

Leadership of Character Education

Developing Virtues and Celebrating
Human Flourishing in Schools





A teal-colored background on the left side of the page, featuring several circular cutouts. Through these cutouts, parts of people's heads and shoulders are visible, suggesting a group of people in a meeting or discussion. The cutouts are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and focus on the human element of the document's content.

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Executive Summary

This report joins a growing dynamic discourse of research and reflection on the importance of character education in schools, building on key thinking and recommendations from research centres including the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham and NICER (National Institute for Christian Education Research) at Canterbury Christ Church University. It builds on the influence of the Church of England Education Office's 'The Fruit of the Spirit' discussion paper, and places leadership of character education at the heart of any school's approach to developing and celebrating human flourishing through:

- **clear definition** of what we mean by character education
- **theological reflection** on the Christian inspiration for the leadership of character education, in the context of a range of other starting points, including virtue ethics;
- consideration of the importance of **leadership virtues** lived out in action amongst staff and their impact on the effectiveness of character education;
- analysis and application of a range of **leadership models** to support leaders in developing and embedding their approach;
- provision of a **suite of practical resources** to empower school leaders in using the Church of England Vision for Education, Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good to inform and underpin their approach.

Our definition of character education is:

Character education seeks to develop and celebrate the flourishing of individuals, communities, families and societies, through the cultivation and encouragement of an expansive range of moral, spiritual, intellectual, civic and performance character virtues. It is central to a Christian vision for education for 'life in all its fullness' and is concerned with developing virtues seeing them as 'character in action', grown through experience and demonstrated over time in word and deed.

Character education equips young people to grow in wisdom, hope, community and dignity and is shaped by an understanding of God at work in the world, present and active in shaping each individual's developmental story. It is fundamental to the pursuit of academic excellence, and stands at the heart of all aspirational teaching, learning and pastoral care.

Although character can and should be taught explicitly in schools, it is frequently also caught implicitly through role-modelling and relationship. Therefore, the deliberate embedding of leadership virtues in staff teams is pivotal to the long-term impact of any character education initiative or programme.

Effective character education will have a legacy far beyond the school gates, impacting young people as friends, neighbours, parents, team members and employees, benefitting both the individuals themselves, their wider communities and broader society.

In seeking to support leaders in framing their thinking theologically, the Christian inspiration for leading character education is outlined, through tracing this central biblical thread through Old Testament narrative and wisdom literature, the life and teachings of Jesus, and Paul's letters to the early church. The importance of Aristotle's thinking on character is explored through considering the impact of two key concepts (eudaimonia – human flourishing, and phronesis – practical wisdom) for leaders in schools. Through focusing on developing leadership virtues across staff teams, school leaders can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of character education. Leadership virtues are character in action and a crucial factor in the impact of character education – **the leadership of character is determined by the character of leadership**.

Through underlining the importance of developing and celebrating the virtues, a range of contemporary leadership models are unpacked in relation to character education. These exemplar models, drawn from a broad range of sectors (Fullan's Framework for Leadership, Kotter's 8-stage change management model and Spears' model of Servant Leadership) are interpreted for leaders to give a range of very practical steps that they can take to improve their leadership of character education, recognising their key role-model status within the school community.

The Church of England Vision for Education, Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good stands at the heart of our approach to leadership of character education. Through its programmes, networks and research, the Church of England's Foundation for Educational Leadership aims:

"To develop inspirational leaders who are called, connected and committed to deliver the Church of England vision for education."

To support school leaders in bringing this vision alive in their own context, a wide range of practical resources are provided, and can be used by individuals or within teams to enable reflection on how the school's ethos might enhance its outcomes. Finally, a 6-step methodology is offered to support school leaders in implementation of their thinking in this area:

1	Recognise the fundamental interdependence of character education and academic excellence for developing and celebrating human flourishing
2	Reflect deeply on the impact of Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good in relation to character education
3	Define clearly the particular virtues you are seeking for your context
4	Consider the potential impact of a variety of leadership models in developing leadership virtues in staff across your organisation
5	Share this vision for character education frequently and consistently as leaders (in words and deeds), creating opportunities for reinforcement and celebration whenever possible by all
6	Invest proactively in the development of the leadership virtues necessary to develop and celebrate the approach to character across all teams



1. Setting the Context

This project has been prompted by two significant pieces of work – first, the Church of England Education Office’s publication ‘The Fruit of the Spirit’¹ (also published in partnership with the Jubilee Centre in Autumn 2015), which outlined a range of stimulating approaches to the development of character education in schools, securely grounded in a breadth of pedagogical and theological reflection. It explored the origins and nature of character education, offering reflections on the particular light that a Christian worldview sheds on the issue. In drawing on a range of case studies, it showcased excellent practical ideas for schools to use in developing their approaches to character education. The report underlined the centrality of the formation of pupils’ character within the core moral purpose of a school, re-iterating the importance of character within the Church of England’s concern for education nationally:

“The current interest in character education provides an excellent opportunity to re-invigorate the conversation about the kind of people we aspire to be, the kind of world we aspire to create and therefore the kind of education we aspire to provide. These questions are at the core of the Church’s mission in education and always have been.”
(‘The Fruit of the Spirit’ p.5)

‘The Fruit of the Spirit’ joined a growing educational discourse around the importance of character education including, for example, the Department for Education’s recently published ‘Developing Character Skills’ report².

Second, the specific focus on leadership in this report has been prompted by the findings of a research project undertaken in partnership with NICER (National Institute for Christian Education Research at Canterbury Christ Church University). The 2016 What If Learning report into character development³ highlighted the need for schools to be specific about virtues rather than broadly promoting ‘good character’ and to develop virtue literacy amongst staff, emphasising the importance of “strong pedagogical leadership at senior level within the school” (What If Learning Character Development Report 2016, p. 11).

A dynamic partnership has continued between the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership and the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, the research centre based at the University of Birmingham. This partnership has recognised the importance of leadership as the central driver of any school’s approach to character education, and has thus explored the practical steps that school leaders can take to create, sustain and embed approaches to character education, through consideration of leadership virtues. The current project has drawn

together over 350 school leaders from across the country through a series of regional and national conferences. These events have sought to bring together rigorous academic thinking, practical leadership case studies, and reflection on the impact of the Church of England Vision for Education⁴, ‘Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good’ on leaders formulating their approach to character education and human flourishing.

Throughout the partnership we have found significant resonances between the explicitly Christian approach of the Church and the predominantly neo-Aristotelian approach of the Jubilee Centre. Nevertheless, there are significant differences and in this report we have attempted to explore those differences in dialogue with each other.

The Jubilee Centre’s Framework for Character Education⁵ provides a tool to help schools reflect on and evaluate the way that they approach character in their own context:

“Human flourishing is the widely accepted goal of life. To flourish is not only to be happy, but to fulfil one’s potential. Flourishing is the ultimate aim of character education. Human flourishing requires the acquisition and development of intellectual, moral, and civic virtues...and generic virtues of self-management. All are necessary to achieve the highest potential in life. Character education teaches the acquisition and strengthening of virtues: the traits that sustain a well-rounded life and a thriving society.”
(‘Framework for Character Education’, 2017 revised version, p. 1)

The Church of England Vision for Education, ‘Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good’ takes its inspiration from John 10.10 and is centred on, “educating for life in all its fullness”, and is clear about the centrality of human flourishing therein:

“Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework.”
(Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good p. 2)

School leaders can use these starting points to place character formation at the heart of their vision for school life. It is also vital to link the development of character and the improvement of performance outcomes within the school, with character education seen as one of the key foundations for improved attainment. The most effective school leaders recognise the critical interdependence of these two elements and hold them in a dynamic and empowering tension.

A leader's core conviction of the importance of character will define the culture of their school, and indeed be shaped by the leadership virtues that they themselves demonstrate, including for example confidence, compassion and perseverance. Equally their passionate and tenacious pursuit of the very highest academic standards as an inherently valuable and central part of human flourishing in schools will also be grounded in modelling of leadership virtues, including, for example, resourcefulness, motivation and determination.

In focusing on the development and celebration of human flourishing in schools, this report begins by outlining the Christian inspiration for the leadership of character education (Section 2), unpacks the importance of developing leadership

virtues in school teams (Section 3), before providing some practical tools for leaders to use in unpacking 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' in their own leadership contexts (Section 4). The case studies contained throughout the document illustrate practical and sustainable ways in which schools have developed their approach to this work, and root such activities in the wider work of the Foundation.

Reading the Case Studies – Developing Leadership Virtues

Throughout this report, we are delighted to share a range of case studies that have been showcased at our national events throughout 2017. They are provided firstly with the intention of sharing some helpful, practical ideas that school leaders can adapt and embed in their own contexts. Our selection of case studies throughout this report shows a variety of approaches towards flourishing in schools: some are tightly focused on particular virtues, such as hospitality or compassion; others show an emphasis on leadership development in pupils; and yet others focus on longer-term effects, such as the impact that character education can have on future employability. However, we secondly seek to focus on the leadership virtues that have enabled these approaches to flourish. School leaders who can concentrate their attention both on pupils' character development and on their colleagues' virtues in action are likely to be able to generate positive change in a more effective manner. When reading the case studies throughout the report, consider the following questions:

- Which elements of the case study resonate with you as a leader?
- What are the key leadership issues associated with the case study and how could their impact be extended and grown?
- What kind of leadership virtues might you need to embed a similar approach in your own context?



Case Study

Teaching about character through collective worship, St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Sunderland

St Paul's is a one-form entry primary school, serving the community of Ryhope in Sunderland. The school revised its approach to collective worship to ensure that it was underpinned by biblical approaches to character development that could easily be transferred into daily life by pupils. Leaders wanted to help their pupils respond to the challenges of life, by developing their self-confidence and empowering others by reflecting on messages from the Bible in the context of their own character and flourishing.

The school's tagline is, 'Something Special Happens Here'. Not only do leaders think about moral virtues, but promote civic virtues so that pupils and staff can make the links between how they, as individuals, impact on our school family, and then beyond within the local / global community wherever they are in the world. In its most basic sense, that means teaching pupils to always look out for each other. Seeing things from someone else's point of view is important and this notion underpins all school policies.

Leadership virtues in action:

Teamwork: Senior leaders have recognised that investing in empowering staff, through building their self-confidence and self-esteem, is crucial to the sense of family that is created in the school. As adults are valued, so they model the same to the pupils, who can also feel part of the team

Faith: Leaders have placed biblical teaching on character through collective worship at the heart of their approach to character formation and flourishing. This has ensured that character education is not simply a morally-neutral pursuit, but rather one with a clear faith source.

Service: Central to the teaching around character in collective worship has been the application in day-to-day situations. This has focused character not simply on values, but on virtues – i.e. 'character in action'



2. Our Christian Inspiration for Leading Character Education

The development and outworking of character in action is central to a Christian view of human flourishing and stands at the heart of the biblical narrative. It is a theme traced, for example, through the Old Testament journey of the people of God; the exhortation to cultivate practical wisdom throughout Proverbs; the life and teaching of Jesus and indeed the foundational principles of Christian formation outlined by Paul in his epistles to the early church. Biblical approaches to character formation (and the resultant outworking in action and response) – for example, the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ passage in Galatians 5.22–23 – also stand in the context of a range of other helpful starting points for thinking about character, including virtue ethics. For school leaders looking to embed the passionate pursuit of their pupils’ (and indeed their colleagues’) flourishing, a deeper understanding of this range of starting points will enrich both thinking and practice.

Such exploration can help leaders reflect on why character education is so important in schools, how it might be shaped for pupils and staff, and what sort of leadership virtues need to be developed in practice. This focus on leadership virtues frames the case studies, and shapes an approach to school leadership that can facilitate the long-term impact of character education development in schools. Hugely positive steps forward have clearly been made in school leadership through the language of values, not least in helping schools articulate their particular identity, their distinctive characteristics and their overall direction. However, moving the focus from values to virtues enables leaders to focus more fully on the behaviours and actions that define the individual pupil, teacher or leader. This focus on virtues is central to our Christian inspiration for character education for pupils, and underpins our vision for leadership in schools, where effective leaders are creating a culture that proactively develops leadership virtues in staff.

Defining Character Education

The Jubilee Centre’s Framework for Character Education sets out a clear understanding and definition of Character Education, based the centrality of virtues in moral development and ethical decision making:

“Character education includes all explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people develop positive personal strengths called virtues...Students need to decide wisely the kind of person they wish to become and to learn to choose between already existing alternatives or to find new ones. In this process, the ultimate aim of character education is the development of good sense, or practical wisdom; the capacity to choose intelligently between alternatives.”

(‘Framework for Character Education’, 2017 revised version, p. 2)

The ‘Fruit of the Spirit’ discussion paper offers a wide range of stimulating reflections on the nature and purpose of Character Education, setting out insights into Christian approaches to character, framed within a commitment to inclusivity. It draws, for example, on the influential thinking of the What If Learning approach, arguing that:

“Character is formed by the year-in, year-out development of patterns of thought, response and behaviour that become part of who we are. Following Christ is not, in the final analysis, about keeping rules, nor even about following Christian principles and values, as important as rules, values and principles are. Rather it is being a particular type of person, one who is shaped by Jesus’ teaching; someone whose life is an embodied anticipation of the Kingdom yet to come.”

