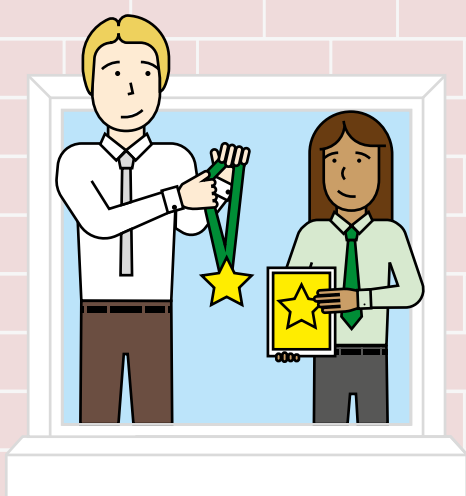
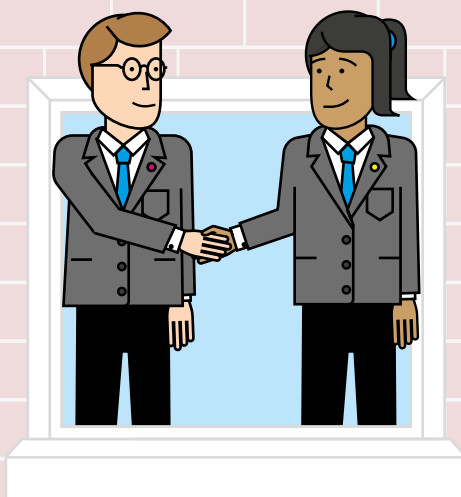
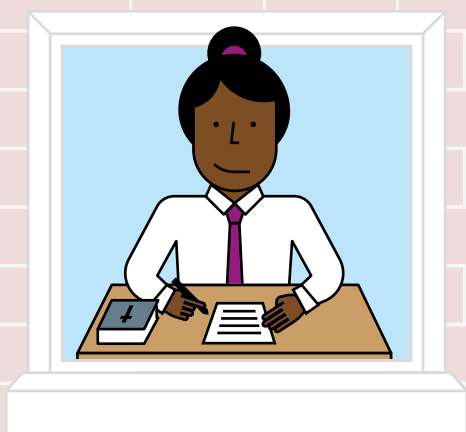


# Windows Into Schools: Celebrating Character



Aidan Thompson  
Michael Fullard  
Danielle Edwards

# The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is a unique and leading centre for the examination of how character and virtues impact on individuals and society. The Centre was founded in 2012 by Professor James Arthur. Based at the University of Birmingham, it has a dedicated team of 20 academics from a range of disciplines, including: philosophy, psychology, education, theology and sociology.

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

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

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# Introduction

There are many windows through which one can look into schools; attainment, behaviour, and numerous other indicators of performance are frequently used as windows through which schools are viewed, measured and compared.

Schools develop the character of their students; this is rarely disputed, but also infrequently articulated. Where schools prioritise the character development of students in positive and meaningful ways, so an alternative window through which to view schools is created. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues has worked with schools across the globe, researching, trialling interventions, and evaluating the provision for developing the character of students.

This publication aims to provide insight into the ways in which it is possible for schools to embed meaningful and planned approaches to character education. The Jubilee Centre has worked with each of the eight featured schools in recent years, in supporting and profiling character education provision. The schools, and the teachers who work in them, have provided valuable contributions to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme developed by the Jubilee Centre. *Leading Character Education in Schools* is designed to support schools in developing their staff to become leaders in character education ([www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/cpd](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/cpd)). As part of the programme, interviews with teachers and short films provide authentic insights into why each school places an emphasis on character in its ethos, and how it went about developing its unique approach to cultivating character.

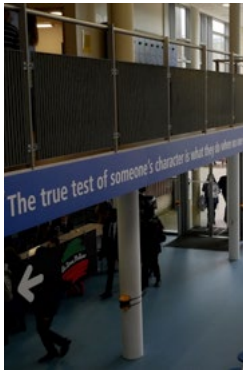
This brochure is intended to support *Leading Character Education in Schools* and showcase the ways in which all schools can enhance their character education provision. Whether it be via characterful leadership, a focus on behaviour, parental engagement, enrichment activities, social action, or faith; whether a school takes an explicit 'taught', or implicit 'caught' approach, each school in this publication has prioritised character to benefit its community. This brochure celebrates the ways in which these schools have sought opportunities to develop the character of their students, and provides windows through which other schools, leaders, and teachers can take inspiration for themselves.

*Aidan Thompson   Michael Fullard   Danielle Edwards*

Director of Strategic Initiatives

Research Fellow

Centre Manager





# Smith's Wood Primary Academy

Type.....Primary, Academy  
Age Range.....3-11  
Location.....Solihull, West Midlands

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## Virtues

*Responsibility, Respect, Determination, Friendship,  
Honesty, Perseverance*

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## Vision

*More than a school.*

## Background

Smith's Wood Primary Academy is a large primary school, with over 460 students from Reception to Year 6. The School has a high percentage of students eligible for Pupil Premium funding. The School has transformed over the last 15 years and became an Ofsted 'Outstanding' academy in 2017.

