UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | THE JUBILEE CENTRE FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

Flourishing Feedback:
Creating the Conditions for Constructive Criticism

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Outline of Today's Talk

- Introduction to the work of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues
- Evaluating Character –The Character Education Evaluation Handbook for Schools
- Intellectual humility, growth mind-set and constructive feedback

The Jubilee Centre For Character and Virtues

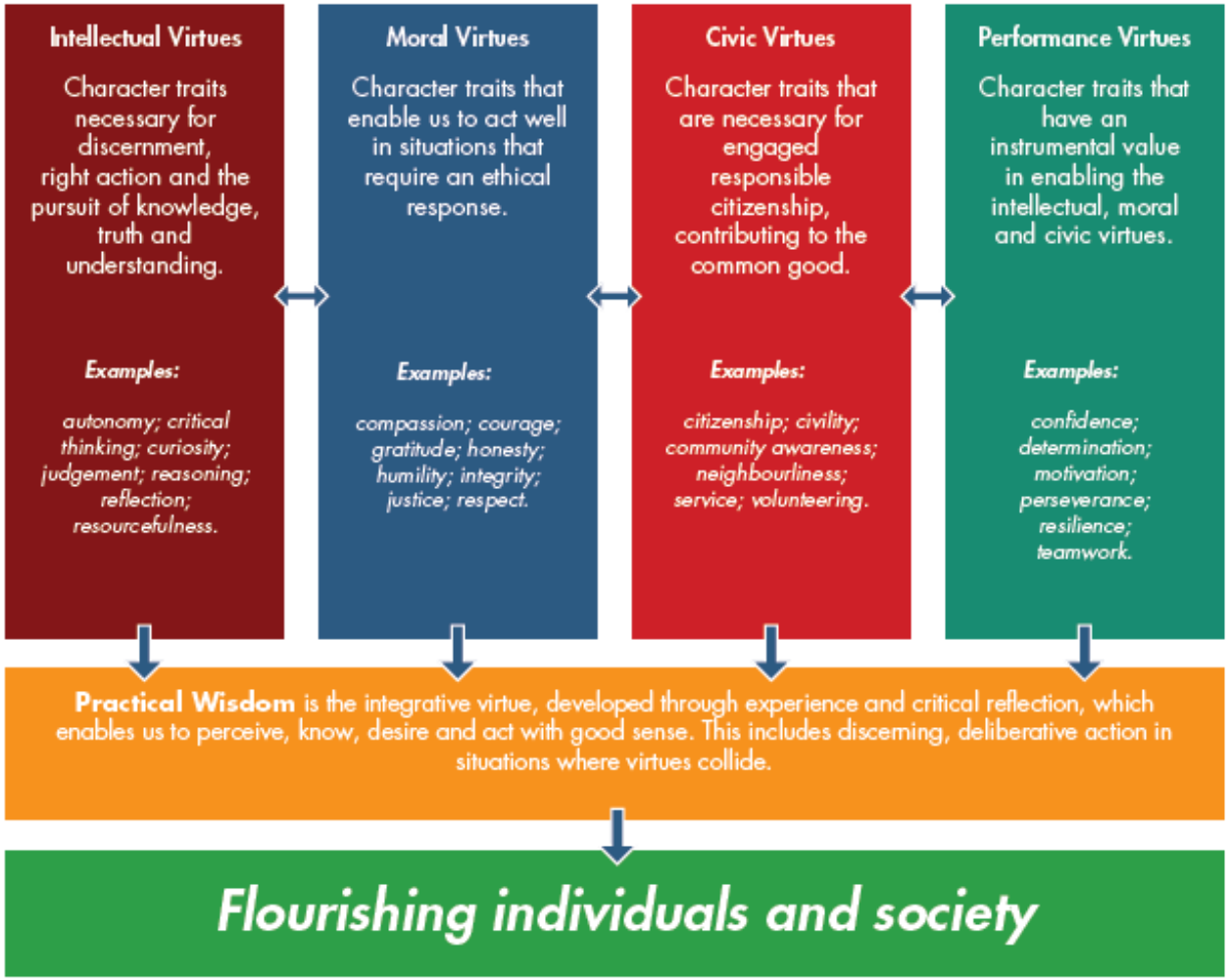
The work of the Centre seeks to help people understand and demonstrate the benefit that good character and virtues bring to the individual and society.

A definition of character:

"Character is a set of personal traits or dispositions that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct. Character education includes all explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people develop positive personal strengths called virtues."

(Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013)

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CHARACTER



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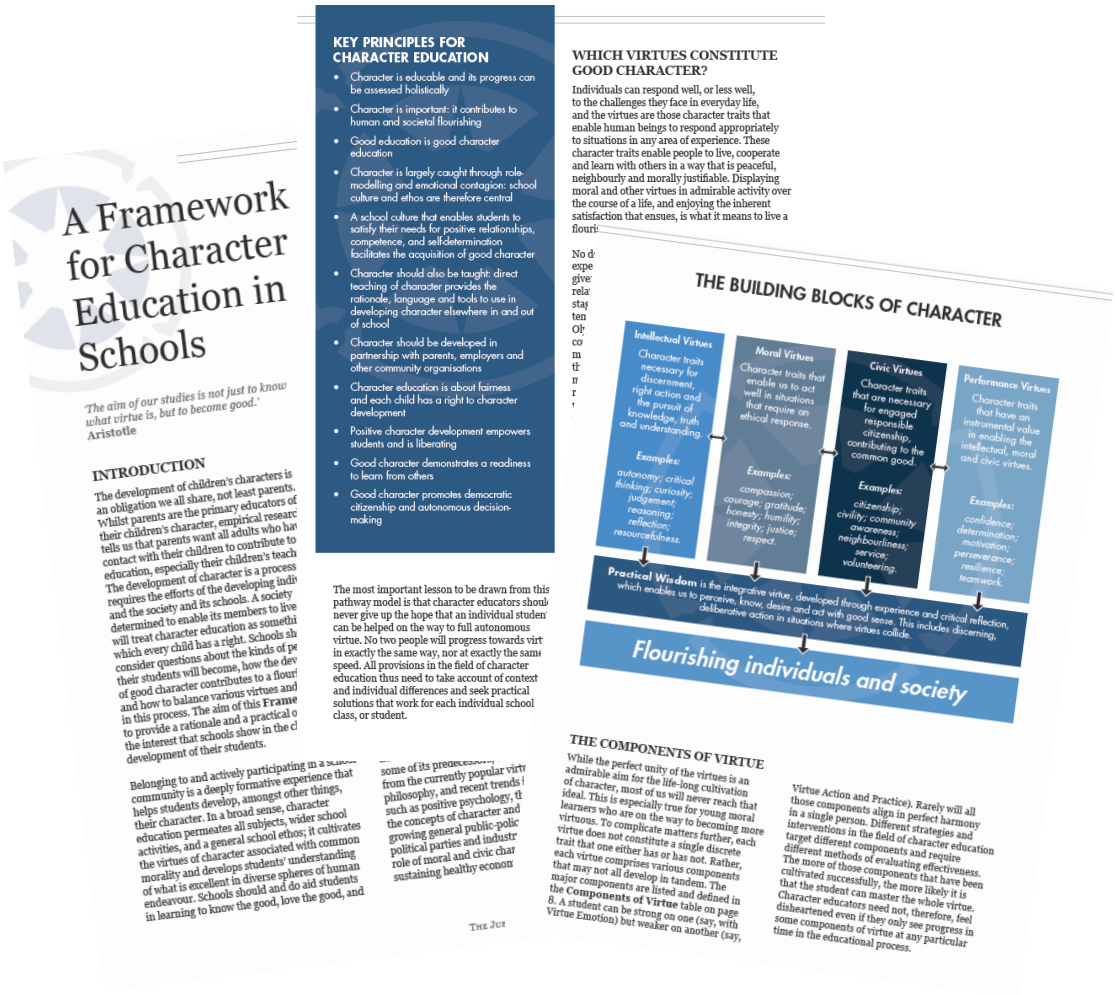
A Framework for Character Education in Schools (2017)



A Framework for Character Education in Schools

'The aim of our studies is not just to know what virtue is, but to become good.' Aristotle

INTRODUCTION

The development of children's characters is an obligation we all share, not least parents. Whilst parents are the primary educators of their children's character, empirical research tells us that parents want all adults who have contact with their children to contribute to education, especially their children's teachers. The development of character is a process that requires the efforts of the developing individual and the society and its schools. A society determined to enable its members to live well will treat character education as something which every child has a right. Schools should consider questions about the kinds of people their students will become, how the development of good character contributes to a flourishing life, and how to balance various virtues and goods in this process. The aim of this Framework is to provide a rationale and a practical guide for the interest that schools show in the character development of their students.

