



THE  
JUBILEE CENTRE  
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

# THE GOOD TEACHER

## UNDERSTANDING VIRTUES IN PRACTICE

RESEARCH REPORT

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The University of Birmingham is a top ranking British University. Founded in 1900, it was England's first civic University and was ranked University of the Year 2013–14 by the Times and the Sunday Times.



The original Department of Education was founded in 1894 and became the School of Education in 1947. Ranked in the top 50 Schools of Education in the world today, it has a long-standing reputation as a centre of excellence for teaching and research in a wide range of areas of educational practice and policy, with fields of expertise including disability, inclusion and special needs, education and social justice, and professional education.

## Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is a unique and leading centre for the examination of how character and virtues impact on individuals and society. The Centre was founded in 2012 by Professor James Arthur. Based at the University of Birmingham, it has a dedicated team of 30 academics from a range of disciplines: philosophy, psychology, education, theology and sociology.

With its focus on excellence, the Centre has a robust and rigorous research and evidence-based approach that is objective and non-political. It offers world-class research on the importance of developing good character and virtues and the benefits they bring to individuals and society. In undertaking its own innovative research, the Centre also seeks to partner with leading academics from other universities around the world and to develop strong strategic partnerships.

A key conviction underlying the existence of the Centre is that the virtues that make up good character can be learnt and taught. We believe these have largely been neglected in schools and in the professions. The Centre also holds a key conviction that the more people exhibit good character and virtues, the healthier our society will be. As such, the Centre undertakes development projects seeking to promote the practical applications of its research evidence.

This report was launched by The Rt Hon. the Baroness Morris of Yardley on the 27 February 2015 at the City of Birmingham Council House.



# The Good Teacher

## Understanding Virtues in Practice

### Research Report

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‘THOSE WHO EDUCATE CHILDREN WELL ARE MORE TO BE HONORED THAN THEY WHO PRODUCE THEM; FOR THESE ONLY GAVE THEM LIFE, THOSE THE ART OF LIVING WELL.’

Aristotle

# Foreword

## Professor William Damon

This important report is at the leading edge of an international movement to reinvigorate teaching with a stronger focus on students' moral and character development. This movement is widespread but still emerging and unformed. The report's revealing empirical findings and astute recommendations will energise efforts to pay greater attention to character in the classroom, and it will help shape such efforts in fruitful directions.

There is nothing new about teaching with an eye to student virtue: indeed, such a focus is as old as the activity of good teaching itself. But there is something distinctly non-modern about directly aiming to teach virtue in the classroom. For much of the 20th Century (and the 21st too, at least until very recently), there has been an escalating emphasis on student's most elementary academic skills, to the exclusion of moral, civic, aesthetic, and any other kind of developmental capacity that cannot be gauged by standardised texts. Although not quite universal (exceptions can be found among schools with enlightened leadership), such an emphasis has been endorsed by policy makers worldwide. This emphasis has led to a narrowing of the school curriculum and to a removal of moral authority from the role of teacher. It is a radical departure from prior views of teaching, which saw the mission of education as broad enough to include everything about the child that is essential for success and social responsibility in life and citizenship.

Now the tide is starting to turn, cycling back to education's earlier and wiser concern for the whole child. Historical cycles occur for multiple reasons, and this one is no exception. First, the single-minded focus on basic academic skills has never been successful in achieving even the limited goal of improving such skills, for the obvious reason that it ignores essential prerequisites for learning, such as student motivation and self-discipline. When new scientific studies showed that, for example, self-discipline predicts even academic success (not to mention personal well-being) better than cognitive indicators, educators were forced to reconsider their neglect of so-called 'non-cognitive' factors such as character strengths. A 2011 best-selling book called *How Children Succeed* brought this point to a broad public audience. As a result, the term

'character' has suddenly appeared in the sights of powerful education policy makers.

As this report correctly notes, character strengths that enable academic performance (such as self-control, grit, zest, and so on) are only part of the character picture. Also necessary for the educator's portfolio are character strengths that enable good moral conduct – that is, moral virtues such as truthfulness, fair-mindedness, compassion, pro-social purpose, and respectfulness. This report is correct in suggesting that this moral dimension is often missing in recent discussions around the place of character in schooling.

But the public at large has not left student morality out of its concerns. If anything, public anxiety about student misbehaviour is at a peak, spurred by distressing stories of youth rowdiness, school cheating scandals, reports of frequent sexual harassment and assault, and a general sense that self-absorption is replacing civic virtue as a standard of conduct for many students. This may be a second reason for the recent cyclical turn: adults are demanding more from schools than simply students who can read, do numbers, and recite facts, as important as such academic skills are.

This report's recommendation that 'teacher education should focus on developing the moral agency of teachers, resisting the tendency to adhere to a reductive, formulaic model of teaching' is, I believe, the soundest answer to the legitimate concerns of today's policy makers and parents. If acted upon, this recommendation would dramatically alter the priorities of many teacher education programs, in a way that would prove most beneficial for the students who are taught by the teachers that such programs train. Such a priority would advance both the agenda of preparing students for success (an agenda widely pursued, but often failed) and the agenda of preparing students for responsible citizenship (an agenda that has been shunted to the margins in recent times). The additional value of this report is that it provides solid information about how to orient teacher education programs towards moral and character priorities, based on virtues that teachers themselves believe are crucial for both themselves and their students.

Teachers who are prepared to be moral and character educators also will be in a position to resist another modern education misdirection: the removal of moral authority from the role of teacher. As school systems become increasingly complex and bureaucratic, they proliferate rules for dealing with classroom matters of every sort, including matters of discipline and assessment. Such a proliferation of rules is exacerbated by a tendency towards litigiousness among many of today's students and parents: in the United States, for example, there are pending lawsuits over disciplinary or assessment decisions in every school district in the country. This places schools in a defensive posture that makes them try to avoid problems by substituting rote rules for teachers' individual judgments. The result of such over-regulation is an abdication of moral responsibility on the part of the school and lack of respect for teacher authority on the part of the student – both of which weaken the climate for teaching virtue.

When a student cheats on a test, or hurls a racial epithet at another student, or shows disrespect for standards of common decency, a teacher should feel prepared – and authorised – to provide an immediate disciplinary response fitting to the occasion. No rule book can provide the right (and most educative) responses for the enormous range of such occasions that every teacher encounters weekly, if not daily. Preparing teachers to deal well with matters of student character will greatly increase the likelihood that school systems will authorise them to exercise their best judgment, rather than attempting to regulate away the developmental problems that students bring to school. In this, and many other ways, the recommendations in this report are prescient in their capacity to address the character development needs of students and the moral atmosphere of the schools where teachers do their all-important work.

**Professor William Damon**  
Stanford University

# Executive Summary

There is a growing consensus in Britain that virtues such as honesty, self-control, fairness, gratitude and respect, which contribute to good moral character, are part of the solution to many of the challenges facing society today.

Schools and businesses increasingly understand the need for their organisations, pupils and employees to follow moral principles based on such virtues. Research suggests that children live and learn better when they are able to apply moral virtues, such as honesty, kindness and gratitude, and businesses operate better when demonstrating moral integrity. However, until recently, the materials required to deliver this ambition have been missing in Britain.

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, which forms part of the University of Birmingham, aims to help solve this challenge. As a world-leader in rigorous academic research into character education, the Centre operates on the basis that teaching good moral character is possible and practicable. The Jubilee Centre works in partnership with schools and professional bodies on projects that promote and strengthen good moral character within the contexts of family, schools, communities and the wider employment scene.

School teachers play a critical role in the formation of young people, shaping the moral character of their students. The best teachers exemplify a set of virtues which they demonstrate through personal example. Yet, in Great Britain, little attention has been paid to character in teaching, and specifically, to the moral virtues that teachers are required to adopt and introduce into the classroom.

This report sets out new Jubilee Centre research, focusing on the virtues that the good teacher might need and the role those virtues play in teaching.

Drawing upon empirical data from an interview and questionnaire based study of 546 novice and experienced teachers and their educators, the research sets out to specifically explore:

- The most important character strengths, or virtues, needed for good teaching.

- The reported character strengths, or virtues, held by today's teachers.
- The ways in which character strengths, or virtues, influence teaching in practice.
- The ways in which regulatory and organisational structures facilitate good teaching.
- The ways in which initial and continued professional education contribute to the further development of good teaching.

## KEY FINDINGS

The Jubilee Centre's research found that moral ethics have always played a central role in good education and practice:

- In interview scenarios, a large number of teachers agreed that developing character can have a positive impact on learning. They saw character education as integral to their teaching.
- Teachers confirmed in these interviews that they frequently draw upon virtue-based reasoning in the classroom, especially in areas of moral or practical significance.
- A large number of teachers also had high expectations of the difference they can make with the children they teach.
- There is also widespread agreement on the personal qualities that are needed to be a good teacher. The majority of teachers surveyed saw fairness (78%), creativity (68%), a love of learning (61%), humour (53%), perseverance (45%) and leadership (40%) as the six most important character strengths for good teachers. However, in describing their own character strengths they reported kindness (49%) and honesty (50%) in place of leadership and perseverance in those top six.

However, the Centre's research also reveals that the pressure surrounding the modern education system is creating more moral challenges for teachers:

- Teachers reported that they are not always given the time in the workplace to reflect on the best way to practice moral virtues. They confirmed that this is largely due to increasing workloads, a very prescriptive education system and a narrow focus on academic success.

- 37% of experienced teachers claimed that they do not feel that they have sufficient time to do their job to a standard they believe is right.

Furthermore, the research shows that while the majority of teachers can confidently apply moral virtues when making professional decisions, there are still some situations where this is challenging. This is evidenced by the Centre's findings relating to specific moral dilemmas:

- Teachers were asked to respond to a dilemma in which they had to choose between maintaining confidentiality at a Parents' Evening or sharing other parents' concerns over distractions posed by a child. 13% of teachers said that they would choose to share information with parents about another pupil.
- Teachers were also asked to respond to a dilemma in which they regularly overheard a colleague making derogatory remarks about a class and commenting that (s)he did not bother preparing properly for their lessons because (s)he did not think the class was worth it. 15% of participating teachers stated that they would not report that colleague.

The Jubilee Centre's research suggests that any weak links in the system may be caused by oversights in the current curriculum for teachers:

- Teacher educators stated that teacher training programmes spend very little time reflecting on the teaching of moral virtues. When interviewed for this report, the majority indicated that personality traits, such as self-confidence, and performance-related traits, such as resilience, are prioritised above moral virtues, such as fairness and honesty, when recruiting candidates for courses.
- Furthermore, teachers interviewed about training courses for this report appeared to be more concerned with learning practical skills and meeting the Teachers' Standards than they were with learning about moral virtues in teaching.



‘PROTECTING GOOD WORK, AND THE PRACTICAL WISDOM TO DO IT, MEANS RECOGNISING THE MANY PLACES IT FLOURISHES UNATTENDED AND FINDING WAYS TO PROTECT IT FROM THE TIME PRESSURES, THE RULES, AND THE EXTERNAL INCENTIVES THAT THREATEN TO PUSH IT OUT.’

**Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this research, the Jubilee Centre's report is recommending a review of ethics education within the teaching profession, and is calling for more time to be given to the teaching of moral virtues within teacher education courses and the teaching workplace.

This report specifically recommends that:

- Initial teacher education includes some focus on the development of the moral agency of teachers.
- Training for teachers should include academic input concerning the integral role of moral virtues in teaching.
- Greater recognition of the moral importance of mentoring in teaching is needed.
- An emphasis on moral character is needed throughout a teacher's career, and needs to be reflected in CPD programmes, to ensure that the early enthusiasm of teachers wanting to make a difference is sustained.
- Policy makers, school management and governors need to pay proper attention to issues of character in their practice, and ensure that priority is given to this in future planning.

# 1 Purpose of the Report

Teaching is, arguably, a 'self-giving' enterprise concerned with the positive growth, or good, of students. Intentionally or not, teachers shape the character of their students, and the best school teachers exemplify a set of virtues which they demonstrate through personal example. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues thus assumes that virtues form an integral part of teaching, reflected in what is taught and in how teachers teach and relate to students.

This report describes research focusing on virtues and character in teaching, by which we mean the kind of personal qualities professional teachers need to facilitate learning and overall flourishing in young people that goes beyond preparing them for a life of tests. The 'good' teacher is someone who, alongside excellent subject knowledge and technical expertise, cares about students, upholds principles of honesty and integrity both towards knowledge and student-teacher relationships, and who does good work (Campbell, 2011, 2013; Sockett, 2012; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon, 2001; Damon and Colby, 2014). In the Framework for Character Education (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2013), we considered the character of teachers to be a crucial ingredient in the development of flourishing children. This new report describes research that examined how teachers thought about, and drew upon, character strengths and virtues in their daily professional lives.

The character strengths and virtues that contribute to the professional lives of teachers comprise complex sets of beliefs considered appropriate for teachers to hold, and actions through which those beliefs are communicated to students. We were interested in how good teachers develop, personally and professionally,

and how their attitudes and practices change as their education and training progresses. We recognise that teachers work within both regulatory and organisational structures, and part of our enquiry was designed to understand how these enhance or limit the space that teachers have to develop their practice in ways that promote their own flourishing and that of their students. As such, we worked with entrants to initial training, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) about to enter their profession, and those who had been in practice for five years or more. Our initial aim was to examine:

- What are the important character strengths, or virtues, needed for good teaching?
- What are the reported character strengths, or virtues, held by today's teachers?
- How do character strengths, or virtues, influence teaching in practice?
- How do regulatory and organisational structures facilitate good teaching?
- How might initial and continued professional education contribute to the further development of good teaching?

We investigated how teachers reported their character strengths, how these might play out in practice and what other contributory factors might compete to influence virtues in teaching. Our research design incorporated not only the use of self-reporting measures of personal and professional character, but also ethical dilemmas, workplace or training context questions and extensive interviews with teachers at different stages of their careers. Ethical dilemmas, used as a research tool to advance a deeper understanding of moral functioning, are applied in teaching much less than in other professions such as medicine and law, where they are often used as both initial assessment and continued teaching tools.

Hence, the process to develop dilemmas relevant to the virtuous practice of teaching was seen as a major milestone for the project. This study was situated within Great Britain, where little attention has traditionally been paid to the role of virtues in teaching, compared with the USA and elsewhere. This report describes the research conducted and makes recommendations for future practice based upon the research evidence.