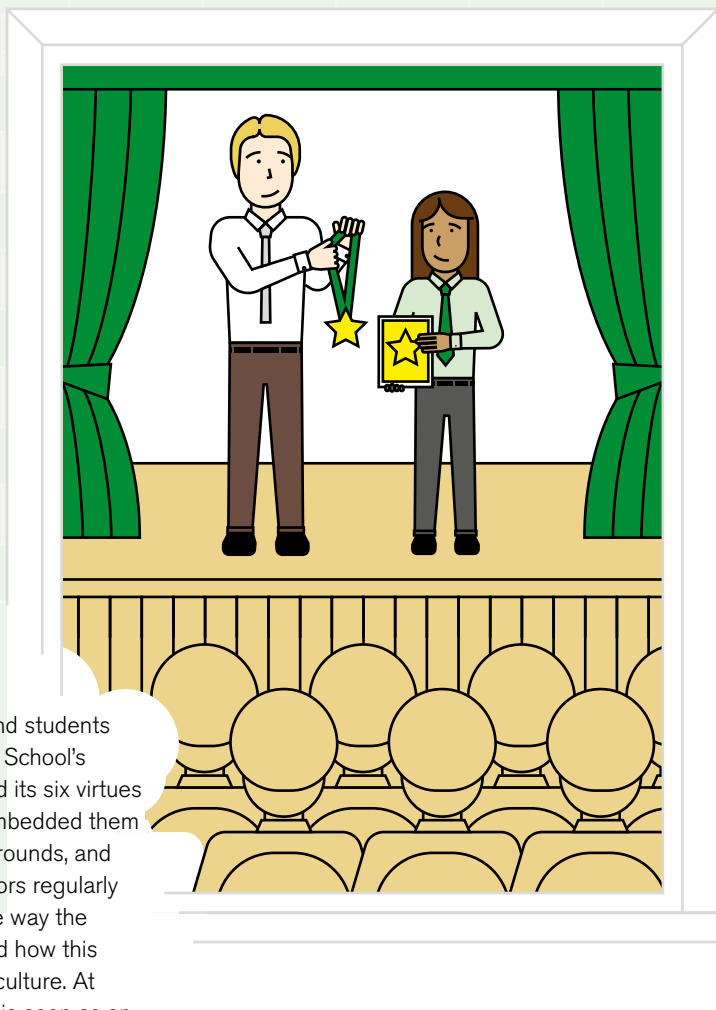
## Character Education

Smith's Wood has embedded character education into the fabric of the School. Led by the Character Lead and Senior Leadership Team, character education is evident throughout the school day. The School puts a reduction in behavioural incidences, the creation of its strong and positive relationships between staff and students, and increased academic attainment, especially amongst the School's large number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, down to its discrete character education programme.

## Character Caught

Smith's Wood has encouraged staff and students to contribute to the refocussing of the School's virtues. The School has since displayed its six virtues prominently around the School site, embedded them into walls and floors, around the playgrounds, and in 'character trees' in classrooms. Visitors regularly comment on the vibrant and innovative way the School demonstrates its six virtues and how this contributes towards a positive school culture. At Smith's Wood the school environment is seen as an important tool in embedding its character education provision.

Daily assemblies incorporate the virtue in focus for each half term, and staff are encouraged to highlight and celebrate instances of students demonstrating these character strengths, not only in the classroom, but throughout the school day. Staff role-modelling of good character is a feature of the Smith's Wood character programme. The staff demonstrate how positive role-models can contribute towards their students' sense of self-esteem, understanding and respect for others. Smith's Wood has embedded character throughout its recruitment and ongoing training of staff, aiming to retain and develop staff as character educators.



“

*Character education is included in our school ethos on a daily basis. It is embedded across everything we do.*

**Hannah Gilmour,**  
Class Teacher



**Kings Langley School**  
Unlocking Potential for Life

# Kings Langley School

**Type**.....Secondary, Academy  
**Age Range**.....11-18  
**Location**.....Kings Langley, Hertfordshire

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## **Virtues**

*Stick-ability, Self-regulation, Empathy*

---

## **Vision**

*We will ensure the happiness of every individual in our school community by providing opportunities for growth and excellence through the education of the whole person.*

## **Background**

Kings Langley School has around 1,050 students. The vast majority of students are from a White British background. The number of special educational needs students is above the UK average. It was the first school to be awarded the Association for Character Education School of Character Kitemark Plus in 2019.