Belonging to and actively participating in a school community is a deeply formative experience that helps students develop, amongst other things, their character. In a broad sense, character education permeates all subjects, wider school activities, and a general school ethos; it cultivates the virtues of character associated with common morality and develops students' understanding of what is excellent in diverse spheres of human endeavour. Schools should and do aid students in learning to know the good, love the good, and

some of its predecessor from the currently popular virtu philosophy, and recent trends i such as positive psychology, th the concepts of character and growing general public-polic political parties and industr role of moral and civic char sustaining healthy economi

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KEY PRINCIPLES FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

- Character is educable and its progress can be assessed holistically
- Character is important: it contributes to human and societal flourishing
- Good education is good character education
- Character is largely caught through role-modelling and emotional contagion: school culture and ethos are therefore central
- A school culture that enables students to satisfy their needs for positive relationships, competence, and self-determination facilitates the acquisition of good character
- Character should also be taught: direct teaching of character provides the rationale, language and tools to use in developing character elsewhere in and out of school
- Character should be developed in partnership with parents, employers and other community organisations
- Character education is about fairness and each child has a right to character development
- Positive character development empowers students and is liberating
- Good character demonstrates a readiness to learn from others
- Good character promotes democratic citizenship and autonomous decision-making

The most important lesson to be drawn from this pathway model is that character educators should never give up the hope that an individual student can be helped on the way to full autonomous virtue. No two people will progress towards virtue in exactly the same way, nor at exactly the same speed. All provisions in the field of character education thus need to take account of context and individual differences and seek practical solutions that work for each individual school class, or student.

WHICH VIRTUES CONSTITUTE GOOD CHARACTER?

Individuals can respond well, or less well, to the challenges they face in everyday life, and the virtues are those character traits that enable human beings to respond appropriately to situations in any area of experience. These character traits enable people to live, cooperate and learn with others in a way that is peaceful, neighbourly and morally justifiable. Displaying moral and other virtues in admirable activity over the course of a life, and enjoying the inherent satisfaction that ensues, is what it means to live a flouri

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THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CHARACTER

Intellectual Virtues
Character traits necessary for discernment, right action and the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding.
Examples: autonomy; critical thinking; curiosity; judgement; reasoning; reflection; resourcefulness.

Moral Virtues
Character traits that enable us to act well in situations that require an ethical response.
Examples: compassion; courage; gratitude; honesty; humility; integrity; justice; respect.

Civic Virtues
Character traits that are necessary for engaged responsible citizenship, contributing to the common good.
Examples: citizenship; civility; community awareness; neighbourliness; service volunteering.

Performance Virtues
Character traits that have an instrumental value in enabling the intellectual, moral and civic virtues.
Examples: confidence; determination; motivation; perseverance; resilience; teamwork.

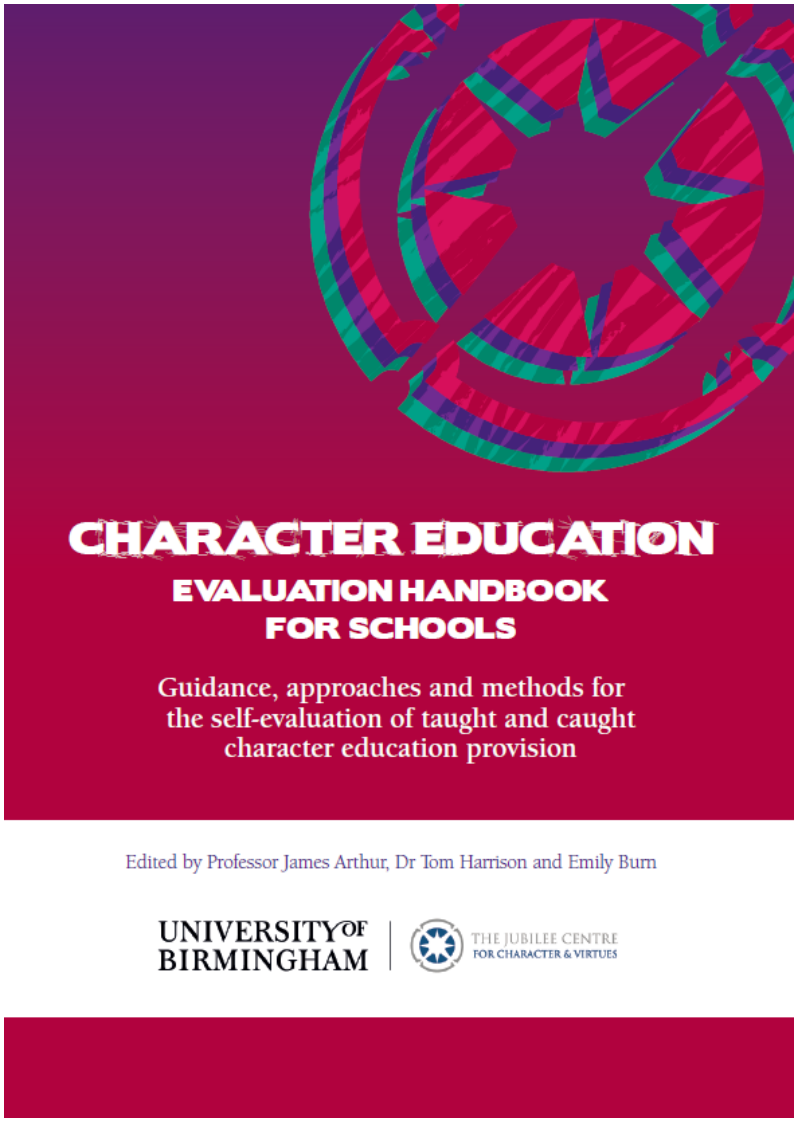
Practical Wisdom is the integrative virtue, developed through experience and critical reflection, which enables us to perceive, know, desire and act with good sense. This includes discerning, deliberative action in situations where virtues collide.

