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Floreat Education

Character Virtues
Development Programme

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This report was written by the project evaluators Dr Tom Harrison (University of Birmingham) and Emma Nailer. It contains a background to the Character Virtues Development Programme written by Floreat staff, as well as the University of Birmingham's evaluation methodology and findings.

Executive Summary

In September 2015 Floreat opened two new primary schools in London, educating around 75 Reception children between them. These brand new schools, with their fresh new cohort of teachers and pupils, and with the support of the evaluation partners at The University of Birmingham, were uniquely well placed to pioneer Floreat's Character Virtue Development (CVD) Programme for Reception to Year 2.

The Programme is designed to equip teachers to develop infant pupils' understanding and practise of 18 character virtues. It constitutes a taught, story-led virtue literacy course; guidance and a case study on implementing service learning with infants; and a website containing guidance and videos about how to create a school ethos conducive to habituating character virtues.

The development and piloting of the Programme was evaluated by researchers at the University of Birmingham utilising a mixed method approach. Accepting the limitations of these methods, the main findings from the evaluation were:

- Teachers rated the training Programme positively.
- Staff spoke positively about the Programme's originality, practicality and flexibility.
- Staff believe that the Programme is already having a positive impact on children's engagement in virtuous behaviours.
- Teachers appreciate the opportunity to teach character and virtues in an explicit manner and feel that it has a larger positive impact on pupils than the largely implicit nature of character education that they have experienced previously.
- There is evidence to demonstrate the Programme enhanced the virtue literacy of pupils.
- Teachers felt that the Programme provides a common language for teaching pupils about character and virtues. This is helped by the use of stories, a format that young children are familiar and comfortable with. This common language makes it easier for staff to encourage children to use the virtues and also contributed to the school creating a backbone to base its ethos on.
- Teachers felt that, in the short space of time they had been using the Programme, it had had a positive impact on pupils and that the children were using the tools they had been given, such as hand signals to help them to remember to use the virtues.



Important recommendations from the evaluation are:

- Virtue language will be reinforced more easily if it is being used consistently by all adults that interact with the children on a regular basis. Further opportunities to train all staff (not only teachers) and to encourage parents to engage with the vocabulary should be considered.
- Some teachers identified where cross-curricular links had been made with Floreat's Knowledge curriculum. It may be worth considering how these links could be strengthened in future. For example, the Character Programme could influence choice of texts in English, and incorporate non-fiction texts relating to science and the humanities learning, and highlighting real-life role models and moral dilemmas.
- Dissemination of the Programme to other schools, particularly through the development of a website that includes the curriculum itself and related resources, a book list, feedback from teachers about how they've used the Programme and videos that could be used for teacher training. It will be important to ensure that this website is maintained and kept up-to-date.
- New instruments for the evaluation of character education Programmes with 4 and 5 year old pupils should be developed to improve the quality of future evaluations of a similar nature.

Background to the Project

Floreat's Character Education Model

Floreat's mission is to enable children to flourish by developing both their minds and their morals. Floreat believes that schools should develop pupils who are curious and hard working, who are good and do good for others. To do this they are developing a *Virtue and Knowledge School Model*, which is rooted in a belief that society - enacted through schools - has a responsibility to cultivate children's cultural knowledge and good character, alongside the core skills of English and maths. Through the dual strands of this educational model Floreat aims to provide an environment in which children can grow into the very best versions of themselves.

Floreat's Virtue and Knowledge School Model (see fig 1) emphasises the development of pupils' character strengths as much as rigorous academic study.



Fig1: Floreat's Virtue and Knowledge School Model

The Model consist of the following four core elements:

- *Core skills*: developing literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills enables pupils to access the entire curriculum.
- *Cultural knowledge*: discrete subject-based study allows pupils to deepen their understanding and engagement with the world.
- *Curiosity*: giving pupils the chance to apply their skills and knowledge in longer, more open-ended projects helps them to become more independent learners.
- *Character*: developing character strengths and virtues supports pupils' academic growth and helps them achieve personal wellbeing.

Why character education?

The profile of character education has risen in recent years. Research shows that 87% of parents want schools to educate for both academic outcomes and good character (Jubilee Centre & Populus, 2013) and that employers feel too many school-leavers lack essential 'soft skills' (CBI, 2012), which goes some way to explain the renewed focus on character. Furthermore, there is evidence that the development of character virtues contributes to a range of positive outcomes including academic achievement (Public Health England, 2014), future success (Duckworth et al, 2007), and good mental health (Waters, 2011). There is also evidence that character education and related fields such as positive psychology can have a positive impact on young people's wellbeing as a prerequisite to learning (Gutman and Vorhaus,2012; Challen et al,2011).

More broadly, there is a belief that in countries with increasingly diverse populations, instilling pro-social attributes in young people is essential for the maintenance of cohesive, trusting and functioning societies.



Can schools develop character?

Character traits are malleable, in that they can be developed through explicit and purposeful practice (Heckman & Kautz, 2013; Waters, 2011). The goal of character education is to help people to become more virtuous by developing the virtues they already possess and habituating new ones. This can take place implicitly and explicitly; meaning character virtues can be ‘caught’ through the ethos, culture, language and role models pupils are exposed to, and it can also be ‘taught’ through formal activities designed specifically to promote virtues.

There are some existing programmes designed to develop character in young people eg. the Penn Resilience Programme; Mindfulness in Schools; and Knightly Virtues, however these programmes are aimed at children over the age of 7.

Our decision to focus the Floreat Character Virtue Development Programme on infant year groups was based on calls by distinguished academics - including Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman - to create high-value programmes specifically targeting young children. At this age, children’s character strengths are particularly malleable, and accordingly, sustained character education programmes are likely to have a significant impact.

Developing the Character Virtues Development Programme

In September 2015 Floreat opened two new primary schools in London, educating around 75 Reception children between them. These brand new schools, with their fresh new cohort of teachers and pupils, and with the support of the evaluation partners at The University of Birmingham, were uniquely well placed to pioneer Floreat’s Character Virtue Development Programme for Reception to Year 2.

The Programme is designed to equip teachers to develop infant pupils’ understanding and practise of a broad range of 18 character virtues. It constitutes a taught, story-led virtue literacy course; guidance and a case study on implementing service learning with infants; and a website containing training materials and videos to support teachers to create a school ethos conducive to habituating character virtues.

The 18 virtues taught are drawn from the 24 universal virtues identified by Seligman and Peterson in their 2004 study ‘Character Strengths and Virtues’, and



span moral, performance, civic and intellectual domains, as defined by Berkowitz and Shields (2015).

The Floreat Character Virtue Development Programme reflects the fact that character is both ‘taught’ and ‘caught’, and comprises three distinct strands:

- Virtue Literacy- a taught, story-based course to develop pupils’ understanding of character and the language of virtue.
- Service Learning - opportunities for pupils to practise virtuous behaviour and apply their learning to real life through Service Learning Projects.
- Culture and Ethos - training materials to advance teachers’ understanding of how to create a school culture which implicitly models and habituates virtuous behaviours.

Following a round table discussion, it was decided that it would be appropriate to study one virtue for two weeks on a whole-school basis. Chosen virtues were taken from the work of Peterson and Seligman, who advocate 24 character strengths or virtues. In order to allow each virtue to be taught for two weeks within the school year, these were narrowed down to 18 virtues (see Table 1), either by eliminating virtues that would be covered explicitly in other lessons, such as spirituality in Religious Education, or by combining connected virtues, such as judgement and prudence.



Intellectual

Curiosity (syn. Interest, open-mindedness): Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering. Within Curiosity, we also include ‘Love of Learning’, which is about systematically learning new skills, topics and bodies of knowledge

Creativity (syn. originality, ingenuity): Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it.

Judgment and Prudence (syn. Critical thinking): Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one’s mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly. Prudence is related to Judgment. It means being careful about one’s choices and not taking undue risks. ‘It also means ‘thinking before you speak’, so that words and actions are not later regretted.

Appreciation and Awe (syn. Wonder, elevation): Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience

Moral

Honesty (syn. Authenticity, integrity): Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one’s feelings and actions

Bravery (syn. Valor): not shrinking from threat, challenge or difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it.

