



THE  
JUBILEE CENTRE  
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

# The Good Teacher Understanding Virtues in Practice Research Report

**Supplementary Online Appendices**

**Key Findings**

**Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues**

University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT United Kingdom

T: +44 (0) 121 414 3602 F: +44 (0) 121 414 4865

E: [jubileecentre@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:jubileecentre@contacts.bham.ac.uk) W: [www.jubileecentre.ac.uk](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk)

# The Good Teacher: Understanding Virtues in Practice

## Supplementary Online Appendices: Key Findings

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## KEY FINDINGS: DILEMMA 1

### The Snowy Afternoon

- You are teaching your Year One class on a winter afternoon.
- There are three children in the class who have recently arrived in the UK: Halima from Somalia, Joseph from Zimbabwe, and Amudha from Sri Lanka. These three children have been fairly quiet and withdrawn in class, and you have been trying your best to engage them and encourage their interaction with their peers. Your mentor has encouraged you to be flexible in your lesson plans.
- Snow begins to fall outside. All of the children are excited, but particularly Halima, Joseph and Amudha, who have never seen snow before and who gaze out of the window in amazement, Amudha asks: 'Can we please go outside and touch it?'

#### Option 1: Tell the children to put their coats, hats and gloves on and take them outside to experience the snow

- It is an opportunity for the children to experience nature and beauty.
- You know that the children will not settle and concentrate if they do not go outside and your lesson will be much harder as a result.
- You know it is risky, but sometimes it is important to experiment and try new things.
- You want your pupils to be happy and enjoy school and this would be fun for them.
- It is an opportunity for some child-centred learning, to share experiences and learn from one another.
- Your mentor has encouraged you to be flexible in lesson plans and to accommodate new learning opportunities if they arise in class.

#### Option 2: Tell the children to put their coats, hats and gloves on and take them outside to experience the snow

- The lesson is important and you do not wish to disrupt it with distractions.
- The children can play in the snow later, and they will appreciate it better once they have waited.
- It would not be fair to take your class outside when other classes are stuck inside.
- It is too dangerous and risky to take an entire class outside in the snow without proper risk assessment.
- It is up to you, as the teacher, to take unpopular decisions when necessary and taking pupils outside now could set a precedent.
- You have not sought permission and if the Year Tutor sees your class outside you may get into trouble.

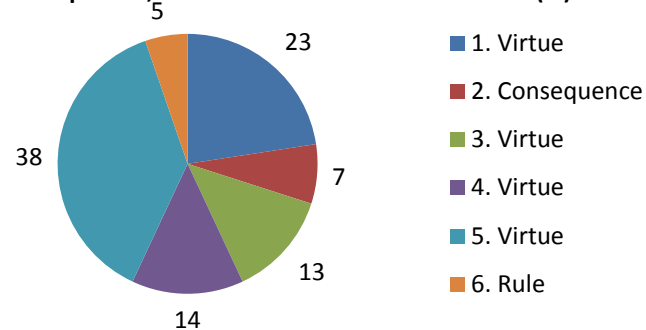
### Key Findings

All teachers: Option One: 87%; Option Two: 13%

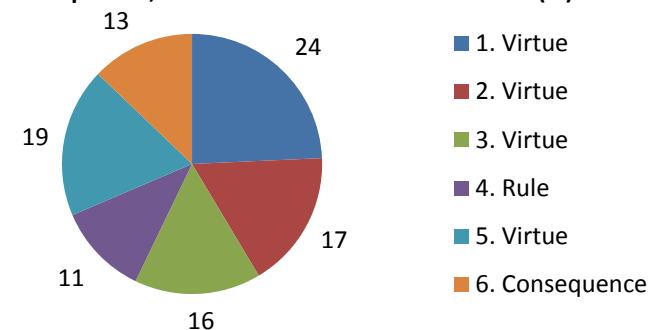
When deciding to take the children out to see the snow, the most cited reason is virtue-based reason 5.

Rules- and consequence- based reasons are least favoured when justifying either option.

Option 1, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



Option 2, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



## KEY FINDINGS: DILEMMA 2

### Uniform

- You are a Year Seven Year Tutor starting the Autumn Term with a new intake of pupils.
- Your school has a strict uniform policy and pupils wearing incorrect uniform should be given a warning, then, if they break the rules again, sent home.
- A pupil, Robert, wears dark-coloured trainers instead of the black shoes required by school rules. You know that Robert lives with his single parent father on a very low income. You have already written to Robert's father about the school's support fund to which low income parents can apply for help with buying uniform items, but the trainers remain.