Flourishing individuals and society

THE COMPONENTS OF VIRTUE

While the perfect unity of the virtues is an admirable aim for the life-long cultivation of character, most of us will never reach that ideal. This is especially true for young moral learners who are on the way to becoming more virtuous. To complicate matters further, each virtue does not constitute a single discrete trait that one either has or has not. Rather, each virtue comprises various components that may not all develop in tandem. The major components are listed and defined in the **Components of Virtue** table on page 8. A student can be strong on one (say, with Virtue Emotion) but weaker on another (say, Virtue Action and Practice). Rarely will all those components align in perfect harmony in a single person. Different strategies and interventions in the field of character education target different components and require different methods of evaluating effectiveness. The more of those components that have been cultivated successfully, the more likely it is that the student can master the whole virtue. Character educators need not, therefore, feel disheartened even if they only see progress in some components of virtue at any particular time in the educational process.

Centre Reports:



Evaluation of CE in Schools

SECTION 1: Planning an Evaluation

SECTION 2: Character Caught: School Ethos Evaluation Framework

SECTION 3: Character Taught: Perspectives On Evaluating Curriculum Strategies and Activities

SECTION 4: Student Self-Reflection on Character and Virtue

Evaluating Character Education: Purpose and Principles

- Schools are under increasing pressure to demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions, but measuring the 'character' of an individual is extremely difficult

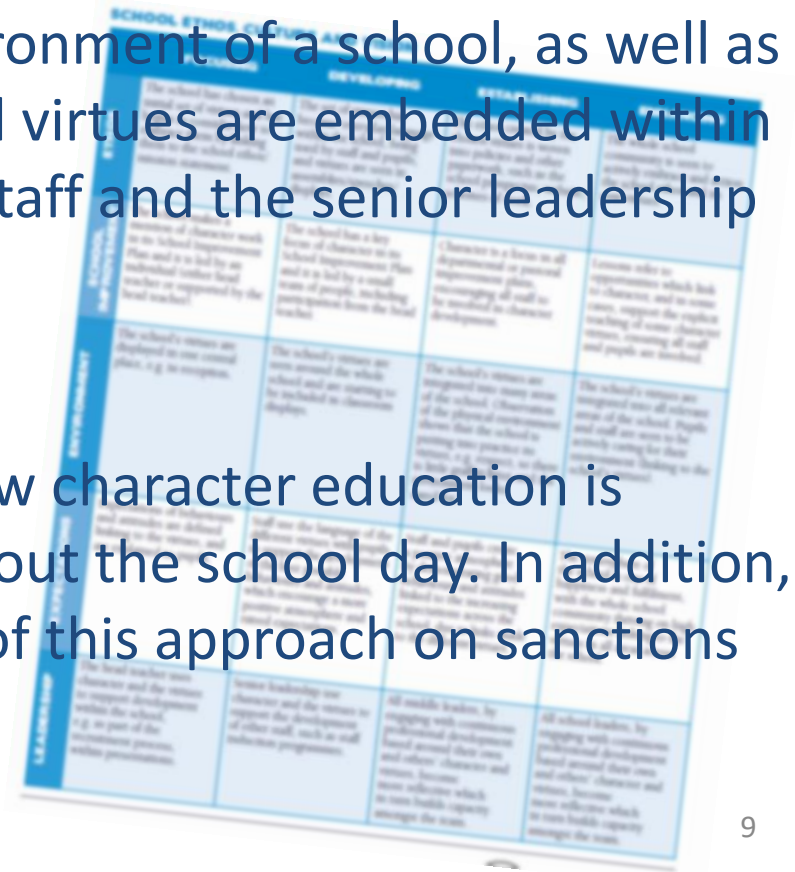
- Handbook does not use the term **'measurement'** and instead outlines how a school's character education provision should be evaluated.