Forgiveness: Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful

Fairness: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance

Humility: Letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than others

Performance

Perseverance (syn. Persistence, industriousness): Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; “getting it out the door”; taking pleasure in completing tasks

Optimism and Joy (syn. Hope, future-mindedness): Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about. This unit also includes Joy, which is about approaching life with excitement and energy. Joy means not doing things halfway or halfheartedly. It means living life as an adventure and feeling alive and activated.

Leadership and Teamwork (syn. Citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty): Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one’s fair share. This unit covers Leadership as an important dimension of teamwork. It involves encouraging a group to get things done whilst maintaining good relations, organising activities and seeing that they happen.

Self-Control and dignity: Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one’s appetites and emotions. Treating oneself and others with respect.

Civic

Service: Looking for ways to help others and putting other people’s needs before your own. Doing good for others without expecting praise or reward.

Gratitude: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.

Love and Kindness (syn. Generosity, care, compassion): Doing favours and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them. Specifically, Love refers to forming and valuing close relationships in which sharing and caring are reciprocated.

Humour (syn. Playfulness): liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes.

Empathy and Perspective (syn. Emotional intelligence, personal intelligence, wisdom): Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick. Having perspective. This means being able to provide wise counsel to others and having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and others.

Table 1: Floreat’s 18 Selected Virtues



Once the virtues had been chosen, the next step was to identify stories and activities that could be used to teach each virtue. Each ‘character unit’ is designed to consist of a core story that is shared and discussed with the class and follow-up activities to reinforce the concepts introduced by the story. Staff generally described this as a 20 minute “input” followed by a teacher-lead activity, such as a class game, either in one session or two sessions a week. All teaching staff also described how the virtue is then reinforced throughout the time that children are at school, for example, by praising children when they engage in a behaviour that displays that virtue.

Virtue Literacy

The virtue literacy curriculum is a taught, story-based course. Lessons are weekly and two lessons are dedicated to each virtue. Each session begins with the class sharing a story as a stimulus for discussion. For example, when pupils study fairness, they read the story of the Little Red Hen, who couldn’t convince any animal to help her make bread, even though they were all happy to help her eat it in the end! This helps children to distinguish situations in which fairness means that everyone automatically gets the same, from those in which entitlement has been worked for or properly earned. In Year 1 the children read the ancient Biblical story of Francis and the Wolf. Francis teaches the townspeople to see through the eyes of the hungry, old and lonely wolf, which introduces the practise of empathy and the idea that fairness can mean giving what you have to others in greater need, rather than keeping hold of what feels like is yours. When pupils study fairness in Year 2 they hear the story *Four Feet, Two Sandals*, which is about 2 refugee girls in Pakistan, who each find one sandal of a pair. They are both willing to sacrifice their one sandal so the other can wear a pair, and through this kindness - even in the face of great poverty in the refugee camp - they forge a deep and enduring friendship.

Another example is honesty. In Reception the story of The Honest Woodcutter teaches children that even when no-one is looking, honesty is always the best policy. Then in Year 1 children hear the story of George Washington and the Cherry Tree, which models for them that when they’ve done something wrong, owning up is always better than covering-up. When the children reach Year 2, they read the story of the boy who cried wolf, which explores more complex issues of trust and a person’s standing and reputation in society.

After reading and recalling the story, pupils participate in activities which enable them to make links between the virtue in the story and in their own lives. We have also added a series of big pictures by a children’s illustrator, which show children both inside and outside of school in situations which provoke discussion about virtuous behaviours.



Virtue literacy alone is insufficient to develop virtuous behaviour (see Arthur et. Al., 2014). Floreat's taught Virtue Literacy Programme has been developed in the context of the whole Floreat Programme which, alongside a knowledge rich curriculum, also comprises service learning and culture and training strands which aim to support teachers.

Service Learning

Through the service learning strand of the Programme pupils participate in Service Learning Projects (SLPs) which affords weekly, timetabled opportunities to practise virtuous behaviours for the benefit of peers, families and the wider community. Teachers are provided with a set of lesson plans and resources that facilitate effective SLPs. Floreat's research into SLPs suggests they're effective when they follow three essential steps, of meaningful engagement, academic enquiry and critical reflection.

Culture and Ethos

Mindful that much of what young people learn about character is 'caught' (Jubilee Centre, 2014) by watching peers, adults and teachers, the third strand of the Character Programme focuses on how to create a virtuous school culture and ethos.

Before Floreat's schools opened, staff attended a three-week Summer Institute (SI). SI purposefully trained staff in how to establish and embed efficient transitions and routines in the classrooms, corridors, playground and lunch hall. As well as ensuring learning time is maximised, these routines habituate children into being orderly, self-controlled and independent.

SI also trained teachers in how to:

- Use *positive language* to correct infractions and create a calm, positive learning environment;
- Facilitate *perfect partners* so that children communicate effectively with peers on the carpet;
- Create an environment in which everyone participates - *maximum participation*;
- Facilitate a calm *morning meeting* routine; and
- Expect a *confident voice*, which means children speaking audibly so everyone can hear, in standard English and using full sentences.



Finally, one day of SI was dedicated to preparing staff to deliver the Character Virtue Development Programme, and an evaluation of this day is included below.

Training materials and classroom resources relating to teaching character eg. templates, videos and posters produced for SI, have been made freely available on the Floreat Character Programme website.

The taught aspect of the Character Virtue Development Programme - as implemented to date in the Reception classes at Floreat - has been evaluated by Floreat alongside researchers at the University of Birmingham. The following section describes the methodology employed to undertake the evaluation.

NB: The Programme is described as having 3 strands: a literacy programme, a service learning and behaviour programme, and a culture and ethos strand. The most developed strand is the literacy programme, so the evaluation reported on next focussed primarily on this strand.

Evaluation Methodology

The aim of the Character Virtues Development Programme was not simply to develop a new set of teaching and learning materials and accompanying training course - but to also evaluate them. The aim of the evaluation was to discover 'what works' as well as where improvements could be made to the programme. When developing a new educational intervention, it is essential to step back regularly and reflect on the process. This ensures that successful aspects are highlighted and progressed, and that challenges are identified, altered and overcome. The evaluation aimed to find out what went well in the development of the programme, as well as what might be done differently in future. The evaluation was guided by the following two evaluation questions:

EQ1. Does the Character Virtues Development Programme improve pupils' knowledge, understanding of virtue terms and concepts and the practice of them?

EQ2. How do teachers experiencing the Character Virtues Development Programme evaluate;

- a) the materials and resources;
- b) the training provided.

After a brief discussion about the challenges of evaluating character-based interventions the following section describes the research methods utilised to address these questions.



The Challenges of Measuring Character

Kristjánsson (2015) calls the measurement of character, the ‘profoundest problem’ and as such it is perhaps the biggest lacuna in the field today. It is well known that many, if not the majority, of philosophers and psychologists currently working in the area, harbour (some serious) concerns about the limitations of measuring character (see e.g. Duckworth and Yeager, 2015). The following passage from Kristjan Kristjánsson (2015) lays out the problem.

‘We can imagine the possibility of drawing up, step by step, a complex picture of students’ broad moral hexeis/schemas by homing in separately on each of the components of Aristotelian virtue...for example gauging perception of moral salience by letting them analyse a novel or a film and identify the moral issues that it elicits, gauging moral emotion and desire through an implicit-measure test, gauging moral self-concept through a self-report questionnaire, gauging moral understanding/reasoning through a deep interview, gauging moral motivation through dilemma testing, gauging moral behaviour and general character related school ethos through a longitudinal observational study, and then corroborating the findings of the study through detailed peer reports (parents, friends, teachers) over an extended period of time’ (Kristjánsson 2015, chap. 3)

A particular challenge for the present evaluation is that measuring virtue in people in general and in young moral learners in particular, is fraught with difficulties. A major issue is that no tried-and-tested instruments to operationalise and measure moral virtue in four and five year olds exist, and that more research is needed to develop credible measures of character that are reliable and have predictive (likely to predict later measures) and concurrent (relates well to other similar measures) validity. The biggest challenge to validity is the over-reliance on seemingly subjective self-reports. Many surveys rely on participants self-reporting their behaviour and the concern is that self-reports do not always generate reliable data. This is particularly the case when participants are asked to self-report on their own character. Due to reasons of social desirability and / or self-delusion, they are unlikely to provide an objective account of virtue (Walker, 2014).