(‘The Fruit of the Spirit’ p.10)

Both documents offer important insights into this field and are essential reading for leaders seeking to develop their approach to character education in schools. They demonstrate that there is significant common ground and shared understanding between a range of starting points for understanding character education. Before unpacking some of the specifically Christian inspiration for the importance of character formation, and reflecting deeply on the impact of two key virtue ethics concepts within this field, it is important to state clearly what we mean by character education and its central purpose within a deeply Christian approach to education:

Character education seeks to develop and celebrate the flourishing of individuals, communities, families and societies, through the cultivation and encouragement of an expansive range of moral, spiritual, intellectual, civic and performance character virtues. It is central to a Christian vision for education for 'life in all its fullness' and is concerned with developing virtues seeing them as 'character in action', grown through experience and demonstrated over time in word and deed.

Character education equips young people to grow in wisdom, hope, community and dignity and is shaped by an understanding of God at work in the world, present and active in shaping each individual's developmental story. It is fundamental to the pursuit of academic excellence, and stands at the heart of all aspirational teaching, learning and pastoral care.

Although character can and should be taught explicitly in schools, it is frequently also caught implicitly through role-modelling and relationship. Therefore, the deliberate embedding of leadership virtues in staff teams is pivotal to the long-term impact of any character education initiative or programme.

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Case Study

Developing Pupil Leadership through Character Education – Welwyn St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Welwyn St Mary's is a medium-sized, two-form entry primary school in the village of Welwyn, in the London outer fringe. The school has created and embedded a range of dynamic leadership opportunities for pupils based on the development of their character. These have included an innovative Peer Mediator Programme focusing on pupil relationships, and a wide range of other pupil leadership roles within the school, including school council, environmental groups and sports leadership. Training programmes have been well focused and over time, the focus on character education has provided a rich framework for developing pupil leaders.

Through focusing on pupils' character development in leadership, the school has seen a great increase in the proportion of children wanting to serve as leaders, and has also embedded a culture where service is a tradition and a norm. The school recognises the importance of highlighting and celebrating their values constantly through collective worship, pedagogy and behavioural expectations, whilst recognising that the development of servant leadership within their pupils has made a significant impact on the sense of mutual flourishing across the school, for both staff and pupils.

It is true that the vast majority of schools will have pupil leadership opportunities, but the principle here of basing these opportunities in the development of pupils' character, particularly in relation to service, has been fundamental to culture created in this school context.

Leadership virtues in action:

Servanthood: Leaders have established an approach to pupil leadership that has focused on servanthood and placing others first. This has been modelled by staff, creating a strong culture of giving and respect, enabling all members of the community to flourish together.

Confidence: Leaders have placed their confidence in their pupils, not giving lip-service to the notion of leadership development, but rather allowing pupils to take on a wide range of leadership opportunities that make a significant difference to the culture and ethos of the school.

Humility: Leaders embody humility in their approach to development of character through pupil leadership. They provide opportunities for pupils to take on real leadership issues and, through their humility, have seen pupils grow in confidence and dedication to one another.



The Purpose of Character Education – Developing and Celebrating Human Flourishing

The pursuit of human flourishing for pupils and staff is an aspirational goal, which goes far beyond any reductionist approach towards simply improving academic outcomes. Our vision for ‘life in all its fullness’ offers a different perspective on the pressure that school leaders can feel under to make an artificial binary choice between academic rigour and the well-being or character development of their pupils. The development of character is fundamental to any serious pursuit of sustained improvement in academic outcomes, and is central to excellent learning experiences within the classroom. This means that the purpose of character education is not centred merely on moral decision making, but more broadly synergises the performance character virtues with the spiritual; the intellectual with the civic; sees pupils holistically through God’s eyes, and treats them with requisite levels of ambition and grace.

The notion of human flourishing set out in our thinking draws significantly on Aristotle, and especially on his conception of **eudaimonia**. The meaning of eudaimonia can be traced etymologically from its roots of ‘eu’ (good) and ‘daimon’ (spirit), refers to the notion of human flourishing, and can be considered from a number of viewpoints. Those viewpoints include physical flourishing (which may include for example food, drink, exercise, health and rest); emotional flourishing (which may include consideration of our desires, feelings and reactions); societal flourishing (that is living well together, in relation to others, in community) and fourthly, flourishing in terms of personal creativity, self-expression and knowledge seeking.

At its heart, human flourishing requires not merely the presence or understanding of good character, but actual activity or outworking through real examples of the virtues in action. This is what great school leaders develop and celebrate in their pupils and colleagues – character in action, human flourishing. Such flourishing will be both on an individual level, frequently outworked in personal acts of service for the common good, and on a societal level, where individuals seek to build a more effective community through their service-based actions.

When considering the breadth of intellectual, moral, civic, performance and spiritual virtues, human flourishing is a rich tapestry, with each virtue interweaving and interacting

with one another. However, there can be a danger of reducing this approach to character simply to another list of things to get better at – another measuring stick for school leaders to aspire to, and another pressure for pupils simply to get better at by trying harder. As we shall see, the Christian inspiration for character development clearly implores humans to refine and develop their character in action for the long term. However, equally important in Christian terms is the notion that God, through the Holy Spirit, is at work in each individual, family, community and society, shaping and developing character by grace, not simply through increased human effort and moral fortitude.

Our Christian inspiration for developing character virtues

Whilst acknowledging that no single faith tradition can reasonably claim a monopoly on the understanding or interpretation of virtues such as honesty, humility or respect, it is nonetheless essential to affirm our deeply Christian inspiration for the leadership of character education. Throughout the unfolding story of the people of God in the Old Testament, there are numerous inspiring examples of leaders whose character formation is unpacked through significant twists and turns, and often over a long period of time. In this context, one might consider the character development and leadership virtues seen in the life of Moses, encompassing a battle over slavery, political freedom, sustaining hope in the wilderness, or of Joseph – dealing with family, betrayal, career progression and ethical decision making, or of Ruth – demonstrating perseverance, faith and wisdom. The Wisdom literature of Proverbs, to which we shall return below, tells and re-tells the critical importance of the development of character in decision-making, and of the consequences of failing to do so. Indeed, the personification of Wisdom in this part of the Old Testament is outlined for example in Proverbs 4.5–9:

“Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honour you. She will give you a garland to grace your head and present you with a glorious crown.”

In the New Testament, the notion of ‘life in all its fullness’ cannot be understood without explicit reference to the Christian’s response to God, through the development of character which is enacted in daily life. The gospels are full of persuasive parables, through which Jesus taught his disciples that the Kingdom is defined not merely by words but through faithful actions, which reveal the human’s character, and their response to God. We can see this clearly in parables such as The Good Samaritan, The Unforgiving Servant and The Prodigal Son, where the required response to God is in character outworked in action. Indeed, Jesus says clearly what he was specifically looking for in his followers, and the kind of defining love-in-action that he hoped would mark them out:

“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

(John 13.34–35)

Jesus models this frequently, for example, showing his closest followers what the virtues of service and humility meant, not merely by talking about them, but by washing their feet shortly before his own arrest, trial and crucifixion. In understanding that the development of character and moral behaviour was not simply the task of the individual to become better by human effort alone but rather that such improvement and development is the work of the Spirit in each individual, the Christian conception sees the virtues as more theocentric. The implications for school leadership are releasing and may find particular expression in the way collective worship is organised and led, recognising that these virtues can be prayed for and infused, rather than simply exhorting one another to work harder at developing them.

Paul’s letters serve as rich unpacking of this thinking for the early churches, seeing Christ at work in the lives and development of the believers, for example stating,

“For I am confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will continue to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

(Philippians 1.6)

The famous Galatians 5 flourish of virtues – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – combine with the inspiration of 1 Corinthians 13 and its focus on faith, hope and love to show a deep Christian concern with the development of character, shown not in words, but in action. This will

resonate with a central concern of the most effective school leaders – namely to encourage and celebrate character development in action, not simply in words. New Testament scholar NT Wright unpacks the relationship between the Aristotelian understanding of virtue and the positions put forward by the gospel writers and Paul in his insightful book ‘Virtue Reborn’⁶. Although acknowledging the similarities of approach with Aristotle, Wright focuses on the impact of 1 Corinthians 13 in positioning love as a virtue, not merely a set of rules and principles by which to live. With characteristic flair, he speaks of love as,

“...a language to be learned, a musical instrument to be practiced, a mountain to be climbed via some steep and tricky cliff paths but with the most amazing view from the top. It is one of the things that will last; one of the traits of character which provides a genuine anticipation of that complete humanness we are promised at the end. And it is one of the things therefore which can be anticipated in the present on the basis of the future goal, the telos, which is already given in Jesus Christ. It is part of the future that can be drawn down into the present.”

(NT Wright, Virtue Reborn p.157)

Furthermore, in Colossians 3, having outlined a wide range of moral and ethical instructions to his readers, Paul then goes on to say:

“Therefore as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience...And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

(Colossians 3. 12, 14)

Among the many Christian thinkers to develop these notions further, Augustine remains foundational to Christian interpretation of the scriptures. Augustine followed Ambrose in espousing the notion of using the theological virtues of faith, hope and love as a lens through which to understand the classical Greek cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance and justice, so deeply embedded in the world of Plato, Socrates and Aristotle. Augustine interprets each of the cardinal virtues through the lens of love in action, drawing on Paul’s writing to the Corinthians:

“What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.”

Augustine beautifully articulates the motivation for one of the most common ways that schools may attempt to develop pupils' character, namely through acts of service. Charity events, pupil leadership development, volunteering, international service opportunities all essentially seek to develop this notion of virtue in action, and should, wherever possible, be pursued by schools as integral to their pupils' development. Thomas Aquinas builds on this notion, crucially seeing the virtues not as simply something for humans to pursue on their own, but that their acquisition was dependent on God infusing each individual with them through the working of grace. Aquinas recognised the requirement for the virtues to be present, but also highlighted the need for God to transform our human nature, to perfect it, for human flourishing to occur. Thus, our approach to the leadership of character education is rooted within the context of the unfolding relationship with, and response to, God.

The Church of England Vision for Education: 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'

The Church of England Vision for Education, 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good', draws together incisive pedagogical thinking and rich theological reflection to provide a common language and persuasive mandate for leaders seeking a deeper educational experience for their staff and students. It is a compelling and inspiring vision for education which has gained significant resonance with educational leaders in a wide variety of both church and community school contexts across the country since its publication in 2016. It offers enriching insights into the Christian inspiration for these key terms to support leaders in bringing it to life in their own contexts, through the centrality of promoting "life in all its fullness". Our shared task as leaders in education is to bring the Vision off the shelf (both literally and metaphorically), evaluating its potential impact on every area of day-to-day school life, to bring the vision alive.

The Vision for Education is organised around four central themes, which are all helpful examples of virtues to be developed in character education, and indeed stand as core leadership virtues that should be developed amongst staff. A variety of practical tools are provided in Section 4 to support unpacking this vision in relation to the leadership of character education in schools.

Leading Character Education for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills

There may be no more important leadership virtue for an effective school leader than that of wisdom. The extent to which leaders can model, develop and celebrate practical wisdom within their context is pivotal to the success of their school and the flourishing of their community. The Vision for Education states that, "good schools foster confidence, delight and discipline," and through doing so, help pupils to develop, "the skills to shape life well" (Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, p. 7). This is a vision for leaders who wish to fully embrace the pursuit of academic excellence, but also to fully pursue the development of their pupils' character formation, and their human flourishing in its fullest sense. Embracing this vision requires commitment and integrity, but will be rewarded by young people who do indeed have the skills and motivation to become good citizens, parents, employees and leaders. It will also require perseverance to provide an environment where the development of character can be practised (and thus improved). Character traits are not simply switches to be turned on and off, or lesson objectives to be achieved, but necessitate school leaders' long-term investment in their formation, and the patience of wisdom that comes with this.

Leading Character Education for Hope and Aspiration

The development of character is a long-term prospect. It is not easily measured or tracked, may not obviously change in the course of each one-hour teaching period, and is not a linear journey. Essential therefore to the school leader seeking this development is a deep sense of hope, and a long-term view of the students in their care. Hope can colour and enhance each interaction, and will change the language used in the most challenging conversations. Indeed, the embodiment of hope by the school leader may be one of the most fundamental building blocks for learning of any pupil. Drawing on the Christian inspiration for hope, it is not simply a matter of hoping that things get better of their own accord, but demonstrating confidence in the notion that God is at work through his grace, for human flourishing to occur. Great leaders embody this, spot it in others and celebrate deliberately whenever and wherever they find it. It is foundational to character education, in the sense of the breadth of aspiration the school leader has for the child concerned, reaching far beyond the limitations of academic achievement alone.