#### Option 1: Send Robert home and telephone his father to explain the problem.

- It is only fair on other students to follow the school rules.
- You are employed by the school and it is part of your job to make sure the rules are followed.
- If you do not enforce the rules you may be criticised.
- If Robert does not have to follow this rule he may feel he can ignore other rules as well.
- If you send Robert home often enough, eventually his father will let you help him.
- If Robert is wearing different shoes he may be victimised by other pupils who are wearing the correct uniform.

#### Option 2: Ignore the trainers.

- You suspect Robert does not have any shoes to change into, so you know he will miss a whole day's lessons and this will not help his progress at school.
- Robert and his father are in a difficult financial situation and the school should recognise this.
- Robert is at school to learn and what he is wearing on his feet does not affect that ability.
- You think that penalising Robert may negatively affect your relationship with him.
- You think that this is an inappropriate problem for you to be dealing with and needs someone more senior to resolve it.
- You think that perhaps Robert's father has not had enough time to fill in the form and get the shoes and you want to give him more time.

### Key Findings

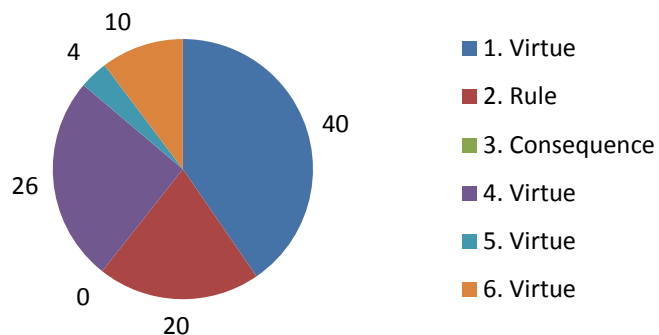
All teachers: Option One: 51%; Option Two: 49%

All cohorts prioritised fairness to other students when deciding to send Robert home, followed by the rule-based reason.

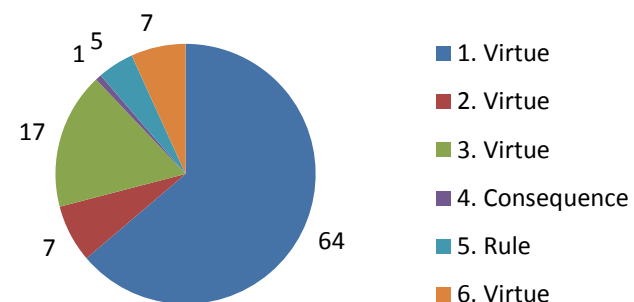
All cohorts prioritised Robert's learning in the face of economic hardship in deciding to ignore the trainers

Consequence-based reasons are least favoured in either option.

Option 1, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



Option 2, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



## KEY FINDINGS: DILEMMA 3

### The Exam

- Fifty of your school's Year Six pupils are sitting an exam which you are co-invigilating alongside the Deputy Head.
- You notice the Deputy Head pointing out the correct answers for some of the pupils. She notices you watching, and whispers that the school needs good results. She says that these pupils' learning suffered last year as their teacher was on long-term sick leave and they had several supply teachers. She adds: 'this is the only way they will get the results they deserve'.

#### Option 1: Join in and offer similar help to other pupils in the exam.

1. The pupils have had a bad deal this year - this is an opportunity to redress the balance.
2. She is the Deputy Head with years of experience and to question her actions would be disrespectful.
3. The Deputy Head is responsible for this exam, not you.
4. It is not really a big issue - if one school can do this, you bet everyone else does as well.
5. She is the Deputy Head and if you do not support her she might think less of you, affecting your promotion chances in the future.
6. It will have a negative impact on staff morale if you do not agree. It has already been a turbulent and difficult year and you are keen for the school to be a success.

#### Option 2: Do not help the pupils and challenge the Deputy Head about her actions after the exam.

1. All children in England are being tested and you feel that it is important that all children are treated equally.
2. If you do not stand up to her someone may find out there was cheating and you may get into trouble.
3. You feel that this is not a very good example to set the pupils and you do not want to endorse such behaviour.
4. Although you respect the Deputy Head and she has years of experience, you know that this is wrong and against the policy relating to Key Stage assessments.
5. On balance you think this is not the best way of dealing with the difficult situation the group faces.
6. You think that cheating is wrong and you need to make this clear.