- Researchers and practitioners attached to the Centre have been looking closely at the issue. The handbook contains advice, guidance and practical tools that will help school leaders and teachers consider the indicators of a successful school of character.

SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

❖ **School ethos, culture and vision**

This section focuses on 'caught' character education through emphasising the atmosphere and environment of a school, as well as how the development of character and virtues are embedded within the ***expectations*** placed on students, staff and the senior leadership team.



❖ **Curriculum**

The content of this section explains how character education is embedded within lessons and throughout the school day. In addition, this section also considers the impact of this approach on sanctions within the school.

❖ Learning outside the classroom

Opportunities to develop virtues and character through participation in extra-curricular activities, volunteering and student leadership

❖ Whole school community

This section considers how community, including: staff, governors, students and parents, understand and demonstrate virtues.

❖ Community links

The focus of this section is on the connections that schools have with external organisations and establishments
and the opportunities these present for students to develop their character.

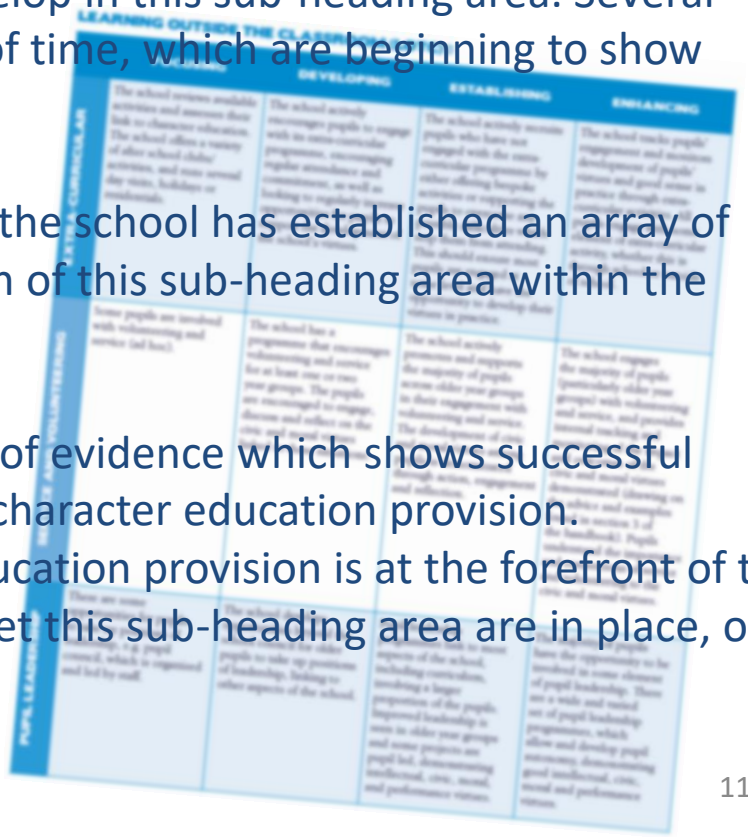
The self-evaluation framework includes four levels to direct self-assessment:

- **Focusing** - The school is beginning to focus on this sub-heading area. Action is taken to achieve this by the school but is either minimal, not successful, or in its early stages.

- **Developing** - The school is actively trying to develop in this sub-heading area. Several actions are being taken over a sustained period of time, which are beginning to show progress.

- **Establishing** - Over a designated period of time, the school has established an array of evidence which shows successful implementation of this sub-heading area within the school's character education provision.

- **Enhancing** – The school has established an array of evidence which shows successful implementation of this sub-heading area within character education provision. Improvement and enhancement of character education provision is at the forefront of the school's activity. New and innovative ways to meet this sub-heading area are in place, or are being developed in the school.