Case Study

Developing, Sustaining and Celebrating Character Development through The Archbishop of York Youth Trust – Young Leaders Award

The Young Leaders Award is a unique active-citizenship programme that empowers young people to make a difference in their local communities by developing their leadership skills and encouraging them to “be the change they want to see”. The Awards run from KS2 to Post 16 and have strong links to SMSC, British Values, PSHE, Character Education, Citizenship and RE. At all Key Stages pupils explore: what leadership is; what character is; investigate the stories and impact of great leaders in society; the importance of serving others; and examine the role they themselves can play to bring unity to their communities, supporting and looking after the most vulnerable. Pupils learn the skills required to lead others, working in teams to complete mini-challenges. Each Award requires pupils to take action through volunteering projects. These are carried out individually in their communities and through team projects in their school community and in the wider community, locally, nationally or globally.

Through the Award pupils:

- Develop in wisdom, knowledge and the skills needed to be effective servant leaders. They grow in confidence and emotional intelligence, and use their creativity and leadership skills to be good citizens, actively making a difference to the lives of others. (Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge & Skills)
- Identify injustice and prejudice in our world, growing in generosity and compassion. They explore how to bring hope to others in their communities; learning to communicate effectively and to break down barriers that can exist between generations. (Educating for Hope & Aspiration)

- Learn to relate, co-operate and support one another. They develop a sense of social responsibility, recognising individual worth, and use their practical actions to set an example of ‘being the change you want to see’. (Educating for Community & Living Well Together)
- Celebrate diversity in the way they serve and partner with people from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. (Educating for Dignity & Respect)

Leadership Virtues in action:

Service: Leaders embody the Awards programme through acts of service; they focus their energies on developing character in young people, not in words, but in action, and through loving social action projects they communicate the values of putting others first and central to leadership development.

Teamwork: Leaders prioritise teamwork and mutual flourishing through their approach to the Awards. They celebrate team development and recognise that staff and pupils are stronger when they work together.

Citizenship: Leaders give young people a wider vision for society, and their part in it. This is counter to the overly individualised approach to learning and progress that can characterise much of our pedagogy.

Leading Character Education for Community and Living Well Together

Human flourishing cannot occur in a vacuum – it is an inherently social phenomenon or experience. The pursuit of societal flourishing therefore is foundational to school leaders' approach to character education. If we are indeed "only persons with each other, inextricably involved with others" (Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, p. 7), then the leadership of character education will chiefly consider individuals as members of teams, networks and communities, making one another stronger through their co-construction and evaluation of task.

Very few character virtues can make much sense without reference to other people, as they usually imply an outworking in action towards another. This is particularly true of the moral virtues (e.g. compassion, gratitude, humility) and the civic virtues (e.g. community, citizenship, service, volunteering), and stands in comparison to a reductionist approach to education leadership which can over-individualise each pupil for the purposes of measurement. The pursuit of performance virtues should be set in a wider context of living well together. The extension of the school's definition beyond its own walls can be a key measure of the effectiveness of its approach to character education; those that have really grasped the nature of service will be doing so far beyond the obvious boundaries of their school community, and will be contributing significantly to the flourishing of society at large.

Leading Character Education for Dignity and Respect

To recognise that "the ultimate worth of each person is central to good education" (Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, p. 7) is to consider all members of the community in a holistic manner, and, as a leader, to be concerned with their individual flourishing in the broadest sense. Dignity is a necessary pre-cursor to academic learning and progress in any effective classroom, and equally stands as a key starting point for the development of character. In treating another person with dignity, effective school leaders embrace the individual regardless

of background and pre-conception and assume that anything is (still) possible. They provide necessary and targeted resources for virtue development, including patience where necessary, and champion a vision of personal growth in character that is relentlessly celebrated at every turn. In so doing, they are doing as Jesus did, in "paying special attention to the disadvantaged, excluded, despised and feared" (Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, p. 11).

Leading Character Education – Developing Practical Wisdom

The meta-virtue **phronesis** is commonly translated as 'practical wisdom', and refers not to the acquisition of knowledge or skills but rather the practical outworking of wisdom in decision-making, forming an overarching meta-virtue necessary for good character. It is the development of the ability to choose wisely, often between alternatives which may clash. For pupils, this may be found in the playground where, following a disagreement with a friend, and challenged by a teacher as to 'who started this?' the pupil is faced with the difficult decision between the two laudable virtues of honesty and loyalty. Effective character education should seek to move beyond teaching values in schools towards the embedding of a virtues within the school culture, but the ability of schools to develop this meta-virtue of practical wisdom marks out those institutions which demonstrate the most effective approaches.

This notion of responding out of wise character is not limited to pupils, but has pervasive implications for school leaders. It is not concerned with a simply technical or mechanical approach to leadership of character, but rather an instinctive and intuitive maturity of the leader that synergises and responds effectively and consistently, revealing their character to those around them. Phronesis may be required, for example, in the collision between the virtues of compassion and justice in an exclusion meeting, or between the virtues of honesty and humility in a staff appraisal meeting. It is an especially significant leadership virtue, and one that is frequently observed in effective school leaders at all levels, built and refined through critical reflection on experience.

Many desirable attributes of great leadership are to be found within The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education's definition of the concept:

"...the overall quality of knowing what to want and what not to want when the demands of two or more virtues collide, and to integrate such demands into an acceptable course of action. Living with practical wisdom entails: considered deliberation, well founded judgement and the vigorous enactment of decisions. It reveals itself in foresight, in being clear sighted and far sighted about the ways in which actions will lead to desired goals. The ability to learn from experience (and make mistakes) is at the centre of it."

(‘Framework for Character Education’, 2017 revised version, p. 4)

The Church of England Vision for Education outlines in some depth the centrality of Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills, offering an expansive and inspirational insight into the notion of wisdom, and indeed relating all four areas of the Vision back to the concept of wisdom, speaking of ‘a delight in wisdom and passionate pursuit of it’. In outlining the impact of the biblical conception of wisdom, through exploration of Job, Proverbs and in the teachings of Jesus, the Vision offers rich theological insight, placing wisdom at the centre:

"We see [Wisdom] as the most adequate framing concept for education, one that is not only deeply rooted in Christianity, but is also at home in other religious and non-religious traditions represented in our schools. It offers a healthily deep, broad and long-term context within which to consider other key educational concepts and practices such as knowledge, information, skills, excellence, academic rigour, critical thinking, measurement and assessment, appraisal, outcomes, ethos...Wisdom is about ethics as well as cognition, values and purposes as well as facts, and above all tries to make sound judgements that do justice to the whole ‘ecology’ of life."

(*Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*, p. 10)

Having defined our approach to character education, unpacked its purpose in developing and celebrating human flourishing, and explored our Christian inspiration for this approach, it is clear that the development of virtues (and

indeed the meta-virtue of practical wisdom) stands at the heart of excellent character education. As our range of case studies illustrate in a variety of ways, for this aspirational vision for character formation to take root in schools in the long-term, the development of leadership virtues amongst staff is a key priority. It is to this key activity that we now turn.

Case Study

Rewarding and Celebrating Character Development – The FOSCAs (Fruit of the Spirit Character Awards), St Hild's Church of England School, Hartlepool

St Hild's is a secondary school serving an area of high socio-economic deprivation. Leaders have an inspirational vision and commitment to developing their approach to improving academic outcomes in tandem with the formation of pupils' character. Their aspiration is that 'pupils leave St Hild's with fantastic results and all the characteristics to be a good neighbour'. Pupil leadership has been integral to this approach, notably in terms of consultation on the school's values statement.

In order to embed a culture of celebration of character education, school leaders have designed and embedded an annual awards ceremony called the FOSCAs. This ceremony sees the whole school community voting in relation to a range of character traits, which are celebrated through the giving of prizes in a whole school act of worship. The ceremony has become extremely popular with pupils and enables the reward of pupils from right across the school for the development of character, focused on the Galatians 5.22-23 list of Fruits of the Spirit – patience, kindness, self-control etc.) The awards do not seek to diminish the importance of academic outcomes, but rather to complement this journey, recognising the centrality of character education in a holistic view of pupils' development.

Leadership virtues in action:

Hope: Leaders encourage hopefulness through the celebration of success in this broad sense. By widening the range of activities celebrated beyond academic progress, they enable pupils' aspirations to rise, and publicly acknowledge this critical part of their developmental journey.

Motivation: Leaders seek to recognise success and development in character and celebrate it publicly. This ensures that the development of character within pupils is given focus and clarity within the wider narrative of school improvement, and that pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds are supported and celebrated.

Gratitude: Leaders have a long-term view of the school's development, but require regular celebration of success to punctuate the journey, demonstrating their gratitude for the developments that are taking place.



3. Developing Leadership Virtues for Character Education

Character Education has been most commonly considered in relation to the development of pupils' character virtues, as opposed to the development of leaders' character virtues in embedding the work. While the focus on the former is quite natural, given the centrality of pupils' development within the very nature of a school, the impact of effective investment in the latter should be not be under-estimated. Leaders' and teachers' own character is frequently their most important resource for character education, whereby the leadership of character is determined by the character of leadership. The success of our case study approaches has not been based simply on a creative idea in a school, or an impressive teaching resource for pupils to use, but rather on the effectiveness of leadership virtues ('character in action'), embedding impact over a sustained period of time.

Effective leaders in these very different contexts are making a strong contribution to the development and celebration of human flourishing (eudaimonia) in schools, through their focus on a combination of intellectual, moral, spiritual, civic and performance virtues, and are also certainly exercising practical wisdom (phronesis). When seeking to develop leadership virtues in schools, it is important to reflect on why this might be an important element of this approach; on what specific virtues school leaders may wish to focus with their teams; and then on what leadership models and approaches might help leaders embed such a virtue-based approach with those teams.

Why focus on leadership virtues?

In their book, *10 Virtues of Outstanding Leaders*⁷, philosophers Al Gini and Ronald Green insist that character formation and virtue are fundamental to leadership, arguing that:

"Leadership is not just a set of learned skills, a series of outcomes, a career, a profession, or a title. Leadership, at its core, is about character: specifically, a character attuned to its ethical responsibilities towards others. The kind of character that, in regard to others, always tries to do the right thing, for the right reason, on purpose."

Indeed, Gini and Green themselves propose a stimulating list of leadership virtues for a wide variety of leadership contexts:

Deep Honesty – the leader's basic commitment to the truth, and a sense of shame or anger when deceitfulness replaces truth-telling

Moral Courage – this deep-seated inner core enables leaders to hold fast to their values and purpose even when there is no certainty that they will prevail

Moral Vision – understanding the importance of ethics in human life and communities, and the ability to share it with others

Compassion and Care – the ability to connect with and resonate with their teams through practical action

Fairness – drawing on the cardinal virtues of justice and prudence, making a level playing field for all

Intellectual Excellence – teachability and learning as a leader, rather than knowledge or technical skill

Creative Thinking – the tendency to seek new ideas, embody the passion for them, and will them into being

Aesthetic Sensitivity – an understanding and appreciation of the importance of beauty in communication, product or experience

Good Timing – a structural virtue linked to Moral Courage; knowing the right time to make the move

Deep Selflessness – demonstrating the earnestness of the leader through the willingness to sacrifice oneself

As with any list of virtues, leaders will find different elements within this collection attractive, exciting and challenging, but the clarity of focus on virtue (as opposed to simply stating leadership values) is helpful. Leadership virtues demonstrate character in action, and are developed through leaders not simply talking about particular value – words or statements, but by embedding practices that develop virtues themselves.

To take one example, if a school wanted to develop the virtue of humility in its leaders, it would be unlikely to make any fundamental change in approach without considering carefully the practices and activities that might develop this among colleagues. Humility may be developed in leaders where risk-taking is supported and applauded, mistakes are an accepted and necessary part of a leader's development, and where practical demonstrations of humility are modelled by leaders and commended across staff teams. In a similar vein, if a school wanted to develop the virtue of perseverance in its leaders, it would need to consider what leadership practices led to its growth. This may include the support provided to leaders facing challenging circumstances, practical demonstrative actions in relation to work-life balance, consideration of the impact of stakeholders (for example governors) on leaders, and a focus on activities that systematically redirect leaders to the sustained fundamental vision of the school. In each situation, the notion of leaders as role models and exemplars of the virtues is critical to their effective outworking.

The potential impact of this approach to leadership virtues can, of course, be conceived across a wide range of school leadership areas, and is not limited to the leadership of character education. The character virtues embodied by a classroom teacher, pastoral leader or HR manager will determine to a great extent the effectiveness and impact of their work with pupils and colleagues. However, when considering the leadership of character education in particular, this focus on leadership virtues is particularly pertinent, given that the development of student character is both 'taught' and 'caught'. For virtues to be 'caught' by pupils, it is crucial that they are inspired and encouraged both by individual leaders who display those virtues, and indeed by a consciously-cultivated school ethos, one where these virtues are pervasive in decision-making, word and deed alike. This is what draws pupils into character development and inspires them to move forward.

Cultivating leadership virtues

There is no single list of virtues that should be used in every context, and schools will have strong views on the particular aspects they judge to be most worthy of inclusion. Many of our case studies evidence the importance of significant periods of consultation around this critical element of the school's identity. It may also be desirable that leaders to focus on specific sets of leadership virtues for different phases of the school's development, for example choosing to develop resilience in supporting the school through turbulent periods of academic outcomes, or choosing to develop service in establishing the school as a transformative presence within its local community.