## **Character Education**

Kings Langley School attributes much of its recent academic success to a dedicated and passionate commitment to developing the character of all

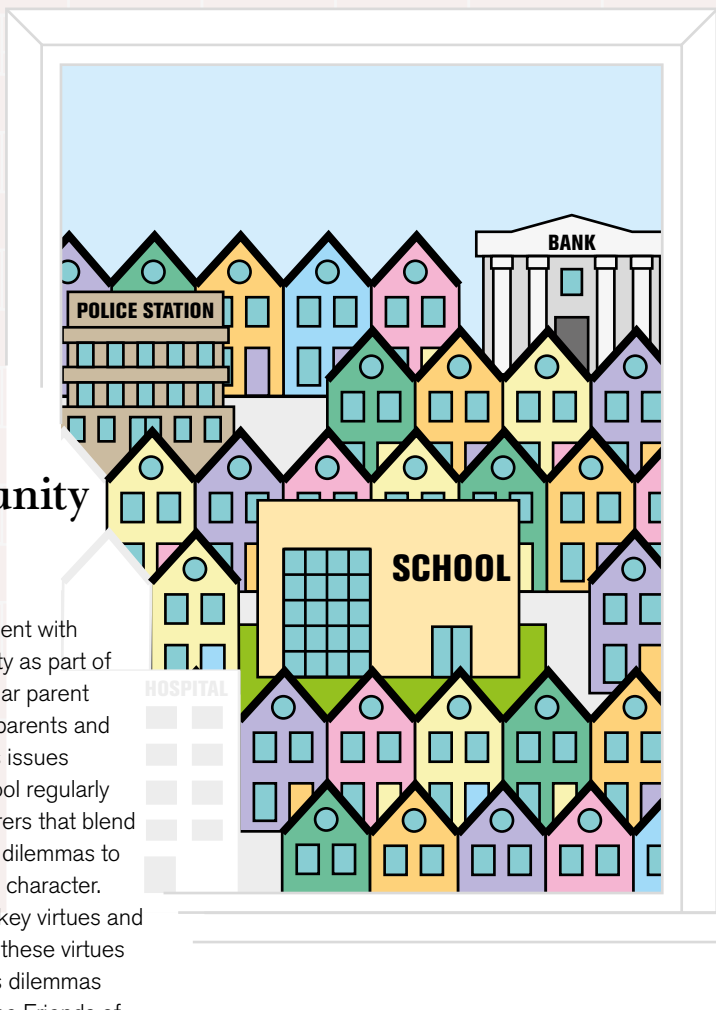
its students. In 2002, the School was placed in the bottom 3% of maintained schools, nationally. The School began its transformation with a focus on traditional standards, through standardising uniforms and focussing on improving behaviour, before it introduced a specific focus on character education, intended to help students flourish. The Kings Langley character education programme incorporates both 'taught' and 'caught' approaches. The School has developed a reputation as a centre of excellence, not just for its character provision, but for its arts curriculum and parental engagement.



## Parent and Community Relationships

Kings Langley has prioritised engagement with parents and the wider school community as part of its character education provision. Regular parent workshops provide the opportunity for parents and carers to meet with teachers to discuss issues affecting students or parents. The School regularly runs training events for parents and carers that blend discussions, research and virtue-based dilemmas to demonstrate the key principles of good character. Parents are introduced to the School's key virtues and are encouraged to openly discuss how these virtues can affect their responses to numerous dilemmas in an open space, free of judgement. The Friends of Kings Langley School group involves parents directly in fundraising and social events for the School. Regular newsletters are sent to parents with features celebrating students' successes both academically and in terms of character development.

The School has coached its staff on how to introduce its character education programme so as to positively impact the character education journeys of others. The School has actively engaged local business forums, and in recognition of the many connections it has made, was asked to become a Business Ambassador for the local area of Hemel Hempstead. Students are offered opportunities to become Business Ambassadors and work closely with local business leaders, giving them opportunities to stretch themselves, learn from new people, and test their character in new environments.



“

*What character education does, is it allows a school to establish a set of universal values that everybody can understand. That's parents, students and staff.*

**Gary Lewis,**  
Former Executive Head



# Elvetham Heath Primary School

**Type**..... Primary, Community School

**Age Range**..... 4-11

**Location**..... Fleet, Hampshire

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## **Virtues**

*Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance, Honesty, Kindness*

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## **Vision**

*A positive and supportive learning community where each child is helped to develop academic skills, qualities of character and a 'growth mindset' to enable them to become successful citizens in tomorrow's world.*

## **Background**

Elvetham Heath Primary School is a large primary school, with around 635 students. The majority of students are White British. The School has consistently scored highly in attainment. The numbers of students receiving Pupil Premium funding is below average.

