

# Integrating Character Education Across the Curriculum: Teachers' Perspectives and Experiences, Case of England\*

## Karakter Eğitiminin Müfredata Entegre Edilmesi: Öğretmenlerin Bakış Açıları ve Deneyimleri, İngiltere Örneği\*\*

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## **Abstract**

The historical overview highlights the existence of numerous philosophical theories of moral education. Nonetheless, these theories may pose a challenge when put into practice. Despite its philosophical foundations, character education has emerged as the most systematic and all-encompassing approach to moral education. Of particular note, the four-dimensional taxonomy of character education could prove to be a valuable framework for incorporating character education into various subject areas, given its emphasis on the cultivation of moral, intellectual, performance, and civic virtues. This study gathers insights from secondary school teachers across different subject areas (encompassing key stages 3 and 4) in England, utilizing the four-dimensional taxonomy of character education as a theoretical framework. Based on semi-structured interviews with eighteen teachers, this study reveals that while humanities subjects such as religious education (RE) play a crucial role in fostering moral virtues, civic virtues are often addressed through subjects like history and English, whereas intellectual and performance virtues are developed through science, literature, the arts, drama, and physical education (PE). In summary, the study emphasizes that character education is not limited to a particular subject area but should be an integral part of the curriculum of all subjects and extended to the extracurricular activities of the school.

**Keywords:** Education, Character Education, Teachers' Perspectives and Experiences, Role of Subject Areas in Teaching Character Education, Four-dimensional Taxonomy of Character Education, Moral Education.



## **Öz**

Tarihsel genel bakış, ahlaki eğitimle ilgili birçok felsefi teorinin varlığını vurgular. Bununla birlikte, bu teorilerin pratiğe geçirilmesi zorluk yaratabilir. Felsefi temellerine rağmen, karakter eğitimi ahlaki eğitime yönelik en sistemli ve kapsamlı yaklaşım olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Özellikle, karakter eğitiminin dört boyutlu taksonomisi, ahlaki, entelektüel, performans ve vatandaşlık erdemlerinin geliştirilmesine vurgu yapması nedeniyle çeşitli branşlara karakter eğitimi entegre etmek için değerli bir çerçeve olabilir. Bu çalışma, İngiltere’de farklı

branşlarda eğitim veren ortaokul öğretmenlerinin (lise 3. ve 4. sınıf aşamasını kapsayan) karakter eğitimi hakkındaki görüşlerini ve deneyimlerini, karakter eğitiminin dört boyutlu taksonomisini teorik bir çerçeve olarak kullanarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri nitel çevrimiçi yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Toplamda, din eğitimi, İngilizce, beden eğitimi, matematik, fen bilimleri, modern yabancı diller ve diğer beşeri bilimler dersleri dâhil olmak üzere çeşitli konu alanlarından ve kartopu yaklaşımıyla devlet okulları, dini okullar ve akademi okulları gibi farklı okul türlerinde görev yapan on sekiz ortaokul öğretmeniyle röportaj yapıldı. Araştırmanın bulguları ahlaki erdemlerin geliştirilmesinde Din Eğitimi gibi beşeri bilimlerin önemli bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Aynı zamanda tarih ve İngilizce gibi çeşitli konu alanlarının vatandaşlık erdemlerini geliştirmede kritik bir rol oynayabileceğini ve bilim, İngiliz dili ve edebiyatı, sanat, drama ve beden eğitimi aracılığıyla entelektüel ve performans erdemlerinin desteklenebileceğini göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak çalışma, karakter eğitiminin belirli bir konu alanıyla sınırlı olmayıp, tüm konuların müfredatının ayrılmaz bir parçası olması ve okulun ders dışı etkinliklerine de genişletilmesi gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eğitim Bilimleri, Karakter Eğitimi, Öğretmen Bakış Açısı ve Deneyimleri, Karakter Eğitimi Öğretiminde Konu Alanlarının Rolü, Karakter Eğitiminin Dört Boyutlu Taksonomisi, Ahlak Eğitimi.

## Introduction

Character education stands at the forefront of fostering positive personal virtues in individuals, aiming to develop strengths that shape ethical and responsible decision-making (Jubilee Centre, 2012, p. 2). Rooted in both explicit and implicit educational activities, character education addresses the multifaceted aspects of human development. This article explores the concept of character education, its goals, and the widely acknowledged four-dimensional taxonomy of character virtues.

The Jubilee Centre defines character education as an intentional approach that seeks to instill virtues, emphasizing positive traits that contribute to personal and societal well-being (Jubilee Centre, 2012, p. 2). The development of character involves diverse elements, including imitation, habituation, and training in various facets such as feeling, attention, and perception (Halstead & McLaughlin, 1999, p. 132-133). Virtues, as dispositions of character, encompass qualities

ranging from generosity and compassion to less desirable traits like dishonesty and arrogance (Baehr, 2017, p. 1153-1154).