Even if we set aside the difficulty of the subjective nature of self-report measures, their use with four and five year olds would be both practically and conceptually difficult, since children’s concept of self tends to be concrete and descriptive at this age, rather than judgmental or comparative (Bee and Boyd, 2004), and items would need to be read to pupils, probably on an individual basis.



The use of behavioural tasks provides a more direct and objective way of measuring character in young children. These methods require a child to take part in a simple task or game whilst an observer watches and records their response. Examples include following an instruction to not peek while a toy is being wrapped in order to assess self-regulation (Murray & Kochanska, 2002), asking children to accept or reject unequal allocations of candy so as to assess fairness (Blake & McAuliffe, 2011) or allowing children the choice of playing with a known or unknown toy in order to measure curiosity (Henderson & Moore, 1979). However, these methods are time-consuming, usually measure only one aspect of one virtue and often require specialist training for effective interpretation.

An alternative way to overcome the difficulties of self-report measures is to use informant reports, completed by teachers, parents or other observers. Peterson and Seligman's (2004) VIA Classification has been used to assess character strengths in young children by asking parents to provide a written description of their child's personal characteristics and individual qualities and then coding these descriptions using content analysis (Park and Peterson, 2006). Although they found this to be a reliable method for identifying character strengths in young children, there could be difficulties with employing this method in the current study, the main one being that some parents might be reluctant to complete such a description or may not be able to do so if English is not their first language. This could lead to a biased sample.

Informant report measures which make use of Likert scale items are simpler to use and have provided effective and efficient measures of aspects of character in young children. For example, the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA; LeBuffe, Shapiro & Naglieri, 2009) is designed to measure social-emotional competencies of children aged 5-14 years, such as self-management, personal responsibility and optimistic thinking, with the measure requiring the rater to show how frequently a student has engaged in particular behaviours in the past 4 weeks. The researchers report high levels of reliability and validity. Another example is the I/D-Young Children (I/D-YC) scales, which are parent-report scales that aim to assess early expressions of epistemic curiosity (Piotrowski, Litman & Valkenburg, 2014). Whilst similar methods might provide a useful tool for measuring character in the context of the current study, it is important to note that their effectiveness rests on the ability of raters to be objective and consistent in their judgments.

It is for the reasons stated above that caution is advised when reading the findings from the evaluation. They are likely to provide a useful picture about the 'effectiveness' of the Character Development Programme, but unlikely to provide an accurate account of its impact on the virtue development of individual pupils.



The Methods

An approach undertaken to strengthen the present evaluation was the use of multiple methods, allowing for the triangulation of findings. When used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for a more in-depth analysis (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Multiple method research is particularly beneficial for studies into character, as it often draws on qualitative and quantitative data in combination and is therefore more likely to provide an accurate account when researching the intricacies of character (Arthur *et al.*, 2104; Alexander, 2014). The advice from Alexander (2014) and Funder (2012) is that all the available research tools should be applied if the richest picture of human character is to be gained from any single piece of research.

The following four methods were utilised in the evaluation and each are described below.

- i. Teacher Interviews
- ii. Observations
- iii. Pupil Focus Groups
- iv. Teacher pre and post survey

I. Teacher Interviews

In order to evaluate the development of the Programme, interviews were carried out with three key members of the development team and three teachers with experience of using the Programme materials at Floreat Brentford and Floreat Wandsworth primary schools. Interviews were carried out by a research assistant approximately 2 months into the first year of using the Programme with a Reception cohort. At this time, the virtues that had been covered in the curriculum were self-control, bravery and love and kindness. Each interview lasted between 16 and 38 minutes with two different (but similar) interview schedules used for development staff and teaching staff respectively (appendix 1).

Interviews were recorded and transcribed ready for qualitative analysis. During analysis the transcripts were read whilst listening to the audio recordings to check accuracy. Interview responses were then coded using computerised coding software (NVivo), and grouped together into categories and subcategories, according to the report's aims of identifying how staff view the Programme, its strengths, challenges faced and areas for further development.

II. Observation



Observations were used to address the question of whether the Character Virtues Development Programme improves pupils' virtuous practice. Observation based research methods lessen an over-reliance on self-reporting. Some successful attempts to measure virtue through observation have been recorded (Fallona's, 2000) although they are also limited by the many practical issues associated with implementing the method. For example, observation is known to be a labour-and-time consuming method and sometimes difficult to administer (Robson, 2011). For the present study, one of the main issues is that there were no pre-validated methods available for the study of the identified character virtues appropriate for 4 and 5 year olds. This meant the observation instrument had to be devised specifically for this evaluation and there was not time to pre-pilot or pilot the measure. This has clear limitations for the validity of the resulting findings. However, it was decided that the Programme would be a good opportunity to experiment with new instruments with the view that they can be developed and improved during future research of a similar nature.

As a starting point for developing the rubric (appendix 2), it was noted that observations are routinely used in early years settings to assess progress for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile, so staff are familiar with using such methods. Whilst it would be too time-consuming to assess all pupils on all virtues, observing a representative sample of pupils on the four core virtues of the Floreat Programme (honesty, curiosity, perseverance and service) provides a manageable way to evaluate the overall progress in the development of virtuous practice, remembering that the intention is to provide a picture about the 'effectiveness' of the Character Development Programme, rather than the character development of individual pupils.

To standardise the observations, teachers attending Summer Institute training were asked to list behaviours that would be representative of the four core virtues, behaviours that would indicate a need to develop each virtue further and situations or activities in which behaviours related to those virtues might be observed. These lists (appendix 3) were collated and provided to staff completing the observations along with an observation rubric. In line with the EYFS profile, observers were also asked to make a decision about the child's current progress in the development of each core virtue: not yet reaching expected level, meeting expected level, or exceeding expected level.

A sample of 5 children was selected by teachers for each of the three Reception classes taking part in the Programme, resulting in a total sample of fifteen children. Teachers were asked to select children who are broadly representative of their class as a whole. Teachers were therefore asked to choose five children across a range of abilities and to ensure a gender balance. Teachers were also



concerned to choose children with different temperaments. One teacher explained that she also considered the pupils' ages as she wanted to ensure some pupils with summer birthdays were included in the sample.

Staff were asked to complete their observations over the course of one week, with the first set of observations undertaken in the last week of September 2015. This allowed enough time for children to settle in at school but was before any of the core virtues had been taught. The second set of observations were completed in February 2016. In Floreat Wandsworth, the character observations were completed by the class teachers and in Floreat Brentford the observations were undertaken by a member of the Trust who has spent a significant amount of time with the class and knows the pupils well.

Within these parameters, teachers varied in their approach to completing the observations. Two teachers spent the whole week observing all 5 children, making and adding to rough notes at the end of each school day and writing them up onto the character rubrics at the end of the week. The other teacher completed her observations more intensely over a period of two days. This teacher chose to focus her attention on one pupil at a time, concentrating on observing the pupils' behaviour closely and recording it directly onto the observation sheet, before moving on to the next pupil. In this case the teacher reviewed the observations at the end of the week and made additions where she had subsequently observed relevant behaviour. In every case the sections for strengths and areas for development were completed first, before moving on to the quantitative sections.

The qualitative and quantitative data was analysed by a member of the research team. Further discussion on the analysis and limitations of the method are discussed in the findings section. The discussion in the findings section relate more to the validity of the method and its usefulness for future research.

III. Focus Groups

Focus groups were used to evaluate the extent to which the Character Virtues Development Programme improves pupils' knowledge and understanding of virtue terms and concepts. Since it was important to provide evaluation materials that could continue to be used by teachers in future, and given the Programme's focus on the use of texts as a basis for learning about character, the focus group session took the form of a story and questions activity. The story chosen reflected the virtue of self-control, since this was the first virtue to be introduced to the children in the Programme, and was a story that the children were not likely to



have known previously. Questions were aimed at assessing the children's understanding of the virtues demonstrated by the characters in the story (appendix 4). During the timeframe available, it was not possible to complete this as a pre and post task or to cover more than one virtue, but the basic format of the session can be easily adapted to use any story in which the characters display a virtue or vice, so this could easily be done in future.