We draw upon 546 questionnaires and 95 interviews completed by Student Teachers, NQTs and Experienced Teachers in a variety of geographical, educational and professional settings in Great Britain, and at differing stages of their careers. The report describes the background context to the study, the methodology adopted, and presents the findings from the research, before discussing those findings in the light of the context described. It identifies key recommendations for policy makers, teacher educators, and schools seeking to enhance the place of character in education. There is a dearth of research in Great Britain that specifically focuses on teachers' readiness for developing character or virtue in their students. Moreover, much of the existing research elsewhere has focused on teachers' beliefs at particular stages of their careers, rather than comparisons between stages (Barrett *et al.*, 2012). We see this research as contributing to the vital work that school teachers do every day in supporting and guiding children and young people to become moral, engaged and intelligent members of an increasingly complex and challenging society, and we hope that it will encourage others to enter into this important debate.

**'IN THE CLASSROOM WITH AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRESENCE, THE FOCUS FOR THE MORAL TEACHER MUST BE ON THE MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES BEING EDUCATED, NOT ON THE CONTENT PERFORMANCES DEMANDED BY THE DEFAULT CURRICULUM.'**

**Hugh Sockett**

## 2 Background

The *Good Teacher* research arose from the conviction that insufficient attention is currently paid to the personal character strengths that are needed to sustain good teaching and to enable the teaching of good character in students. What makes a good teacher, beyond technical competence, and how universities and schools might prepare and support teachers for such work, is therefore a pressing question.

### 2.1 PROFESSIONAL CONTEXTS

#### 2.1.1 Professional Practice in Education

There are a number of reasons why research on ethical practice in teaching is timely and necessary. Teaching has long held an ambiguous position in the league table of professions, often struggling to assert its specialist credentials or attract the status and rewards that other professions enjoy. However, it shares, along with its apparently more prestigious cousins (such as medicine and law), challenges to practice that require not just evolving formal governance arrangements, but development of the good characters of the individuals who comprise such ‘*people professions*’ (Bondi *et al.*, 2011). These shared challenges include:

- the rise of consumer power and principles of *choice*;
- an increase in shared knowledge through new technologies; and
- reduced deference to, and respect for, professionals as a result of public scandals.

There are also distinctive features of teaching that many other professions do not share: the vulnerability of the recipients of the service, the legal requirement of such recipients to ‘receive’ the service; and the nature of teaching itself, requiring as it does constant deliberation on ethical issues. However, at the heart of any debate on teaching lies the fundamental questions of what it means to educate, what the aims of education are and therefore what the fundamental role of the teacher is. Traditionally in Great Britain, education has been viewed as incorporating concern for the moral, ethical and social development of the

child (Arthur, 2003), a concern that dates as far back as the ancient Greeks. In more recent years, such focus has arguably shifted with an increasing emphasis on more measurable ‘outputs’ such as academic achievement, notably within discrete subject disciplines. This has largely been driven by a more instrumental approach to education that conceives the purposes of education in economic and utilitarian terms, particularly set within the demands of a global workforce and international competition. Yet there is, once again, growing recognition that, in an unpredictable world, young people need more than subject knowledge or employability skills; they also need to be able to connect with and participate in society in ways that promote their own, and others’ well-being – or in Aristotelian terms, flourishing. This is, arguably, what it means to be truly educated.

Who has the responsibility to contribute to the education of young people? Ultimately, the responsibility lies closest to home – the parents (or legal substitutes) are both the first and the most consistent source of moral and ethical guidance, from whom the norms are learnt. Yet teachers share this responsibility for a number of reasons. First, their job is to educate, and, as we have argued, education incorporates concern with moral and ethical development. Second, they are inevitably influential as role models because of the relationship they hold with their students. Third, young people spend a great deal of their formative years in schools with teachers, and often encounter formal ‘society’ first through school. The role of the teacher is, therefore, to be concerned with not just knowledge inculcation, but personal and moral development. Seeing teachers in this way offers a crucial justification for regarding teaching as a profession, rather than a craft, or skill:

When teachers are viewed as practitioners of an ethic then they may be described appropriately as members of a *profession*. But when their activity is viewed as a kind of technology then their status may simply be reduced to that of the technician (Elliott, 1989: 9).

We do, of course, recognise that teachers need good skills and practical competence in the classroom and beyond, and that these skills are in part taught and in part learnt through experience and good mentoring. We also recognise that teachers need secure and strong subject knowledge, together with a desire to share and inspire others with that knowledge. However, we think there is more to say about the ‘good’ teacher, and although some of those additional qualities may relate to non-moral personality skills – having enthusiasm, self-confidence and a helpful blend of Big-Five personality traits – there is something more at stake. This is often called *character*; the ability to do the right thing in the right way for the right reasons, guided by practical wisdom (Schwartz and Sharpe, 2010; Cooke and Carr, 2014). How teachers acquire and sustain character is a key question that informs our research.

There is widespread agreement in the literature that Initial Teacher Education (ITE), in the UK and abroad, has changed in line with changing conceptions of education (Ryan and Bohlin, 1999). The focus has shifted to a technical and rationalist approach, concentrating on ‘what works’ in the classroom rather than on broader, philosophical underpinnings of educational theory. For example, philosophy and sociology of education feature much less frequently in ITE, if at all (Sanger and Osguthorpe, 2011). Student teachers are taught techniques of classroom management and are then observed and judged on their ability to implement those techniques. Where students are taught theory, it often focuses more upon the cognitive development of the child, rather than broader considerations of educational and moral purpose, sociological understandings or deeper professional insights (Furlong *et al.*, 2000). This has led some theorists to argue that teachers lack mastery of the ‘moral language’ of the classroom (Soccket and LePage, 2002; Campbell, 2008), and that teachers report confusion about their role as moral educators (Mahoney, 2009; Cummings, Harlow and Maddux, 2007). This in turn may lead new teachers to focus on the technical



aspects of teaching practice, seeing the moral development of the child falling beyond their remit.

### 2.1.2 Education in a Policy Context

The shift in emphasis outlined above has been accompanied by a series of policy developments, in Great Britain and elsewhere, that impact on understandings of good teaching. Concerns over standards in education have led to a succession of initiatives that, taken together, show a trend towards standardisation, formal accountability and control. For example, the introduction of the National Curriculum in England and Wales in 1988 established national frameworks within which teachers are expected to teach. The emphasis on parental choice in schooling set in motion a series of measures designed to provide parents and the public with information about the academic performance of children in schools, including most notably Standard Assessments Tests, from which league tables were compiled. This trend has led to increasing attention on the measurable, academic attainment of children and a narrowing of the historic focus in education on the development of the character of the child.

Schools face a further layer of accountability through increased inspection. In England, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED), makes judgements about schools against the Inspection Framework, and reports are publically available. These include judgements about individual teachers' lessons that form part of the analysis of teachers' overall performance. The emphasis OFSTED places upon different aspects of provision shapes the priorities of the individual teacher and the school. These initiatives may be focused on improving practice, but the dominant discourse has been around tests, performance and accountability (Ball, 2003). Such policy priorities – in conjunction with other historical trends discussed earlier in this report – have led to a more instrumental approach to evaluating 'good' teaching and, consequently, as already mentioned, to an emphasis on teaching as a morally neutral, technical exercise, requiring skills of behavioural and classroom management, specific subject knowledge and demonstrable performance indicators. There is less confidence in the professional ethical judgement of the teacher, and teachers experience disjuncture between their working environment and their own moral and personal motivations (Sanger, 2012).

There is a danger that having an apparently robust framework of accountability undermines the need to pay proper attention to the moral integrity of those acting in the profession's name. In this report we assume that teaching is an inherently moral enterprise and that people and their *character* matter. No amount of rules, regulations and codes of conduct can prevent dishonourable professionals from acting dishonourably, nor ensure that people act with integrity and wisdom.

### 2.1.3 Sustaining Good Teaching

Being a teacher is challenging. It is a role that requires stamina, commitment and constant professional development, and yet research suggests that it is the ethical aspects of teaching which keep teachers committed to their work (Belogolovsky and Somech, 2010). Attrition amongst teachers in England is high: 27% of teachers leave the profession within five years of qualification. Once initial training is included, 48% leave within five years<sup>1</sup> of beginning an undergraduate teaching course and 43% acquiring a postgraduate qualification<sup>2</sup>. The challenge is to find ways of enabling teachers to flourish in their role and creating a learning environment that helps students to flourish. A relentless focus on academic achievement, qualification and measurement neither prepares young people for the breadth of challenges they face beyond school, nor does it necessarily allow space for teachers to exercise their creativity and love of learning, or to build the kind of relationships with students that create an environment conducive to building character. In this respect, however, we are currently witnessing a resurgence of interest, among prominent politicians and policy makers, in character being viewed as an essential part of education (Hunt, 2014; Morgan, 2014), although the use of the term 'character' is sometimes lacking in precision. One of the assumptions animating our research is that teachers need to be supported in their role as educators for character, as well as for academic achievement.

## 2.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

### 2.2.1 Why Does Character Matter in Teaching?

In recent academic discourse on the professional ethics of teaching, the role of the teacher has been increasingly viewed through a virtue ethics lens, drawing upon general philosophical insights about the role of virtues

in the good life (Anscombe, 1958; Campbell, 2013). According to this virtue ethics stance, professional ethics involves the practice of moral virtues, and knowledge transmission is increasingly seen as the cultivation of intellectual virtues. However, although there may be growing agreement over such a conception of education, as an intellectual and moral pursuit, there is less agreement over the practicalities of how the role of the teacher as a cultivator of intellectual and moral virtues can best be executed (Schwartz, 2008). One argument is that much of classroom practice – such as effective classroom management – is, in large part, dependent on the moral character and presence of the teacher (Richardson and Fallona, 2001; Carr, 2000; 2011), and that teachers need to have good moral characters for the purposes of broader moral education (Carr, 2007; Osguthorpe, 2008; Arthur, Davison and Lewis, 2005).

In short, a teacher is, of necessity, engaged in a process of constant judgement and arbitration (what Eraut (1994) describes as 'hot' action) that requires ethical judgement throughout the day. Responding appropriately to behaviour issues, allocating just grades for work, enacting fair treatment in classroom activities, and implementing rules and regulations even-handedly are just some examples of the ethical challenges teachers face constantly in their work. Teaching is therefore, of its very essence, 'moral labour', and neither teachers nor students can escape the moral consequences of their professional decisions (Fenstermacher, 1990; De Ruyter and Kole, 2010). To engage in such work however, teachers require sound moral character themselves before they can begin effective educational work in the classroom.

### 2.2.2 Understanding Ethical Professional Practice

Traditionally, there have been different approaches to understanding how people make ethically relevant decisions, at a personal or a professional level, all of which have much relevance to teaching. It could be argued that modern-day reliance on codes of conduct, including the Teachers' Standards in England, is founded in deontological theories of decision making (such as Kantian ethics), according to which teachers should act on pre-determined, rationally grounded principles. Precisely because teaching involves engaging with unique individuals in unique situations however, formal rules cannot possibly provide answers on how to act in every particular

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmsselect/cmeduc/1515/151508.htm#note141>

<sup>2</sup> DfE, A profile of teachers in England from the 2010 School Workforce Census (DfE Research Report 151, September 2011), p. 81

situation a teacher faces (Carr, 2011). This does not mean, however, that adherence to rules is necessarily non-moral; only that mere adherence to rules, without due consideration of their moral merit, is insufficient.

Alternatively, basing decisions on a utilitarian approach – ensuring the greatest good for the greatest number – may risk putting the interests of the majority of children before the interests of an individual child. While this may be a practical approach, it does not necessarily guarantee a fair result for that individual. Other considerations need to be brought to bear that allow the teacher to identify the salient features of any given situation and determine, through an application of their own good judgement, the right thing to do, in the right way, for the right reasons. This has led to the recent revisiting of a third ethical approach, namely virtue ethics, in relation to teaching. The main points that virtue ethicists emphasise are that:

- i) human flourishing is an objective condition;
- ii) virtues are essential in creating the conditions for flourishing; and
- iii) virtues can, and should, be taught and learnt through informal and formal education (Annas, 2011).

Virtue ethics assumes that if teachers are able to balance virtues such as honesty, courage, fairness and compassion in their work, they will learn to interpret rules, think about consequences and thereby arrive at the most appropriate action.

### 2.2.3 Wisdom in Teaching

According to a virtue ethical approach to good teaching, the main moral challenge for teachers is to develop a balanced set of virtues as well as a capacity to draw upon their own practical wisdom (or *phronesis*) in professional practice, rather than looking to an external set of rules or principles. Virtue can be described as a complex character state which has, at its core, moral sensitivity that is exhibited through emotional reactions (Kristjánsson, 2010), ideally followed by motivations and actions arrived at through morally 'right reasons'. What determines the 'right reasons', in part, lies in the emotional reaction to the situation, balanced against other, possibly competing

demands, some of which may represent different virtues. So to act with virtue requires the individual, for instance, to recognise the need for honesty, to know how to act with honesty and to be able to moderate the application of that honesty in an appropriate way when it conflicts with other potential virtue-based reactions, such as considerateness. Where this situation occurs within a professional context – ie, in the context of service to others by a trained expert – it requires what we would call *professional practical wisdom* (Schwartz, 2014), where the response of the person meets the moral imperatives of the situation.

To offer theoretical approaches to the ethics of teaching is one thing, but trying to measure it empirically – especially through a virtue-based lens – is quite another. Previous empirical research in the area of teaching from an ethical perspective has typically used three broad methods: observation (Buzzelli and Johnston, 2001; Fallona, 2000), reflection and interviews (Elbaz, 1992; Sockett and LePage, 2002; Husu and Tirri, 2003, 2007; Mahoney, 2009), and ethical dilemmas or critical incidents (Strike and Soltis, 2009). In most studies using dilemmas, teachers are asked to reflect on either real or perceived situations and discuss how they had previously dealt, or would deal, with them (Colnerud, 1997; Husu and Tirri, 2003; Romano, 2006; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011). Previous work using ethical dilemmas as a basis for discussion suggests that practical wisdom develops over time and requires shared reflection on specific instances of experience (Biesta, 2009). There is evidence that reference to real life dilemmas may provide a useful basis for discussion and the development of moral reasoning, but not if used in isolation from shared reflection (Bullough, 2011; Benninga, Sparks and Tracz, 2011).