THE JUBILEE CENTRE FOR CHARACTER & VALUES

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SCHOOL ETHOS, CULTURE AND VISION

	FOCUSING	DEVELOPING	ESTABLISHING	ENHANCING
ETHOS	The school has chosen an initial set of virtues and has begun to consider how to embrace them by linking them to the school ethos/ mission statement.	The set of virtues has become 'everyday language' within the school, being used by staff and pupils, and virtues are seen in assemblies/speeches/ displays.	The ethos created by the chosen virtues is woven into policies and other paperwork, such as the school prospectus; website; schemes of work.	The whole school community is seen to actively embrace and action the school ethos and its core virtues.
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	The school makes a mention of character work in its School Improvement Plan and it is led by an individual (either head teacher or supported by the head teacher).	The school has a key focus of character in its School Improvement Plan and it is led by a small team of people, including participation from the head teacher.	Character is a focus in all departmental or pastoral improvement plans, encouraging all staff to be involved in character development.	Lessons refer to opportunities which link to character, and in some cases, support the explicit teaching of some character virtues, ensuring all staff and pupils are involved.
ENVIRONMENT	The school's virtues are displayed in one central place, e.g. in reception.	The school's virtues are seen around the whole school and are starting to be included in classroom displays.	The school's virtues are integrated into many areas of the school. Observation of the physical environment shows that the school is putting into practice its virtues, e.g. respect, so there is little graffiti/litter, and the environment looks cared for.	The school's virtues are integrated into all relevant areas of the school. Pupils and staff are seen to be actively caring for their environment (linking to the school's virtues).
EXPECTATIONS	Expectations of behaviours and attitudes are defined linking to the virtues, and are explained to pupils.	Staff use the language of the different virtues with pupils to support the development of the best possible behaviours and attitudes, which encourage a more positive atmosphere and raised expectations.	Staff and pupils create a positive atmosphere by demonstrating good behaviours and attitudes linked to the increasing expectations across the school, due to links made to the different virtues.	The atmosphere of the school is one of happiness and fulfilment, with the whole school community thriving on high expectations linking to the virtues in all areas across the school.
LEADERSHIP	The head teacher uses character and the virtues to support development within the school, e.g. as part of the recruitment process, within presentations.	Senior leadership use character and the virtues to support the development of other staff, such as staff induction programmes.	All middle leaders, by engaging with continuous professional development based around their own and others' character and virtues, become more reflective which in turn builds capacity amongst the team.	All school leaders, by engaging with continuous professional development based around their own and others' character and virtues, become more reflective which in turn builds capacity amongst the team.

SCHOOL ETHOS, CULTURE AND VISION

	REFERENCES TO:	TEACHING STANDARDS	OFSTED	DfE
ETHOS	Why were your initial chosen virtues chosen? Who was involved in the process? How will your virtues support your ethos? What would your "ideal" school look like? Examples of evidence could be: Mission statement, list of virtues, photographs of displays, assembly plans, website, schemes of work, school prospectus, policies, pupil and staff voice, lesson observations, learning walks, visitor feedback.	**Part1** 2a 5bc 7abd 8a **Part2** 2	OE 125 **L&M** 138	2a 3a 10b 12a
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	Is your character initiative seen to be embraced and led by the head teacher? How many people are involved in driving the initiative? Have they enough capacity? How are the rest of the staff and pupils involved? How many? How often? Examples of evidence could be: School Improvement Plan, Department Improvement Plan or Pastoral Improvement Plan, agendas and minutes, schemes of work and lesson plans.	**Part1** 2ab 3ab 4a-e 5a-d 6a-c 7a-d 8a-c	**L&M** 138 **OoP** 170	2c 3a 4b 10b
ENVIRONMENT	Is your school ethos obvious to visitors? Where do you see your character ethos as you walk around the school, for example: ✶ displays - do they have links to different virtues? ✶ behaviour - do pupils demonstrate good behaviour/manners? ✶ physical environment – does it look cared for/respected - any litter or graffiti? Examples of evidence could be: Photographs of displays, pupil and staff voice, visitor feedback, learning walks, character mentioned in the maintenance budget.	**Part1** 1ac 5c 7abd 8a	**L&M** 138 **PD** 165	12a
EXPECTATIONS	What are your ultimate goals in terms of behaviour and attitude? What are your non-negotiables? What are the challenges you are facing in reaching your ultimate goals? Examples of evidence could be: Observation of behaviour and attitude in lessons and around the whole school, behaviour incident forms, staff and pupil voice, academic results, numbers of awards and successes (physical education, drama, extra-curricular, Duke of Edinburgh award scheme), attendance, totals of rewards and sanctions, including analysis of these – fluctuations/decrease/increase, are people smiling?	**Part1** 1bc 2a 4a-c 5a-d 6a-c 7a-d 8a **Part2** 2	**L&M** 138 **QoT** 152 **PD** 164 165 **Eff 16-19** 197	3a 4b 10b 12a
LEADERSHIP	How does the character programme link to the development of leadership within the school? Is this in more than one area? Is it part of meetings, middle or senior leadership training, new staff induction, continuous professional development programmes? Examples of evidence could be: Continuous professional development or other training/induction programmes, questions from interviews, staff voice, outcomes from research or continuous professional development.	**Part1** 2ad 3ab 5a-d 6a-c 7ab 8abd	**L&M** 138 141	1ad 2a 3a 10b

