

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



THE JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

Professor James Arthur
Director



- [87% of parents](#) felt that schools should focus on character development and academic study, not simply academic study alone (2013)
- [95% of parents](#) felt that it is possible to teach a child values and shape their character in a positive sense, through lessons and dedicated projects or exercises at school (2013)
- [Parents and teachers](#) both prioritise character development of children ahead of attainment, but thinks that the other prioritises the opposite (2018)



- 98% of teachers believe that 'character education' should be delivered in some form or another (2018)
- 80% of teachers believe it's all of society's role to develop character in young people (2018)
- 85% of the UK public agreed that schools should have a role in promoting character development (2019)

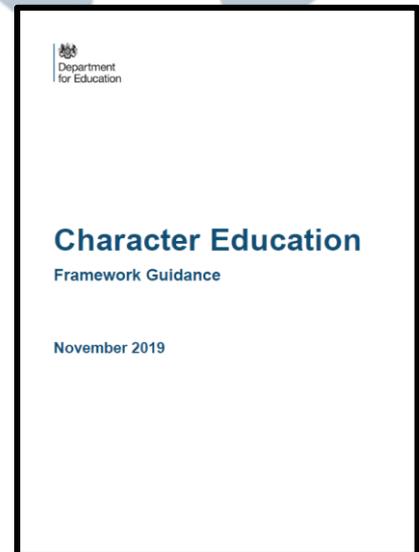


- In UK society 63% of people reported seeing a decline in public virtue (2017)
- 80% of MPs from each of the three main parties agree that developing a sense of moral values is as important for school children as good examination results (2014)
- 70% of MPs agree that character education should be taught in schools (2015)

Why Character Education?

Public agreement

The Department for Education's
*Character Education
Framework Guidance* (2019)



Why Character Education?

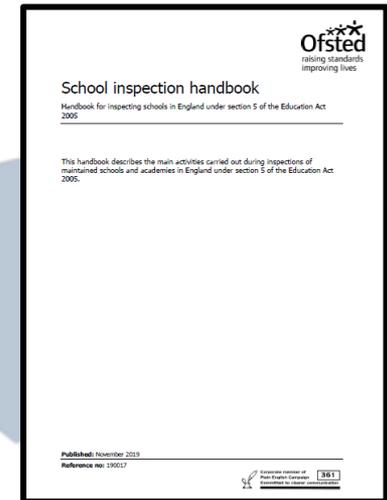
The Ofsted *School Inspection Handbook* (2019)

Personal Development

‘Developing pupils’ character, which we define as a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives pupils the qualities they need to flourish in our society’ p.58

Outstanding Personal Development

‘The way the school goes about developing pupils’ character is exemplary and is worthy of being shared with others’ p. 62





Aims of Education

It is about the formation of persons and the formation of communities, societies and our shared world. It aims to form and develop individuals with the knowledge, capabilities and character to live good lives – that is lives committed to the good for humankind.



Aims of Education

Education should aim to form people so they
can live well in a world worth living in



Jubilee Centre Aims

- The culture and practices of the school are formative. Virtue formation happens slowly and requires intentional practice. Virtue is something we practice and improve on.
- Experiences in school can be the catalyst for the development of virtue. These experiences offer opportunities to practise good discernment and virtue. Thoughtful attention to experience and the practice of discernment tends to lead to good decisions and living well.



Aristotle notes that young people are mostly poor learners when it comes to practical wisdom as they lack the experience required to discern well. As such, teachers need to engage students in a variety of virtue-forming practices—reflection and deliberation—in order to develop the cognitive skills and affective qualities characteristic of practical wisdom.

Flourishing in Catholic Terms

Since flourishing entails a virtuous life, it cannot be divorced from the community in which we are part. We are not only rational and ethical beings; we are also social and political beings. Solitary or individualistic approaches to ethical thinking lack elements essential to the *telos*. After all, the Church says that love (charity) is the virtue that motivates all the other virtues. We only flourish as individuals in relationship, and therefore the *telos* includes both individual and societal dimensions. The *telos* is consequently to be found in common projects, shared activities, intimate relationships. It includes love of friends, as these relationships have intrinsic worth without denying individuality. The possibility of realising oneself as a person depends on participation in the communal life of the community of which one is a member. Relationships contribute to the common good, and our individual good is dependent on the common good. The consequences of our moral actions are important for self and society.