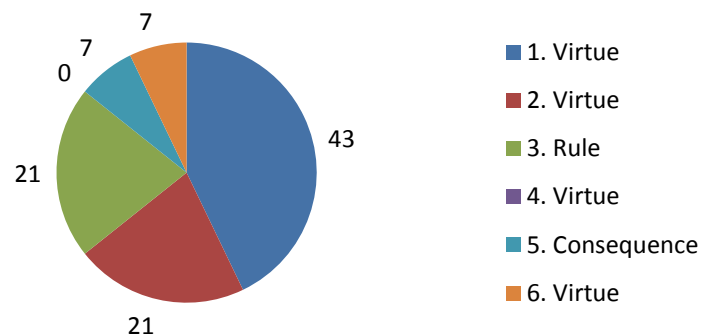
### Key Findings

All teachers: Option One: 3%; Option Two: 97%

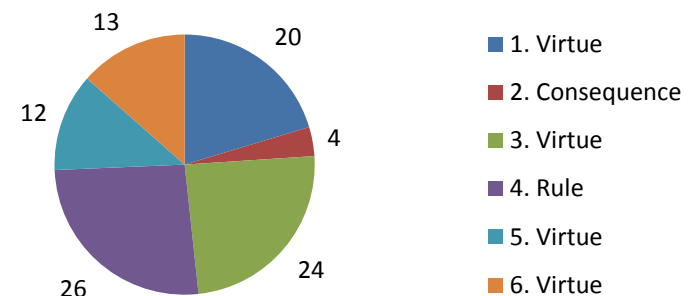
Most cite rules (policy relating to Key Stage assessments) in deciding not to help the pupils

Secondary reasons relate to leadership/judgement (setting a good example to pupils) and fairness (making sure all children are treated equally)

Option 1, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



Option 2, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



## KEY FINDINGS: DILEMMA 4

### Parents' Evening

- You are an NQT at your first parents' evening and are speaking to Emma's parents.
- They are concerned that Emma is not doing as well at school as she used to and think the reason could be that another girl Emma has told them about, Jade, is constantly disrupting the class.
- Unknown to them, Jade has a Statement of Special Needs but her Learning Support Assistant is on maternity leave and has not been replaced. Although you have sought support from the SENCO, you have largely been left to struggle along as best you can with Jade's challenging behaviour.

#### Option 1: Agree with Emma's parents that Jade causes issues in the classroom, but explain Jade's special needs and the steps you have taken to try to access appropriate support.

- You feel that Emma's parents are entitled to know about the lack of support from the school and how this impacts on their child.
- It is a relief to have an opportunity to talk about the difficulties you have been having.
- The 'Teachers' Standards' state that a teacher should "communicate effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being". This is an opportunity to do so.
- You have tried your hardest and feel that Emma's parents could take this up with the SENCO and Senior Management Team.
- You believe that all children should be encouraged to reach their full potential and have noticed that Emma is not, so you are keen to explain to her parents why this could be.
- You do not want Emma's parents to see you as unaware or unable to act on such issues in case they report you to the Headteacher.

#### Option 2: Reassure Emma's parents that you will monitor her progress carefully in the future without saying anything about Jade.

- Jade's needs are a separate issue to Emma's and school policy states that confidentiality must be observed in all such situations.
- You are not sure what support might be forthcoming for your teaching with Jade, so you avoid referencing her in your comments as you do not want to make promises you may not be able to keep.
- As an NQT you are still unsure how to handle this situation, so better to play safe.
- You know that the school policy on support for pupils with Statements of Special Needs has not been adhered to but it would not be appropriate or professional for you to discuss Jade with other parents.
- You do not wish Jade's parents to find out you have been discussing her with other parents in case they report you.
- You know that it would not be appropriate to discuss another pupil with Emma's parents and, although you agree with them, you feel it is important not to place blame on Jade.