Purposes of evaluation:

- Evaluating how a whole school's culture and ethos contributes to character education (Section 2)
- Evaluating the effectiveness of a character education strategy, activity or approach (Section 3)
- Self Reflection on character by students (Section 4). Promotes self-knowledge and virtue knowledge

Giving Good Feedback for Reflection

How can we create the conditions for open, and constructive feedback in educational settings?

- *Value and virtue of intellectual humility (IH)*
- *Importance of character strengths for learning (Tough, 2012; Seider, 2012) IH, GRIT*
- *Character Education (JCCV)*
- *Growth*
- *IH as important virtue to cultivate for both giving and receiving effective feedback*

Intellectual humility

- Intellectual virtue (see Baehr, 2012; Roberts & Wood, 2003)
- IH: 'Acknowledging the partial nature of one's understanding and valuing others' intellectual contributions' (Porter et al., 2016)
- Fosters continued educational engagement
- One *source* of intellectual humility could be promoting growth mind-set (Dweck, 2006)

Growth mind-set and fixed mind-set

- Beliefs about the source of intelligence –
  - Fixed mind-set (success determined by set level of intelligence)
  - Growth mind-set (success through hard work and persistence)
- Individuals' reaction to failure/obstacles (c.f. learned helplessness)
  - Failure passes a sentence on ability
  - Failure is an *opportunity* to learn

‘In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb.

In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it.’

(Carol Dweck, Interview, 19 June 2012)

How to praise...

Implicit theories of intelligence influenced by praise:

'You did really well. You're really clever!' (FM)
'You did really well. You worked very hard.' (GM)

Meta-cognitive strategy of thinking about learning itself – embrace challenge and effort
In FM intelligence is outside our control

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success (2006) Carol Dweck

Consequences of types of praise

N= 400. After a simple puzzle half participants were told:
'Wow, you must be really smart!' or 'Wow, you must be hard working!'
(six words each)

Participants were then given a choice of a hard or easy test

Two-thirds of the students praised for intelligence chose the easy task
90% of the effort-praised group chose the tough test

Students were given a test of equal difficulty to the first test
The group praised for intelligence showed a 20% decline in performance.
The effort-praised group increased their score by 30%

‘People who believe in the power of talent tend not to fulfil their potential because they’re so concerned with looking smart and not making mistakes.

But people who believe that talent can be developed are the ones who really push, stretch, confront their own mistakes and learn from them.’

(Carol Dweck, NY Times, July 6, 2008)

- Excellence does not come from our genetic inheritance
- All human excellences (virtues) can be taught, they are **NOT** innate.

Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and intervention, *Child Development*, 78, 246 -263

Blackwell, Trzesniewski & Dweck report a study in which

- An eight-week intervention taught some students study skills and how they could ***learn*** to be smart
- It described the ***brain as a muscle*** that became stronger the more it was used
- A control group learned study skills but were ***not*** taught this theory of intelligence
- In 2 months students from the experimental group showed marked improvement in grades and study habits
- 'Blind' teachers identified students who had shown positive changes and selected students in the growth mindset group

See also Paunesku et al, 2015 (2 x 45 minutes online sessions)

Mindset affects all our lives…

- In school/university
- At work
- On the playing fields - sports
- Personal relationships

Grade of ‘not yet’ instead of ‘fail’
Growth mind-set is a great leveller
Fixed mind-sets can offer a ‘cop-out’

Intellectual Humility (IH) (Porter, Schumann, Dweck & Damon, 2016)

- Intellectual humility associated with stronger learning goals (e.g. developing and acquiring skills). High IH scorers were significantly ***less*** motivated to look more intelligent than peers.
- Some evidence that IH correlated with higher maths grades – IH affects actual **performance**
- The virtue of intellectual humility could be sustained by GM: Participants temporarily induced into growth mind-set showed higher IH scores, demonstrated greater respect and were more open to learning from a fictional disagreement than were those induced into a fixed mind-set