## **Character Education**

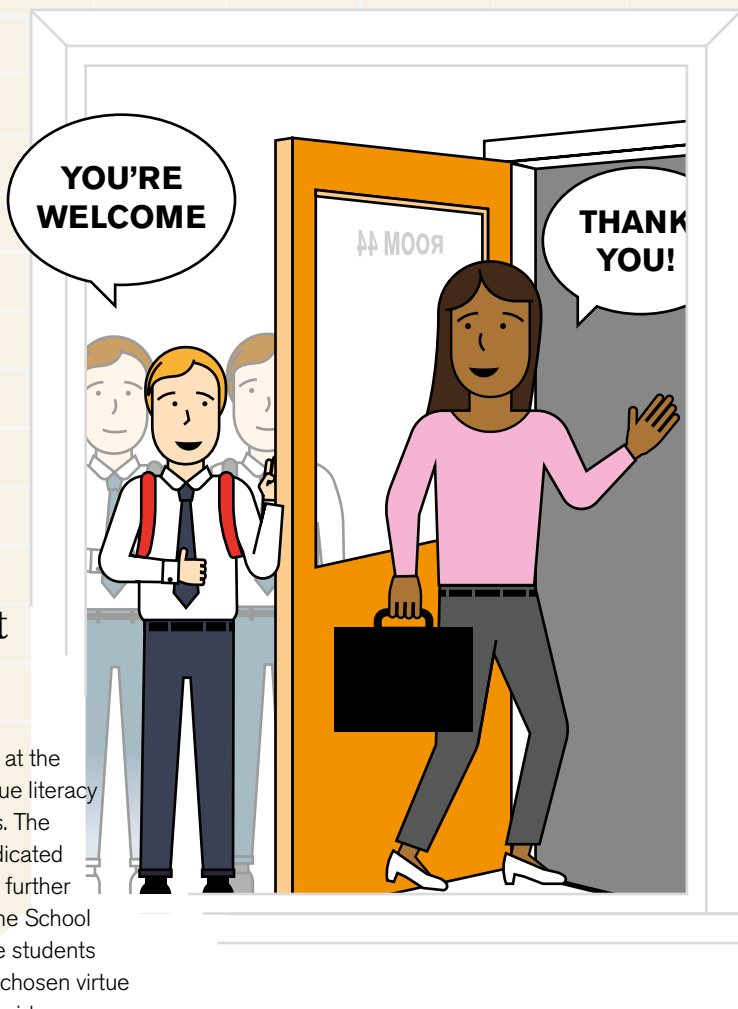
Elvetham Heath has developed its character education programme to cover both 'taught' and

'caught' approaches. Teachers and students are encouraged to 'live' the virtues of the School, which are rooted in mutual respect, and participate in the local community. Through a whole-school approach to character the School develops in its students the language of virtues to help them to be successful learners and members of society. Staff deliver the School's behaviour policy through the setting of high expectations for their students and their belief that the children can exceed those expectations through a focus on character development.

## Character Taught and Caught

The character education programme at the School combines the teaching of virtue literacy with implicit and explicit interventions. The School's assembly programme is dedicated to teaching the five core virtues, with further virtues added throughout the year. The School celebrates 'Stars of the Week', where students who have demonstrated that week's chosen virtue are praised for their efforts. The core virtues are prominently displayed throughout the School grounds. There is a strong culture of positive reinforcement of virtuous behaviour, with older students expected to take on extra responsibilities, such as mentoring younger peers. The School promotes positive staff role models, where staff use virtue language in their conversations with each other and with students, as part of cultivating an environment in which character can be caught.

The School has regularly and rigorously evaluated its taught approach to character education. The School began teaching the virtues in standalone lessons and, over time, adapted so that the teaching of virtues sits explicitly within the PSHE curriculum. Explicit teaching of the virtues begins in Reception, and as students move through the School, they are encouraged to use the language of virtue in all subjects.



“

*You can see character education, walking through the school, hearing people talk, talking to children and it has had a really positive effect.*

**Penny Bryant-Jones,**  
PSHE Lead



# The London Oratory School

**Type**.....Secondary, Academy  
**Age Range**.....7-18  
**Location**.....Fulham, London

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## Virtues

*In accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church*

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## Motto

*Respice finem [Live Wisely].*

## Background

The London Oratory School is a Catholic, state-funded boys' school, with a co-educational Sixth Form. The School has nearly 1,400 students, each educated in accordance with the principles and teachings of the Catholic Church. The School encourages and supports the spiritual, physical, moral and intellectual development of students. The School places an emphasis on providing a wide and rich range of educational, cultural and spiritual experiences for both students and staff, across its provision.

