereby progress is assessed with the intention to use this to inform and refine approaches to character education. Formative evaluation provides a continual feedback loop in which findings from the evaluation are used to develop the approach that is taken. This approach is subsequently evaluated again and refined in light of the findings.

Summative evaluation attempts to measure what has been achieved within a period of time against a set of previously defined goals. It could be thought of as a much more ‘static’ process which is used to describe whether a target has been met and is in stark contrast to the feedback loop provided by formative assessment.

Value and understand the importance of professional judgments

The professional judgements of teachers are crucial to successful evaluation. The effective use of resources in this handbook is dependent on teachers being able to make accurate evaluative judgements about *what they are doing well* and *what they could do better* in their character education provision. Furthermore, the resources require teachers to exercise professional judgement when planning their approach to evaluation, with due regard for the limitations listed in section 1.4. Finally, teachers and students are required to make judgements about their own character and virtues – to honestly assess how they are building character, as well as resolve the inevitable ethical dilemmas that are part and parcel of growing up or being a professional.

Use mixed methods to triangulate evidence to get the fullest possible picture

To gain the best picture of character and character education, multiple sources of evidence should be drawn upon. This includes evidence drawn from a variety of methods – including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. For example, if a new strategy/activity is being evaluated, the evidence might be drawn from lesson observations as well as interviews or questionnaires, with students experiencing it and the teachers delivering it.

TRIANGULATION: DEFINITION

Triangulation is the use of more than one method or source of data in order to cross-check the findings of a study (Bryman, 2012).





Use multiple voices in the evaluation

Where possible, as many people in the school community should have a 'voice' in the evaluation. This includes governors, teachers (at all levels), other staff, parents and students themselves. As a school begins to make decisions about the evaluation of character, it should ensure that a student-led approach is increasingly adopted, giving students a safe voice in the debate. This will help to ensure decisions on tools and methods are fit for purpose within the school, and appropriate to the context and developmental stage of the students.

Prioritise professional development

It is important for schools using this handbook to recognise the need to build teachers' knowledge and capacity, particularly in understanding the purposes and methods for evaluating character. Developing capacity may call for designated teachers to take a lead on evaluating character, and for them to be given time and space to properly understand the information and advice contained within this handbook and how best to apply it in practice in their particular context. They may also require specialist training, such as taking part in the online course on character education, see for example the *What is Character? Virtue Ethics in Education* Massive Open Online Course provided by the University of Birmingham and available via [FutureLearn \[www.futurelearn.com/courses/what-is-character\]\(http://FutureLearn.com/courses/what-is-character\)](http://FutureLearn.com/courses/what-is-character), or undertaking the MA in Character Education run by the University of Birmingham (for more information see here www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/charactereducationma), or seeking advice from other schools.

The Association for Character Education (ACE) is a further source of information for schools looking to enhance their character education provision. ACE provides a community for schools, organisations and individuals interested in character education to share expertise and practice. For more information see here: www.character-education.org.uk/

Recognise and acknowledge the limitations of evaluating character

Teachers, policy makers and others using this handbook must recognise and acknowledge the limitations of the approach to, and tools for, evaluation contained within this handbook– as explained in section 1.4.



1.4 HOW TO EVALUATE CHARACTER AND CHARACTER EDUCATION: LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Evaluating character is currently one of the biggest challenges facing researchers working in the field, partly because ‘character’ and ‘virtues’ are such complex constructs. A compounding factor is that research on existing evaluation tools is scant. With a few exceptions, educators cannot be certain that their tools in fact evaluate what they are intended to evaluate (that they are psychometrically valid) or always do so consistently (that they are reliable). It is therefore important to exercise the virtues of honesty and humility when attempting to evaluate character and the effectiveness of character education. It is important to be honest about how much any evaluative method will truly tell us about a school, individual or programme and be humble about the limitations of any findings. Honesty and humility are called for due to the significant methodological limitations associated with evaluating character. These limitations are discussed below.