The same children who took part in the observations participated in the focus groups - a representative sample selected by the teachers of 5 children from each of the three classes taking part in the Programme. The focus groups were carried out by a research assistant approximately 2 months into the first year of using the Programme. Each focus group lasted approximately 20-25 minutes. The sessions were recorded and then transcribed ready for qualitative analysis. During analysis the transcripts were read whilst listening to the audio recordings to check accuracy. Interview responses were then coded using computerised coding software (NVivo), and grouped together into categories and subcategories, so as to identify knowledge and understanding of virtue terms and concepts, particularly related to the virtue of self-control.

IV. Teachers Pre and Post Survey - Summer Institute

A survey was developed to evaluate the impact of the training provided as part of the Summer institute. The survey sought to discover how useful staff found their training in how to deliver the CVD Programme. All 12 teachers and Teaching Assistants who participated in the training were asked to complete a 'pre' survey on the morning of Floreat's Character Day on 4th September 2015 before the training day began. All 12 participants completed the same survey at the end of the session.

The survey was devised by the development team and the questions were specifically tailored to this particular training event (see appendix 5). Participants were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1-5 (1 being 'not at all', and 5 'very confident') on their confidence delivering character lessons and community engagement projects, on assessing and on correcting their pupils' individual virtues. By asking staff to evaluate their confidence level, we are able to gauge how successfully the training had equipped teachers to deliver each of the three strands of the CVD Programme.

To measure the impact of the training, responses were scored as follows:

- Not at all confident - 1
- Not very confident - 2
- Fairly confident - 3



- Confident - 4
- Very confident - 5

Then totals and average confidence levels were calculated in order to ascertain average confidence levels across the group and the percentage change before and after the training.

Principle Limitations

The specific limitations of each method have been outlined above. The following is a list of principle limitations that apply across the evaluation:

- The significant challenges associated with ‘measuring’ character mean that the findings that relate to the development of virtue knowledge and understanding are likely to hold greater validity than those that relate to virtue practice.
- The timeframe of the evaluation was limited. It would have been preferential to undertake the evaluation over a longer timeframe to also take into consideration longitudinal effects;
- The instruments used for the observation was developed specifically for this evaluation and were not piloted due to limited time. The validity and robustness of this instrument is reported on in the findings section;
- The observation and training survey were implemented by the staff at the schools themselves.

For the reasons stated above the findings detailed in this report should primarily be considered as formative evidence that can be used to aid further development and revision of the Programme, rather than as a summative account of its impact.

Ethical Considerations

Full ethical approval was received from the University of Birmingham’s Ethics Committee. Informed written consent was obtained from all adult participants and from the parents of all children taking part in the observations and focus groups. A child-friendly version of the information sheet was read to and discussed with the children and they were told that they did not have to take part if they didn’t want to. Adult participants and parents were informed about the aims of the research and what would happen to the data as well as being offered contact details of the researchers involved.



Findings

The findings are reported below against the two evaluation questions outlined in the methodology section.

EQ1. Does the Character Virtues Development Programme improve pupils' knowledge, understanding of virtue terms and concepts and the practice of them?

Findings from the Interviews

Interviews with the teachers and staff demonstrated that in their professional opinion the Programme has had a positive effect on the pupils' knowledge and understanding of virtue terms and concepts. A principal benefit was that it was seen by staff to provide a common language for teaching character and virtues.

The Programme is therefore viewed as integral part of Floreat's ethos, offering clear and explicit expectations for both staff and pupils and providing a "backbone" to connect the whole school and family of schools. One particular strength that stood out was that the Programme provides the common language needed to teach children about character and virtues:

"By teaching children to be literate in the language of virtues, the Programme enables us, as adults, to use the language of virtues and expect - increasingly expect the children to know what we're talking about."
(Development staff).

This was closely connected to the use of stories to teach children about the virtues, with staff feeling like stories provide a familiar and comfortable starting point to discuss the difficult concepts involved:

"By giving them a story it gives them a context to be able to talk about different situations, how you should act in different situations, what's right or wrong or good or bad about a certain character, and it just gives, I think, a language for them to have those conversations with their teachers and with their parents, and it's a starting point, really, for them to be able to identify virtues and to start to talk about them." (Development staff).

There was also the sense that this common language allowed teachers to be more positive and more specific in their behaviour management techniques:

"I guess you can praise in more specific ways because... where you might say 'oh well done, that was good', you might say 'well done, you've really shown bravery here' and if you're using that specific language then that's sinking in, isn't it? 'Oh if I do this, this means bravery.'" (Teaching staff).



“It can feel unnatural to talk about a child’s dignity to a four-year-old, or their self-control or empathy, and I think without creating - without giving them the space and resources to teach the children to understand those words, other words get used in their place and they are less likely to be positive and virtue-laden and, therefore, as effective in the classroom.”
(Development staff).

Given the complexity of some of the concepts being taught and the young age of the pupils, some staff were surprised by just how well pupils had responded:

“I’ve been actually surprised at how well they’ve reacted and even taken in some of the things because when I first looked at the Programme I thought there’s no way they’re going to understand about fairness or self-control and other things like that, but actually they’ve taken it in really well and they’re even using some of those language and those words that I thought they would find difficult to understand.” (Teaching staff).

Whilst some of the content were described as things that teachers ordinarily bring into their classrooms anyway, staff appreciated the explicit approach to character education provided by the Programme.

“A lot of the things that are in the Programme are things that you would naturally do, but I think it just makes you much more aware of it and the gaps.” (Teaching staff).

They also felt that teaching character and virtues in an explicit way had a larger impact on pupils:

“Sometimes children need to be told, ‘This is a thing. Love and kindness is a thing. Bravery is something.’ And if you go into the depth of, ‘This is what it is. This is how we can show it.’ then they know it in their heads and so it kind of comes more naturally.” (Teaching staff).

“This is much better, much more organised and structured and just, at the end, having a much bigger impact on the children. And it impacts not just on their kind of behaviour and their personality but also the rest of their learning, their attitudes to their academic learning as well.” (Teaching staff).

Teachers felt that, in the short space of time they had been using the Programme, it had had a positive impact on pupils and that the children were using the tools they had been given, such as hand signals to help them to remember to use the virtues:



“Since we’ve talked about kindness in particular and self-control, they’ve started doing things in a different way. And it’s only been a few weeks, but it’s like we talked about self-control with putting our hands up instead of shouting out, and if you really want to say something you could press pause, or you could kind of whisper out, and you do see them kind of sitting there and pressing pause on the carpet.” (Teaching staff).

With regards to the young age of pupils, staff also felt that it was important for character education to begin as soon as children start school:

“Very little is available for the youngest children in school, and we feel that there is a real missed opportunity, especially as children are establishing relationships with peers in a way that they’ve never done before and they’re starting on their school career.” (Development staff).

Findings from the Focus groups

Given that self-control is a complex concept not traditionally taught in an explicit manner in an early years setting, the findings showed that the children had meaningful knowledge and understanding of the concept, most likely resulting from their learning during the Character Virtues Development Programme.

Although none of the children spontaneously named self-control when asked about the characters in the story, when asked if the characters had shown self-control, most pupils were able to give confident and accurate responses, suggesting that they were familiar with the term and had some understanding of its meaning. Furthermore, children in all focus groups were able to identify the ways in which the characters demonstrated self-control, or a lack thereof:

“Because [Edith] had been so quiet the animals couldn’t hear a thing from her... but Arthur was so loud. He said, ‘Come out animals, come out!’” (Focus group 3).

The children also recognised that Arthur’s lack of self-control had negative consequences:

“He’s too noisy and he couldn’t see them because he was too noisy, but they were hiding in the pond.” (Focus group 1).

However, for most of the children, this did not affect whether or not they liked the character or whether they thought he was a good person or not:

“I think he’s a good person but he’s too loud...because he’s so excited.” (Focus group 2).



Unsurprisingly, considering their age, most of the children found it very difficult to define self-control, with children relying on concrete examples to illustrate the concept:

“You have to concentrate on what you’re doing and not be loud.” (Focus group 2).

“It means you have to be brave and stop shouting or stop running or else stop pushing. If you run around you might fall down and hurt your knee.” (Focus group 3).

