# 80 percent of teachers say character education would improve school grades

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Credit: University of Birmingham

80 percent of teachers surveyed across the UK say that character education would improve school grades – according to findings in a new poll.

The 450 practising teachers surveyed suggested that a greater focus on character education in schools would have a positive impact on pupil attainment.

The research conducted by Populus and the University of Birmingham's Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, asked teachers about current character education provision within their schools, and the potential impact a greater focus on character might have.

Adapted from previous Jubilee Centre research, the poll defined character education as school provision focused on developing 'positive strengths such as honesty, confidence, and critical thinking," and teaching students to 'understand what is ethically important in difficult situations and how to choose the right course of action."

Professor James Arthur, Director of the University of Birmingham's Jubilee Centre, said:

"This poll provides a further indication from teachers that a greater focus on character education in schools would not only help to develop the skills young people need when venturing out into the world of work, but also help to improve academic attainment."

The survey findings show that whilst only 1 in 3 teachers are aware of their school having a specific character education policy in place, provision for character development is currently delivered through a number of routes.

The two most commonly reported by teachers were PSHE/ Citizenship classes (58 percent), and as part of the 'whole-school ethos' (48 percent).

However, when asked where they thought such provision should be delivered to have the greatest effect, whole-school ethos was the most

popular option at 65 percent, with the other two most popular responses being PSHE/ Citizenship (56 percent), and through all curriculum subjects (47 percent) .

Professor Arthur, University of Birmingham added: "These findings also corroborate previous Jubilee Centre research that has highlighted the transformational impact that placing character at the heart of a school's ethos can have."

Participants in the survey came from a diverse range of British schools, including teachers from primary, secondary and alternative provision; faith and non-faith; different levels of seniority within the school; and across school status, including local authority, academy, free, special, alternative provision and independent schools.

Interestingly, participants also suggested that a greater focus on character education within their school may have a positive impact upon their own practice, with 70 percent of teachers indicating as such.

Provided by University of Birmingham

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