When further developing virtue literacy in relation to the leadership of character education, there are a range of frameworks to draw upon, so that attention is paid to the kind of virtues to which school leaders may aspire. Although these frameworks may be implicitly focused on pupil development, they are just as applicable in relation to leadership virtue-development in staff.

The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education states that,

"...schools have a responsibility to cultivate the virtues, define and list those they want to prioritise and integrate them into all teaching..."

(*'Framework for Character Education'*, 2017 revised version, p. 4)

The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership aims:

"To develop inspirational leaders who are called, connected and committed to deliver the Church of England vision for education."

When considering which virtues on which to cultivate, this inter-dependent trio may provide a helpful insight for leaders in reflecting on the kind of leaders they are looking to grow:

Called

Leaders who are called can articulate a strong sense of personal vocation to their role, and demonstrate this through their words, actions and decision making, exemplifying a strong moral purpose, confident vision, and ambitious trajectory of improvement. For some, this sense of vocation will be driven by an established or developing faith commitment. They show integrity, honesty and a deep sense of resilience, underpinned by their personal sense of vocation as a leader.

Connected

Leaders who are connected operate deliberately within communities of practice, positioning themselves within positive relationships that sustain and encourage all parties. They embrace interdependence, demonstrate compassion and embody service to others humbly. They create shared identity within their teams and draw colleagues around a common purpose.

Committed

Leaders who are committed exude energy and passion in all they do, inspiring confidence and faithfulness in their teams. They are clear about their purpose and resilient in the face of challenge. They take long-term decisions and not easily swayed by short-term changes of policy or procedure. They articulate a sense of mission in their approach to education to which they draw others, and are committed to the flourishing of their pupils and colleagues.

Having considered the Christian inspiration for character education in Section 2, it is important for leaders to consider theological virtues. Augustine and Aquinas were among the seminal Christian thinkers who added the lens of the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love to the four classical cardinal virtues of Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice and consider the difference a 'Deeply Christian' approach could make. Consideration and development of these theological virtues will enrich school leaders' thinking and practice, and provide a complementary vocabulary to the intellectual, moral, civic and performance virtues school leaders would also hope to see in their teams. Furthermore, these theological virtues can give some additional language to leaders seeking to articulate their approach with a broader framework of Christian reflection and practice – to Augustine's Faith, Hope and Love, we may also add range

of other example virtues such as Grace, Servanthood, Forgiveness, or indeed draw on 'the fruit of the Spirit' passage from Galatians 5 as further stimulus for the leadership virtues we seek to develop: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control.

Having thought about leadership virtues and their impact on leading character education, school leaders will then turn to consider how best to share, implement and embed these virtues within their teams. Although no single leadership model will be fully applicable in every context, time or team, there is merit in considering a range of approaches, and how they might impact the leadership of character education in particular. We offer here three developed examples as a practical starting point, drawn from a range of leadership theory contexts, both within and outside education.

Case Study

Developing Character through Community Organising – London Design & Engineering Technical College

The London Design & Engineering University Technical College (LDE UTC) is the only UTC nationally that has a Church of England Diocese (Chelmsford) as a founding partner. This partnership has delivered a new model of school Chaplaincy, focused on harnessing the practice of community organising both to develop the Chaplaincy team and to engage and develop the character of the pupils.

As a result of this pioneering approach, around 50% of pupils participate in voluntary Chaplaincy activities, including the leadership of Acts of Worship, a Gospel Choir, the 'Aspire' leadership development programme, and a wide range of community organising projects. Community organising is a practice which builds hope and acts in ways that affirm the dignity of citizens who are often overlooked and marginalized. The UTC's work with Citizens UK seeks to build relationships across diversity, enabling people who have not previously had positive experiences of engagement with authority to take constructive, effective action on the issues they care about – and thus to develop as civic leaders.

This is an extremely active approach to the development of pupils' character (and leadership development) through a wide range of service and community-based activities. The notion of community organising fosters empathy, teamwork, listening skills, all rooted in a desire for action and social change. Pupils' engagement in this kind of opportunity has also built their confidence and sense of aspiration both for themselves as individuals, and the communities in which they live and work.

Leadership virtues in action:

Community Awareness: Leaders are actively rooting their approach to developing their pupils holistically within a wider community framework, seeking partnership, relationship and mutual flourishing beyond the school walls. Basing character development in these acts of organising and service, ensures that it is fully focused on action, not simply words.

Teamwork: Leaders demonstrate that character development is a social enterprise – human flourishing occurs with relationship and teams. Through the building of key networks and partnerships, leaders enrich the kind of opportunities available to their pupils

Vocation: Leaders enact their own personal sense of vocation and vision for their work, seeing their own character development as a consequent outcome of the approach, as they have sought to build personal and institutional credibility through the community organising work.



Example 1 – Fullan Framework for Leadership

Michael Fullan's Framework for Leadership⁸ is a highly influential transformational-leadership model, seeking to empower people so that they reach their potential and gain confidence in their unique talents, skills and values. Fullan identifies three personality characteristics that are seen in 'culture change leaders', namely, energy, enthusiasm and hope, which then underpin five core components of leadership:

- **Moral Purpose** – clearly defined core motivation of a wider social purpose to education, longer-term vision for sustainable change and system improvement, including impact beyond the walls of one institution
- **Understanding Change** – innovate selectively, build shared understanding of change, appreciate and expect early difficulties, redefine resistance as a potential positive force, 're-culturing' through embracing the day-to-day complexity of change
- **Relationship Building** – if relationships improve, things get better; emotional intelligence is seen as equal to having the best ideas
- **Knowledge Creation and Sharing** – new information or ideas only become knowledge through social process, making relationships and professional learning communities essential
- **Coherence Making** – avoiding taking on too many new projects, preferring coherence, alignment and synergy of ideas

Using Fullan's model to develop leadership virtues

For any significant change to take root in the school, those leading that change need to exude Fullan's three personality characteristics of energy, enthusiasm and hope over a sustained period, showing authenticity and consistency across a variety of interactions with colleagues. These are not simply values to be talked about but are lived out in leadership behaviours. For school leaders, negotiating challenging accountability or resourcing pressures, this deliberate embodiment of 'character in action' for these three concepts is key. This may involve leaders challenging their own internalised decision-making in relation to communication style and presence around the school, and may frame the kind of conversations undertaken with colleagues, and the quality and nature of hopeful professional relationships formed. Leaders may wish to consider what practices and activities help build these three qualities, both in themselves and in those around them. This might involve consideration of work-life balance issues for individuals and teams, the extent to which leadership meetings are characterised by hope in word and deed, and reinforcing the organisation's core vision to drive enthusiasm and purpose in the team's work.

MORAL PURPOSE

The pursuit of virtues will be determined fully by leaders' core moral purpose which should be shared as widely as possible in wise words and actions.

Fullan emphasises the importance of all schools improving as opposed to creating false competition and comparison between institutions, and so moral purpose for leaders may provoke questions about the importance of supporting the growth of others.

UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

Fullan's notion of 're-culturing' is highly relevant to leadership virtues and character education, the pursuit of which will take time and persistence, firstly to introduce the context and importance of the virtues and secondly to develop a culture in which leaders are modelling these virtues across the school. School leaders and governors need to be aspirational but realistic about the timeframe for this culture change to take place.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The development, refinement and embedding of particular leadership virtues requires practices that cultivate those virtues, located in trusting and empowering relationships. Taking this approach may require leaders to consider both the quantity and quality of time they spend with their colleagues, and the balance they create in line management or team meetings between developing the virtues and managing performance.

ENERGY

HOPE

KNOWLEDGE CREATION & SHARING

Social development and celebration of the virtues is pivotal to their implementation, and leaders should give time and space to this within their meeting patterns.

The deliberate and regular celebration of early wins and changes is as motivational to staff members as pupils.

COHERENCE MAKING

For any virtue to be embedded in action (as opposed to simply being recalled as a value word), team alignment and synergy is crucial.

Leaders may wish to consider a range of self- and peer-evaluation activities in order to evaluate changes being made, and their resultant impact.

ENTHUSIASM

Example 2 – Kotter 8-stage change management model⁹

- Create a sense of urgency – helping others see the need for change with a bold, aspirational opportunity statement that communicates the importance of acting immediately
- Build a guiding coalition – to guide, co-ordinate and communicate its activities
- Form a strategic vision and initiatives – clarify how the future will be different from the past and how you can make the future a reality through initiatives directly related to the vision
- Enlist a volunteer army – significant proportion of staff rally round a common opportunity, bought in and moving in the same direction
- Enable action by removing barriers – losing inefficient processes to provide the freedom necessary to generate real impact
- Generate short-term wins – wins are the molecules of results – they must be recognised, collected and communicated, early and often, to track progress and energise colleagues to persist
- Sustain acceleration – increasing credibility through improving systems, structures and policies – being relentless with initiating change after change until the vision is a reality
- Institute change – articulate connections between new behaviours and organisational success, making sure they continue and replace old habits



Using Kotter's model to develop leadership virtues

This table outlines a range of possible actions of leaders to consider in relation to developing leadership virtues, and then offers some possible markers of measuring impact of those actions. This is clearly not exhaustive, but intended to provide stimulus for leaders in considering the potential application of Kotter's model into this area of school life.

Stage	Possible leadership actions to consider – what might we do?	Measurement and evaluation of impact – how might we know it's happened?
Create a sense of urgency	Hold staff meetings/INSET sessions with passionate communication with key stakeholders linking leadership virtues and school improvement, seeing character as necessary building block to achievement	Significant time and space given in planning cycles to impact of leadership virtues Senior staff and governors articulate importance of character education and virtues in strategic planning
Build a guiding coalition	Draw staff/leaders together from variety of roles within school (academic, pastoral, support) to consider potential impact of virtues Encourage and embed key reading and self-evaluation opportunities through documents such as the Jubilee Centre Framework	Working parties/consultation groups begin to work across staff teams to explore virtues Internal self-review of difference between values and virtues in school leadership undertaken
Form a strategic vision and initiatives	Outline how leadership virtues could have a transformational impact on key areas of school life – e.g. teaching and learning, behaviour, personal development Reflect in depth on choosing the core leadership virtues for the school, through a series of leadership consultation groups Design specific focused action learning projects as part of appraisal placing the potential impact of leadership virtues at the centre of approaches to developing school priorities including character education	Staff teams can articulate difference between values and virtues and outline key behaviours/activities for the selected virtues Project groups begin to trial new approaches and celebrate early developments
Enlist a volunteer army	Embed range of opportunities to share vision with staff, governors and parents Consider developing pupil leadership groups to broaden approach to embedding virtues	Through integrated processes, staff can begin to articulate the importance of leadership virtues Pupils can begin to articulate virtues and how their character can develop
Enable action by removing barriers	Allocate appropriate resources of time and money to release the work, ensuring that this is not bolt-on, but embedded within other school processes Develop opportunities for staff to form communities of practice with colleagues in other like-minded school contexts	Time and resources are allocated, and school begins to invest as appropriate in partnership work through networks
Generate short-term wins	Facilitate short peer-to-peer review opportunities between key leaders around leadership virtue development Public celebration opportunities of where leadership virtues are already happening Develop pupil reward systems focused on virtue development	Senior staff can begin to articulate elements of their own professional development in terms of virtues Rewards systems motivate pupils in their development and progress in lessons
Sustain acceleration	Consider extending the approach to other areas of school leadership – for example governor or middle leaders training Partner with other schools to develop informal accountability and challenge	Review of character education programmes, whether explicit or implicit shows growing impact on staff and pupil development
Institute change	Embed leadership virtues into staff recruitment and induction processes, for example designing interview activities that explore character Establish and embed clear rhythms of celebration, through awards ceremonies, appraisal cycles etc.	New staff joining the school report the centrality of leadership virtues within the school Staff and pupils are motivated and inspired by regular opportunities for virtues to be celebrated

Case Study

Rewarding and Celebrating Character Development – All Saints Church of England Primary School, Newmarket

All Saints is a highly multi-cultural school in central Newmarket, with 19 different languages spoken, 40% EAL pupils and mixed socio-economic catchment. School leaders wanted to retain the school's caring and compassionate ethos, but make significant improvements to pupils' motivation and aspiration through focusing on developing their character. Following a period of consultation, which involved changes to the school's strapline and mission statement, school leaders focused strongly not simply on the embedding of character education pedagogically, but on the rewarding and celebration of these crucial character developments within every part of school life. Through focusing on the particular learning characteristics of effective learners, school leaders have embedded a 'Learning Attitudes Rewards' system based around celebrating the development of character – for example, creativity, perseverance and hope. This has been deeply motivating for children, and has a very positive impact on the culture of teaching and learning across the school.