Intellectual humility can be cultivated

- All virtues (including IH) can be taught
- Excellences (virtues) are *not* innate
- Virtues can be ***taught explicitly***
- *Importance of having a growth mind-set about cultivating virtues like IH*

- In terms of ***character***, it is important for educational institutions to foster the virtue of IH (accepting one's partial understanding and **welcoming** others' contributions to expand knowledge)
- When learners feel 'judged' by feedback, a vicious cycle may begin which often results in defensiveness, alienation and a breakdown in communication
- Fostering **growth mindset,** which embraces challenges may be a **source of IH**

Flourishing Feedback…

- A key benefit of creating the right conditions for constructive feedback is **improved performance** – people do better when they are less afraid of making mistakes they fear will be negatively judged by educators.

- Another important outcome is that in creating these conditions, **educators model important virtues like civility and respect that their students learn to emulate**.

- Creating the right conditions for giving and receiving feedback can **help develop virtues like intellectual humility, respect, civility, love of learning and persistence**.

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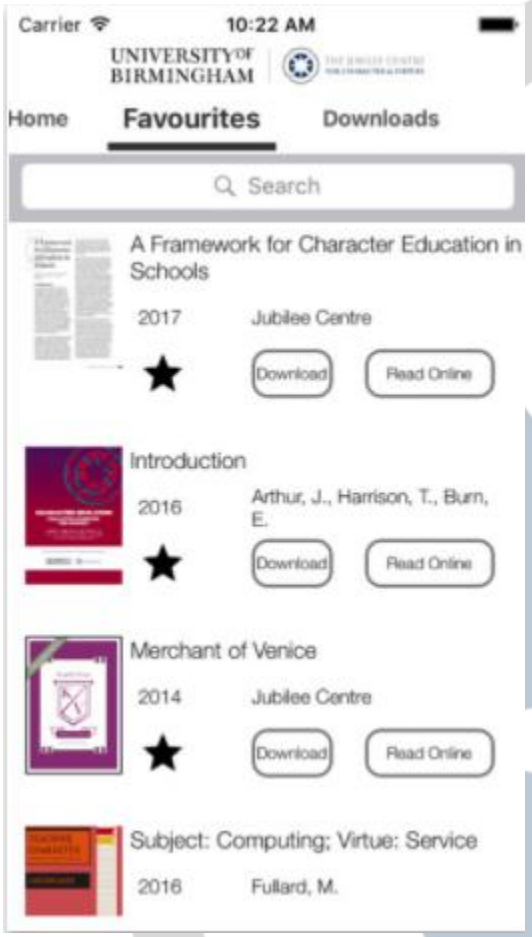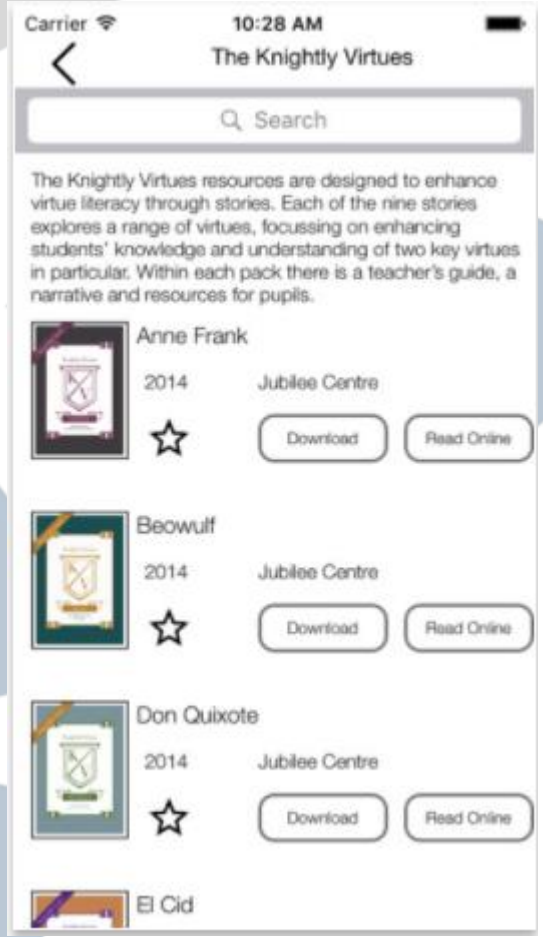
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