## Character Education

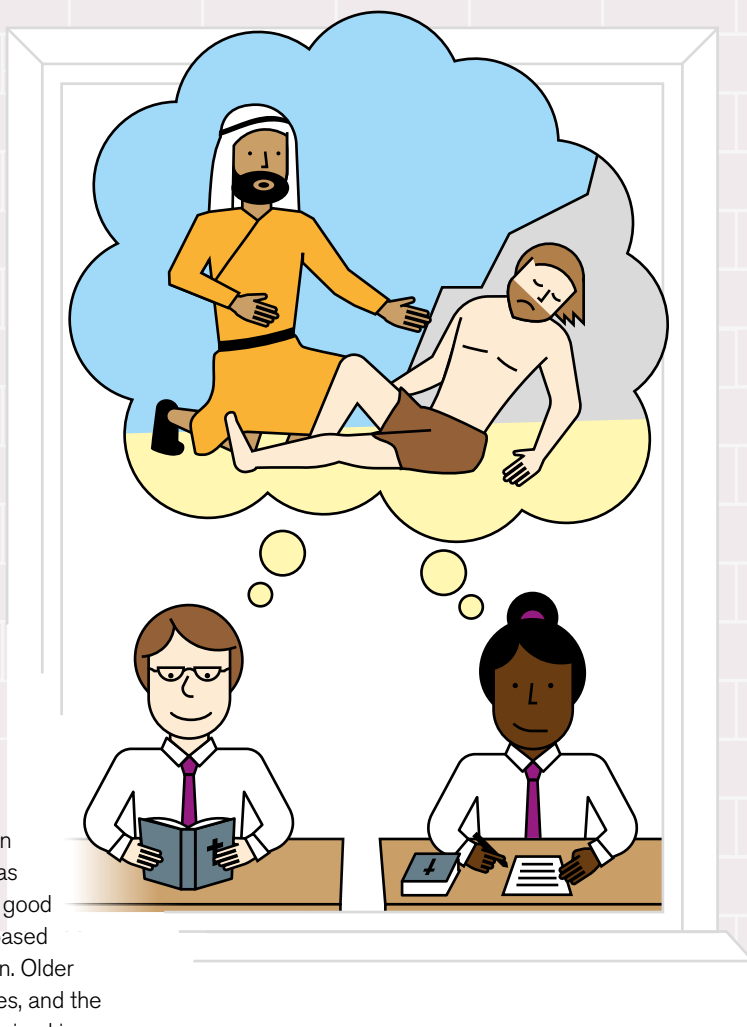
Character development sits at the heart of all that The London Oratory School seeks to do.

Whilst this has historically been the case, the School has recently made more explicit the ways in which character is developed through a faith-led curriculum. The Headmaster of the School actively encourages staff to be adventurous in their teaching of character by incorporating different pedagogies and using different resources across the curriculum. Character is taught explicitly as part of weekly Religious Education (RE) lessons, with each lesson focussed on a specific virtue. Further to this explicit teaching of character, the School utilises resources to integrate a character focus across the whole curriculum. For example, exploring the virtue of fortitude through studying interviews given by Victoria Cross recipients in History lessons.

## Character taught through faith

The School teaches character education through RE lessons to all year groups, as well as seeking to cultivate an ethos of good character and virtue through the faith-based approach that the School is immersed in. Older students act as mentors to younger ones, and the moral dimension of education is emphasised in the pastoral support provided to students, in its enrichment provision, and in time spent in prayer and worship in the School Chapel.

The School seeks to be 'distinctively Catholic' in its strategic direction, and emphasises its desire to be a 'flagship school for the Catholic character development of pupils.' In addition, Sixth Form students attend a compulsory weekly RE lesson, which is not assessed. The purpose of the lessons is to guide students' character development and spirituality through theology, where students debate moral dilemmas through a Catholic lens. Sixth Form students study the School's multiple Patron Saints as moral exemplars, using their hagiographies to debate the virtues they demonstrated in their lives.



“

*What we are trying to do is get teachers to debate the context of character education in everything that they feel.*

**Daniel Wright,  
Headmaster**

# Aylesford School

**Type**..... Secondary, Foundation School  
**Age Range**..... 11-18  
**Location**..... Aylesford, Kent

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## **Virtues**

*Respect, Self-discipline, Motivation, Resilience, Integrity,  
Courage, Open-mindedness, Confidence, Compassion, Curiosity*

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## **Vision**

*An education that builds courage, confidence and character.*

## **Background**

Aylesford School has around 740 students. It is a non-selective school in a local authority where high numbers of schools select students by ability. It was awarded the Association for Character Education School of Character Kitemark in July 2019.

## **Character Education**

Aylesford School began its explicit focus on character education in 2016. The School community were invited to help in the selection of ten virtues around which the school ethos would focus. Character development is now integrated across all aspects of school life. The School holds an annual

'Character Week', where each day is dedicated to developing a different virtue through enrichment activities including extreme sports, discovering local heritage and sponsored walks.