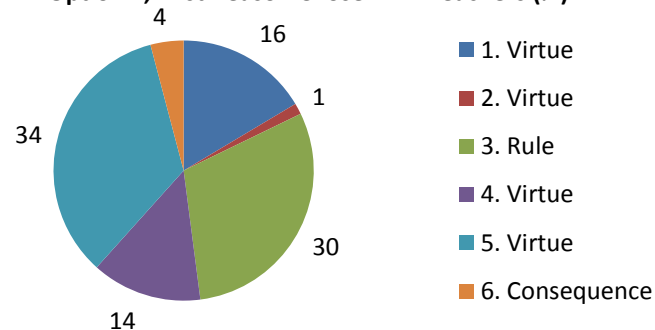
### Key Findings

All teachers: Option One: 13%, Option Two: 87%

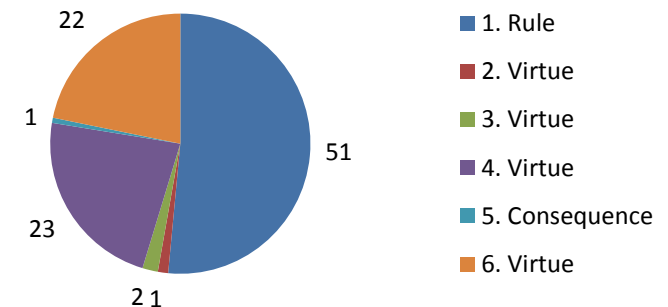
11% of new students choose Option One, compared with 15% of experienced teachers.

Career stage impacted on the reliance upon rules based reasoning, with an apparent decline in reliance as career stage progressed.

Option 1, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



Option 2, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



## KEY FINDINGS: DILEMMA 5

### The Citizenship Lesson

- You are teaching a Citizenship session with Year Nine about the 'war on terror'. You emphasise that Islamic terrorists are a tiny minority and that most Muslims condemn violence. The class discuss the topic respectfully and you feel that a potentially sensitive session has gone well.
- Later in the playground, you overhear a pupil who attended the session saying to another that Muslims are 'a bunch of terrorists'.

#### Option 1: Report the pupil's comments to their Head of Year.

- The Macpherson report states that teachers should report incidents of discrimination in school.
- It is up to you as a teacher and role model to take a stand against Islamophobia.
- This kind of talk could escalate into Islamophobic abuse of Muslim pupils.
- If you do not report the pupil, and their language or behaviour worsens, you could get into trouble for not reporting the matter.
- It is for the pupil's own good that this issue is dealt with now to avoid the problem escalating.
- You owe it to the Muslim pupils in the school to challenge this kind of language which could cause them hurt and upset.

#### Option 2: Do not help the pupils and challenge the Deputy Head about her actions after the exam.

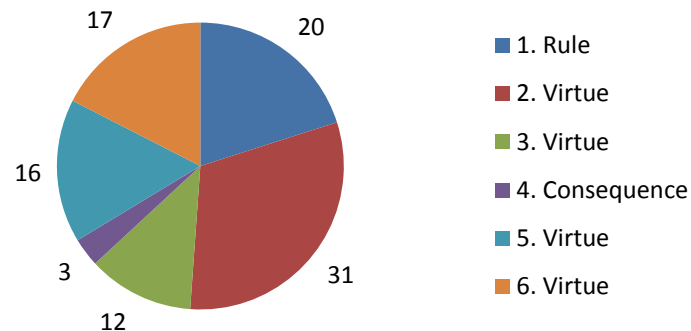
- The pupil might tell the Head of Year that they got these views from your lesson and you may get into trouble as a result.
- This pupil's views may be shared by others in the class. Reporting just one pupil will not address the problem effectively.
- This is probably just a stupid comment and will not lead to anything more serious.
- Although you thought you had taught this issue in a sensitive way, it is possible that something you said has prompted these comments. Rather than blaming the individual you should try and put this right in the next session.
- This is the kind of risk which arises when teaching sensitive topics. You are confident you can set the pupil back on the right course in the next session without getting them into trouble with their Head of Year.
- The 'Teachers' Standards' state that a teacher should "maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary". Dealing with this issue in this way allows you to do so.