The evidence from previous research into the moral dimensions of teaching shows that teachers accept that they have a role to play as moral educators (Arthur and Revell, 2012; Sanger and Osguthorpe, 2013) and want to make a positive difference to their students (Osguthorpe and Sanger, 2013). The role of the teacher as a potential moral exemplar has been extensively researched and explored

by theorists such as Damon and Colby who have, over many years, sought to understand why some people lead exemplary moral lives (Colby and Damon, 1992; Damon and Colby, 2014). Most of this research has so far, however, taken place outside of the UK. Still, Elliott *et al.* (2011) report the use of hypothetical vignettes in their study of the development of tacit knowledge in UK teachers, focusing on choice of action rather than the (moral) reasoning behind the action. Klassen *et al.* (2014) are developing a series of Situational Judgement Tests for teachers in the UK, but the focus here is on essential competencies needed by teachers, rather than on virtues, and on using such tests for the selection of candidates for professional entry, rather than for research purposes.

Many of the academics cited in this section have called for further research into the ethical practices of teachers. They typically share the belief that ethics can, and needs to be, taught, in a cycle of reflection, instruction and debate, to build teachers' capacities to exercise practical wisdom in the classrooms of the future.

## 2.3 OVERALL EVALUATIVE GOALS

Our overarching aim was to provide evidence of the role and place of character and virtues in teaching, in the belief that teachers play a vital role in the development of young people. Our overall approach therefore sought to explore and add to the existing knowledge base in three broad areas, which then shaped the more specific research questions listed in Section 1. The aims of this research were to:

- understand what the characteristics of a *good* teacher are, in the moral, ethical and professional sense of the word. We have aimed, therefore, to explore those morally relevant aspects of teachers' professional lives that are often neither highlighted in mainstream educational discourse, nor necessarily found in professional standards;
- explore the conditions under which teachers felt able to exercise practical wisdom for the good of their students, what helped them to do so, and what they considered to be barriers to wise and virtuous practice; and
- examine how teacher education and continued professional development can be organised to support good teaching, through the development of teachers' moral character.

We did not find evidence within the UK of any previous work that sought to combine the elements of these evaluative goals into a single research project.

'YOU DON'T WANT TO BECOME JUST LIKE A LOAD OF ROBOTS THAT JUST FOLLOW PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOL AND RULES, EACH SITUATION IS DIFFERENT AND YOU NEED TO DEVELOP THE SKILL TO MAKE JUDGEMENTS.'

Experienced Teacher



# 3 Methodology

*The Good Teacher* research was a three-year study, in Great Britain, involving students (referred to as Student Teachers throughout), teachers who had recently graduated from their course (referred to throughout as Newly Qualified Teachers, or NQTs) and teachers with at least five years of teaching experience, referred to as Experienced Teachers. It was designed to deepen understanding of the place of virtues and character in the education, training and practice of teachers. This section explains the research rationale and design.

## 3.1 RATIONALE

In seeking to understand the place of virtues in teaching, we wanted to capture the views of teachers at different stages of their careers. We designed the project as a cross-sectional study to allow us to compare cohorts at the three career stages listed above. Recognising the complexity of the issues, and wanting to move beyond simple self-reports, we used different methods to capture data. It has been argued that a multi-method approach offers the best chance of obtaining robust data when exploring the intricacies of issues of character (Arthur et al., 2014). Our work therefore included:

- literature reviews and analysis of profession-specific literature, including official documentation from both regulatory and representative bodies in teaching;
- an online questionnaire; and
- semi-structured interviews with a selection of participants across three career stages.

The online questionnaire was designed to capture data from a large number of participants across multiple sites and aimed to help us to understand the role that character and virtue play in ethical professional practice. Recognising, however, that what is gained through sizable populations cannot fully do justice to the nuances of professional practice, the research team also undertook semi-structured interviews with a sample of participants. These interviews provided insight into the conditions under which virtue can be enacted, and how to develop schools and individuals in a way that it is conducive to ethical professional practice. They also offered an opportunity to focus on pertinent questions, test out initial analyses of datasets, and deepen

understanding of practical wisdom (Schwartz and Sharpe, 2010).

## 3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTS

The *Good Teacher* research began with a scoping period, involving a review of pertinent literature and discussions with a range of key experts in the field. Essential to the study was the co-operation and participation of a number of universities engaged in ITE, across a wide geographical area (Midlands, North and South of England). Following extensive analysis of potential partners, a shortlist of six universities was drawn up, of which five agreed to take part. It was important to include different routes into teaching, so there was some representation from undergraduate degrees leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), postgraduate certificate or diploma courses and employment-based courses. In order to ensure a mixed sample, we looked for courses in both primary and secondary education, across a range of subjects.

With the agreement of teaching staff at the chosen universities, Student Teachers and NQTs were sent a link, with an email from lecturers, encouraging them to complete the online questionnaire. To reach Experienced Teachers, universities' mentor networks were used, together with help from known teachers who sought their head teacher's permission and forwarded the email to colleagues in their schools.

The participants to be interviewed were chosen purposively. Questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate their willingness to be interviewed and a member of the research team then made initial contact with the interviewee via the provided email address or telephone number and arranged a suitable date and time.

The total number of participants, by career stage, is presented in Table 1 below. The demographic breakdown of participants, including school sector, is available online at: [www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/professions](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/professions)

**Table 1: Total Number of Participants, by Career Stage**

Career stage	Interviews conducted	Questionnaires completed
Student Teachers	25	235
NQTs	32	181
Experienced Teachers	26	130
Teacher Educators	12	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>546</b>

### 3.2.1 The Questionnaire

The online questionnaire consisted of five sections (four for starting undergraduates), surveying, in order:

1. Respondents' views on their own character (a list of twenty-four character strengths, derived from the *Values in Action* inventory [Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Peterson and Park, 2009], from which respondents were asked to identify the six that 'best describe the sort of person you are');
2. Respondents' responses to a set of professional dilemmas (six dilemmas which explore the role of virtues and values in decision making, using scenarios and a scoring system created by, and piloted with, an expert panel of over 40 practitioners and educators);
3. Respondents' views on the character of the 'ideal' teacher (the list of twenty-four character strengths presented again with respondents asked to choose the six which they thought best described an 'ideal' teacher). This was followed by an open question asking respondents to write about a teacher they had met who showed many of these character strengths;
4. Respondents' views regarding their work or study environment (not included for starting undergraduates). This section used and adapted questions from a Europe-wide workplace survey [Eurofound, 2012] with additional questions on ethical issues in the workplace; and
5. A set of demographic questions, followed by an open question asking respondents to describe their reasons for entering the teaching profession.

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rank their *personal* top six character strengths from the list of twenty-four strengths identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004); then to rank the top six character strengths they thought a good teacher required, and finally to answer an open question: *Can you think of a teacher you have met who shows many of these character strengths? If so, please use the box below to describe how they show these strengths in their work.* In interviews, respondents were asked to describe the kind of teacher they wanted to become, what they felt their most important character strengths were in relation to being that kind of teacher, and how those strengths might influence their practice.

Ethical dilemmas were used as they (a) promise to offer a credible way to gain an insight into moral functioning and development, and

(b) can ideally be designed so as to activate more than simply moral reasoning skills (Kristjánsson, 2015, chap. 3). Nevertheless, responses to dilemmas serve as an indication, rather than guarantee, of action or understanding of moral sensitivity in a real, particular situation. They do not, in and by themselves, *measure* virtue, nor do any such definitive measures exist elsewhere, but when combined with data from interviews and self-reports, they may contribute to an overall understanding of virtue in professional practice.

Using hypothetical dilemmas as an indicator of moral awareness is grounded in a long, neo-Kohlbergian tradition in moral psychology of working with 'Defining Issues Tests' (DITs) to trace general moral development (Rest *et al.*, 1999). In professional decision making, DITs have been developed as Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs) which gauge professionals' possible performance on specific tasks, designed and evaluated by 'expert' panels. They are becoming more widespread in education and for selection to the professions, particularly in medicine and dentistry (Patterson and Ashworth, 2011).

The ethical dilemmas in the questionnaire were designed to provide some indication of how teachers at different stages of their careers would choose to act in hypothetical situations and how they might explain their reasons for acting. Recognising that their options were limited, we nevertheless asked respondents to choose between two or three given courses

of action and to rank their top three (out of six possible) reasons for making that choice. It is important to note that the course of action was not under scrutiny here, with all suggested options being potentially reasonable; we were interested in the reasons respondents provided for taking such action. Good reasons could be provided for different courses of action, but we wanted to understand, more specifically, the extent to which teacher reflection about moral decisions is virtue-based and (then) on what virtues, and to what extent it is based on rules and consequences. While considerations of rules, consequences and virtues are in no way mutually exclusive, it is instructive to see how different individuals prioritised these when reflecting upon moral dilemmas. In the development of dilemmas, our expert panel of Teacher Educators designed them to reflect common problems likely to be faced by all teachers at some stage: curriculum flexibility, school rules, assessment, parents, teaching sensitive or controversial topics, and working with colleagues. They then identified six possible reasons for selecting each course of action; one rule-based, one consequence-based and four virtue-based (summarised in Table 2). With regard to the virtues, these represent the consensus of the expert panel. There is no guarantee that one person would link the same reasons to the same virtues, but they are taken here to be indicative. Full details of all the dilemmas can be found online at: [www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/professions](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/professions)



<sup>3</sup> The process by which the Expert Panel was formed, and its role in the research, can be found in Appendix 1

Table 2: Summary of Dilemmas Content and Associated Virtues

Subject area	Summary of the dilemma	Virtues associated with the reasoning by the expert panel
<b>Curriculum Flexibility</b>	Children wanted to explore the snow during a lesson, where this would disrupt the planned programme, further complicated because for some children snow was a new experience. The teacher had to choose between disrupting the lesson or ignoring the children's requests.	Option 1: Appreciation of beauty; Love of learning; Kindness; Creativity Option 2: Perseverance; Fairness; Leadership
<b>School Rules</b>	A child, Robert, persistently came to school in the wrong shoes but had difficult home circumstances that might have made it difficult for him to afford the regulation ones. The teacher had to choose between sending Robert home or ignoring the trainers.	Option 1: Fairness; Perseverance; Hope; Kindness Option 2: Fairness; Judgement; Perspective; Kindness
<b>Assessment</b>	A junior teacher had to decide whether to join in with her Deputy Head who was helping students with an examination, or to refuse to join in and challenge the senior colleague. Students had been disadvantaged by staff absence earlier in the year.	Option 1: Fairness; Social intelligence; Perspective; Hope Option 2: Fairness; Leadership; Self-regulation; Honesty
<b>Working with Parents</b>	The NQT faced a challenge between maintaining confidentiality at a Parents' Evening or sharing other parents' concerns over distractions posed by a child with Special Educational Needs.	Option 1: Fairness; Honesty; Bravery; Hope Option 2: Prudence; Perspective; Judgement; Kindness
<b>Teaching Sensitive, or Controversial Topics</b>	Students were overheard making apparently racist comments following a citizenship lesson on the 'war on terror'. The teacher had to decide whether to report the child or to tackle the issue in a subsequent lesson with the whole class.	Option 1: Bravery; Prudence; Kindness; Courage Option 2: Judgement; Perspective; Humility; Hope
<b>Relationships with Colleagues</b>	A teacher regularly overheard a colleague making derogatory remarks about a class and commenting that (s)he did not bother preparing properly for their lessons because they were not worth it. The teacher had to choose between ignoring the comments, reporting the colleague, or challenging them directly.	Option 1: Self-regulation; Fairness; Judgement; Social intelligence Option 2: Self-regulation; Teamwork; Kindness; Honesty Option 3: Leadership; Bravery; Hope; Prudence

'WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE NEVER A COMPLETED ARTICLE, THE WHOLE PROCESS OF TEACHING IS AN ONGOING ONE.'

Newly Qualified Teacher

### 3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The research team devised a set of questions for interviews with participants from each of the three career stages, based around the main research questions. These included questions around reasons for choice of career, characteristics of a good teacher, factors that can help or hinder being that kind of professional, views on the influence of character on everyday professional practice, the influence of the Teachers' Standards, and the influence of education and training in developing the strengths necessary for good professional practice. For interviews with Teacher Educators, a separate set of questions was devised. These concentrated on their role in educating future teachers, their view of a good professional in their field, how this had changed in the course of their career, how students are assessed for entry, whether the character strengths required change and why, what informs their teaching in relation to the virtues, and how ITE could be developed.

Most interviews with Student Teachers were conducted in person but for other cohorts where this was not possible, telephone interviews were undertaken. All Teacher Educator interviews were conducted in person. They were recorded to ensure accuracy, although the team was aware that this may affect answers, as it moves from a private conversation to a public one (Scott and Usher, 1999). Audio tapes were transcribed, a small number by team members themselves to become familiar with the data, others by transcription services contracted externally. Once transcribed, records were returned to participants for member checking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) to allow for amendments and to ensure that data used were a fair reflection of what the participant wanted us to know.

## 3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

### 3.3.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of four or five sections, depending on career stage. Responses were examined for errors and only those with complete dilemma responses were included in the working dataset. The first priority for data analysis consisted of compiling descriptive statistics of answers, by career stage, to allow for early comparisons. Initial stage data analysis was then summarised. To analyse the ethical dilemmas section, we conducted a series of tests using SPSS, including 2 way ANOVAs, and appropriate post hoc analyses to see where any differences of statistical significance lay.

### 3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Analysis of interview data was thematic, using a constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) within a modified framework approach (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). The team members analysed the data from the interviews independently and developed the codes according to the data. Codes were created both horizontally (by coding each interview as a stand-alone narrative) and vertically (by scanning across the data for specific terms), and then developed into categories and themes. Categories were refined and coding reviewed throughout the process, using NVIVO software.

### 3.4 LIMITATIONS

There are limitations in our sampling, relying as we did on the willing participation both of gatekeepers (primarily course leaders) in our chosen institutions, and subsequently on those who chose to complete the questionnaire and again in choosing to take part in interviews. We have limited representation from Scotland; the remaining data is from England only. Some of those choosing to take part had a keen interest in the subject and may have had particularly strong views, either positive or negative, on the subject matter.

Any study of professional ethics, virtues and values assumes, implicitly or explicitly, a certain understanding of how professionals make ethical judgements and implement them in practice. Professional practice is highly

situational – it depends on the organisational, personal and social context at a given moment in time. Thus, to condense highly complex, dependent dilemmas into a research exercise is inevitably going to offer only one limited perspective. We sought to challenge this by the triangulation of methods between the questionnaire and interviews so that we could compare key messages from one dataset with another.