1.4.1 Limitations

Limitation 1: The multi-component nature of character and virtue

Not only is character made up of different virtues, but each virtue is also made up of different components: understanding, perception/recognition, emotion, desire, motivation, behaviour and comportment or style, applicable in the relevant sphere, where none of the factors (not even ‘correct’ behaviour) can be evaluated in isolation from the others. The person possessing the virtue of compassion, for example, *understands* what compassion is, *notices* easily and *attends* to situations in which the situation of others has been undeservedly compromised, *feels* for the needs of those who have suffered this undeserved misfortune, *desires* that their misfortune be reversed, *acts* (if humanly possible) for the relevant (ethical) reasons in ways conducive to that goal and *exudes* an outward aura of empathy and care.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, children’s character development was usually understood in terms of well-defined *stages* or *levels*, through which all children needed to progress in the same order, albeit at different speeds (Kohlberg, 1984). Those theories suffered major setbacks because their explanatory power (in other words, their power to predict good or bad behaviour) turned out to be limited. In the field of virtue, some theorists have also suggested the possibility of stage theories, for example where children move from the initial level of ‘virtue indifference’; through being ‘well-intentioned but weak-willed’; ‘well-intentioned and self-controlled’ (without really enjoying being virtuous); and finally to being ‘fully virtuous’ (Sanderse, 2014). The current received wisdom, however, is that any such stage theories paint much too simplistic a picture of students’ progress, as a student could, for example, be strong in one component of virtue (for instance, feel the right feelings) but weak in another (for example, lack courage to put the feelings into action) (Curzer, 2014; Carr, 1991). Furthermore, virtues are, to a certain extent at least, domain-specific; a child could act much more courageously at home than in the classroom, for example. A further complication lies in the longitudinal nature of virtue development. For example, students should not be considered more virtuous even if they displayed more honesty or resilience for a day or two after a character-education intervention; character change is about slow, sustained and long-term development.



This *complex* nature and *domain-specificity* of virtue mean that it is impossible to ‘measure’ a student’s overall virtue with any single instrument or a simple set of indices. If that were possible, there would not be much need for a handbook such as this one; we could just produce a simple test for schools to use. It is believed that there is no simple way to ‘test’ whether someone is becoming more honest or compassionate over time. Students might seem to act more honestly after an intervention, but do so simply in order to attain some external rewards and without their hearts in it; that would not count as a true manifestation of the *virtue* of honesty. Conversely, students might not visibly change their behaviour, but they would feel more remorse after violating the requirements of a virtue; that would count as progress in virtue development. Researchers tend to rely on self-reports of people endorsing certain attitudes or actions – but these do not necessarily indicate the development of any particular virtue. Likewise, some instruments tend to focus exclusively on performance virtues, such as teamwork, leadership and resilience rather than civic and moral virtues – and therefore are unlikely to capture the full picture of any particular individual’s character.

In short, previous research has shown that it is relatively easy to implement and ‘measure’ progress in moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1984) and also progress in the understanding and application of virtue terms (Arthur *et al.*, 2014b). To evaluate individual virtues or moral character holistically however requires measurements of the link between cognitions and moral action. Theorists do not agree what bridges the gap between moral cognition and moral action – for instance whether it is moral emotion, moral identity formation, the development of good sense (phronesis), or all of these – let alone how to measure the whole construct of moral/virtuous functioning.

Limitation 2: Over-reliance on self-report

As noted above, many popular evaluation instruments rely on young people reporting on their own character strengths and weaknesses. Whilst there might be some formative uses for students reporting on their characters (see section 4), the Centre would caution against their use as summative evaluations. The method suffers from considerable validity issues as young people and adults may not know or may be unable to make an accurate self-evaluation about, for example, how much they are of service to others or how resilient they really are. A lively discussion is underway in academic circles on what can replace self-reports, with suggestions ranging from so-called experience-sampling methods, vocabulary analyses (for example, analysis of social media posts), and implicit-association tests, to MRI brain scans. The problem with many of those new methods, however, is that whereas they are academically exciting, none are easily administered by individual teachers in individual classrooms, and quick, cost-effective and practical versions have yet to materialise (Kristjánsson, 2015, chap. 3). While the search is on for more fine-grained, longitudinal and holistic evaluation of students’ virtues, the best current approach for teachers who want to track the effects of character education seems to be some sort of a triangulation of existing measures, combined with a large portion of their own good sense.