Whilst children found the concept difficult to define, they were able to give numerous examples of times when they themselves might be required to demonstrate self-control including:

- Staying in bed until other people are awake in the mornings
- Walking to a line instead of running
- Avoiding eating too much food
- Reading or listening to a story quietly
- Avoiding hurting other people
- Not doing big splashes in the water during choosing time
- Putting your hand up in school instead of shouting out
- Sharing toys that you might prefer to keep for yourself

Although this list doesn’t provide any evidence that the pupils are able to successfully implement the behaviours they describe (they might recognise that they *should* do these things without actually doing them), the range of examples does demonstrate that they can identify what self-control might look like in a 4 or 5-year old. It seems that the children are able to apply their knowledge and understanding of the concept of self-control to their own lives and behaviours, at least theoretically.

Findings from the Observations

The most challenging question to answer, due the deficiency of appropriate instruments and methods, is the effects of the Programme of the pupils’ practice or display of character virtues (see methods chapter). It was hoped that the observation method would provide some interesting findings relating to this question - as it was an attempt to observe pupils ‘virtues in action’ over two different weeks (early and late on during the evaluation period).

Although an analysis of the pre and post data demonstrated change, largely positive, in the pupils’ character virtue development, there are limitations with the method that mean it is unwise to draw any summative evaluation of the ‘impact’ of the Programme on the pupils’ character virtues.



The reasons for this decision are:

- As there was no control group it is impossible to demonstrate that any positive change was down to the Programme;
- It was found that the quantitative assessment criteria/descriptors were changed during the Programme by some teachers; for validity the measures must remain consistent pre and post Programme;
- The quantitative judgments were based on teachers' judgments and therefore cannot be said to be completely objective; furthermore in some cases different teachers completed the pre and post observations.
- Although the observation was undertaken over the duration of the week, there are issues relating to situation and context that will have an influence on the way the data was recorded; such as, the opportunities for pupils to display these virtues; if they happened to be observed whilst they were undertaking a virtuous action;
- It is possible that, due to the Programme, teachers became more aware of the character virtues in question, became more reflective about their classroom practice (in regards to character education) and became more aware of the character their pupils displayed - and this could have influenced the way actions were recorded.

There are however benefits from carrying out the observation, both for the evaluation of the Programme as well as for the pupils and teachers (see appendix 6 for examples of qualitative observation records). These include:

- It is evident from teachers' responses that an ongoing formative assessment procedure has made teachers more reflective about their own practice in regards to character education;
- Through the Programme teachers have become more confident with the virtue terms used;
- It is evident from the teachers' responses that an ongoing formative assessment procedure has made teachers more aware and observant in the classroom in regards to recognising character virtues within their pupils;
- In most cases teacher comments could be used to highlight examples for an individual child in regards to a character virtue.

It is therefore concluded that although the observation data is not deemed valid to make a summative evaluation of the Programme and in particular its impact on the



display of character virtues by the pupils, it has many formative evaluation benefits. These benefits could be enhanced in the future if:

- Observations are undertaken more regularly and over a greater period of time - perhaps tracking them through their whole school journey.
- Ensure strengths and areas of development are described instead of just listing the example.
- Areas of development between the pre and post assessment are followed up. Has the pupil shown examples of an improvement in a previously highlighted area of development? If yes, how? If no, why?
- Given both qualitative and quantitative assessment are used there must be a link between them. If progress has been made it must be evident in all forms of assessment. Formative assessment should feed into the summative assessment.

EQ2a) How do teachers experiencing the Programme evaluate the materials and resources?

Findings from the interviews

The interviews identified a number of strengths of the Programme for teachers seeking character education materials and resources. One strength identified by most teachers was its originality:

“It’s pioneering. I don’t think that any other programme has tried to deliver a character programme in such a coherent way to children so young, in the infant phase.” (Development staff).

This was also supported by teaching staff, who made comparisons to what is already available or how they have taught similar subjects, such as PSHE, in the past:

“Curiosity or something like that that, you probably wouldn’t really touch on as a lesson in itself. You might praise children for being curious but you wouldn’t really properly stop and take the time to talk about great people that have been curious and what comes with being curious. So in that way I think it kind of has that really positive direction in that we will hopefully, you know, make children aware of things that they’ve not really thought of and try to aspire to have those traits in themselves.” (Teaching staff).

“This is very structured, it’s very clear, the hard bit has been done for you with regards to setting out the planning and the topics and the order and the



books and I think the fact that that's all given to us and then we just need to read it each week and kind of put our bit to it, I think that's a real strength and it's obviously been really thought about.” (Teaching staff).

Teachers also appreciated the flexibility of the Programme:

“They give you kind of the bare bones, the ideas, and ‘this is what we’d quite like’ and then we flesh it out to a standard that we want it to so it has been useful to have it there. And we get given activities and stuff that we could potentially do with them and it’s been quite nice to have those that we can either use or transfer.” (Teaching staff).

“For example with the books, I’ve added some of my own text in or I’ve slightly maybe changed the circle time activities. I think that my head of school is very kind of, like, do what you think is best for your children, you know them the best so you know what is best for them.” (Teaching staff).

The teachers also identified, in the interviews, a number of challenges of the new Programme. One particular challenge highlighted by all staff was that of selecting appropriate stories for each virtue. As many of the concepts involved in the Programme are complex, it follows that some of the stories that demonstrate these concepts are also complex. For example, the story *My Mouth is a Volcano* by *Julia Cook* uses a metaphor to depict the concept of self-control. Whilst some staff found that their pupils could cope with this metaphor, others found that some pupils had difficulties:

“Some of the children didn’t know what a volcano was, they didn’t know about lava and eruptions, and so for them to leap to learning what a volcano is to then understanding the metaphor - that it’s about calling out, and to then understand that it’s about controlling yourself, I think that was a big intellectual leap for them to make.” (Development staff).

Staff have suggested that it will be important to take feedback from teachers regarding the stories used and asking for their opinions and ideas on alternative stories or follow-up activities. Other ideas for approaching this problem have included identifying areas where pre-teaching activities might be needed, using visuals to support the stories, or developing purpose-written stories.

Another issue faced by development staff in terms of story selection is the question of whether or not it is appropriate to use religious stories, with staff concerned about ‘muddying’ the waters between religious education and character education but not wanting to miss out on the rich array of moral stories provided by religions:



“I think we have reservations about the character Programme being kind of swamped by an RE curriculum, which of course has statutory responsibilities and there are expectations from Ofsted/from local authorities on what is covered in that.” (Development staff).

“There’s so much scope to include some incredible stories, and I think the attraction for me in doing that is that these are important cultural stories, as well, and it’s developing their cultural knowledge.” (Development staff).

Staff generally seem to be in support of using religious stories so long as they come from a range of religions. They also don’t want to prescribe quotas for stories from different religions, instead focusing on choosing the story that best represents the virtue in question, regardless of which religion it comes from.

Staff also expressed concerns about the introduction of such complex concepts to such young pupils, although they didn’t feel that this issue was insurmountable, just that it needed careful consideration:

“The biggest challenge has been addressing such a young audience and the assumptions you can or can’t make about what they know and what concepts they can grapple with when they’re four years old.” (Development staff).

“I think age wise doing things with four and five year olds with regards to self-control, I mean, we did sleeping lions and who can stay still the longest, you’re in control of your body, all the rest of it, but there’s just some that you think, ‘Oh how am I going to approach that with four and five year olds?’ But you always get a way, like there’s always a way round it.” (Teaching staff).

A related concern was that of covering such a vast amount of new concepts in the school year:

“I think we’re trying to fly through a lot of things quickly and I think especially at this age, if a message isn’t repeated enough it’s a little bit lost sometimes, so we’ve kind of been spending a couple of weeks on the virtue and whether or not that’s really sinking in enough for them I guess is a question.” (Teaching staff).

However, some staff felt such concerns may be a case of managing their own expectations of what can be achieved in the initial stages and that it is important to remember that the concepts will be reinforced in future years:

“I think with any new programme that you start with your youngest cohort, there is a tendency to want them - you know, you want them to have the fullest understanding of love and kindness or self-control, but obviously



that's not realistic. So I think our expectations originally were very high about what they could understand about these concepts and I think, you know, we're kind of paring them back. Not dumbing them down but just kind of refining and kind of getting to the heart of each one in a way that four-year-olds can grapple with." (Development staff).