Because this rewards system has focused on character, not achievement, it has treated all pupils with great dignity, and given them an equal footing, which has been deeply motivating, particularly when the celebration has become public, through parents' assemblies, certificates, medals and trophies. It has also involved all members of staff – teachers, leaders, midday supervisors, teaching assistants – all of whom contribute to the celebration of the development of pupils' learning character. Pupils are motivated by it, and pursue the opportunity to demonstrate these key characteristics in action, which has had a very positive impact on learning and progress as a result.

Leadership Virtues in action:

Reflection: Leaders spent significant time reflecting deeply on the nature of the changes that they were seeking, and prioritised character education as a key lever for the flourishing of their pupils across all areas

Motivation: Leaders provided, embedded and sustained a system that rewarded the characteristics they were seeking to develop, wherever and whenever they were evidenced in action. Through spreading this system across the whole school (not just the class teacher), leaders have communicated that character is fundamental to flourishing and also pervasive across all areas of pupils' experience in school

Hope: Leaders embody hope. While celebration and rewards systems inherently highlight that which has happened in the past, they essentially provide hope for change which is embodied by staff at all levels. It is a highly aspirational system which has provide great motivation for pupils' future development through the promise of celebration and recognition.



Example 3 – Spears’ Servant Leadership Model

The concept of ‘servant’ and ‘leader’ are traditionally seen as opposite, but Robert Greenleaf’s pioneering work in the 1970s generated the notion of servant leadership, making a significant contribution to leadership theory discourse. There are clearly echoes and resonance with the New Testament’s conception of the servant leader, as outlined for example in Philippians 2.5–11, and as we have seen earlier, the teachings and action of Jesus. Spears has developed this work to draw together 10 typical characteristics of a servant leader, as servant leadership continues to grow in influence as a contemporary leadership paradigm¹⁰. Spears’ 10 characteristics are:

Listening – seeking to identify the will of the group and clarify that will, through receptive listening and periods of reflection

Empathy – accepting and recognising others’ unique qualities, skills and characteristics

Healing – helping make whole those you lead, through a shared pursuit of restoration and re-building

Awareness – understanding issues of ethics, power and values in leadership, viewing situations from integrated and holistic positions

Persuasion – seeking to convince others, rather than coerce compliance, building consensus within groups

Conceptualisation – embodying the delicate balance between conceptual thinking and day-to-day operational approaches

Foresight – understanding intuitively the lessons from the past, the realities of the present and the likely consequence of a decision for the future

Stewardship – assuming a commitment to serve the needs of others, holding institutions in trust for the greater good of society

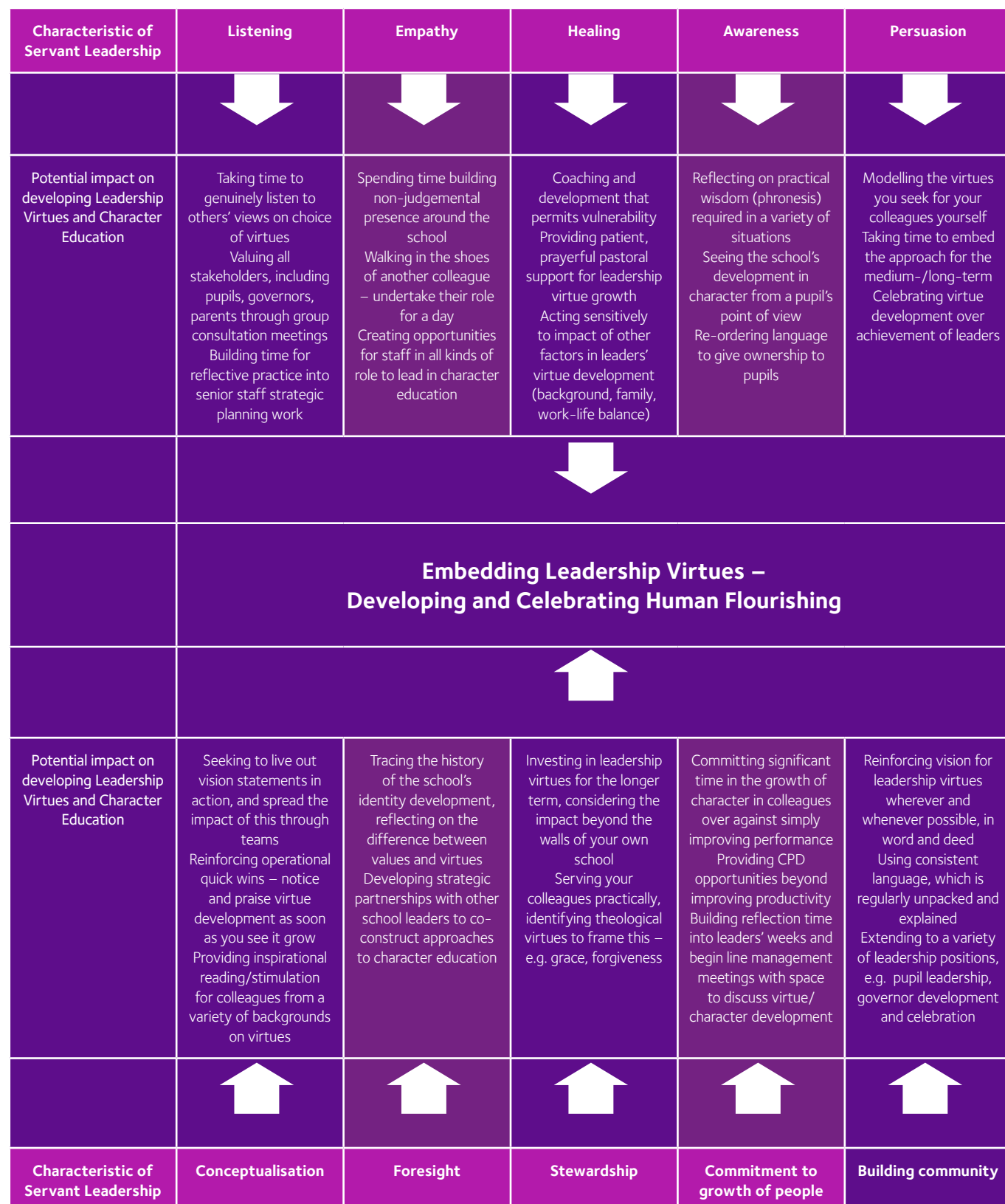
Commitment to growth of people – explicitly resourcing and encouraging the personal and professional growth of colleagues, seeing their intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers

Building community – seeking opportunities to strengthen community, shared values, ideals and relationships

There are many other possible leadership theories upon which to draw in embedding the approach to leadership virtues and their impact on character education in schools. This includes models which are naturalistic (great leaders are born not made – e.g. King Arthur, William Wallace, etc.); functional (focusing on what leaders do – e.g. Adair); situational (helping leaders adapt their approach to different situations and circumstances – e.g. Hersey & Blanchard, Lewin); transactional vs. transformational (developing performance through supervision, organisation and management vs. vision enhancing motivation, identity and ownership – e.g. Weber, McGregor Burns); and moral/ethical (caring for institution, core moral purpose, those who are served grow – e.g. Greenleaf). While potentially no single model will exactly fit a given situation, the interaction of a suite of approaches can help leaders navigate this culture-changing opportunity for their institutions.

It is also important to emphasise that the Church of England’s Vision for Education, ‘Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good’ is central to our pursuit of character education in schools, and the development of leadership virtues in those leading this important work. To support school leaders in unpacking and applying this vision into their leadership of character education, we have provided a range of practical tools, building on the Foundation’s wider suite of materials which support leaders in bringing the Vision alive in their schools. Having established a clear mandate and rationale for the development of leadership virtues in order to embed outstanding approaches to character education, we now turn to this crucial work in Section 4.

Using Spears' model to develop leadership virtues within your school



Case Study

Developing the 'Character Compass': forming and norming habits and practices – St Peter's Church of England School, Exeter

St Peter's School is a large 11–16 secondary school, serving a wide range of communities in the Diocese of Exeter. Its work on Character Education has focused on one particular element of its school-wide principles entitled HOPE – standing for Habits for Character, Opportunities for All, Personal Responsibility & Excellence. In focusing on developing character in terms of habits, the school has developed a tool, called 'The St Peter's Character Compass', which has sought to proactively build habits of character in action in daily school life. The process began with a review of the school's vision statements, and then involved a wide range of stakeholder groups who consulted on its re-shaping.

School leaders recognised that character development in their pupils was not simply a pedagogical task, but a re-orientation of thinking and practice, such that its outworking became habitual for pupils. The approach highlights that, regardless of which particular character traits a school is trying to develop, the outcome that school leaders are seeking is the development of character in action, of habitual practice and reaction. Habits are instinctive, ingrained and naturalised behaviours. Character in pupils – and staff – is in many ways an overview of the habits that are lived out, and thus the focus on creating these habits through the re-orientation of the character compass has proved very positive in embedding this approach across the school.

Leadership virtues in action:

Autonomy: Leaders are seeking to develop independence of character in their pupils and through an equipping tool, provide them with a common structure and language to aid their development. They are seeking autonomy in the outworking of the project in their pupils and are supporting and reinforcing across the school.

Resilience: Leaders are acting with resilience as they seek to embed this approach fully across the school. The embedding of habitual behaviour requires long-term commitment, correction and celebration, and leaders across the school need to support one another in this sense of commitment over a longer period of time.

Grace: Leaders have to recognise that in seeking to embed this kind of habitual approach, things can and will go wrong. They need to have a significant resource of grace to underpin their actions and words, and model a resolve to consistently offer positive options in challenging circumstances.

4. Bringing the Vision Alive – Resources for Leadership of Character Education

The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership has published a range of resources to support school leaders in relation to the Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good Vision for Education. This wider pack of resources has been provided to enable leaders to engage deeply with the text, and to ensure that the vision is brought alive in a range of 20 school leadership issues, including for example, Removing Disadvantage, Teaching and Learning and Curriculum Design. This report sits within that wider context.

By way of exploring what the Vision for Education might have to say about the leadership of Character Education, we now explore three of these contrasting and complementary approaches for leaders seeking to develop their thinking and practice in this area:

- a) Accessing the Riches – developing our deeper reflection, understanding and interpretation of the text for our own leadership context
- b) Ethos Enhancing Outcomes – forming dynamic connections between vision and Character Education leadership through exploring the four elements of the Vision for Education using a questioning approach
- c) Leadership-Pedagogy-Theology – equipping leaders to think holistically, from a leadership, pedagogical and theological point of view through a holistic coaching approach

Each of these approaches can be used by an individual leader, as part of their own self-reflection and thinking processes, but are at their best when rooted in group reflection and discussion. By their very nature, the questions offered here, can, in turn, open new and original questions pertinent to particular contexts, ensuring that evaluation is formative not summative in nature (there is clear resonance here with the Jubilee Centre's Evaluation of Character Education Handbook).

Leadership Approach 1: Accessing the Riches

Key Leadership Questions:

It is easy to reduce a vision statement to its most memorable keywords – in this case, Wisdom, Hope, Community and Dignity. How might deeper and extended reading of the Vision for Education equip us as leaders to reflect, plan and evaluate our approaches to leadership of Character Education?

In this approach, we encourage leaders to reflect deeply on their approach to Character Education through a deeper exploration of the text of the Vision for Education. Through exploring particular elements of that document and reflecting on what they might mean, or what questions they might provoke, leaders will open up new vistas of conversation and thinking. These approaches can help us think both from a leadership standpoint, and also help us to think theologically about Character Education within our own educational context. Indeed, the Vision for Education itself says:

“The wisdom literature is just one of the many examples of texts that cry out to be read and re-read carefully, thoughtfully, in conversation with others (fellow learners, teachers and previous generations of readers), open to being delighted, enlightened, moved, challenged and shaped by their message...We encourage schools to be places where such wisdom-seeking reading can happen”
(p. 20, footnote 7)

The approach takes a range of quotations from the Vision for Education and then explores a range of areas of reflection specifically in relation to the leadership of Character Education.

4. Bringing the Vision Alive – Resources for Leadership of Character Education

Accessing the Riches – Reflecting on School Leadership of Character Education

Wisdom, Knowledge & Skills	'...how to live before God in family, friendship, community and nation.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is Character Education primarily worked out in the wisdom of relationships, action and interaction between individuals? If a visitor spent a week with you, how might they describe your community in terms of its character? What kind of character are you developing within your team of staff, and what practical ways could you prioritise this in your development of leaders? What character do you aspire to see in them? What are the challenges facing leaders in relation to the language of 'family' in relation to developing character education in schools? If the Vision is concerned with 'how to live before God', what differences would you expect to see in a Church school in relation to Character Education, and how important are these distinctive aspects to your school leadership?
Wisdom, Knowledge & Skills	'...affirming what is of worth in the past and present, rejecting courageously things we judge unwise and working to transform those that are valuable but need improvement.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you are undertaking self-evaluation activities as leaders, how do you consider the development of leadership character or virtues? What elements of your approach to Character Education are 'valuable but need improvement', and how are you working together to transform them? To what extent do you believe character can be 'transformed'? What kind of experiences transform character? How are you providing or prioritising those experiences within your curriculum design?
Wisdom, Knowledge & Skills	'a delight in Wisdom and a passionate pursuit of it.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are you passionate about as a leader, and how would anyone know? What practical aspects of school life reflect a passion for Character Education? What do you do, or choose not to do, that reflects this? Character formation is rarely overnight – how do you retain passion for it over the long-term in your leadership approaches to pastoral care?
Footnote	'...there need be no competition between education for employment and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might your approach to Character Education become more fundamental to your approach to careers and employability – to what extent do you hold Character in tension with acquisition of skills and knowledge? What do you value more in a teacher/leader – technical skills or character? What ends up mattering most when things go wrong? What do you think employers really value in potential employees, and how much further than CVs/qualifications does this go?
Hope & Aspiration	'The worth of each student impels us to work to fulfil their God-given potential'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you hear the phrase 'God-given potential' do you instinctively think of academic progress, character development or a blend? How do your teachers demonstrate the worth of each pupil's character in their lessons? Do you deliberately report on your pupils' character development as well as their academic progress? Which element do your parents seem to value more?