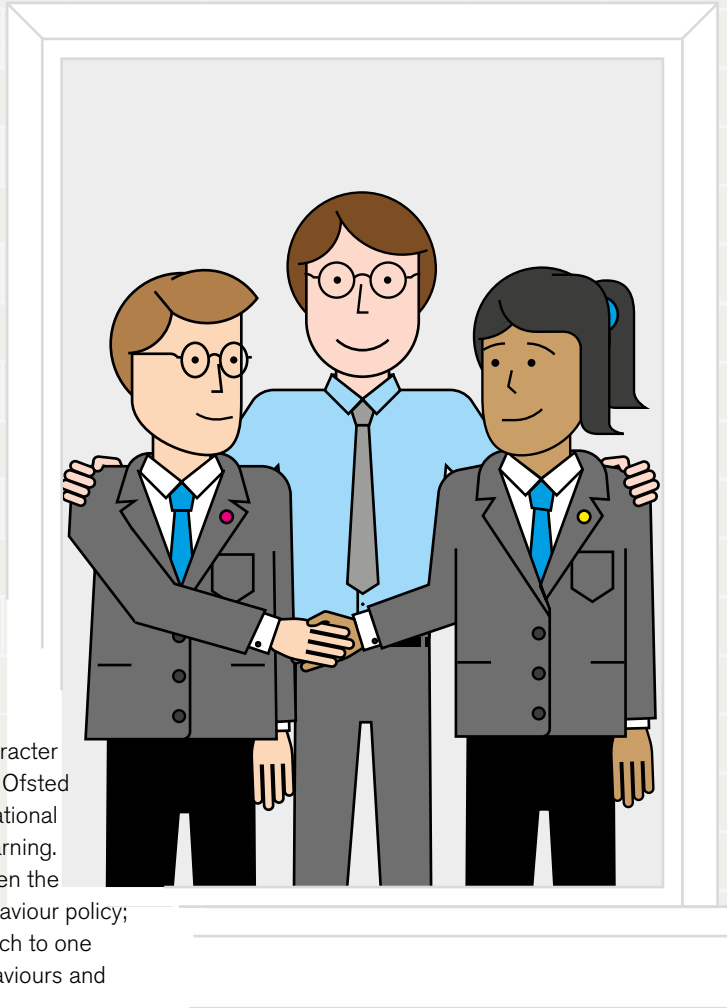
All students have a personal development 'log book', encouraging reflection on their character development, both at school and at home; this helps students to track their progress and 'Character Rewards' are earned throughout the year. Since embarking on its character education journey, the School has enacted many positive outcomes, including improved attendance, greater staff wellbeing and greater academic achievements.

## Behaviour

Aylesford School's commitment to character education was recognised in its 2020 Ofsted report which highlighted its transformational approach to student behaviour and learning. Central to such transformation has been the complete overhaul of the School's behaviour policy; moving from a more traditional approach to one that prioritises rewarding positive behaviours and fostering an atmosphere of respect.

The Senior Leadership Team placed character education at the forefront of the School's new behaviour policy. Designed to be transformative, the new policy was far removed from the previous approach and so frequent training sessions were provided to ensure staff felt comfortable enacting the new policy. When behavioural issues arise, teachers draw on a range of de-escalation strategies, giving students every opportunity to reflect on their actions and to discuss the virtues on display.

One-to-one 'repair and rebuild' meetings enable students to discuss practical steps they can take to generate positive outcomes and resolve issues. The modelling of positive behaviours by all members of staff is central to the character education approach at Aylesford School.



“

*What character education has done is it's certainly brought us closer together as a community. We are a school that really values everyone within the community.*

**Dave Wright,**  
Assistant Headteacher



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM  
SCHOOL

# University of Birmingham School

**Type**.....Secondary, Free School  
**Age Range**.....11-19  
**Location**.....Birmingham, West Midlands

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## Virtues

*Drawn from across the Jubilee Centre Building Blocks of Character*

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## Vision

*Rethinking education, helping tomorrow's citizens flourish.*

## Background

The University of Birmingham School opened in 2015 as the UK's first secondary University Training School, as well as the first school to have an explicit focus on character development. The School has a high percentage of students from minority ethnic groups, recruiting as it does through a 'multi-nodal' admissions policy located in three socially disadvantaged areas in Birmingham. The School has worked in close partnership with the Jubilee Centre since its conception in developing its character education provision. The Head of School, Rebecca Tighe, became the first Jubilee Centre Ambassador of Character in 2020 for her dedication to developing the character provision of the School.

## Character Education

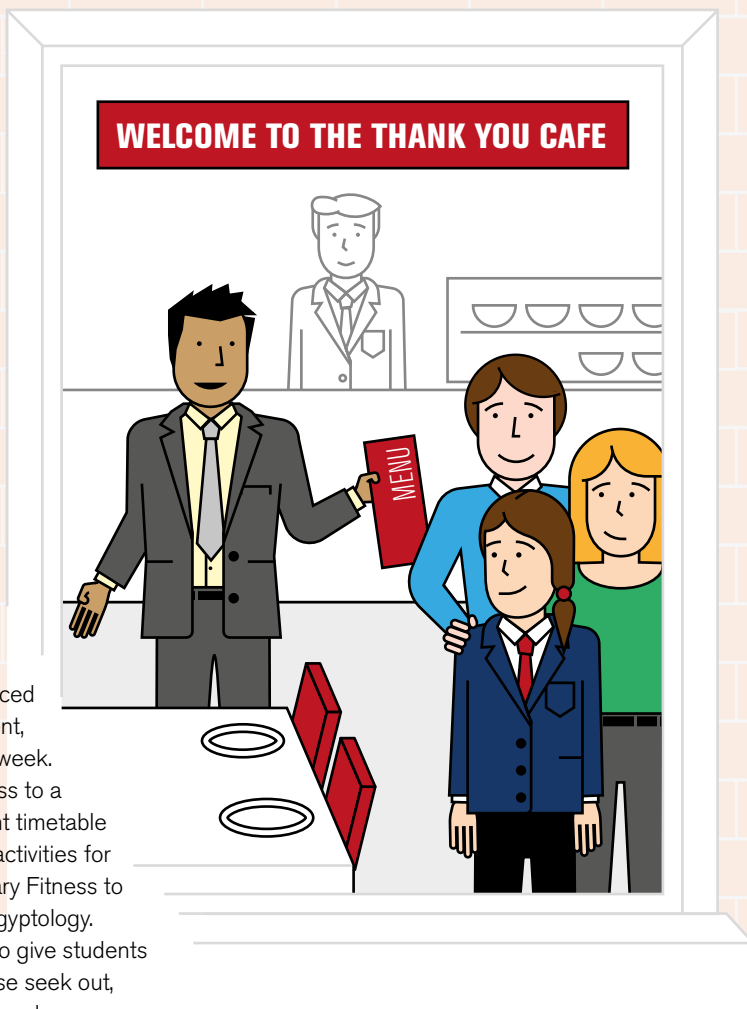
Established to have an explicit focus on character, the School timetable is characterised by a longer school day intended to facilitate explicit and implicit character education provision. Character education infuses all operations at the School, across curriculum, policy, governance, professional development, and teacher conduct. The partnership with the Jubilee Centre has included the design of a bespoke curriculum for character, research with staff and students, delivery of character-focussed INSET, access to work experience opportunities for students, and collaboration on presentations and publications.