There are also a number of more specific limitations associated with the research methods used, particularly in the self-report aspects of the design. Self-reporting is subject to inherent problems: self-deception biases, where one sees oneself as something other than one is in practice; social-desirability biases, or the tendency for participants to answer questions in ways that they believe will be viewed favourably by others; and self-confirmation biases where people respond to information in ways that confirm their beliefs, and discard information that contradicts those beliefs. A further potential problem lies in so-called 'demand characteristics', where participants try to work out the aim of the study and answer in ways to support those aims.

There is also controversy over the use of ethical dilemmas as a tool for gauging moral performance. Some theorists still insist that such tools only measure (at best) moral reasoning, rather than giving any indication of overall moral functioning. Other theorists are more optimistic regarding such testing, seeing

it as tapping into grand 'moral schemas' and therefore reaching beyond mere formal reasoning processes or skills (Kristjánsson, 2015, chap. 3).

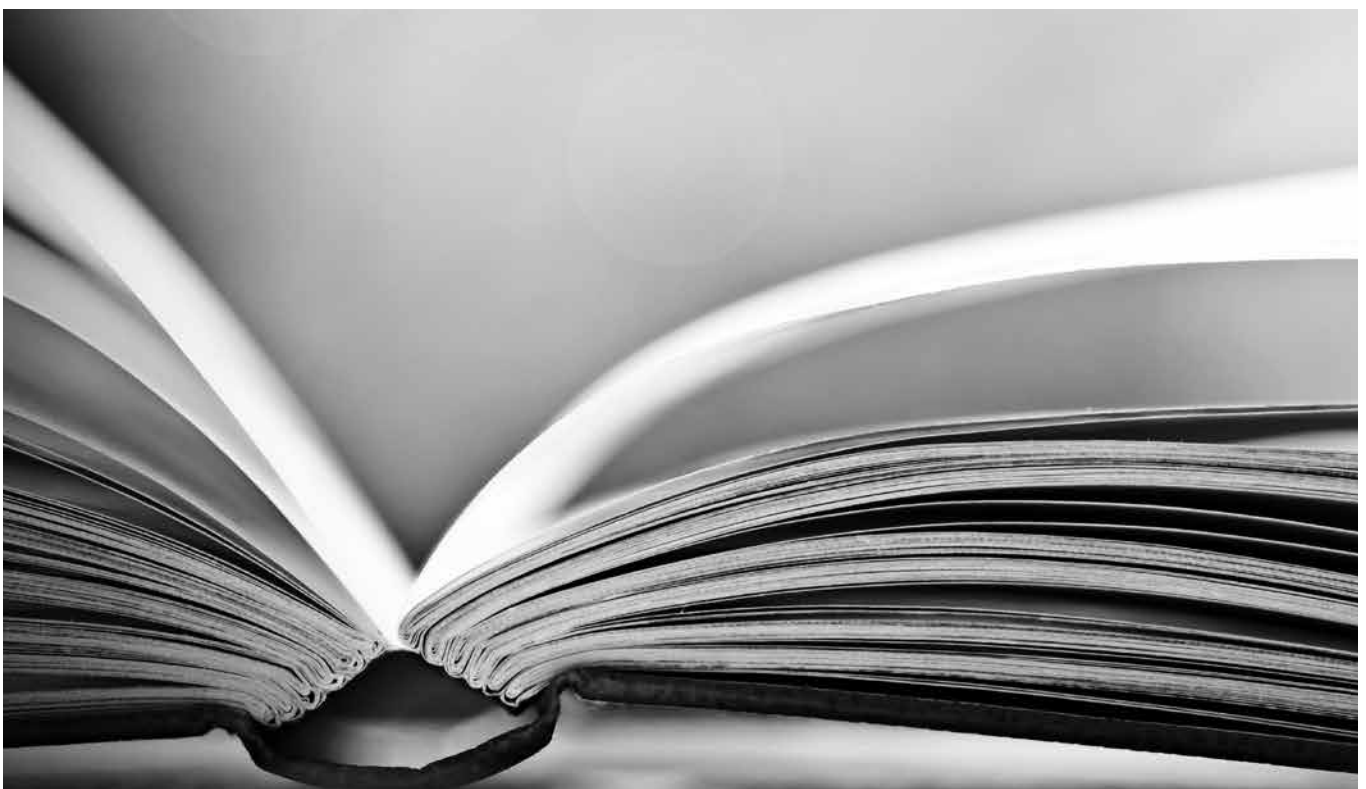
We are confident however that with the numbers of participants and the complexity of the research design some of these dangers have been reduced.

### 3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The project was granted initial, formal ethical approval by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee, with subsequent modifications being approved as the design developed. We were conscious of our responsibilities to all participants to ensure they understood their commitment to the project and the right to withdraw or modify their contribution at any point up to data analysis. Comprehensive consent forms were signed in duplicate once appropriate explanations and information sheets had been offered. Data were stored electronically in password protected servers and transcriptions were anonymised to protect participants' identities.

'TEACHERS OPEN THE  
DOOR. YOU ENTER BY  
YOURSELF.'

Chinese Proverb



# 4 Findings

To be a *good* teacher, one needs the commitment and concern to understand the importance of the responsibilities involved; we thus turn our attention in the first instance to what teachers judged to be the motivating factors behind their choice of career. Secondly, we report how teachers talked about their role as educators for character, before moving on to discuss their own character strengths, as well as their idealised view of the 'good' teacher. We then present our findings from the ethical dilemmas and the data from the interviews where teachers discussed some of the challenges they face in day-to-day practice. We also explore the extent to which teachers thought they had been prepared for the task of teaching following their initial professional education.

## 4.1 MOTIVATION TO TEACH

Participants were asked, both in an open question in the questionnaire and during interviews, why they had chosen teaching as a career. Drawing upon recent research on motivation to teach (Thomson, Turner and Nietfield, 2012; Manuel and Hughes, 2006; Ewing and Manuel, 2005), responses were analysed with reference to three broad themes: altruism (to benefit others), intrinsic worth (because it matters to the self) and extrinsic benefits (external conditions or rewards).

Most participants' responses, across all career stages, fell within three broad themes of altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, with a majority combining both altruistic and intrinsic values:

*I think it is a very noble profession, very rewarding, a fun job, not boring and I can continue to work with my languages and young people as well. 16 NQT<sup>4</sup>*

The second most reported combination, across all career stages, was the combination of intrinsic and extrinsic themes:

*There was a mixture of it seeming to be a natural and normal thing to do from growing up, a real genuine sense of vocation and particularly the teaching of my subject being something I wanted to do; but also*

*the fact that it was a viable, financially rewarding career. 23 Exp Tchr*

Respondents across all career stages relied largely on intrinsic motivators, either solely or in combination with altruistic or extrinsic themes. Those who stated the intrinsic motivator of 'enjoying teaching' often did so in relation to their previous work experience with children (eg, coaching a football team, or volunteering with young people).

A powerful altruistic theme emerged where teachers from all career stages talked about wanting to 'Make a difference' and wanting to 'Impart wisdom or knowledge':

*To make a difference, because I think I can contribute something and I feel I could add something to the value of, I don't know, on the bigger scheme of things, value of humanity. 06 Exp Tchr*

*I chose it because I've always had a passion for my subject primarily and it's not only a career that will enable me to keep learning, but also to share that knowledge with young people. 20 NQT*

No participants cited extrinsic motivators exclusively as their motivation to teach: it was only ever mentioned alongside the other themes of motivation already referred to.

### 4.1.1 Teachers Educating for Character

Having explored with teachers their motivations for entering the teaching profession, we were interested to know more about how Experienced Teachers described the goals of their work and what it meant to be an educator. When asked specifically about developing character in young people, teachers talked of both moral and performance virtues – for example, of both empathy and perseverance. However, the main emphasis was on the latter, and often linked in discourse to the need to cope successfully with assessment. There was overwhelming agreement that it was the job of schools to build character and that this was an integral part of what schools did. For example:

*You're not just there to cram in facts and information, you're there to make them into*

*good people, good members of society. 20 Exp Tchr*

Teachers acknowledged however that there were limitations to the extent to which they could influence that development, as parental, home and outside influences were also crucial factors:

*I don't think we should over-estimate the impact that we can have on some students. I think if you're looking for the school or college to be the be all and end all in developing a young person, that's not the case. 08 Exp Tchr*

The link with parental influences was evident in other ways: teachers described the different demands on parents' time and the sometimes unrealistic expectations that some parents had for teachers to exercise control over their children:

*I could list on one hand the number of children out of 200 in Year 7 who actually get read a story or get to discuss something random at the dining table. We are the first port of call because parents are so busy. 06 Exp Tchr*

As teachers talked about their role as character educators, three themes emerged regarding how character might be taught. The first theme saw character education as integral to everything that happened in school; for one teacher it was:

*Integral: you can't separate, you can't say 'we teach'... all the education goes on in the classroom anyway, about good behaviour and things like that, and what you should do. 19 Exp Tchr*

The second theme concerned how children learnt to 'be' through extra-curricular activities, often focused on attempts to instil gratitude in them or getting them to understand how fortunate they were in relation to others:

*They go to old peoples' homes; they go to a special school and put on Christmas parties and stuff they wouldn't do. I think if we weren't doing that, the nature of the school would be lost. 20 Exp Tchr*

<sup>4</sup> The reference for quotes denotes the number assigned to the transcript when anonymised and the career stage, thus, 16NQT refers to transcript number 16, Newly Qualified Teacher. Elsewhere, *StdT Tchr* refers to Student Teacher and *Exp Tchr* to Experienced Teacher.



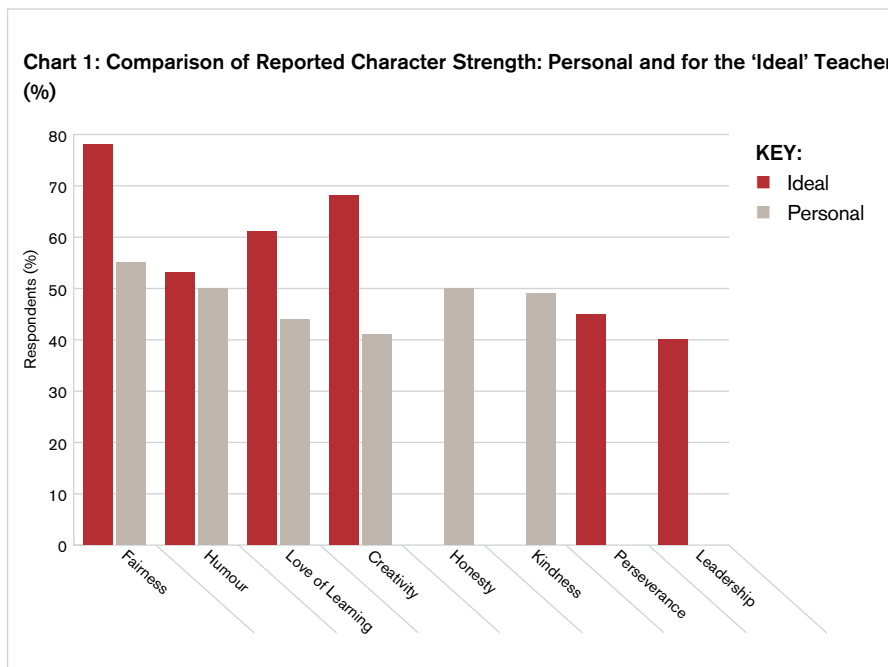
The third theme concerned teachers acting as a role model to students and enacting the virtues they sought to develop in their students:

*Maybe they need to just realise how much of a role model they are and how much that makes a difference to your classroom atmosphere ... how they can have such a positive influence if they are that positive role model. 10 Exp Tchr.*

As teachers inevitably serve as role models within the classroom and beyond, it is reasonable to consider the character of the 'good' teacher and to understand what kind of person makes that kind of teacher.

#### 4.2 REPORTED CHARACTER STRENGTHS FOR THE 'GOOD' TEACHER

We were interested to find out how Student, Newly Qualified, and Experienced Teachers conceived their own character strengths and to compare this with their descriptions of the character strengths needed by the 'ideal' teacher – as well as to understand how character strengths influence practice. Here we draw upon data from both the questionnaire and interviews.



As can be seen in Chart 1, teachers state that they possess fairness (55%), honesty (50%), humour (50%), kindness (49%), love of learning (44%) and creativity (41%). Although some overlap can be seen between the top six character strengths identified personally, and those for the 'ideal' teacher (fairness, humour, love of learning and creativity), perseverance and leadership feature for the 'ideal', in place of honesty and kindness for the personal.

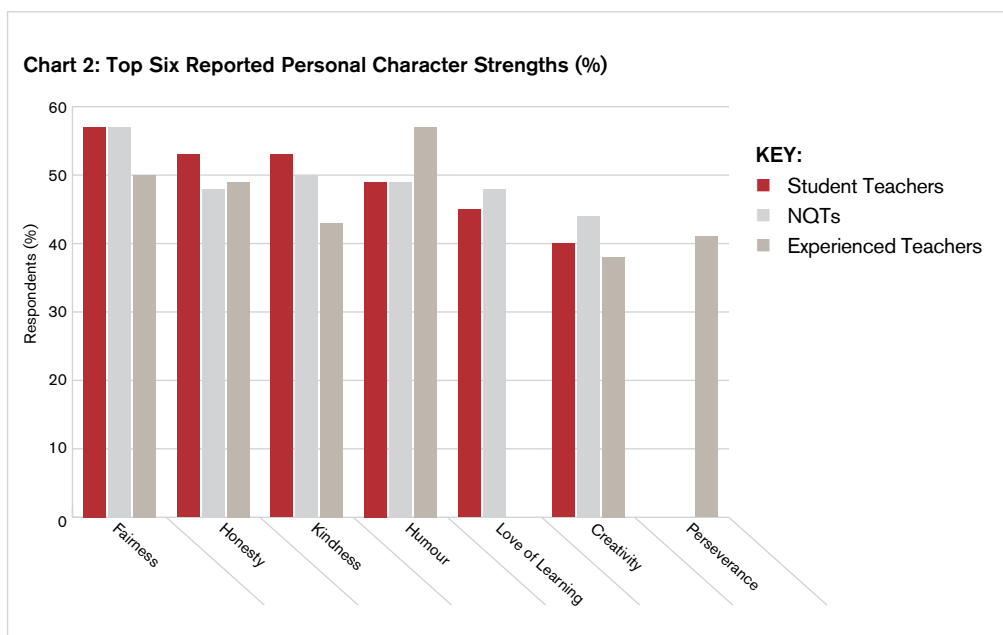


Chart 2 shows that Student Teachers and NQTs identified the same six personal character strengths. Five of these were also selected by Experienced Teachers; however they identified perseverance in place of love of learning.