Accessing the Riches – Reflecting on School Leadership of Character Education

Hope & Aspiration	'...one's own fulfilment cannot be separated from that of other people or from the flourishing of families, groups, communities..., so that hope and aspiration are social as well as individual'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of partnership do you need to develop with parents and the wider family for developments in character to really take root? • If your school community was flourishing under the leadership of the senior staff and governors, what things might you see? • How might you pick up as a leader when individuals, groups or communities are not flourishing and what could be done about this?
Hope & Aspiration	'being realistic about how much can and does go wrong'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For character to form in learning, how much does failure form a part of your pedagogy? • How much character formation (in children and adults) can only really happen when things go wrong? Do you avoid difficult or painful experiences as a leader? • To what extent are you patient when problems arise in pupils' character – to what extent do you think long-term as a leader when a crisis comes?
Community & Living Well Together	'Each school is to be a hospitable community that seeks to embody an ethos of living well together...the flourishing of the pupils goes along with the flourishing of the teachers and other staff.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the characteristics in pupils that lead to great hospitality and how are you supporting the development of these practically? • If character is primarily evidenced in action, what leadership virtues are you developing in your students that help them practically love one another? • To what extent are your teachers and other staff flourishing at present? What are you doing as a leader to contribute positively and negatively to this?
Dignity & Respect	'To encounter Jesus is to be invited into 'life in all its fullness'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we use the phrase 'life in all its fullness' in relation to character development, to what extent do we focus on the positive aspects of life – to what extent is embracing life in all its fullness about equipping students in their character formation for the most challenging times? • What kind of character did Jesus display through the gospels and how do we draw this out in our approaches to collective worship? • Is dignity an essential starting point for true learning to occur in relation to Character Education?
Dignity & Respect	'Our commitment to the dignity and ultimate worth of each person...is shaped by the person, teaching and example of Jesus.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do you treat your pupils with dignity when teaching them? • What does it mean to experience dignity when things go wrong? • If each person has 'ultimate worth', are there particular character traits and virtues we artificially value over others, and could we become broader?

Case Study

‘Pen Pals’: Developing character through inter-generational service projects – Shaldon Primary School, South Devon

Shaldon Primary School is a coastal community school which has developed an inter-generational programme between its Year 6 pupils and older members of the local community who may feel isolated despite still having much to offer. Working with local charity Volunteering in Health, friends were matched based on their interests and experiences and regular letters were being exchanged. This naturally led to some face-to-face meetings involving a range of shared events including art afternoons, music performances, shared history books, croquet games, maypole dancing and cream teas, enabling pupils to serve the local community and develop their understanding of a wider network of people. The project recognises the value of the experiences and perspectives that elderly people bring, not only by providing an insight into how the local area has changed over time, but also in terms of the advice and wisdom they have to share. In turn, feedback from participants has shown how they have been enthused by ‘re-connecting’ with younger people, with many reporting how it is helped them feel less isolated.

Through embedding this project within the Year 6 curriculum, the school has made a significant leadership choice to ensure a stronger balance between academic activity and the development of character. This investment in the wider and deeper development of the pupils has been extremely positive, and has developed excellent opportunities for service, through which increased maturity of character and attitudes have consistently grown. The school received national recognition in 2017 through receiving the Houses of Parliament Speaker’s Award in the 8–11 years category.

Leadership virtues in action:

Neighbourliness: School leaders have prioritised this core personal development activity within a highly pressured Year 6 programme, acknowledging that the development of character is equally important as the pursuit of academic outcomes. The project has developed pupils’ appreciation of the contribution that our older neighbours have to make, equipping them with the skills to communicate across the generations.

Resourcefulness: Through the design of this project, pupils have ventured beyond the school walls using a range of resources to make a very positive contribution to the wider community. The school has made key leadership decisions around time and resources such that community has been strengthened through activity and relationship.

Love: School leaders have facilitated a community centred project which is firmly rooted in the formation of relationships between generations. This focus on community coherence is loving and respectful, showing the school reaching out beyond its walls and opening its doors, to make a difference, where pupils learn together through rich, purposeful experiences which are led by them.



Accessing the Riches – Reflecting Theologically as School Leaders about Character Education

‘Living before God and living with and for others go together in Jesus. He embodies the centrality of relationships in love, compassion, generosity, truth-telling, forgiveness, and gathering a community.’

There is great evidence through the biblical narrative that God created people for community – this is seen in the creation story itself, the community of the people of Israel, the way that Jesus gathers his disciples and indeed the manner in which the early Christian church forms. The church is identified by Paul as ‘one body with many parts’. Therefore, in this necessarily social approach to creation, there are clear implications for the leadership of Character Education – there are of course some aspects of character that are very individual in reflection and analysis, but all of the virtues are enacted in a relational context, demonstrated by action to and for another.

- What lessons might we learn as a team of leaders from the challenges and opportunities that were faced by communities of believers in the biblical narrative and how they formed in their identity together over long periods of time (Israel in the wilderness, early Christian church in persecution?)
- What does strong and long-lasting Christian community look like, and what marks it out from anything else? How does the community invest in its own development?
- How might God be sustaining us (as children and adults) through the formation of our characters?

‘... we are created and sustained by God for living together in families and communities’

Throughout the gospels, Jesus’ character is revealed by the demonstration of love for others. This occurs in radical and often unlikely ways and with unlikely people. It involves crossing social boundaries, confounding expectations and breaking with tradition to demonstrate love in action. It involves multi-layered forgiveness and patience, coupled with deep compassion and empathy for those around, particularly the outsider. As leaders seek to build our pupils’ character through provision, the strongest leaders will recognise that this provision is mediated by relationship, providing a similarly Christ-like love in action.

- How much time do you give as a leader to developing relationships with those in your care, and what might you learn from the example of Jesus in this regard?
- In seeking to develop character in your pupils, what does it mean to genuinely ‘live with and for others’ – how could this mark your school out?
- What role might prayer play in asking God to build character in your pupils (and adults), rather than just try harder and attempt to make it happen through your provision alone?

‘[Jesus] inspires both a realism about how flawed we are and a confidence in transformation for the better’

Sustained change in character formation is tough. It takes time, focus, humility and community. It does not start simply with a wide-eyed desire to ‘become a better or happier person’, but with a genuine determination to grow and develop right within the core of our being. It starts with a sense of realism about our flaws and areas for growth and necessitates a pursuit of transformation for the better. This tension between identifying things that need to change and confidently seeking the better future is essentially what happens in any successful lesson. If we are seeking to model this as leaders, we need to take some risks in identifying honestly these areas for development in our own characters, and share them with our teams.

- What are the challenges of recognising one’s character flaws as a leader, and what practical strategies could be embedded to support this supportive growth?
- To what extent do you have Jesus’ vision for the pupils in front of you and this deep sense of confidence in ‘transformation for the better’? How is this shown in action?

Accessing the Riches – Reflecting Theologically as School Leaders about Character Education

‘a deep respect for the integrity of other traditions and beliefs’

A deeply Christian approach to character formation cannot of course hold the monopoly of meaning for the virtues, and there are huge benefits to all from an approach to character that also draws on a range of other starting points for reflection, drawing from a range of faith traditions and backgrounds. This is crucial for all schools to enact on a daily basis, regardless of their make up or context. As we seek to develop Character Education in schools, the intentional celebration of diversity of thought and practice will be fundamental to the kind of relational hospitality to which school leaders aspire.

- When leading on Character Education, how might you draw from a wide range of faith traditions?
- What role does diversity and inclusion have in your approach to the leadership of Character Education?

‘Jesus paid special attention to the disadvantaged, excluded, despised and feared.’

To pay special attention to the disadvantaged will mean more than simply attempting to accelerate their progress in Maths and English, but rather a holistic view of their formation will prioritise the development of character alongside the pursuit of the highest academic standards. This kind of special attention will be centred on love in action as demonstrated by leaders and will include the building of community within school, pursuit of character and a radical approach to forgiveness within approaches to behaviour management.

- What role does fear play in an individual’s desire to develop their character and how might school leaders provide the environment for fears to be relieved?
- How does character affect behaviour in your school, and how might you therefore re-shape your approach to behaviour management, rewards and sanctions?



Case Study

Impact of Character Education on Employability and Aspiration - Open Academy, Norwich

Open Academy is an 11–19 secondary academy, serving a deprived and diverse part of Norwich. When this project began, the school was in challenging circumstances in relation to its performance outcomes and consequent Ofsted grading. Leaders needed to improve pupils' performance, but set about doing this by reviewing and evaluating the key elements of their school's vision, and its sense of aspiration for the pupils' character, not simply their examination outcomes. Following a period of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, the school settled on a suite of 12 virtues that they were looking to inspire in their pupils, including for example Humility, Integrity and Forgiveness, supported by the assembly programme.

Drawing on a range of approaches to the curriculum and pupil development, Open Academy has subsequently developed some innovative practice around connecting the development of pupils' character with their future employability and destinations. As a result of making this important link, school leaders have seen a significant impact on academic outcomes, aspirations and NEET figures for their cohorts. Developing pupils' character is making a real difference to the way that young people conceive their futures, and pursue opportunities to explore careers and employability opportunities.

It is also motivating a continually improving approach to academic study and performance outcomes. The school sees its mission as 'breaking the cycle of under-aspiration', and character education has been fundamental to the improvements seen, as the virtues have been embedded with integrity and perseverance.

Leadership Virtues in action:

Hope: Leaders are embodying hope through their actions in seeking to change the school community and raise aspirations in relation to careers and employability. Staff are focused on unpacking inspirational vision for pupils' future, and through focusing on character development, are equipping them with the ability to pursue that future.

Perseverance: Leaders are resolute in maintaining their focus on the core virtues of the school, and ensuring that they permeate all areas of the school's life. They support one another in seeing and overcoming challenges and draw on deeply Christian reflection to inspire and motivate.

Integrity: Leaders apply this set of virtues with integrity for the long-term. They regard character development and raising aspiration as key to their drive for improving performance outcomes, and remain faithful to this vision and its outworking.



Leadership Approach 2: Ethos Enhancing Outcomes

Key leadership questions:

What decisions and practical steps can we take as leaders to ensure that our school's ethos enhances and drives our approach to improving outcomes for all?

How could the relationship between ethos and outcomes, sustain and enrich our approach to the leadership of Character Education?