## Enrichment

The University of Birmingham School's character education provision is enhanced by its programme of student enrichment, which forms a core part of the School week. Every student takes part and has access to a wide range of activities. The enrichment timetable facilitates over 30 different clubs and activities for students to opt-in to, from British Military Fitness to knitting, and henna hand-painting to Egyptology. The enrichment provision is designed to give students experiences that they may not otherwise seek out, with students encouraged to push themselves beyond their comfort zones and seek opportunities to develop their character. Older students are encouraged to lead activities and support their younger peers. Every Friday afternoon is extended to enable students and teachers to explore themes, places and activities in more detail.

One example of a virtue-led enrichment activity is the 'Thank You Café', where students express their gratitude to their loved ones by making them a three-course meal, before inviting them into school to share with their peers and guests. Enrichment activities span the four 'Building Blocks of Character', encouraging students to consider the intellectual, moral, civic, and performance virtues ([www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/framework](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/framework)). Students are asked to reflect upon the virtues they develop through participating in each of their different activities.



“

*We explain that showing good character is all about living a flourishing life by doing something that is meaningful to you but also has impact on your community.*

**Rebecca Tighe,**  
Head of School

# Northampton Academy

Type.....Secondary, Academy  
Age Range.....11-18  
Location.....Northampton, Northamptonshire

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## Virtues

*Respect, Determination, Ambition, Tolerance, Integrity*

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## Vision

*To be an Academy of character and excellence. To provide a unique and extraordinary experience that sets us apart: locally, nationally and internationally.*

## Background

Northampton Academy has been part of the United Learning Trust since 2004. The School is a large secondary academy with 1,445 students including Sixth Form. The School has a high Pupil Premium intake. It was one of the first schools in the country to be awarded the Association for Character Education School of Character Kitemark, in 2018. The School is situated in an area of high socio-economic deprivation.

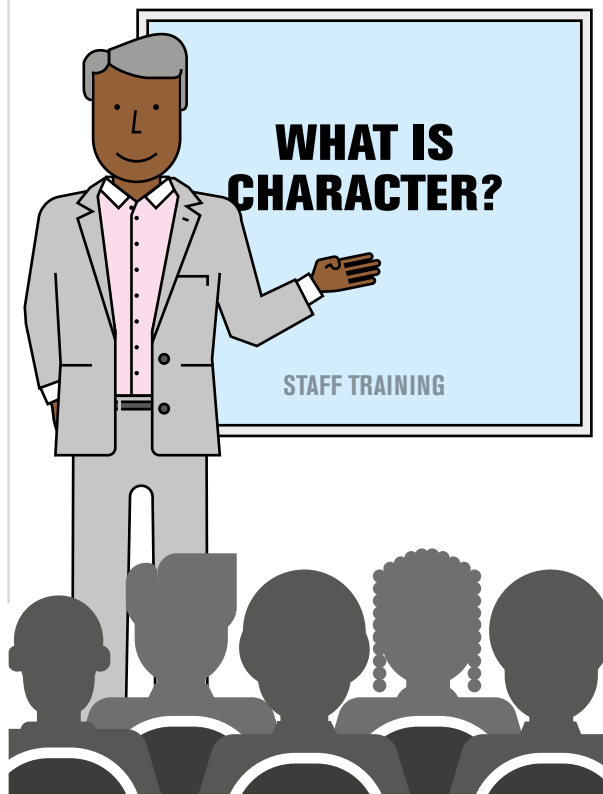
## Character Education

Northampton Academy's character education provision is driven through three core virtues of respect, determination and ambition. The language of character is physically displayed around the School, and is embedded in the school ethos through character-focussed assemblies, tutor time and staff training. The School has designed extensive suites of character education resources that contain materials on how character can be developed at home and actively evaluates its character education provision, utilising the Jubilee Centre Evaluation Handbook for Schools in doing this.