**Chart 3: Top Six Reported Character Strengths for the 'Ideal' Teacher (%)**

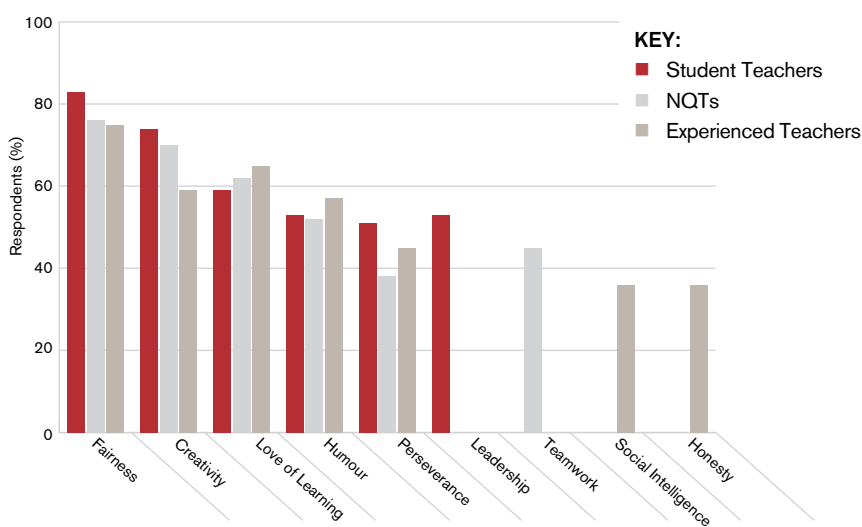
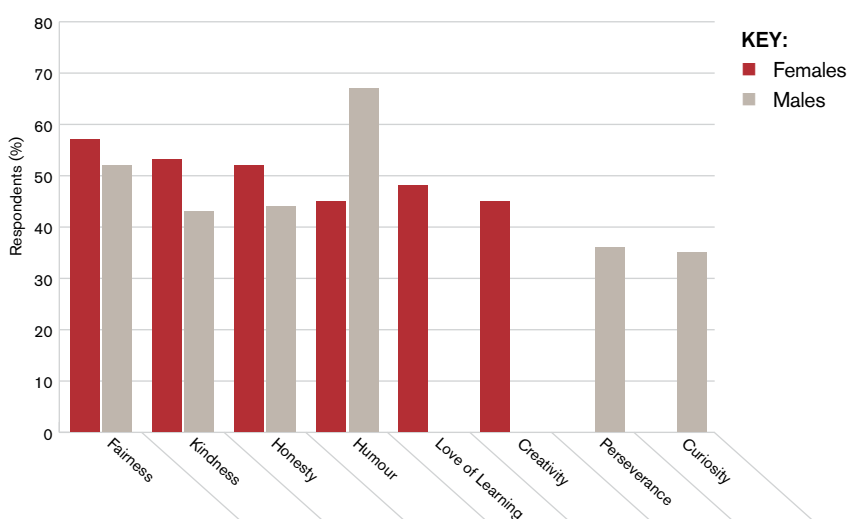
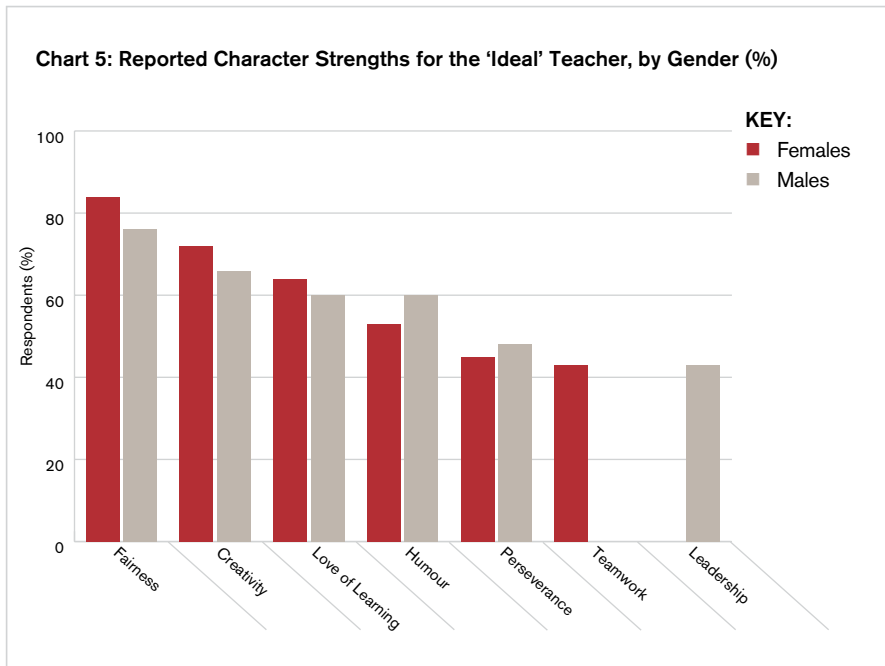


Chart 3 shows that despite considerable overlap of opinion regarding the top six character strengths for the 'ideal' teacher, there are some differences across career stages; namely, Student Teachers identified leadership (53%), NQTs teamwork (45%) and Experienced Teachers social intelligence (36%) and honesty (36%). Using 2-way ANOVA tests, followed by Kruskal Wallis or Mann Whitney tests, some differences in responses regarding all twenty-four character strengths reached a level of statistical significance.

**Chart 4: Top Six Reported Personal Character Strengths, by Gender (%)**



Congruence can be seen in the top six reported personal character strengths across both genders (Chart 4), with both males and females reporting fairness, kindness, honesty and humour. Where males select perseverance and curiosity however, females select love of learning and creativity.



With regard to the reported character strengths for the 'ideal' teacher, both genders prioritised the same five (Chart 5), although males reported leadership to be sixth most important for the 'ideal' teacher and females selected teamwork. There were some specific significant differences between the responses regarding all twenty-four character strengths of the 'ideal' teacher. According to a Chi2 statistical test and related post hoc analysis, men ranked appreciation of beauty and judgement higher than women, and women ranked kindness and teamwork higher than men ( $p = <0.05$ ).

In interviews, respondents talked about their personal character strengths according to three broad themes: performance virtues such as resilience, organisational abilities, virtues that contributed to positive relationships, such as empathy, fairness and being approachable, and virtues that reflected emotional dispositions such as passion, enthusiasm and love (of subject or children). It is interesting to note that although they did not feature highly in the questionnaire exercise, performance virtues such as perseverance (ranked seventh) and self-regulation (eighteenth) frequently featured in respondents' discourse. This reflects the priority given by teachers when describing the virtues they sought to develop in their students. This gives some insight into how character and virtues are often understood in teacher training (see Section 4.5), and also lends itself to focusing on these types of virtues in practice. In interviews, frequent reference was made to the virtues of patience, trust, and care.

#### 4.2.1 Examples of Character Strengths in Practice

We asked respondents how their character strengths influence practice and what difference they made. Below are single examples from the questionnaire, from a multitude of rich descriptions of teachers, of the top six ranked strengths for the 'good' teacher. Together, they illustrate how entangled the different character strengths are in practice. **Fairness:** *Ranging from the way she maximised learning for everyone, listened*

*to everyone's concerns AND acting on them to justifying her decision making processes and reprimands. #66<sup>5</sup>*

**Creativity:** *She loved learning and instilled a sense of the value and joy of it by planning creative and interesting lessons even for the most apparently dull subjects. #14*

**Love of learning:** *She was passionate about her subject, which showed in the ways she constantly drew our attention to curiosities of French language and culture, her resourcefulness, her enthusiasm for teaching us. #66*

**Humour:** *He also has a fantastic sense of humour, allowing the class to have fun and enjoy their time in the classroom, but knowing when it was time for serious work. #70*

**Perseverance:** *Her perseverance becomes evident particularly with the lower ability students where she constantly aims to think of new ways to teach topics that these students find difficult to grasp. #73*

**Leadership:** *The teacher I am thinking of created a classroom environment that felt like she was in control and held the space yet gave the students a sense of space and room for them to explore and learn. #23*

We were interested to know whether the Experienced Teachers in our sample found the character strengths needed to be a good teacher had changed during the time they had been teaching. Opinion was divided, with some teachers arguing that the strengths were the same as when they started out, and others

arguing that occupational and social conditions had changed the priorities for teachers' characters. The Experienced Teachers highlighted two themes: the ability and value of reflecting on one's practice and recognising that teaching was a lifelong project of learning and adapting; and the degree of surveillance and control over individual practice. For example, one Experienced Teacher commented:

*We were having to do lesson plans for every lesson: there were observations, no notice observations and so on, and that just creates a very different atmosphere; but also, the kind of teaching that they're looking for, this very reductive, programmatic, follow this model, those are different kinds of traits that we'll need, rather than the era when I started. 11 Exp Tchr*

This highlights the influence of occupational context and policy in creating systems where individual character strengths may be seen to be of less importance, reminding us that while character is important, other factors also influence professional practice (see further in Section 4.4).

<sup>5</sup> Questionnaire responses are referenced using their anonymous transcript label.



#### 4.3 VIRTUES IN PRACTICE: REPORTING ON THE ETHICAL DILEMMAS

We present a summary of the responses to the dilemmas before highlighting some significant differences we found with regard to how career stage and gender impacted on reasoning for a chosen course of action.

##### 4.3.1 Choice of Action

The focus of interest in the dilemmas was not on the chosen course of action: the dilemmas were not designed with right or wrong answers in mind, but rather to challenge respondents to explain their choices and, in particular, to understand the place of virtue-based reasoning in that process. Although all six dilemmas concerned complex professional situations, some dilemmas appear to be relatively clear-cut, as a high percentage of respondents chose one particular course over another, while other dilemmas divided opinion more evenly. The clear-cut dilemmas were those addressing curriculum flexibility, assessment and parents; the broader, more mixed responses concerned school rules, teaching sensitive topics and working with colleagues. This suggests that some aspects of teaching practice are more open to professional judgement than others, and it is in those respects that the need for practical wisdom might be greater than others. However, there was little apparent evidence of difference in course of action between career stages. The primary interest concerned the reasoning for choice of action, and we present key findings and quotes from interviews describing reactions to each dilemma, to illustrate the complexities and contradictions experienced by respondents.

##### 4.3.2 Reasoning for Course of Action

###### *Curriculum flexibility (Snowy Afternoon):*

The question posed in this dilemma was whether teachers would be willing to be flexible in letting children experience snow in the schoolyard even where this meant interrupting a planned lesson. The response to this dilemma was relatively clear-cut, with 87% of respondents choosing to take the children outside. Despite this dilemma seeming to invite one course of action, there was much less agreement over the reasoning given for that action. Those choosing to take the children outside cited *the opportunity for some child-centred learning, to share experiences and learn from one another* as first choice most often (38%), a reason associated with creativity by the expert panel. Rules and consequences were cited by only a small percentage of teachers as their first choice of reason, regardless of course of action chosen (5-11% rules and 7-13% consequences). The balance between rules, consequences and virtues is highlighted in this quote from an Experienced Teacher:

*I would not have a problem at all with the children going out in the snow; but at schools that I've worked at, my last school, for example, we had to kind of keep them in during the snow, in case they had someone throw a snowball. So you've got to be aware of what your boss would want you to do too and so you're often kind of guided by that, rather than your own values anyway; you're guided by towing the party line really. 02 Exp Tchr*

###### *School rules (Uniform):*

This dilemma concerned the tensions teachers face having to prioritise either upholding school rules for the sake of maintaining school policies on discipline, or showing flexibility in responding to individual circumstances. Respondents had to choose either to send the student home to change, or to ignore the trainers he wore in contravention of rules. The responses were ambiguous, with 51% choosing to send the child home and 49% choosing to ignore the trainers. Reversing the pattern seen in Dilemma 1, although the course of action was evenly split, both options invoked a dominant reason to explain those different choices of action. Those choosing to send the pupil home gave *fairness to other students* as the main reason for this course of action (40%), with only 20% citing the need to uphold rules as part of their job and none choosing the consequences based reason. Those who chose to ignore the trainers also cited *fairness in not wishing Robert to miss lessons if he did not have other shoes to change in to* (64%). Only 5% gave a broadly rule-based reason for this course of action and only 1% cited a fear of consequences for this choice. This Student Teacher describes why she chose to be driven by fairness over adherence to rules:

*I didn't refer to the standards, certainly not, when I was considering what I was going to do; because to be honest, if I think it's the right thing to do, so like for the shoes one in particular, asking why are you wearing trainers, 'is there a particular problem, 'blah de blah'? I actually don't care if I meet the standards, to be honest. I think the best thing is to actually talk about it. 19 Stdt Tchr*



**Assessment (The Exam):** Here, teachers were challenged to either join with a senior member of staff in helping students in an examination or to refuse, even at the expense of incurring her disapproval. The responses to Dilemma 3 show a notable consensus, with an overwhelming majority of participants (97%) selecting to 'not help the students and challenge the Deputy Head about her actions after the exam'. Despite the high level of agreement about course of action, there was little consensus over the reasons given for refusing to join in. Rules were the dominant reason cited, with 26% of teachers not wishing to go against policy on Key Stage assessments. This was one of only two occasions when Experienced Teachers relied heavily on rule-based reasoning. Consequence-based reasoning again attracted little support from each career stage (4%). Despite some concern that this dilemma appeared too obvious, in interviews we had some reports that teachers had indeed faced similar situations in reality:

*I immediately as a professional would have thought, no, actually, that's not fair and it's going against the assessment guidelines and exam boards. However, last week, I found myself in that exact same situation.*  
27 NQT

**Parents (Parents' Evening):** Knowing when to respect confidentiality, particularly in dealing with parents, is an essential part of being an honest and fair teacher. This dilemma tested whether teachers would hold confidentiality above the need to engage sympathetically with parents. It, like Dilemma 1, appears to have been relatively clear-cut, with 87% of respondents choosing Option 2 [not

discussing one pupil with another's parents at a parents' evening] and a minority (13%) choosing to share information with parents about another pupil. Like the assessment-based dilemma, this scenario provoked rule-based reasoning, regardless of the course of action chosen. 30% of all teachers chose the *Teachers' Standards guide to communicate effectively with parents* as a primary reason for discussing the other pupil, and 51% of teachers chose to *uphold school policy on confidentiality* as a primary reason for not discussing the pupil. This is an example of where different rules can conflict and result in contrasting courses of action. In this dilemma, teachers seemed to stick to one kind of rule-based reason or another. Reliance on rules however does not necessarily mean that there is not considerable thought behind a decision:

*Sometimes, the powers that be need to know what the extenuating circumstances are, why people have acted the way they have. Because always, there's lots of layers every time, isn't there? 06 NQT*

**Teaching sensitive topics (The Citizenship Lesson):** Following a lesson on the 'war on terror', a child is overheard making comments about people of Muslim faith that suggested they had not fully taken on board the lesson content. Teachers had to decide whether to report the pupil to a higher authority or revisit the topic in a future lesson. Respondents were fairly evenly split in their choice of action, with 57% of all teachers opting to report the pupil and 43% choosing not to report the pupil and to revisit the topic in class. The most popular reason given by teachers for reporting the pupil was related to leadership: *the need to act as a role model and be seen to be taking discrimination seriously* (31%). In deciding to revisit the topic in a future lesson, 39% of teachers gave *this pupil's views may be shared by others in the class. Reporting just one pupil will not address the problem effectively* as the primary reason for acting. Reasons given for choosing Option 1 were more dispersed between virtues and rules than those choosing Option 2, where rules and consequences hardly featured.