"It's an awful lot of content for teachers to get through, and I think it's probably just a temporary reservation... and children aren't really, necessarily consolidating a good idea of the concept of bravery or whatever it is, but I hope that in time, when they come to that concept year after year, that they will." (Development staff).

Another challenge when introducing new vocabulary and concepts to pupils is ensuring those words and concepts are presented to the children in a consistent manner. Since virtue language is likely to be used both inside and outside of the classroom, it is important to make sure that all staff in school are comfortable with the Programme's definitions and supporting actions or phrases:

"I'd say we probably need to give more time to the teaching assistants to make those expectations clear or....., point out how easy that opportunity is, that it really is just shifting your language or picking out these positive moments in the day to make a fuss over a child and say 'I really liked the way that you showed me self-control because you were desperate for that toy but you waited'." (Teaching staff).

This also extends to other staff, such as lunchtime supervisors:

"I think that they do use some of the language but only because they hear us using it, so myself and the head of school obviously use it, but the other staff not so much and so I think it would be good if they could be kind of involved." (Teaching staff).

It can also be very difficult to ensure that messages given to pupils in school are the same as the messages given out at home but attempts are being made to ensure that parents are at least aware of the virtue language being used:

"A curriculum newsletter goes home every half term with details of the entire curriculum, including the character curriculum, and we explicitly state the virtues that are being taught, and they are brought up in discussions at the end of the day or in assemblies... and so in terms of using the language I think a lot of it is kind of implicit." (Development staff).



EQ2b) How do teachers experiencing the Programme evaluate the training provided?

Findings from the training survey

There was a marked difference between participants' confidence to deliver the Character Values Development Programme before and after the training. Initially, participants felt on average 'fairly confident' (a score of 3) in almost all areas (see appendix 7). The exception was their ability to talk to individual pupils about their character virtues, and to correct their behaviour when they make bad choices; on average participants felt 'confident' doing these things. This demonstrated an interesting situation in which teachers could identify negative actions and discuss individual instances, but did not have such a solid framework for setting high expectations of virtuous behaviours.

After their training, on average participants felt predominantly 'confident' (a score of 4) in all areas, and 'very confident' (a score of 5) in talking to and correcting individual pupils.

Qualitative evidence indicated that teachers appreciated the focus on the language of virtue, and felt the Programme would be a useful resource. They also expressed a desire for more time to plan and discuss the individual virtue lessons together, and to spend some time modelling the use of positive language when correcting 'bad choices' by children.

Findings from the Interviews

The interviews showed that teachers felt that they had been prepared quite well, during the training, to deliver the Programme. Suggested improvements that might be considered when disseminating the Programme include going through a lesson plan or lesson together and having the texts available to view during training. Teachers also felt that it was important for teaching assistants to be involved with training.



Summary and Recommendations

This final section describes the overall findings from the evaluation as well as provides some recommendations for the future.

Overall findings

- Staff felt that the Programme provides a common language for teaching pupils about character and virtues. This is helped by the use of stories, a format that young children are familiar and comfortable with. This common language makes it easier for staff to encourage children to use the virtues and also contributes to the schools' efforts to create an ethos that promotes character virtue development.
- The pre and post observations indicated that the pupils were demonstrating more virtuous actions - however the method and data cannot be relied upon. It is recommended that the observation records are useful for formative as opposed to summative evaluations of individual pupil progress.
- The focus groups demonstrated that pupils were able to describe how characters in a story displayed a particular virtue and use this as a basis to discuss situations where they could display this virtue in their own lives. This method can be easily adapted for use with any virtue in any age group to continue formative assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding of virtue terms and concepts.
- Teachers appreciate the opportunity to teach character and virtues in an explicit manner and feel that it has a larger positive impact on pupils than the largely implicit nature of character education that they have experienced previously.
- Staff spoke positively about the Programme's originality, practicality and flexibility.
- Staff believe that the Programme is already having a positive impact on children's engagement in virtuous behaviours.
- Teachers rated the training programme positively.

Recommendations

The following presents a list of recommendations for the Programme itself as well as the methods and tools utilised for evaluation. It is to be noted that a number



of these recommendations have already been adopted and developments of the Character Virtue Development Programme are already underway. Floreat staff appear to have a clear idea of the direction in which they want to take the Programme.

Recommendations for improving the Programme

- Virtue language will be reinforced more easily if it is being used consistently by all adults that interact with the children on a regular basis. Further opportunities to train all staff (not only teachers) and to encourage parents to engage with the vocabulary should be considered.
- Some teachers identified where cross-curricular links had been made with Floreat's Knowledge curriculum. It may be worth considering how these links could be strengthened in future. For example, the Character Programme could influence choice of texts in English, and incorporate non-fiction texts relating to science and the humanities learning, and highlighting real-life role models and moral dilemmas.
- Dissemination of the Programme to other schools, particularly through the development of a website that includes the curriculum itself and related resources, a book list, feedback from teachers about how they've used the Programme and videos that could be used for teacher training. It will be important to ensure that this website is maintained and kept up-to-date.

Recommendations for improving the evaluation methodology

- Undertake evaluation over a greater period of time, allowing more opportunities for the longitudinal impact to be recorded.
- Provide specific training for all staff on completing the evaluation methods and in particular the observation records.
- Move away from the idea of summative assessment of character and design a vigorous formative assessment procedure led by well-trained teachers;
- Give teachers more input into age related virtue descriptors.
- Set up internal and external monitoring/moderation meetings where teachers can discuss their pupils and the procedures taken to ensure they collect sufficient evidence.
- Decide if the formative assessment is going to be done by one member of staff, a critical friend external to the school, or an ongoing assessment with input from all staff that have interactions with the pupils.



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Appendices

Appendix 1: Staff Interview schedule

Introduction

Recap purpose of study and structure of the interview, complete consent form, remind of right to withdraw. The interview will be audio recorded and will last approximately 30-45 minutes.

Development of the Programme (Developer interview questions)

- Please can you talk through your role and involvement in developing the Programme?
- Who else was involved with developing the Programme? What were their roles?
- Can you describe your view of the purpose and importance of the Programme?
- What difficulties did you face in the Programme's development? How were these difficulties overcome?
- What were your inspirations for the Programme - i.e. did you use other people's / organisations materials and resources?
- How does the Programme fit in with the school curriculum?
- How does the Programme support the wider school ethos on character education?
- What do you see as the biggest strengths of the Programme?
- What developments of the Programme would you like to see in the future? What support would be needed to enact these developments?
- Is there anything else that you would like to mention about the development of the Programme?

Programme training, content and implementation (Teacher interview questions)

- When and how have you delivered the Programme? e.g. isolated lessons, how long for, how often?
- Is anyone else supporting you in delivering the Programme? How effective is this support?
- Can you describe your view of the purpose and importance of the Programme?
- How does the Programme fit in with the wider curriculum?
- How does the Programme support the wider school ethos on character education?
- How have the pupils responded to the Programme? Have you noticed if any groups of pupils have responded differently to others?
- Are all of your pupils taking part in the Programme? If not, why not?
- What difficulties have you faced in implementing the Programme? How were these difficulties overcome? What support would help you to overcome any difficulties in the future?
- What do you see as the biggest strengths of the Programme?
- Please describe the best lesson? Why was it effective?
- Is there anything you would like to see added or changed in the Programme's content?
- How well did the training you received prepare you for implementing the Programme?
- How could it have been improved?
- Have you delivered anything similar previously - how does it compare?
- Is there anything else that you would like to mention about the Programme?