## Leadership and Staff Training

Northampton Academy has enhanced its character provision through its leadership, and through the dedication of staff training to role-modelling and developing strong relationships. The School appointed a Director of Character to lead on developing a character education programme, which has provided detailed and practical guides for staff, including a staff character handbook, a character classroom charter and a guide to teaching character across different subjects. Character is given prominence in all recruitment and selection of staff and regular training workshops ensure that all staff and governors understand the School's approach to character and the high expectations placed on them in their roles as character educators.

The School has also established a staff Character Working Party to work alongside the Senior Leadership Team to implement and innovate new ideas to include in the character education programme. The School hosts staff 'learning hubs' throughout the year for teachers to develop professionally, with each 'learning hub' containing a focussed session on character; topics include the importance of role-modelling, developing independence and nurturing respect.



“

*Character education done in the right way generates a beautiful culture – a positive culture within the school.*

**Chris Clyne,**  
Principal



Yeadling Junior School

# Yeadling Junior School

**Type**..... Primary, Community School  
**Age Range**..... 7-11  
**Location**..... Hayes, Middlesex

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## Virtues

*Resilience, Teamwork, Compassion, Respect, Volunteering, Pride, Curiosity, Reflection, Dignity, Determination*

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## Vision

*Learning; working; achieving together.*

## Background

Yeadling Junior School is a large junior school, with almost 500 students in Years 3 to 6. The School has a high percentage of students in receipt of Pupil Premium funding. The school community is diverse, with a large number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, predominantly Asian and African. The School aims to enable students to develop intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially, in a happy, secure and challenging environment.

## Character Education

Yeadling School has placed character education at the heart of student learning, with character threaded through the curriculum and culture of

the school day. The School believes that its holistic approach to character provision, across all teaching and operations, has been transformational, with students demonstrating confidence, resilience, and embracing new challenges. As part of its approach, external speakers are often invited to give exciting and inspiring assemblies framed around the School's virtues. The School prioritises engagement with parents on character development, as well as supporting staff to fulfil their roles as character educators. Regular staff meetings are used to discuss how the School's virtues can be incorporated across the curriculum and how current research can influence teaching practices.

## Youth Social Action

Yeading School has prioritised character development through enrichment and youth social action, providing students with a wide range of extra-curricular activities and externally-delivered programmes. The School is a key partner of the national #iwill campaign, and works closely with WE Schools, both of which champion young people as ambassadors of social action. The School strives to enable students to access opportunities and experiences they might not otherwise be able to. One means by which the School does this is through its connections with a local 'community house', which plays a central role in on-site social action, used by students, as well as parents, as a base to run fundraising campaigns for good causes.

Social action is incorporated across the whole curriculum, with teachers, wherever possible, exploring local and global issues in their lessons and assemblies. Students are encouraged to develop social action projects that engage with the local community and help those affected by the issues raised, as well as focussing on the development of civic virtues.

All students at Yeading are considered 'Agents of Change', and some children in Years 5 and 6 are democratically elected as 'Special Agents of Change'. This elected group are entrusted ambassadors for the School and wider community for youth social action and character.



“

*The school engages in social action and it is really important to all of us. It enables the children to display those character virtues we teach.*

**Carole Jones,**  
Headteacher





# Recognised by Ofsted

## Smith's Wood Primary Academy

"The diverse and rich curriculum allows pupils to learn about moral values and the importance of the rule of law. Pupils respect one another and the environment that they learn in."

## Kings Langley School

"Leaders have placed great emphasis on the traits of 'stickability, self-regulation and empathy' as a foundation to the character education programme. This is evident across all aspects of the pupils' experience at Kings Langley and pupils say that it helps them make healthy decisions and become better citizens."

## The London Oratory School

"The headmaster has the very able support of the senior staff, heads of department and housemasters, who have a very good understanding of the School's work. He leads a cohesive team, and together they apply the best value principles - compare, challenge, compete, consult - and there is increasing ownership of the changes. They ensure that the School runs smoothly, and make a strong contribution to the inclusive ethos in which every boy is known and nurtured."

## Aylesford School

"Leaders have a strong focus on building character education. This has transformed pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils approach their learning positively, including those who have joined the school in-year."

## Elvetham Heath Primary School

"The most striking feature that the pupils displayed, at all times, was the caring way they took notice of each other and applauded all successes."

## University of Birmingham School

"The School's 'character education' programme contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. Leaders are passionate about pupils' development as 'fully-rounded' individuals."

## Northampton Academy

"The School's strongly held values of respect, determination and ambition help them to reflect on and develop their character. Character development is at the heart of the School's work."

## Yeading Junior School

"Pupils behave well in lessons and around the School. They are friendly and polite, reflecting the School's 10 character virtues, which the School has embedded in its ethos: resilience, teamwork, compassion, respect, volunteering, pride, curiosity, reflection, dignity and determination."



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