*I'd have a word with the student there and then and if I heard it happening again, then I would report it; or maybe say, 'look, I've had a word with the student, they know it's inappropriate' and you know, say that to the head of year or whatever. I don't think it needs to be mentioned again, but if it does get mentioned by another member of staff, then maybe you need to do something about it.* 10 Stdt Tchr

**Working with colleagues (Staffroom Chat):** Working with colleagues is important

to teachers, and this dilemma was designed to test respondents' views on whether or not to challenge a teacher overheard making derogatory remarks about students. It was the only occasion where three options for action were offered, and clearly divided opinion, with all three options attracting significant responses (15%; 39% and 46%). A minority chose Option 1, to ignore the derogatory comments that the teacher made in the staffroom about students, although both NQTs and Experienced Teachers (both 20%) were more likely than Student Teachers (8%) to choose to ignore the comments. Student Teachers (44%) were more likely to defer to senior staff in the school than either NQTs (39%) or Experienced Teachers (29%). Those respondents who did choose Option 1 recorded a heavy preference for reason 3 (64%) as their first choice of reason, particularly the Experienced Teachers (81%). This was a virtue-based reason, arguing that *you do not know, for certain, what really happens in the classroom and the teacher may just be expressing their frustrations*. Once second and third explanations are included, rule-based reason 6 (48% as secondary and 28% as third) becomes the second most popular choice by Experienced Teachers.

This pattern is repeated for those choosing to speak to a more senior member of staff about the teacher's comments. There was a remarkable pattern of consistency across the career stages in the first reason, but Experienced Teachers reported relying heavily (39% compared to 21% by all teachers) on the rule-based reason *a more senior member of staff should deal with this kind of issue* which again suggests that, when conflict with colleagues looms large, they may defer to authority or rules.

The third course of action was to challenge the teacher directly about his or her comments. 46% of respondents chose this course of action with remarkable consistency across career stages in their reasoning. Rules (reference to the Teachers' Standards) and consequences (that additional scrutiny of teaching might follow) played little part in the reported reasoning (3% and 0% respectively). The sensitivities in dealing with colleagues are summed up by this Experienced Teacher:

*If you have a colleague who isn't doing the right thing and isn't pulling their weight and the students are complaining to you, it's really difficult to know what to do with it; because you don't want to be a snitch, you know and go to your Head of department or whatever, but if you speak to the colleague and the colleague then is dismissive and doesn't change or whatever, then I think*

*there's a massive moral dilemma as to what you do with that and where you go. We've had that, which is really problematic and I still don't know really... 09 Exp Tchr*

In Table 3 below, it can be seen there are only two occasions where Experienced Teachers chose the rule-based reason more frequently

than the other cohorts: Dilemma 3, Option 2, and Dilemma 6, Option 2. These dilemmas share a common feature: they involved potential conflict with colleagues. Therefore, we suggest that Experienced Teachers may rely on rules-based reasoning in situations concerning working relationships.

**Table 3: Percentage of Participants who selected the Rule-based Answer, by Career Stage**

	Di1 Op1	Di1 Op2	Di2 Op1	Di2 Op2	Di3 Op1	Di3 Op2	Di4 Op1	Di4 Op2	Di5 Op1	Di5 Op2	Di6 Op1	Di6 Op2	Di6 Op3
Student Teachers	7	12	22	3	67	26	48	52	22	5	20	14	3
NQTs	5	11	18	7	11	25	25	55	19	4	6	21	3
Experienced Teachers	2	11	21	4	0	27	15	45	19	0	4	39	3

#### 4.3.3 Differences between Groups

There was remarkable agreement amongst career stages in first-level reasoning to explain course of actions. In eight of the thirteen possible options, all career stages reported the same reason above all others. There was complete agreement in reasoning across all stages in only one dilemma option – in the case of Dilemma 6 Option 3, choosing to challenge the teacher directly about comments overheard.

A further level of analysis was needed to assess whether there were patterns in the differences amongst groups of teachers in how they reasoned. In particular, differences between career stages and genders were explored through two-way ANOVA tests and subsequent Mann Whitney U tests (see online at: [www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/professions](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/professions) for details). There were some significant differences.

Analysis showed that career stage sometimes has an influence on the likelihood of selecting either a consequence-based, rule-based, or virtue-based reason. A number of these differences are significant at the 0.05 level, and thus worthy of note. For example, when opting to 'Speak to a more senior member of staff about the teacher's comments', NQTs were significantly more likely to select the consequence-based reason as compared to Student Teachers and Experienced Teachers. It appears that when faced with a dilemma which involves a colleague, NQTs more readily factor in the consequences of their behaviour, whereas Experienced Teachers place little weight on this aspect of reasoning, instead opting, unusually, to justify their reasons by defaulting to rules.

Overall, the likelihood of selecting a rule, consequence or virtue was not heavily affected by gender. However, there were some instances where this was the case. For example, in order to support their choice 'not to help the students and to challenge the Deputy Head about her actions after the exam', males were more likely to select the consequence-based reason ( $p = <0.05$ ); *if you do not stand up to her someone may find out there was cheating and you may get into trouble*. Similarly, there was one instance whereby females were more likely than males to select the rule-based reason; *The Teachers' Standards state that a teacher should 'communicate effectively with parents with regard to students' achievements and well-being'. This is an opportunity to do so*. The reasons chosen for actions in these dilemmas reveal variance across individuals, gender and career stages. Moreover, the preponderance of apparently rule-based reasons in particular dilemmas, rather than virtue-based ones, requires further examination – although there is no reason to assume that rule-based reasons are always necessarily inferior from a moral point of view. These findings will also be subjected to further scrutiny in Section 5.

Next, we present findings of how the education environment or the workplace provides an environment for virtue in practice and how ITE prepares teachers in this regard.

#### 4.4 CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR VIRTUE IN PRACTICE

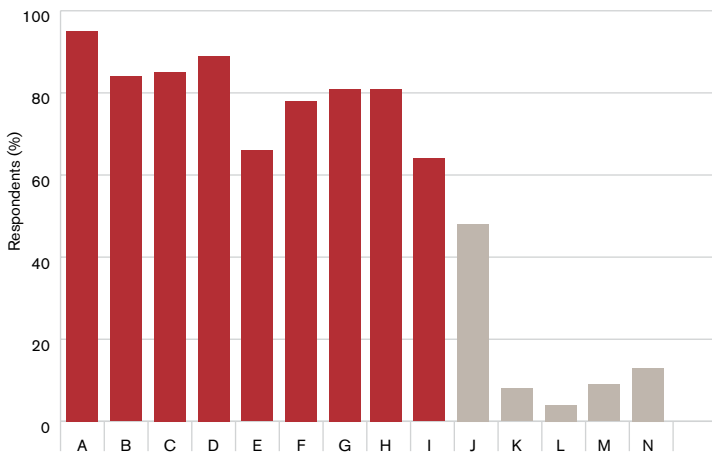
Appreciating how the workplace impacts on teachers' practice is crucial in any understanding of the place of virtue in teaching. Here we draw upon both responses to the questionnaire and interviews to describe what helped teachers be the kind of teacher they wanted to be, and what hindered this endeavour. Three themes emerged from our analysis: the extent to which teachers felt supported and motivated by their school and colleagues to work in ways they themselves valued, the emotional attachment they felt to their work, and the pressures of time and stress they encountered.

Section Four of the questionnaire asked NQTs to think about their training environment, and Experienced Teachers their working environment. They read statements (see Charts 6 and 7) and responded using a 5-point Likert-style rating scale (Always, Mostly, Not Sure, Rarely, Never); 170 responses from NQTs and 110 responses from Experienced Teachers were analysed.

Both NQTs and Experienced Teachers revealed a generally positive picture of their work environment. In some instances, this enthusiasm could be detected in interviews:

*You know that you're with a group of people that truly do love the profession, but also stay up to date with it and get the newest training where possible, so not just resting on their 10 years' experience; they're constantly updating their toolkit. So being at this school, I know that I'm going to be around really inspiring members of staff, both professionally and for the*

**Chart 6: NQT 'Always' and 'Mostly' Responses to Workplace Conditions Questions (%)**

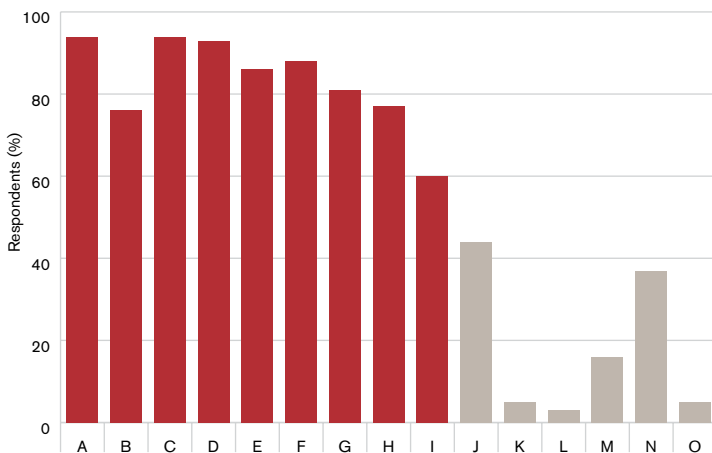


Bars in red denote positive statements, grey denote negative statements

**KEY:**

- A – I have been motivated to work to the best of my ability
- B – My tutors have helped and supported me
- C – I have been able to apply my own ideas in my work
- D – I try to act in the best interests of my pupils
- E – I felt 'at home' during my training
- F – I have the feeling of learning to do useful work
- G – I have been emotionally involved in my work
- H – I have had the resources to do my work to a standard I believe is right
- I – I can influence decisions that are important for my studies
- J – I have experienced stress during my training
- K – During my training, I have not been treated fairly
- L – My training involves tasks that have been in conflict with my personal values
- M – My training required that I hide my feelings
- N – I have not had time to do my work to a standard I believe was right
- O – During my training it has been difficult to do the right thing

**Chart 7: Experienced Teacher 'Always' and 'Mostly' Responses to Workplace Conditions Questions (%)**



Bars in red denote positive statements, grey denote negative statements

**KEY:**

- A – I am motivated to work to the best of my ability
- B – My colleagues help and support me
- C – I am able to apply my own ideas in my work
- D – I am able to act in the best interests of my pupils
- E – I feel 'at home' in my workplace
- F – I have the feeling of doing useful work
- G – I am emotionally involved in my work
- H – I have the resources to do my work to a standard I believe is right
- I – I am able to influence decisions that are important for my work
- J – I experience stress
- K – At work, I am not treated fairly
- L – My job involves tasks that are in conflict with my personal values
- M – My job requires that I hide my feelings
- N – I do not have time to do my work to a standard I believe is right
- O – At work it is difficult to do the right thing

students, I'm going to witness some fantastic teaching practice. 08 Stdt Tchr

I think personally it's where I've worked and the people I've worked with, in that I think I've been lucky, I've always been encouraged to, I've never been sort of, oh, here's a scheme of work, you must follow it rigidly, this is what we're doing, this is how we're doing it, I've been allowed the freedom to be creative, to try things out on my own, I've been encouraged to do training and do different things. 15 Exp Tchr

However, of concern was the finding that 37% of Experienced Teachers reported they 'always' or 'mostly' did not have time to do their work to a standard they believed was 'right'. This finding was echoed in the interviews where responses indicated limited space for virtuous practice. One major issue was the political climate within which teachers work and, in particular, the emphasis on performance, attainment and assessment. Policy initiatives and changes, including OFSTED inspection, the Teachers' Standards and performance related pay were named as potentially

threatening to good practice, captured by this Experienced Teacher in her interview: *What happened was you have an over-emphasis on slavish assessment levels and artificial sub-division of levels and it's only through the confidence of good leadership at school level that you can stand against this regime. So again, we come back to the key principles of intelligence and confident leadership. Now, my intelligence and confident leadership gives me the space and the trust to get on. When that door is shut, I know that I am trusted to get on with*

*the job and that they will stand between me and any unwarranted criticism, right, but if I didn't have that confident leadership, then I would feel completely exposed and I would be delivering a structured, formulaic, rigid programme of learning. 03 Exp Tchr*

It was not just Experienced Teachers who expressed concerns regarding policy initiatives and inspection regimes:

*I think, as a trainee, it didn't affect me as much because I could kind of experiment with what I wanted to do, but in terms of teaching, it was you must constantly check, you must show what OFSTED want, instead of getting students to engage with the subject, and doing projects and activities, you will need to show progress every time because that's what OFSTED want you to do to account for stuff. 04 NQT*

*The Government at the moment, they're telling us to do all these things, but those are people that are telling us to do them that aren't teachers, that they don't know what it's like on a day-to-day basis. 02 Stdt Tchr*

What seemed to have helped teachers cope with the strains of policy were colleagues and strong, supportive leadership within the school. Having the support of colleagues was a strong theme in the interviews, both as part of a mentoring framework and to share best practice and knowledge. In the questionnaire, 84% of NQTs and 76% of Experienced Teachers reported that they always or mostly felt supported by their colleagues, a sentiment echoed in a number of interviews:

*Your colleagues, I think, working with likeminded intellectual, dynamic, inspired individuals helps you to be that kind of teacher. 02 Exp Tchr*

Significant differences were found in how teachers reported having time to do their work. Experienced Teachers reported a higher pressure on time – and yet, counter-intuitively perhaps, they were more likely to report feeling that they were doing useful work.