Appendix 2: Example Observation sheet

Name of child _____ Age (years and months) _____

Character Virtues Development Programme: Core Virtue Observation Summary

Curiosity					
<p>(syn. Interest, open-mindedness): Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering. Within Curiosity, we also include ‘Love of Learning’, which is about systematically learning new skills, topics and bodies of knowledge. Curiosity is wanting to learn lots about people, places and things. It means asking lots of questions and trying to find out their answers. We can also refer to curiosity as: searching; asking questions; being interested in the world. The opposite of curiosity is boredom.</p>					
Strengths identified			Areas for development		
<p>Please ✓ to indicate how often the child engages in the following behaviours:</p>					
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not sure
Asking questions					
Independently exploring new objects					
Disinterest in trying new things					
<p>Based on the observations, please indicate the child’s progress in the development of curiosity:</p> <p>Not yet reaching expected levels Meeting expected levels Exceeding expected levels</p>		<p>Any additional relevant information:</p>			

Observer name/s _____ Date of observation _____

Summary form completed by _____ Date of completion _____



Appendix 3: Collated responses from SI training regarding observable behaviours related to the core virtues

	What behaviours would you expect or hope to observe to demonstrate this virtue?	What behaviours would demonstrate a need to develop this virtue further?	In which situations or activities are you most likely to observe behaviours related to this virtue?
Honesty	Two children arguing but taking responsibility for doing wrong things; Not hiding mistakes; Speaking frankly about feelings even when others feel different; Resisting groupthink; Trust in others; Seeking help when needed; Consistency of responses/reported experience; Ability to distinguish fact and fantasy.	Lying; Not willing to seek or accept help; Following others' leads; Solitude - not mixing well; Cheating in games; Putting a brave face on - trying too hard to please.	In the playground; In activities/games, especially where there is a winner/loser; Possession/sharing (especially toys); Circle time - talking about feelings, sharing views; Interactions with parents and other staff - do their reports match yours?
Perseverance	Completion; Staying at challenging activities; Pupils correcting errors independently; Self-motivated to face hard challenges and put extra effort in; Pride on task completion; Showing peers: pride in work; Asking for another challenge; Asking for help in order to complete; Losing a game, not	Giving up "can't do it" - reluctance to try; Avoidance tactics; Unwillingness to try new things; Recognition of purpose and motivation; Clinginess/regressive behaviour; Looking for a prop; Crying and falling apart.	Giving permission to stop but they keep going; Where pupils are highly motivated; Puzzles/challenges; Where free - not pressurised to pass/fail win lose; When it matters to a pupil for a reason important to them; Where there is a new exciting challenge; Where there is a motivating reward; When adults model it



	giving up; Independently repeating/revisiting until achieved.		
Curiosity	Different senses; Asking questions; Trying out; Showing each other things; Looking around; Opening/upturning; Inspecting.	Watching; Referring to adult; Holding back; Isolated; Bored; Nervousness; Focusing inward; “What are we doing?” to the adults.	Different setting/ outside the class = less familiar areas; Outdoors; Supervision? Not being watched? Filmed? Safe space - not about courage.
Service	Sharing resources; Giving it up even when you wanted it; Helping a peer understand, find, fix something; Putting others first; Helping the teacher pick up a dropped pen.	Snatching; Hogging; Self-centredness.	Choosing time; Small group; Fruit/milk time; Playtime; Independent, unmodelled, natural situations.



Appendix 4: Focus group question guide

Research Questions

What virtue language do young children use when discussing stories about virtues? Are young children able to apply virtue terms appropriately in the context of stories about virtues?

Script for researcher

Introduction

Welcome and thank the pupils and briefly explain the purpose of the study and what we will be doing. Remind them that they do not have to join in if they don't want to.

Story

A story, chosen to reflect one or more of the virtues, will be shared with the children.

Recap story

Aim - to check understanding of the story and engage children in the discussion.

Key questions

- Can you remember the people/animals in the story?
- Can you tell me the things that happened to them?

Character focus 1

Aim - to identify virtue language used by children when discussing characters in a story. Choose a character in the story that displays a particular virtue/ set of virtues (or lack thereof).

Key questions

- Let's think about [name of character]. Who can tell me one of the things that [name of character] did or said in the story?
- Did you like [name of character]? Why/why not?
- Do you think [name of character] is a good or bad person? Why/why not?
- Do you think [name of character] is [name of virtue]? Why/why not?
- Do you think it is important for [name of character] to be [name of virtue]? Why/why not?

Character focus 2

Aim - to identify virtue language used by children when discussing characters in a story. Choose a character in the story that displays a different virtue or set of virtues (or lack thereof) to the character in character focus 1.

Key questions

- Let's think about [name of character]. Who can tell me one of the things that [name of character] did or said in the story?
- Did you like [name of character]? Why/why not?
- Do you think [name of character] is a good or bad person? Why/why not?
- Do you think [name of character] is [name of virtue]? Why/why not?
- Do you think it is important for [name of character] to be [name of virtue]? Why/why not?

Closing

Ask children if they have any other thoughts about the story that they would like to share. Thank them for joining in.



Appendix 5: Teachers pre and post survey

1. As a result of your training how confident do you feel in your ability to develop a range of character virtues in your lessons through explicit character lessons - for example perseverance, curiosity, honesty and service?

- 1 Not at all:
- 2 Not very confident:
- 3 Fairly confident:
- 4 Confident:
- 5 Very Confident:

2. As a result of the training, how confident do you feel in your ability to develop a range of character virtues in your pupils through community engagement projects eg. perseverance, curiosity, honesty and service.

1 2 3 4 5

3. As a result of this training, how confident do you feel in your ability to assess a range of character virtues in your pupils?

1 2 3 4 5

4. As a result of this training, how confident do you feel in your ability to talk to individual pupils about their character virtues and correct their behaviour when they make a bad choice?

1 2 3 4 5

5. How comprehensively do you believe The Floreat Character Programme develops a broad range of character virtues specified in the programme?

- a. Not at all comprehensive:
- b. Comprehensive:
- c. Very comprehensive:

6. If you answered 'not at all comprehensive' to Question 5 please provide any details of any gaps in the programme.

7. Please use the space below to suggest any improvements to the Floreat Character programme.

8. Further comments about character education or the Floreat Programme



Appendix 6: Sample of completed observation sheet for one class

Child	Virtue	Pre Programme		Post Programme	
		Strengths	Areas for development	Strengths	Areas for development
WAN02	<i>Curiosity</i>	<p>Strong interest in language and using new words</p> <p>Very articulate interest in complex ideas</p> <p>Curiosity demonstrated in her knowledgeable contributions in class</p>	Curiosity in others' contributions and activities	<p>Asks questions.</p> <p>Inspects things</p> <p>Shows things and explains things to others</p> <p>Tries out new things</p>	
	<i>Honesty</i>	<p>Honest in relationships with peers</p> <p>Will admit a wrongdoing and knows to say sorry.</p> <p>Resists group think!</p>		<p>Doesn't hide mistakes</p> <p>Trusts her teachers and peers.</p> <p>Consistency of responses</p>	Sometimes follows others' leads, resulting in poor behavior choices e.g. disruptive noises during lessons
	<i>Perseverance</i>	<p>Will persevere if interested.</p> <p>Very quick to give up on activities she's not interested in, e.g. during choosing time</p>	Following instructions and keeping going even if the activity is not her choice	<p>Self-motivated to face challenges</p> <p>Pride in work and its completion (shares with adults and peers).</p> <p>Asks for help to complete things if needed</p>	Avoidance tactics for some tasks that may be challenging and not self-chosen e.g. not fussing by making noises - this could also be disinterest in the task
	<i>Service</i>	<p>Will share resources and explain to peers that she is sharing.</p> <p>Enjoys explaining something to another child during choosing time.</p>		<p>Helps others understand, find, fix things.</p> <p>Shares resources.</p> <p>Would help adults if they dropped something.</p>	Unaware of the impact of own behavior on others at times (which can disrupt 'learning times') but this has improved a lot since starting school.
WAN06	<i>Curiosity</i>	Will show others work she is proud of, e.g. her drawings	<p>Asking questions.</p> <p>Observations in the environment</p>	<p>Asks questions with encouragement or when highly motivated.</p> <p>Will try out new</p>	<p>Referring to an adult for guidance.</p> <p>Holds back and can be nervous</p>



				things.	about uncertain events.
	<i>Honesty</i>	Understands between right and wrong, e.g. very sheepish if she knows she's done something wrong. Honest in an incident with another child, if prompted.	Proactive honesty. Resisting group think.	Trusting of teachers and peers. Reports experiences consistently.	Putting on a brave face at times. Can be quiet and reluctant to seek help.
	<i>Perseverance</i>	Pride in completed work is strong. Shares her work with peers.	Choses activities she knows she excels at, e.g. drawing. Gives up if she doesn't know how to complete something unless supported by an adult	Will complete set tasks despite their duration. Pride on task completion. Pride in own work	Reluctance to try if she thinks she cannot do it at times
	<i>Service</i>	Plays happily with other girls and involves others in play. Helps adults around her with small tasks.	Reluctant to give up her space on the drawing table.	Shares resources. Would help teachers without expecting rewards.	Begin to help others fix, understand etc. who are not close friends.
WAN07	<i>Curiosity</i>	Asks questions in carpet time - always to extend what he knows (e.g. not asking for the sake of asking a question). Big interest in world around him - wants to know more.	No particular interest in peers.	Asks questions. Looking around. Inspects things.	Will sometimes watch things if unsure - (different senses) - could also be disinterest.
	<i>Honesty</i>	Good at honest turn-taking. Resists group think. Speaks frankly about his feelings to adults and peers.		Doesn't hide mistakes. Speaks frankly about feelings. Seeks help when needed. Reports experiences consistently.	Resisting group think at times.