1.4.2 Opportunities

Some people may find the message conveyed above to be bleak. If there really is no simple and unproblematic way to ‘measure character’, should we not simply give up on the whole quest of character evaluation? The opposite conclusion can be drawn, however if we understand a virtue to be made up of multiple components, it is possible to evaluate the development of particular components of virtue (such as virtue knowledge, virtue reasoning, and virtue practice) – see section 1.5 for further information. By comparison, while there is no overall test to evaluate how good students are at the arts, that does not mean that we cannot find out a great deal about how good they are at singing, drawing, sculpting, etc., and whether a particular teaching programme has improved their specific skills. Furthermore, we can explore the quality of a school’s provision in this area, and how conducive it is to potential character building. This handbook is written in the belief that different types of evaluations can help in building a holistic picture of the state of the school ethos with respect to character, the effectiveness of specific character education interventions, and the students’ own evaluations of their characters. There is no single magic evaluation bullet available – but we can make use of a varied (triangulated) set of resources. In sections 2, 3 and 4, guidance, methods and tools are suggested that acknowledge the limitations, but also provide a way forward for character education evaluations.



1.5 VIRTUE KNOWLEDGE, REASONING AND PRACTICE: THREE COMPONENTS FOR EVALUATION

Virtue knowledge, reasoning and practice are three components of character that an evaluation might focus on. Virtue knowledge and reasoning can be combined to be termed virtue literacy (see Arthur *et al.*, 2014). It is easier to successfully evaluate development in a student's virtue literacy than their virtue practice. The three components are referred to in various sections of this handbook as they are useful pillars to frame evaluations around. The following definitions have been adapted from the Centre's Secondary Programme of Study (2014, p.11-12).

Virtue knowledge - This is about acquiring and understanding the technical language and concepts associated with virtue. It would be possible, for example, to evaluate the development of virtue knowledge using a survey (see sub-section 3.1).

Virtue knowledge would include knowing about the following:

- * what those who have this virtue do well;
- * what the benefits of acting out this specific virtue are;
- * which situations may be appropriate for the acting out of this virtue; and
- * which emotions, or desires and feelings may be alerting us to practise a particular virtue.

Knowing about a virtue is not sufficient on its own to be virtuous. This requires a move from knowing what a virtue is to knowing how and when we should practise it, which requires virtue reasoning.

Virtue reasoning - This is about making reasoned judgements about when and how to act well and includes the ability to explain differences in moral situations. This emphasis on acquiring judgement is reflective and allows for each individual to make their own decisions about how best to assert the virtues in situations in which they find themselves. It might be best to evaluate virtue reasoning using dilemmas (see sub-section 3.3).

Virtue reasoning can involve individuals having an understanding of the following:

- * their basic dispositions and inclinations and how well they have practised this virtue in the past; and
- * understanding how much of the virtue to demonstrate within a particular situation - in other words, understanding what it would look like to fall short of the virtue and what it would look like to assert too much of the virtue.

Virtue practice - This is about using virtue knowledge and reasoning to promote virtue practice. Virtue practice enables people to give expression to virtue in desirable, recognisable and observable attitudes, behaviours and action. It involves translating virtue knowledge and reasoning into virtuous action and reflecting on how virtues were demonstrated and how strengths can continue to be developed and difficulties challenged. Observations on character would be the best method for evaluating virtue practice – but are difficult to conduct scientifically and ensure validity.

1.6 USEFUL FURTHER READING



Many of the publications referred to in this handbook can be downloaded for free from the Jubilee Centre library www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/474/library

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