Teachers at each career stage expressed concerns over their workload and at the impact this had on how they could develop their teaching practice. The questionnaire revealed that 37% of Experienced Teachers felt they do not have adequate time to complete their work. Student Teachers both predicted that workload would be an issue and observed colleagues in school placements suffering the effects of excessive workload.

*I think also the workloads being excessive, data, which I hate, I can see the value of it*

*but only in reason, and my school, that I've now left, was fixated on data as the answer to everything. So I think anything like that, where I didn't feel like I was able to plan lessons and teach, 'cause I was spending my whole time inputting data about national curriculum levels, when I wanted to really be planning lessons. 07 Exp Tchr*

The questionnaire results present a broadly positive story of the workplace, but in interviews teachers at all career stages were more critical of the environment in which they practiced.

#### 4.5 PREPARATION FOR VIRTUE IN PRACTICE

In interviews we asked teachers how they felt that their education had prepared them to be the kind of teacher that they wanted to be and what advice they would offer to improve the education of beginning and experienced teachers. When they talked about their aspirations, these were framed in broadly virtue-based terms, such as, wanting to be kind, honest, or fair. Hence we wanted to find out how ITE might contribute to laying the foundations for developing virtue and perhaps most significantly, practical wisdom, – and how continuing professional development (CPD) might contribute to such development. We report those findings from interviews wherein we asked participants how they felt their initial professional education had prepared them to be the kind of teacher they said they had wanted to be. Where Experienced Teachers discussed CPD, we draw upon those comments. We focus on two main aspects: the importance of role models and mentors, and how a learning community adds to teachers' lifelong development. We then discuss recent developments in ITE, as Experienced Teachers reflected on the differences they observed in new entrants to the profession, and conclude with reflections from Teacher Educators on the place of character in ITE.

It should not be surprising that the dominant theme throughout Student Teachers' and NQTs' interviews was the practical and technical skills and techniques needed to manage the classroom. They were most concerned with meeting the Teachers' Standards, with preparing for the reality of the classroom and demonstrating that they met the Standards in their NQT year. Therefore, there was a tendency to refer to performance virtues, such as resilience and perseverance, in describing their learning needs.

A significant strength of ITE courses lies in the partnerships between universities and schools,

and the importance of good mentoring was highlighted in interviews. Students valued the mentors who understood their concerns, who promoted their professional development and who were able to relate learning to the individual student. It was clear from the interviews however that the quality of experience on placement varied and was often largely dependent on individual mentors.

*I think the issue's really been, from what I've heard other people say, has been with mentors who have not really been, not really remembered what it's like to be starting out and making mistakes. 07 NQT*

Both Experienced Teachers and Teacher Educators raised concerns about the pressure on Student Teachers, as ITE had been required to respond to policy initiatives and accountability regimes despite being squeezed in duration.

*I think more support from, and more time from experienced professionals. I think the trainee that we've got with us at the moment has one hour a week with his mentor. It's crazy, isn't it? If the last time you've been in a classroom was when you, yourself, was a student aged 18, to me, that's crazy, that you have one hour a week to talk to a professional about what to do. 02 Exp Tchr*

In previous work, we have highlighted the importance of a whole school ethos in developing character (Arthur and Harrison, 2014). This whole school ethos was visible as NQTs talked about what helped them learn to be a good teacher. Where the school was described as a learning community, with an emphasis on reflection and CPD, this helped students and teachers to see the importance of developing their own practice and character.

*I'd like to be in a school that has good support as well. Lots of, mainly, sharing practices with people in the department, and other departments, so that I can become a better teacher by learning from other people, rather than being by myself. 04 NQT*

To gain a different perspective on these issues, Teacher Educators were asked about their views on the place of character in ITE. There was common agreement that character matters in good teaching and that attention was paid to applicants' characters in the selection process for entry to courses. As they talked however, it was clear in all the interviews that the emphasis was on either personality traits (such as self-confidence) or on developing performance virtues (such as resilience).



Once again, the issue of time on the course was highlighted and it was suggested by some that the pressures were so great that there was little time to pay attention to developing moral character in students. Instead, the priority was on achieving the relevant outcomes from the Teachers' Standards.

*We try and cram so much into less than a year that you can see why it wouldn't be addressed because we've got to help the trainees to meet the Teachers' Standards and a lot of that is about subject knowledge; but I think when you unpick what makes a good teacher, for me, it is some of those not so obvious characteristics that we need to help them to better understand. 11 Tchr Edcr*

Although there was common agreement that character matters in teaching, a small number of respondents questioned whether it was the responsibility of university teachers to develop character in student teachers, and even if it were, whether it was possible or desirable to do so. Some talked about fixed personality traits and others suggested that changes would happen through practical experiences, including 'life', rather than any explicit teaching. The idea that character development (as conceptualised by the Teacher Educators) was integral to the broader teaching was, however, predominant in all interviews.

*You can't change who you are as a person, so the ones who are most outgoing and you know, all singing, all dancing, that's fine, but somebody else might see another teacher like that and go, I can never be that person. No, you can't be that person, but are there some aspects that you can actually incorporate into your own practice and use in your own practice? 01 Tchr Edcr*

When educators discussed how Student Teachers learnt character strengths, the emphasis was again on learning 'professional' behaviour, about developing a particular attitude to work, and a recurring theme was the importance of appropriate, and business-like, dress. The two processes by which that learning took place were through modelling appropriate behaviour themselves as Teacher Educators and through encouraging reflection and evaluation. However, such reflection and evaluation was most frequently described as a reflection on *practice*, on what worked and what did not, rather than on whether the students respond with kindness or courage, for example.

*I'm a stickler as a tutor for things like professional appearance and punctuality,*

*attendance, all that sort of thing, you hope send out subliminal messages, you know, if somebody's phone goes off, you can say to them, have you ever heard my phone ring in a session, so that, you know, we must practice what we preach. 06 Tchr Edcr*

*We try and push forward the character skills linked to resilience, adaptability, flexibility, interpersonal skills and communication, so that is probably constantly fed through. 03 Tchr Edcr*

What Teacher Educators described was a crowded programme of study with an emphasis on passing the benchmarks of prescribed Teacher Standards, with little time for guided reflection on anything other than technique and subject knowledge.

#### 4.6 OVERALL FINDINGS

- Teachers had high expectations of the difference they can make with children, driven by a love of their subject, a natural enthusiasm to inspire young people in education and a desire to work with those young people. Previous experience of working with children often inspired respondents to choose teaching as a career.
  - Teachers in this study recognised that they have a role to play in educating for character, in partnership with parents and the rest of society. They reported the positive impact that developing character can have on learning. They saw character education as integral to their teaching, but also as something that happens through extra-curricular activities and with the help of role models.
  - Teachers saw fairness, creativity, love of learning, humour, perseverance and leadership as the six most important character strengths for good teachers, but in describing their own character strengths they reported kindness and honesty in place of leadership and perseverance in those top six.
  - At different career stages, teachers prioritised different character strengths
- needed by the 'ideal' teacher: Student Teachers valued leadership, NQTs valued teamwork, and Experienced Teachers social intelligence and honesty.
- Teachers drew upon virtue-based reasoning considerably, especially in areas of moral or practical significance. Yet rule-based reasoning dominated in specific cases – such as assessment – where rules are clear-cut, and reflect overall political and professional trends and emphases in teaching.
  - Unsurprisingly, Experienced Teachers chose rule-based reasoning less frequently than other career stages, the exception being where conflict with colleagues was implicated.
  - Key messages from data about the workplace centred on teachers' concerns about policy, workload and maintaining the passion and enthusiasm for teaching they felt at the start of their careers. Pressures on workloads, evidenced in the questionnaire responses, reduced the time and energy teachers had for reflection on their personal motivations and the kind of teacher and moral exemplar that they wished to be. However, supportive colleagues provided an important framework to help them meet the demands that they faced.
  - The data suggested that university teacher education provides an important theoretical and pedagogical context for reflecting on classroom practice. Learning by example from role models who are good mentors, is important. However, the quality of mentoring is reported to be variable.
  - Teacher Educators agreed that character matters in teaching, but had particular conceptions of character that centred on performance rather than moral virtues. This encouraged a focus on more superficial aspects of professional practice, such as dress and behaviour, at the expense of deeper reflection on the personal virtues needed for good teaching.

**'IT IS THE SUPREME ART OF THE TEACHER TO AWAKEN JOY IN CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND KNOWLEDGE.'**

**Albert Einstein**

# 5 Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the most important findings from the study in the light of the research questions raised in Section 1.

## 5.1 WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTER STRENGTHS, OR VIRTUES, NEEDED FOR GOOD TEACHING?

Previous work on what is needed for good teaching has often focused on the technical aspects (competencies) or the knowledge required (Furlong *et al.*, 2000), but, particularly in the UK, less attention has been paid to the kind of *person* a good teacher needs to be (Arthur, 2003). Of course, part of the debate relates to conceptions of good teaching. According to the virtue ethics assumptions explained in Section 2.2.2 and adopted by the Jubilee Centre, teaching is seen as 'moral work', and teachers as having 'epistemic presence' (Sockett, 2012) to carry out such work. The journey into teaching begins similarly for each career stage; with the main reported motivations being altruistic reasons, such as making a difference, and intrinsic reasons, such as passion for the subject. Extrinsic reasons were never cited exclusively, only in conjunction with the other motivating factors. Therefore we conclude that most people choosing teaching as a career do so with positive and good intent.

In this study, the character strengths reported for the 'ideal' teacher showed some variance across career stages, with Student Teachers selecting leadership, NQTs teamwork, and Experienced Teachers social intelligence more than other cohorts. This, arguably, suggests that the conceptions of what is needed by the 'good' teacher change with experience in the field. This may be in response to the learning journey that teachers undertake, from novice to expert, initially reliant on external authority, which diminishes over time as teachers develop more advanced understanding of the importance of emotional and relational dynamics in teaching.

However, although four of the selected strengths for the 'ideal' teacher – fairness, humour, love of learning and creativity – reflect the good intent discussed above, perseverance and leadership are arguably more aligned to a more instrumental understanding of teaching. The fact that we found Experienced Teachers valuing honesty and social intelligence more

than their novice counterparts suggests that teachers develop some aspects of practical wisdom (Schwartz and Sharpe, 2010) in their work over time.

## 5.2 WHAT ARE THE REPORTED CHARACTER STRENGTHS, OR VIRTUES, HELD BY TODAY'S TEACHERS?

It is important to recognise that responses to this question rely entirely on self-report; however, they offer an insight into how teachers see their strengths and how these relate to their conceptions of the 'ideal' teacher. There was a high degree of congruence between the two sets of results – with fairness, creativity, love of learning and humour appearing in both lists of the top six reported strengths – personal and ideal. The finding that perseverance and leadership feature for the 'ideal', in place of honesty and kindness for the personal, is noteworthy however. One possible interpretation of these differences is that people are attracted to teaching because they feel it is a good role for a kind and honest person, but when they enter the field, performance virtues of leadership and perseverance, appear to dominate. This is especially interesting given the fact that kindness was the most selected personal character strength (55%), but was completely absent from the top six when thinking of the character strengths needed by the 'ideal' teacher.

These questions have potential implications for ITE. If teachers see themselves as kind and honest, but needing perseverance and leadership, two courses of action can be recommended. One might favour a different conception of teaching that nurtures the personal qualities of kindness and honesty (Sockett, 2012), and another might focus on fostering leadership and perseverance to ensure teachers are appropriately prepared for their roles.

In interviews, away from the constraints of a specified list of virtues for the 'ideal', the dominance of performance virtues, such as hard-work, resilience and so on was noted. It is striking however that when teachers were asked to focus on their own strengths, descriptions moved away from the dominant discourse of competencies and techniques, and focused again on moral virtues. Teachers talked about *reconnecting* with the kind of teacher they wanted to be, which was kind, approachable, inspirational and wanting to make a difference. This raises the question of what happens to those aspirations once they are in practice.

## 5.3 HOW DO CHARACTER STRENGTHS, OR VIRTUES, INFLUENCE TEACHING IN PRACTICE?

In our analysis of the responses to dilemmas, we found no significant differences between career stage or gender in the course of actions chosen. Our priority was to understand the reasons given for the choices made. An interesting observation was that there was no apparent alignment between consensus on course of action and consensus on reasoning: some clear-cut courses of action elicited very diverse reasoning, and vice versa. This illustrates the complexity in ethical decision making in professional practice.

Many of the consequence-based reasons appeared to relate to self-motivated decisions. Hence, the fact that there were very few instances of those reasons being chosen is not so surprising, given the potentially negative social desirability bias in questionnaires. The dilemmas reveal, however, a more nuanced picture regarding the place of rules in teachers' reasoning.

NQTs and Experienced Teachers relied less on rule-based reasoning than the Student Teachers entering professional education.

'EDUCATION DESERVES EMPHATICALLY TO BE TERMED CULTIVATION OF MIND WHICH TEACHES YOUNG PEOPLE HOW TO BEGIN TO THINK.'

Mary Wollstonecraft

It would appear that students entering ITE rely on rules to navigate ethical dilemmas but this reliance diminishes with experience in the workplace. Learning through experience may contribute to the development of practical wisdom and build confidence in the teacher that allows them to interpret rules in a more nuanced way.

There were two instances, however, where the rule-based reason was the most popular choice regardless of career stage, the first concerning the assessment process, the second the principle of confidentiality with parents. Rules appear to dominate in circumstances where a teacher may feel under some kind of threat. Given the dominance of assessment processes in education, it is perhaps to be expected that teachers are fearful of undermining those processes and resort to rules to defend their position – unlike, for example, rules about school uniform, which have less direct relevance to classroom practice. Likewise, the parent-teacher dynamic can be sensitive and teachers may feel obliged to adhere more strictly to rules in order to protect that relationship.

Interestingly, these two instances occurred where a high percentage of teachers chose one course of action, suggesting clear-cut

rules may make the course of action obvious. In the confidentiality dilemma however, different rules were used to justify alternative actions, in one instance the Teachers' Standards, and in another school policy. This illustrates that different sets of rules can lead to contradictory actions, and that teachers need to develop practical wisdom to understand not only what virtues to draw upon, but also the principles behind the rules so they can adjudicate among them (Schwartz and Sharpe, 2010).