	<i>Perseverance</i>	Will stick at an activity that is challenging if he is enjoying it, e.g. will stick at painting. Asks a peer for help just as readily as asking an adult.	Trusting new activities even if not immediately appealing.	Completes tasks. Stays at challenging activities which are self-chosen. Has great pride in completion and asks to share his work with the class.	Sometimes has an “I can’t do it” attitude if he thinks it will take time or be challenging (e.g. writing a longer piece of work).
	<i>Service</i>	Enjoys helping peers and adults in classroom jobs and academically, e.g. he will support a partner during maths quite readily.	Looking out for peers he might play with during play time.	Shows others how to do things. Helps others understanding and fix things. Helps adults without expecting reward.	Can sometimes find it hard to share popular resources e.g. pieces of construction material.
WAN08	<i>Curiosity</i>	Very keen interest in how things work - very keen to use big equipment and blocks to make machines during choosing time.	Asking questions during choosing time.	Always asking questions and looking around. Inspects things closely. Will try out new things.	
	<i>Honesty</i>	He seeks help from an adult, if required - though sometimes this is an area for development (see perseverance).	Cheating in games. Not owning up.	Does not tend to hide mistakes. Speaks freely about own feelings Seeks help when needed. Trusts others.	Does not always take responsibility for doing wrong things. Following others’ leads.
	<i>Perseverance</i>	He will persevere with activities he enjoys and he encourages others to participate.	Very quick to ask for adult support without having a go first! Hides mistakes.	Completion of tasks and stays there when they are challenging. Pride in competition and desire to share work with others. Asks for help in order to complete. Will ask for new challenges.	



	<i>Service</i>	He has strength in involving others in his ideas - not to be mistaken with sharing though!	Gets upset if he doesn't get a turn first. Sharing!	Helps others by finding, fixing things. Helps teachers if they drop something.	Can keep all resources to himself at times. Needs support to give popular resources up.
WAN10	<i>Curiosity</i>	Very acute curiosity related to movement and taste. Strong imagination and in make believe.	Asking questions.	Asks questions. Looks around. Shows friends things.	Sometimes holds back. Can be isolated if not with favourite friend (e.g. waits for them before taking on an activity).
	<i>Honesty</i>	Understands right and wrong, especially during incidents in choosing time, e.g. he gets quite overwhelmed if he has done something he believes is wrong.	Reluctantly says sorry but will happily move on from situation.	Trusting of teachers. Can distinguish fact from fantasy. Can speak frankly about own feelings.	Sometimes hides mistakes. Not always willing to seek help.
	<i>Perseverance</i>	Pride in work when he is finished, e.g. writing, playdough, etc.	Very quick to say he can't do something, e.g. handwriting.	Pride on task completion. Shows peers their work. When self-chosen, will stay at challenging activity e.g. construction materials.	Reluctance to try at times. "I can't do it!" e.g. when faced with a challenging book
	<i>Service</i>	Very quick to step in to support another child with their behavior, "put your hands on your hips!" he will say often.	Tendency to keep resources to himself unless asked otherwise.	Helps peers understand and fix things. Will share with close friends.	Helping teachers without expectations of rewards. Sharing with others who may not be a close friend.



Appendix 7: Teacher pre and post survey – training

Pre-Summer Institute Training

1. How confident do you feel in your ability to develop a range of character virtues - for example perseverance, curiosity, honesty and service - in your pupils through explicit character lessons? (35)

- 1 Not at all: 0
- 2 Not very confident: 5
- 3 Fairly confident: 4
- 4 Confident: 2
- 5 Very Confident: 1

2. How confident do you feel in your ability to develop a range of character virtues - for example perseverance, curiosity, honesty and service - in your pupils through community engagement projects? (25)

- 1 Not at all: 0
- 2 Not very confident: 4
- 3 Fairly confident: 6
- 4 Confident: 2
- 5 Very Confident:

3. How confident do you feel to assess a range of character virtues in your pupils? (25)

- 1 Not at all: 2
- 2 Not very confident: 7
- 3 Fairly confident: 3
- 4 Confident: 0
- 5 Very Confident: 0

4. How confident do you feel in your ability to talk to individual pupils about their character virtues and correct their behaviour when they make a bad choice? (45)

- 1 Not at all: 0
- 2 Not very confident: 1
- 3 Fairly confident: 2
- 4 Confident: 8
- 5 Very Confident: 1



5. In the past, where have you found resources to help you develop pupils' character virtues? Please tick all that apply.

- a. I have not looked. 2
- b. I have not found any I wanted to use 1
- c. Online 4 Reading books, Ideas for character, stories, youtube clips,
- d. Specific programme 2 Teach First. Values Based Education
- e. School's own. 7

Made my own

6. Please use the space below to write any further comments about character education.

I'm excited to find out more!

Quite new to the theory of this. Teach lots about learning skills eg. perseverance. Mostly teach character building though lessons with skills objectives eg. P4C, PSHE and Cit, break time discussions and mostly through stories.

I'm particularly interested in how to develop resilience to support high aspirations.

Post-Summer Institute Training

1. As a result of your training how confident do you feel in your ability to develop a range of character virtues in your lessons through explicit character lessons - for example perseverance, curiosity, honesty and service? (43)

- 1 Not at all: 0
- 2 Not very confident: 3
- 3 Fairly confident: 1
- 4 Confident: 6
- 5 Very Confident: 2

2. As a result of the training, how confident do you feel in your ability to develop a range of character virtues in your pupils through community engagement projects eg. perseverance, curiosity, honesty and service. (48)



- 1 Not at all: 0
- 2 Not very confident: 0
- 3 Fairly confident: 2
- 4 Confident: 8
- 5 Very Confident: 2

3. As a result of this training, how confident do you feel in your ability to assess a range of character virtues in your pupils? (38)

- 1 Not at all: 0
- 2 Not very confident: 3
- 3 Fairly confident: 2
- 4 Confident: 6
- 5 Very Confident: 1

4. As a result of this training, how confident do you feel in your ability to talk to individual pupils about their character virtues and correct their behaviour when they make a bad choice? (52)

- 1 Not at all:
- 2 Not very confident: 1
- 3 Fairly confident: 1
- 4 Confident: 3
- 5 Very Confident: 7

5. How comprehensively do you believe The Floreat Character Programme develops a broad range of character virtues specified in the programme?

- a. Not at all comprehensive: 0
- b. Comprehensive: 6
- c. Very comprehensive: 7

6. If you answered 'not at all comprehensive' to Question 5 please provide any details of any gaps in the programme. N/A

7. Please use the space below to suggest any improvements to the Floreat Character programme.



8. Further comments about character education or the Floreat Programme

- *The training really role modelled the virtues and everyone speaking the same language - well done!*
- *The Floreat character Programme is really clear and useful for everybody.*
- *The character Programme is very distinct and therefore is reflects children's needs, intellectually and emotionally.*
- *The reasons why I feel so confident about teaching and learning the character programme is due to the work of Annalise, Briar and Jenn so thank you for all the effort and work you have put into this.*
- *Thank you for a great introduction to this well done!*
- *Thank you for today*
- *A really well organised, fascinating and inspiring day. Thank you for including us!*
- *It would be valuable for staff to be given opportunities to plan and discuss all of this together.*
- *Further modelling of correcting 'bad choices' using positive language.*
- *Do we need to teach all the 18 virtues in Early Years? Can some virtues be focussed on Reception/Year*
- *A really great idea! I wish you all lots of luck. The children soon to be in your care are very lucky*