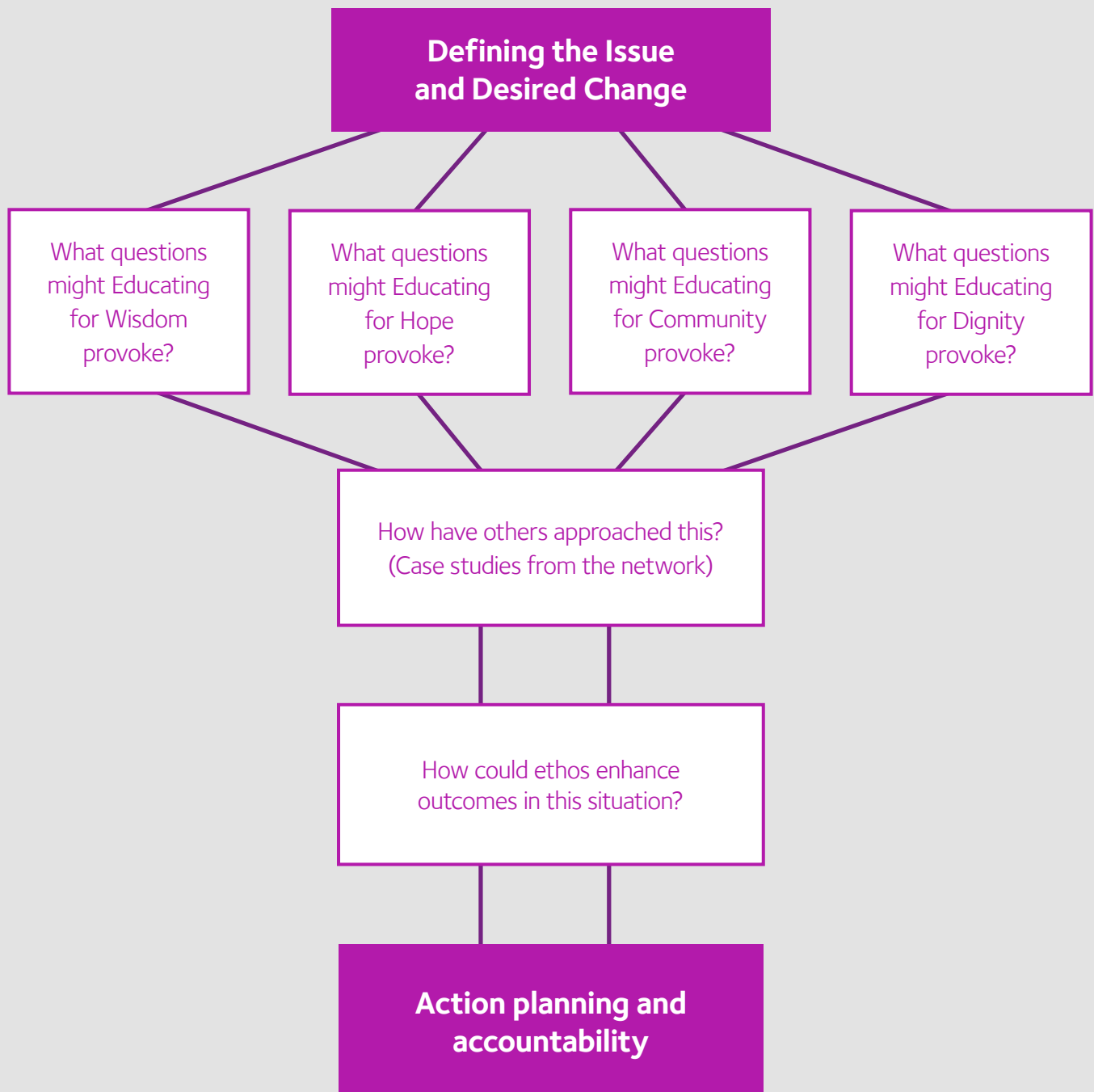
School leadership teams and governing bodies rightly choose to spend a significant time thinking about questions of vision and purpose. This will often be articulated by schools in really creative and inspiring ways, through their vision/mission/ethos statement. The production of such statements may involve rich discussion over terms such as vision, values, virtues and many other categorisations, which help school leaders to clearly articulate what they are doing, and also how and why they are doing it. Equally, virtually all schools are under pressure to ensure that their outcomes (both in the broadest sense, and including measured academic achievement) are improving at an acceptable rate.

It is easy to imagine a context where the Church of England Vision for Education excites and inspires the former while having limited impact on the latter. The connection is sophisticated and requires skilful and agile leadership to

draw these two crucial and symbiotic elements of school life together. The Vision is intended to be something that permeates all areas of school life and has a positive impact on the school's outcomes for all. That is why we have developed the language of 'ethos enhancing outcomes', so that the school's ethos makes a deeply positive and enriching impact on the day-to-day lived reality of corridors and classrooms.

The 'ethos enhancing outcomes' approach has been welcomed by school leaders as a way into interpreting the Vision for their own contexts, without falling into the trap of producing a series of more dogmatic, directive papers for school leaders around particular issues.

Begin with the end in mind



Case Study

What If Learning Character Development Project – Canterbury Christ Church University, Church of England Education Office, Dioceses of Chester, Derby, Exeter & Peterborough

What If Learning is a cross-curriculum approach, designed to support teachers in creating a classroom learning environment that is framed by a Christian ethos. It aims to support pupils in their character development. The approach is not an add-on to curriculum content, but a way of reframing the established curriculum content so that pupils experience learning in character development in all subjects.

In this project the focus was on developing the Christian virtue of hospitality as part of the Church of England's aspiration that pupils in its schools learn to live well together with others as preparation for life in the diverse society that constitutes modern Britain. The key dimension of this project was the re-framing of the British value of tolerance in terms of the Christian virtue of hospitality and then the ways the schools implemented that across the curriculum.

20 schools took part in the research funded by the DfE and The Jerusalem Trust, undertaking classroom work aimed at applying the What If Learning approach to develop the virtue of hospitality. A range of research interviews and analysis activities produced credible, statistically significant evidence showing that:

- Pupils make less negative judgments about those they perceive to be different following the intervention.
- Pupils responded positively to the challenge of being hospitable during the intervention.
- Teachers' confidence in and ability to teach the virtue of hospitality increased during the project.
- The more the teachers engaged with the project, the greater was their understanding of and ability to teach character education.

Analysis of the impact of the intervention showed that:

- The intervention promoted deep reflection on professional practice and increased confidence in the teachers' approach to character education
- The initial induction into What If Learning and the virtue of hospitality was very important to the success of the intervention

- The focus on hospitality and the support in understanding its meaning in the classroom provoked a "mind-set" change to teachers' traditional lesson content and delivery
- Pupils moved from merely understanding hospitality to the adoption and exemplification of hospitable character traits

Leadership virtues in action:

Reflection: Throughout this extensive project, significant reflection time for teachers and leaders has been built in, enabling a deep consideration of the actions taken, impact and resultant changes. The interventions happened over a number of occasions, and between these, colleagues reflected deeply, both individually and collectively on the impact on pupils' learning.

Hope: The What If Learning approach embodies hope in the classroom and in the minds of leaders, offering the potential of a very different and enriching approach to teaching. It broadens horizons and through asking challenging questions, is characterised by aspiration.

Teamwork: In working across such a range of schools and Dioceses, this project offers a fantastic example of collaborative teamwork, where multiple stakeholders have been brought together to make a great difference. The co-ordination and leadership of the project has been strong, and led to such coherent research outcomes, which have gone on to influence other thinking and practice, including our present focus on leadership itself.

The full report from this project is available through the Church of England website here – https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2861463/whatif_report_2016_proof.pdf

In addition, the outcomes and analysis of similar approaches in a secondary context have been published in *Christian Faith in English Church Schools* by Trevor Cooling, Beth Green, Andrew Morris and Lynn Revell (2016)



Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills

- When you celebrate great leaders or figures from history in the curriculum or in collective worship, do you focus on their achievements or their character development? What might be the benefits of looking at both?
- If education is to become focused on ‘fostering the skills to shape life well’, to what extent do your assessment methodologies equip pupils to do this, and where are the gaps? What is the impact of your approaches to assessment and testing on the development of students’ character?
- To what extent does your curriculum design create space for pupils ‘to pursue the big questions of meaning such as ‘Who am I? “Why am I here?” “What do I desire?” and “How then shall I live?”’ What impact does the discussion of these bigger questions have on character?
- How can you help students with the practical wisdom (phronesis) of choosing the right virtue for the right occasion when there is clash?
- To what extent do you think character can be taught (or caught), and how does affect your approach to teaching, learning and assessment? How might character development be seen to run through your approach to lesson planning?
- What impact does a students’ character have on their ability or potential to learn something, and how important is ‘getting things wrong’ as a first step to learning in your pedagogy?
- How are you developing your students actively to become a ‘good citizen, parent or employee’, and how do you define ‘good’ anyway? What are the challenges and opportunities of developing character in a primary context in terms of long-term impact on the students’ life trajectory?

Educating for Hope and Aspiration

- If character is formed and revealed ‘in the drama of ongoing life’, how are we actively developing our students’ ability to ‘approach the future’ well? What teaching are we actively providing that supports their character development in relation to the future?
- How hopeful is your pedagogy in relation to developing students’ character?
- If you set aspirational targets for students in relation to attainment and progress, do you have similar aspirations for their character? If so, how are these aspirations embodied by your teachers?
- How does character develop in young people’s bad experiences, and learning to deal with them well? Why therefore do we often try to avoid bad experiences, and how might this shape our approach to pastoral care, and kind of support you provide to students?
- To what extent does your school leadership consistently inspire ‘perseverance, patience and gratitude’? What kind of events, programmes or lessons might be needed to encourage, evaluate and celebrate these key traits?
- How does your collective worship ‘inspire both a realism about how flawed and fallible we are and a confidence in transformation for the better’?

Educating for Community and Living Well Together

What might it mean for your school to be a ‘hospitable community’ and how might anyone know this when they visit for a day, or indeed join your community as a teacher, parent, student etc.?

How does your school work in partnership with local churches and chaplaincy, to develop character in its pupils and staff? What does ‘life in all its fullness’ mean for your school leaders?

How are you teaching your pupils about 'relationships and commitments' and how does your staff team embody and model what you mean by this?

What is the relationship between individual and societal flourishing for you as a school leader?

When you appoint staff, how much does character matter to you as a leader, and how do you assess this within the application process?

What practical steps are you taking as a leader to contribute to your staff team's flourishing? Are there any practices or pressures you bring as a leader which have a negative impact on their character or sense of flourishing? How could you address this without compromising your standards?

Educating for Dignity and Respect

- How is your commitment to dignity and respect of each member of your community shaped by 'the person, teaching and example of Jesus' and thus the development of students' character through this lens?
- If 'how schools deal with difference is a crucial indicator of their quality', how does your approach to integration of students reflect a 'deeply Christian' approach to character formation?
- How does your leadership of character education demonstrate 'the ultimate worth of each person'?
- In what ways does your behaviour policy promote dignity and respect in relation the development of students' character when they cross the line of what is acceptable?
- What practical strategies could you use to ensure that your approach to sanctions or exclusions focus on the development of student character?
- To what extent is dignity the starting point for human flourishing, and what practical steps do we take to promote and celebrate the dignity with which we see our students?
- How might our policies and practices in relation to diversity and groups of students (gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, sexual orientation etc.) be rooted in the development of students' character?



Case Study

Developing Hospitality – St Marychurch Church of England School, Torquay

St Marychurch is a larger than average primary school, and explored the virtue of hospitality through 'What If Learning' approaches. Through direct teaching about hospitality and its exploration in school life, the school facilitated children's understanding of the term. Leaders then planned specific opportunities for the pupils to experience and demonstrate hospitable virtues.

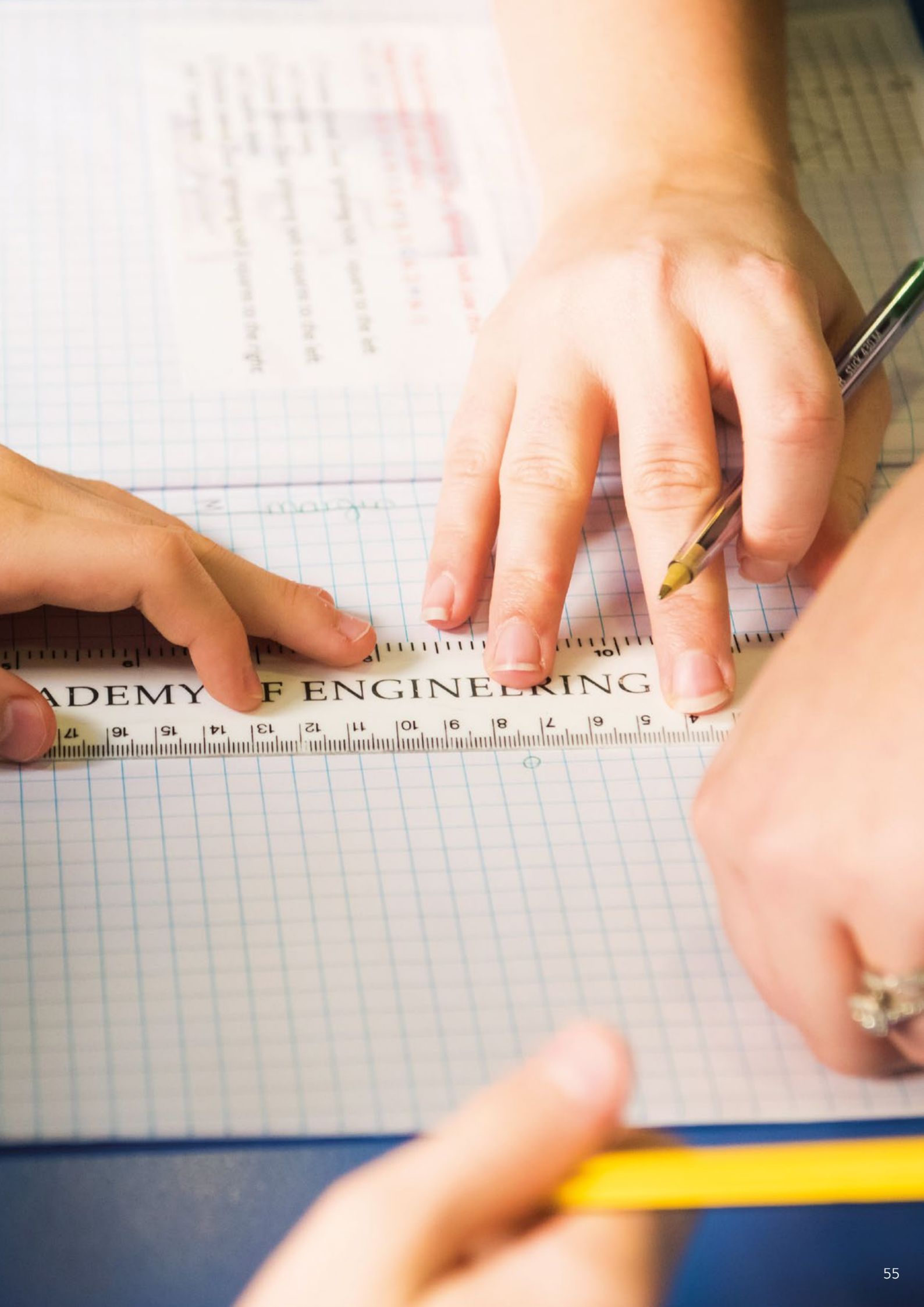
Reception pupils baked bread for Year 6 pupils who joined them at a picnic. Pupils explored how to invite them, how to greet older pupils, and what to talk about, even though they were shy at first. Year 3/4 pupils led an Open Afternoon for the school, making and serving refreshments and guiding visitors to the right places. They learnt how to demonstrate hospitality through their conversation and body language. Year 5/6 pupils undertook a project around welcoming new pupils to the school, developing empathy and compassion, as well as a range of practical skills. All of this was further embedded within the school's approach to collective worship.