For the two dilemmas where Experienced Teachers were more likely to opt for a rule-based reason than other cohorts, both concerned potential conflicts between colleagues. Here we conjecture that Experienced Teachers prioritise protection of their relationships with team members and default to rule-based reasoning in order to distance themselves from difficult situations.

The dilemma that produced the lowest percentage of rule-based reasoning (for either possible course of action) was the first, wherein children were asking to go out in the snow. This concerned curriculum flexibility, arguably at the core of professional practice in teaching, and here respondents clearly felt confident in subjugating rules in favour of virtues of creativity, curiosity and love

of learning. There appears, therefore, to be some connection between 'high-stakes' situations, such as assessment or dealing with parents, and adherence to rule-based reasoning, compared to areas of greater professional autonomy, based within the classroom, where rules are more open to interpretation.

#### 5.4 HOW DO REGULATORY AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES FACILITATE GOOD TEACHING?

The findings from the questionnaires revealed a largely positive picture of the organisational structures within which teachers work, across both NQT and Experienced Teacher career stages. Interviews showed a more critical picture of those structures however.

Emotion in teaching is often couched in terms of passion or enthusiasm, particularly for the subject. If teachers are passionate about their work, it is likely that they will be emotionally engaged with it, or that they will *care* about their work. Hence, it is important that the workplace provides conditions conducive to passion and enthusiasm. The danger of such emotions being ignored or suppressed is the resulting disillusionment, most often described in teaching as 'burnout'.



Another related theme in the data concerned stress, the lack of available time, and unreasonable workloads (Pietarinen *et al.*, 2013; Loonstra, Brouwers and Tomic, 2009; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010; 2011). Given the emphasis that is put upon workload in teaching, the results of the questionnaire painted a mixed picture in this regard. While respondents were somewhat equivocal in their answers, concern about workload was more apparent in interviews. This may simply mean that those who volunteered for interview had particular axes to grind, but their testimonies do reflect much of the literature on changes to public services in general (Griffiths, Kippin and Stoker, 2013; Frey, Homberg and Osterloh, 2013), and education in particular (Green, 2011; Ball, 2008). As competition and accountability increase, the gap between professional altruistic motivations and working practices conducive to such motives increases. Teachers in this study were pleased to have the opportunity to discuss issues of character and virtue, arguing that these had been squeezed out of discourse by the predominance of quasi-accountability measures. The apparently relentless focus on technique, audit trails and assessment risks endangering the enthusiasm and goodwill of teachers found in this study. The finding that colleagues provide support and in some ways ameliorate the stress of such demands highlights the importance of such relationships in good teaching practice.

The challenge posed by the issue of workload has implications for how teachers are prepared for their role. Government policy can make some difference to expectations, but essentially teaching is a tough and demanding task and teachers need to be supported in developing strengths of perseverance as well as other virtues, such as perspective and teamwork, that might help to mitigate the worst effects of workload.

### 5.5 HOW CAN INITIAL AND CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION CONTRIBUTE TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF GOOD TEACHING?

It is our contention that teachers need to develop practical wisdom in order to sustain good quality as well as meaningful education in the classroom and beyond. Aristotelian theory argues that it takes time to develop and nurture practical wisdom, with experience, practice and reflection all being key ingredients of the process (Annas, 2011:27-28). However, in order to exercise practical wisdom,

one needs the underlying virtues of character. In interviews, respondents from all career stages reported that character was not emphasised in education, training or CPD programmes, and this study was often the first opportunity they had had to focus specifically on character strengths in relation to professional practice. However, two issues of concern were, first, the emphasis placed on personality traits such as self-confidence untethered from any moral constraints and, second, on exclusively developing performance virtues such as resilience (Tough, 2013). This was most conspicuously seen in the interviews with the Teacher Educators. Although this perhaps represents a pragmatic acceptance of what is needed to cope with the demands of teaching today, it leaves little space for reflection on moral virtue, on what kind of a person a teacher needs or aspires to be, and on how this might inform teaching as a profession. Teachers may be extremely resilient, with highly developed self-confidence, but without a kind or fair attitude or disposition, this may result in poor practice.

Furthermore, where both teachers and Teacher Educators reported on processes of reflection, this was most often couched in terms of reflecting on classroom practice through a 'what works' lens. Thus, the question often asked was 'how did I manage behaviour in that lesson?' as opposed to 'did I do the right (kind/fair/honest) thing for those children in that lesson?' Once again, the emphasis on coping with the brute practicalities of classroom rough and tumble squeezed the space available for a deeper kind of reflection on motives, actions and reasons (Mahoney, 2009; Sanger and Osguthorpe, 2013). The question this raises, once again, is whether technique-based training for a role such as teaching properly equips practitioners for the complexities and moral dilemmas faced in everyday practice.

The other issue of concern from the data was the reported variation in the quality of mentoring experienced by respondents. Given the importance attached to good mentoring, both in the data and in the literature (Richter *et al.*, 2013; LoCasale-Crouch *et al.*, 2012), the recent reemphasis on moral exemplars

(Damon and Colby, 2014), and in light of moves to increase school-based ITE, it is essential that consistency is maintained in standards of mentoring. While exposure to good practice is an essential part of learning, avoiding the learning of bad habits is no less important. Thus, poor mentoring not only wastes an opportunity for good learning, it also provides occasions for learning bad practice.

This research has offered a view of teaching in Great Britain in the 21st century, as seen through the lens of virtue ethics. It confirms much of what was already known internationally about *good* teaching, but does so from a British perspective, ranging across career stages, with a particular focus on the virtues needed by teachers and the complex interplay between rule-based and virtue-based decision making. It tells a story of the journey teachers make from novice to experienced practitioner. It highlights the altruistic motivations of teachers at the start of their careers. The initial education experience concentrates on the practical preparation needed to enter the workplace, responding to students' natural concern about coping in the classroom, but not to their aspirations as moral educators. As they learn from experience, and from experienced colleagues, they seem to build confidence in their professional judgement and this allows them more space to draw upon their virtues in practice, with the ultimate meta-virtue of practical wisdom coming to the fore. However, the pressures from accountability regimes, most obviously the Inspection Framework and the need to demonstrate Teacher Standards are met, limit the space available for the virtuous teacher to practice their vocation.

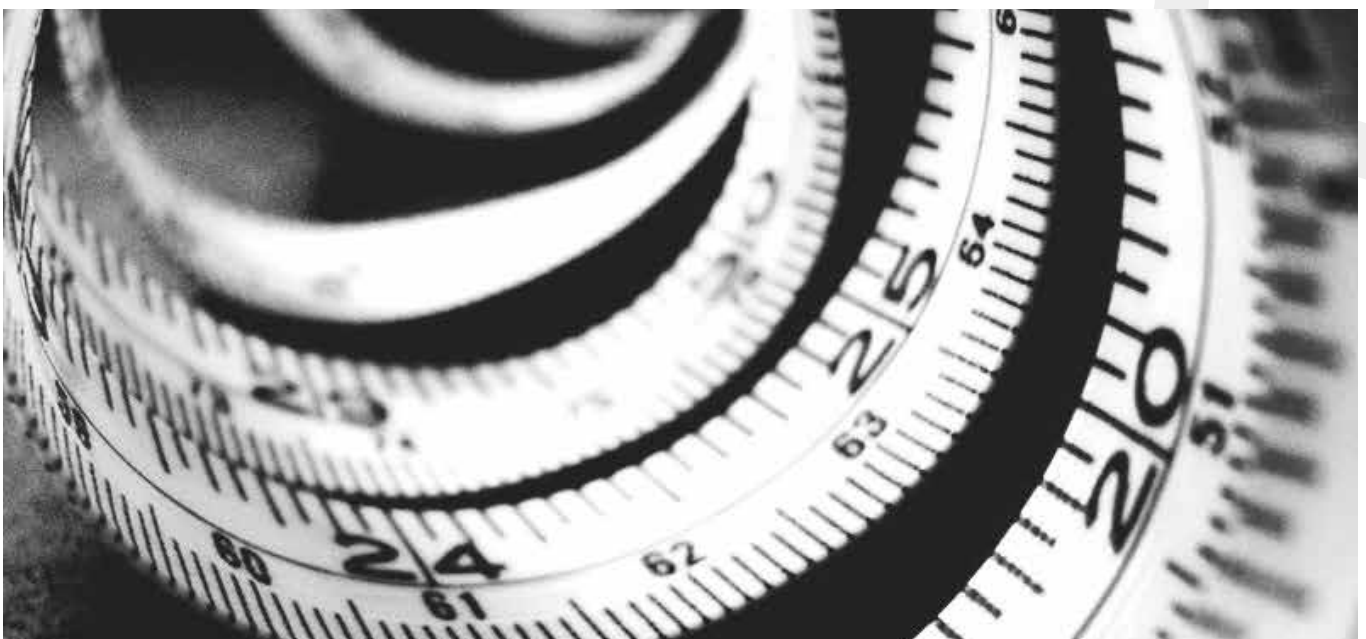
## 6 Recommendations

In light of our research findings, we propose the following recommendations:

- ITE should focus on developing the moral agency of teachers, resisting the tendency to adhere to a reductive, formulaic model of teaching. Making space for ethical reflection on practice and developing understanding of character education are two priorities.
- Insofar as teacher educators have conceptualised character in teaching in terms of rule-governed 'professional' behaviour, training for teachers should include academic input concerning the integral role of moral virtues in teaching.
- There needs to be a greater recognition of the moral importance of mentoring in teaching. Schools need to ensure that teachers have time in their workloads to allow for the proper development of mentoring, through good quality training and shared standards of moral and practical excellence.
- Emphasis on moral character is needed throughout a teacher's career, and needs to be reflected in CPD programmes, such as the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues Advanced Workshop programme, to ensure that momentum is maintained and the early enthusiasm of teachers wanting to make a difference is sustained.
- The shift in educational emphasis from character to technical competency and subject knowledge, and from teacher professionalism to accountability, needs to be realigned with the core values of good teaching. Policy makers, school management and governors need to pay proper attention to issues of character in their practice, and to ensure that this is given priority in future planning.

'ONE LOOKS BACK WITH APPRECIATION TO THE BRILLIANT TEACHERS, BUT WITH GRATITUDE TO THOSE WHO TOUCHED OUR HUMAN FEELINGS. THE CURRICULUM IS SO MUCH NECESSARY RAW MATERIAL, BUT WARMTH IS THE VITAL ELEMENT FOR THE GROWING PLANT AND FOR THE SOUL OF THE CHILD.'

**Carl Jung**



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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Expert Panel Process

### STAGE 1: FIRST MEETING WITH EXPERT PANEL:

- Introduction to the project and its aims.
- Introduction to the VIA 24 character strengths.
- Examples of SJT's used to assess ethical judgement in professionals context (eg, EHCI, Rezlar...)
- Brainstorming exercise of what kinds of dilemmas teachers may experience in their professional practice. These were grouped into categories (eg, assessment, dealing with parents, enforcing 'unfair' rules etc...).
- Experts then broke into small groups to work on coming up with dilemmas and courses of action which sat within each category.
- The outcome of the first session was four draft dilemmas with a number of draft courses of action.

### STAGE 2: EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH EXPERT PANEL:

- A rough draft of the scenarios was prepared, based on the four the panel had devised, and two that they had discussed, but had not got as far as devising. This document was emailed around panel, and they were asked to come to the next meeting having thought about their feedback on the scenarios, and some possible courses of action for each.

### STAGE 3: SECOND MEETING OF EXPERT PANEL:

- The panel worked through each scenario, clarifying wording and 'realism', then took each scenario in turn as a group to agree 2 or 3 plausible courses of action.
- One scenario was then discussed by the group as a whole, with 5–6 reasons developed for each course of action. These reasons were then mapped onto some of the 24 character strengths to give one 'complete' scenario as a working example.

### STAGE 4: EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH EXPERT PANEL (2):

- The six dilemmas and courses of action were prepared, (plus the one fully developed with reasons as an example) in the questionnaire format, and circulated to panel by email.
- The panel were each allocated two dilemmas (so each dilemma was worked on by two panel members independently), and asked to come up with 5–6 reasons for each of those dilemma's courses of action, indicating 1 or 2 of the 24 character strengths that their reasons mapped onto. They returned these by email.
- Reasons were re-sent to the panel in the questionnaire format for their feedback (on the validity/appropriateness of the reasons, and whether they thought these had been mapped onto the correct character strengths).

### STAGE 5: EXPOSURE TO WIDER EXPERT AUDIENCE

- Once the panel had agreed the scenarios, courses of actions and reasons (and mapped strengths) these were circulated to two meetings of mentors (forty-plus in total) – one internal to the University, one external – to validate the dilemmas and courses of action as plausible, and that the strengths mapped onto the reasons were appropriate.

# Research Team

## **JAMES ARTHUR – PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

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Professor James Arthur, Director of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, is the Head of the School of Education and Professor of Education. He has written extensively on the relationship between theory and practice in education, particularly the links between communitarianism, social virtues, citizenship, religion and education. A leading expert in the field of character and values, James is also Editor of the *British Journal of Educational Studies* and Director of CitizED, an organisation in higher education promoting citizenship.

## **KRISTJÁN KRISTJÁNSSON – PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

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Professor Kristján Kristjánsson is a Deputy Director in the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, and Professor of Character Education and Virtue Ethics. He is also an editorial board member of the *Journal of Moral Education*. Kristján leads and oversees all the research activities in the Centre and has written widely on moral education, with his main area of interest being research in character and virtues at the intersection between moral philosophy, moral psychology and moral education.

## **SANDRA COOKE – PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

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Dr Sandra Cooke is a Research Fellow at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. To date her academic interests have been to explore the confusions around the use of practical wisdom (phronesis) to understand practice in the 'people' professions. With a background in Social Policy, she is particularly keen to understand policy influences on how people of character practice their professions, and make use of practical wisdom in practice.

## **EMMA BROWN**

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Emma joined the Centre in early 2014, as a Research Associate for *The Good Teacher* project. Prior to joining the Centre Emma worked as a Clinical Assistant Psychologist in a range of settings.

## **DAVID CARR**

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Professor David Carr is Professor of Ethics and Education at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, and Emeritus Professor at The University of Edinburgh. David has written widely in the areas of virtue ethics and moral education, the nature of professionalism and professional ethics, aesthetics, and education of the emotions.



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