### Key Findings

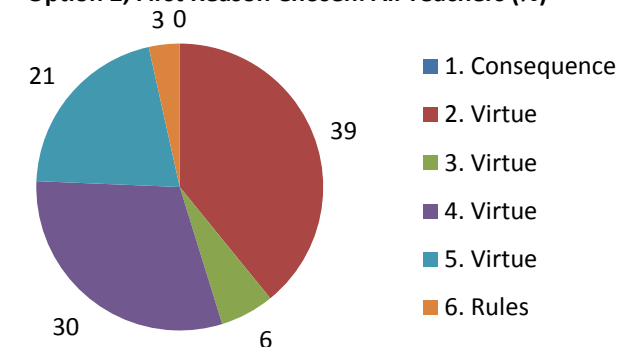
All teachers: Option One: 57%, Option Two: 43%

Rules and consequences based reasoning were very unpopular amongst all career stages when choosing not to report the pupil.

Option 1, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



Option 2, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



## KEY FINDINGS: DILEMMA 6

### Staffroom Chat

You regularly hear an experienced member of staff in your school complain about a class you both teach. You know this can be a frustrating class to teach because their behaviour is challenging. This teacher comments that they do not bother to plan lessons properly for this class because the pupils 'haven't got the brains to notice'. The teacher also comments that they see no point in marking the work that this class produces, because it is 'worthless'.

#### Option 1: Ignore the comments

1. You do not want to start an argument with a colleague.
2. Ignore the comments because doing otherwise may lead you to being ostracised at work and your professional life becoming more difficult.
3. You do not know, for certain, what really happens in the classroom and the teacher may just be expressing their frustrations.
4. Taking action may make matters worse as you cannot know how the situation will end.
5. This can be a frustrating class to teach and, although you are uneasy with the comments, you feel that your colleague is only being realistic.
6. School systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and assessment are designed to identify and resolve such issues.

#### Option 2: Speak to a more senior member of staff about the teacher's comments

1. A more senior member of staff should deal with this kind of issue.
2. You do not want to get into an argument with a colleague.
3. You believe that more senior staff should know about the possibility of poor teaching in school.
4. You are concerned for the health of that member of staff; giving up with one class could be just the start of their problems.
5. You are worried that the quality of this teacher's work might impact on attainment outcomes and reflect badly on other colleagues and yourself.
6. You see the responsibilities of teachers quite differently to this colleague and the issue warrants reporting upwards.

#### Option 3: Challenge the teacher directly about their comments

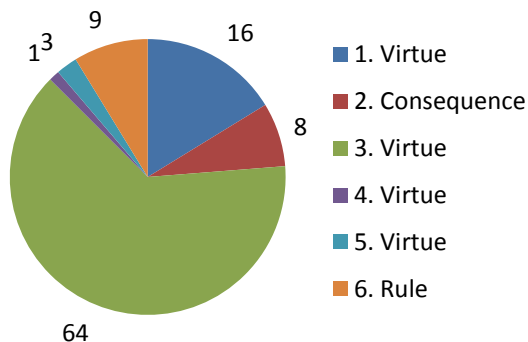
1. You are concerned that other members of staff may believe the teacher is correct and take on those values; you do not want to work in a school with negative values.
2. You know it is the clearest way to express your concerns and minimise the chance of misunderstanding.
3. You believe that your knowledge of the pupils will allow you to make some positive suggestions that will help the teacher improve their work with the class.
4. Reporting upwards might cause unnecessary additional scrutiny of all colleagues' teaching, including your own.
5. Containing such matters at an individual level should always be the aim, at least to start with, and might be followed by reporting upwards.
6. The Teachers' Standards state that a teacher must be able to 'manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them'. This teacher is not meeting that Standard and should be made aware of that.

### Key Findings

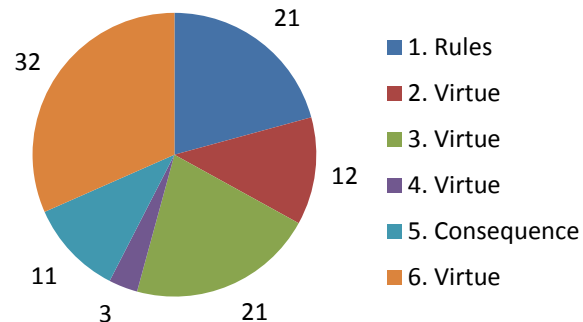
All teachers: Option One: 15%, Option Two: 39%, Option Three: 46%

Experienced and Graduate teachers were more than twice as likely to ignore the comments as new students, but least likely to cite rules (school systems) as a reason for doing so

#### Option 1, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



#### Option 2, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)



#### Option 3, First Reason Chosen: All Teachers (%)