Leadership virtues in action:

Reflection: Leaders have learnt that new learning takes time, but needs to be communicated to staff with vision and pace in order to get buy-in. It then needs patience to embed, building in clear time to reflect and review through clear monitoring with staff.

Confidence: Leaders have placed confidence in pupils and teachers responsible for the various strands of the project, establishing a culture of trust among the school community. Leaders have also modelled their own willingness to be open to change.

Servanthood: A range of very practical opportunities to serve have been provided for pupils right across the school, and leaders have focused on developing the nature of service within the context of the virtue of hospitality.



Leadership Approach 3: Leadership/Pedagogy/Theology

A holistic coaching approach

Key leadership questions:

What is the interaction between leaders' reflection, evaluation and planning in relation to Leadership, Pedagogy and Theology?

How might scaffolding coaching questions help to increase leaders' confidence in relation to Character Education?

The Vision for Education helpfully enables and resources leaders to think about the business of schools in rich educational ways, touching on key leadership and pedagogical decision-making. Equally, it equips and resources leaders to reflect theologically, a key underpinning element of their work as a whole. This activity is focused on the dynamic interaction between leadership, pedagogy and theology, and aims to give colleagues the opportunity to engage deeply with these 3 key areas of thinking in a coaching context, regardless of where they perceive themselves in relation to their personal confidence or experience in these areas.

Thinking about leadership should never be restricted to those with leader in their job title, any more than pedagogical reflection should be confined to class teachers. Equally, we can be encouraged and emboldened to think about the deeply Christian inspiration for education and the nature of God which is embodied in the documents we have been engaged with. Regardless of our own beliefs, we can see this process as a form of theological thinking, reflection and judgement about the nature of God, and the deeply Christian inspiration for education articulated in the document.

This coaching approach concentrates on building people's confidence and credibility, so that they can look at the impact of these three dimensions of school life and leadership together, not in isolation. We begin with an honest reflection on our own confidence in each of these areas, and our ability to articulate our own school's approach to each of them. As colleagues will see, our way into these discussions is through the more straightforward initial issues, building up to those which tend to be less familiar, or more complex, challenging or contentious. In the diagram below, we describe this progression as being from Introductory to Emerging to Questioning and Debating to Challenging, although these shouldn't be seen as rigid and fixed stages or phases in the process. Our experience has been that taking such an approach recognises the varied strengths and backgrounds of participants, and actively stimulates a myriad of further conversations, debate and discourse. Again, this approach is not intended to be exhaustive, but instead to be a healthy starting point that will enable colleagues to think on this level.

	Introductory	Emerging	Questioning/ Debating	Challenging
What leadership questions should you be asking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of curriculum time do you give to character formation – is it explicit or implicit? If it's implicit, do your pupils/staff/parents know what your approach is? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you invest in your staff character as a leader? What character formation do your staff see going on in you as the leader? How vulnerable are you about this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What impact does a staff members' character have on their performance as a teacher/leader? How could you build the emotional literacy of your team to enable more open conversations to be embraced? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you test and evaluate character at interview? What leadership virtues are you seeking when you make an appointment?
What pedagogical questions should you be asking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which matters more to you when you're marking – character or achievement? What impact could focusing on character have on your pupils' progress? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do your lessons allow students to appreciate their differences? What does hospitality look like in your classroom – in words and deeds? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In an individually based assessment system, how do you promote and improve group work? What important aspects of relational flourishing could take place in your lessons? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could a student fail every course, but see their character formed positively through failure? What kind of character formation goes on during Results' Day?
What theological questions should you be asking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does God value the development of our character over our achievements and failures? How might this theological position be reflected in the way you lead your school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does character form primarily through difficult or painful experiences? If the answer is frequently yes, why do we tend to avoid these? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the role of suffering in character formation? What examples might we draw on from the Bible of those whose character was formed through great times of trial? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does character relate to human flourishing and Aristotle's concepts of 'eudaimonia'? How do virtue ethics approaches complement Christian thinking?

Case Study

Embedding Character Virtues through pupil leadership groups – St Anne’s Church of England Primary School, Bishop Auckland

St Anne’s is an average-size primary school, serving a market town, popular with parents, and with strong academic standards blending with creative approaches to developing the whole child. A wide range of 9 pupil leadership groups are in action across the school, with pupils democratically elected by their peers, following a formal application process. Pupil written audits and action plans are reflected in the school’s development plan, influencing policy direction. From each Pupil Voice group, a Year 6 leader is democratically elected to form the Junior Leadership Team, which in turn reports to the SLT and HT and prepares a written report for the Governing Body’s termly meetings. The school’s virtues are the building blocks on which it is founded, setting guidance for learning and ethos, depicted on every display around school, offering an ever-present representation of how the community lives them out.

As a result of this approach:

- A culture of shared responsibility supports pupils to build feelings of strong self-worth and an inner confidence.
- Pupils have a better sense of right and wrong and are able to apply the school’s core virtues to the wider world.
- Pupils gain a heightened awareness of the difference they can make through promotion of the Christian stewardship of the planet and support for charities, local and further afield, generating a sense of moral pride
- Pupils have a strong sense of supporting their school and the local community and display ownership of it by developing links, strengthening relationships and modelling the application of Christian virtues

Leadership virtues in action:

Teamwork: Leaders are focused on building relationships and team across the school, valuing the role of pupils inherently through their accountability and reporting. They embody the trust they want to see in their pupils by embedding them fully within their leadership structures.

Vision: The school’s vision permeates all areas of pupils’ development, leading to strong development of the whole child, including strong academic performance. This has been built patiently over time by school leaders, acknowledging quick wins in individual classes, before extending the approach right across the school.

Faith: The creation a new role of a School Chaplain as the first step to realising the vision, mission and values, to act as a catalyst for worship, pastoral support, relationships and enriched spirituality. This post oversees all of the pupil leadership development, and thus pupil voice is given a very high profile within the school.



5. Next steps and further development

This report has outlined the importance of focusing on character education, articulated our Christian inspiration for this work, and offered a range of practical tools and resources to support school leaders in bringing the Church of England's 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' vision alive as they develop their approach to character education. In addition, it has recognised the pivotal importance of leadership in the development of schools' approaches, through consideration of leadership virtues, underpinned by a range of case studies from around the country. In conclusion, the following framework is offered to school leaders as a potential mechanism for articulating, embedding and sustaining their approaches to leading character education:

1. Recognise the fundamental interdependence of Character Education and Academic Excellence for developing and celebrating human flourishing

Regardless of a school's context, current position in league tables or Ofsted judgement, the pursuit of human flourishing in the broadest sense must recognise and embody a necessary tension and interdependence between character education and academic outcomes. They are strongly linked, and the development of students' character will have a positive impact on their wider performance in school, whilst investing more broadly in their holistic development. This recognition requires leaders' moral integrity and vision to enact within the school community. However, without the recognition of interdependence, the positive impact of one on the other may be difficult to realise in action.



2. Reflect deeply on the impact of Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good in relation to Character Education

Some rich resources have been provided in this report by way of equipping school leaders to reflect on how the inspiration of the Vision for Education can be brought fully and specifically alive in relation to Character Education. Use these resources as part of your school's leadership development journey to equip yourself and your teams (including governors) to think deeply on these pivotal issues. Make space for this level of reflection within your agendas, including considering the impact the language of the Vision could have on the school's choice of virtues.



3. Define clearly the particular virtues you are seeking for your context

Each school needs to arrive at its specific articulation of the virtues it is seeking to foster, and this needs to be a collaborative process involving a wide range of stakeholders. In addition, school leaders should consider not simply which virtue words should appear in their final list, but focus on what kind of resultant actions/habits/behaviours they are hoping to see lived out in their community, and how the overarching virtue of practical wisdom might be cultivated in staff and pupils. Character is demonstrated and evidenced primarily by action, not words.



4. Consider the potential impact of a variety of leadership models in developing leadership virtues in staff across your organisation

Evaluate a range of leadership theories to choose the most effective approach for your teams. Synergise a blend of approaches, developing support networks and relationships as appropriate for your context.



5. Share this vision for character education frequently and consistently as leaders (in words and deeds), creating opportunities for reinforcement and celebration whenever possible by all

The most effective leaders share their vision frequently, using words when necessary, and seek to embody their commitment to the cause. Throughout, they will create opportunities to reinforce the kind of character education that they are looking to create, and most critically, identify opportunities for celebration by all members of the school community as frequently as possible to energise and motivate their pupils.



6. Invest proactively in the development of the leadership virtues necessary to develop and celebrate the approach to character across all teams

For this work to become deeply embedded beyond just the completion of a project, a significant investment in personal development is required across staff teams, to focus on the particular leadership virtues required for the task. This will involve a strategic combination of intellectual, moral, civic, performance and spiritual virtues. The success of the developing character education for the long-term will rest on the quality of leadership virtues in action.

Case Study

Compassion, Curiosity and Character Formation – Five Islands Church of England School, Isles of Scilly

Five Islands School is a multi-site Church of England school, serving the island communities of Bryher, St Agnes, St Martin's, St Mary's and Tresco. Leaders have worked across this group, along with partnering with a range of other schools on the Cornish mainland, including the Aspire MAT and Grampound CE Primary School, to develop a cohesive approach to Character Education. This initially focussed on the virtue of Compassion, encouraging pupils to soften critical self-talk, growing in compassion to self, then allowing this to turn outwards with a new level of empathy for others. The school's outdoor classroom in the woods provided both a great environment for sharing thoughts around a campfire and space to connect with nature for quiet reflection and writing.

School leaders then developed this approach further, using the VIA Youth Survey to create lesson sequences exploring curiosity, and challenging pupils to think in more creative ways through activities including role play, storytelling, walking, poetry and drawing through outdoor learning. Placing the Character Education project at the centre of wider planning has emphasised its importance, built pupils' positive sense of self and embrace the hope, community and dignity elements of the Vision for Education.

Leadership virtues in action:

Compassion: Leaders have focused their project on the outward notion of compassion, by beginning with self-reflection and analysis. By forming the approach in this way, a greater sense of empathy and understanding towards others has been built. Staff has embodied this leadership virtue in encouraging pupils to develop in this way.

Reflection: As the project has developed over a period of time, leaders have given significant periods of reflection, both within the individual schools, and across the group of school leaders working on the wider character education initiative. Time and space has been critical to this, along with the development of communities of practice between the school leaders.

Confidence: Leaders have acted with confidence, ensuring that this project has been embedded within the Year 6 programme of study and have seen a positive impact on student progress through the centrality of character education.

The leadership of character education and development of leadership virtues will continue to form a key part of the provision of The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership, through its programmes, networks and research. Importantly, a key opportunity for school looking to continue to develop their work in this area is available through the Foundation's Peer Support Network, which connects school leaders together, to support each other's development and work on shared leadership priorities. There are also opportunities for online sharing of resources and conversations through the Foundation's developing online community, which again seeks to connect leaders across the country around similar leadership development issues.

You are invited to connect with this work at **www.cefel.org.uk** and become part of the ongoing conversation and development of this critical area of leadership practice, as we seek to partner in developing and celebrating human flourishing together.

Footnotes

- 1 https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2547023/ce_character_education_report_web.pdf
- 2 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634710/Developing_Character_skills-synthesis_report.pdf
- 3 https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2861463/whatif_report_2016_proof.pdf
- 4 <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2532839/2016-church-of-england-vision-for-education-web-final.pdf>
- 5 <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Framework%20for%20Character%20Education.pdf>
- 6 NT Wright, *Virtue Reborn* (London: SPCK, 2010)
- 7 A Gini and R Green, *10 Virtues of Outstanding Leaders: Leadership and Character* (Chichester: Wiley & Sons, 2013)
- 8 <http://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/13396053050.pdf>
- 9 <https://www.kotterinternational.com/8-steps-process-for-leading-change/>
- 10 https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jvl/vol1_iss1/Spears_Final.pdf

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