Character education strives to empower individuals to act for the 'right reasons' and make ethically grounded autonomous decisions in complex situations (Jubilee Centre, 2012, p. 6-7). It is a deliberate and systematic approach to promoting positive character traits and values, thereby contributing to the development of ethical and responsible individuals (Lickona & Davidson, 2005, p. 387). The ultimate goal is to cultivate moral and ethical reasoning skills that enable individuals to make responsible decisions and contribute meaningfully to the common good (Lickona & Davidson, 2005, p. 380).

Beyond ethical reasoning, character education also plays a crucial role in enhancing emotional well-being by fostering virtues such as gratitude, forgiveness, and resilience (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008, p. 100). By promoting positive character traits and virtues, character education programs have the potential to improve individuals' overall sense of well-being and happiness.

While debates persist on defining the virtues that constitute good character, character education remains a critical aspect of education, contributing to the flourishing of both individuals and society (Jubilee Centre, 2017, p. 8). According to Lickona (1997, p. 45-46), character education stands as the most organized and comprehensive approach to moral education, a sentiment that aligns with the applied theoretical framework for research analysis.

In England, character education has gained prominence, integrated into school ethos and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curricula following the introduction of the Character Education Framework (DfE, 2019) and the mandatory Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) framework (DfE, 2021). Although this taxonomy is not part of these policy documents or the schools' curriculums, the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, a leading research institution in the UK, provides a valuable taxonomy (see Appendix 1) that guides the exploration of various facets. This article delves into the widely recognized Four-Dimensional Taxonomy of Character Education, a comprehensive model extensively employed in research and practice (Jubilee Centre, 2017, p. 5; Narvaez et al., 2008, p. 100-115) which will serve as a parameter for analyzing the role of subject areas in this study. The taxonomy encompasses

moral, performance, intellectual, and civic dimensions, each housing specific virtues that collectively contribute to a holistic character development framework (Jubilee Centre, 2017, p. 5).

The moral dimension includes virtues related to ethical behaviour, such as honesty, fairness, and kindness, which provide a foundation for character education (Jubilee Centre, 2017, p. 5). The performance dimension includes virtues related to achievement and success, such as perseverance, resilience, and self-control, which are essential for reaching goals and overcoming obstacles (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005, p. 940-942; Narvaez et al., 2008, p. 100-132; Jubilee Centre, 2017, p. 5-7) and also improving the development of the skills like self-efficacy and self-esteem (Karacan, 2024, p.219-222). The intellectual dimension includes virtues related to cognitive abilities, such as curiosity, open-mindedness, and creativity, which are important for learning and personal growth (Narvaez et al., 2008, p. 100-132; Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 4). Finally, the civic dimension includes virtues related to civic engagement, such as responsibility, citizenship, and social justice, which help individuals become active and engaged members of their communities (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 4; Narvaez et al., 2008). By identifying specific virtues within each dimension, teachers can tailor interventions and activities that target the development of these virtues in students (Lickona, 1997, p. 45-49; Narvaez et al., 2008, p. 112-115).

This article aims to shed light on how different dimensions of character taxonomy could be addressed by different subject areas from the perspective of secondary school teachers in England. By examining this point, this study aims to contribute to the field of educational research in two aspects. First, despite the crucial role teachers play in education, their perceptions and experiences have often been overlooked in existing literature, with most research being conducted on teacher candidates. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by examining the insights and experiences of in-service teachers in relation to character education. Secondly, rather than restricting its focus to a single subject or group of subjects, this study adopts a broad approach by including teachers from all disciplines at the secondary school level, specifically across Key Stages 3 and 4 in the context of England. Through this inclusive perspective, the research aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of how character education is interpreted and implemented across different subject areas within the secondary education system in England.

## **Methods**

### **Research design and Participants**

Given the aim of this research to amplify the voices of teachers and elicit their perspectives and experiences in teaching moral education, specifically character education, a qualitative research approach was deemed most appropriate (Hammersley, 2002, p. 83-85). This approach was chosen for its suitability in capturing the nuanced understandings and lived experiences of teachers regarding moral education in practice. To achieve this aim, semi-structured interviews were selected as the method of data collection, which would facilitate the gathering of in-depth information through a process of mutual communication. This format allowed participants the flexibility to elaborate on their thoughts while enabling the researcher to probe further based on the responses. For example, some of the questions asked during the interview were as follows: What are the character strengths of a morally developed person for you? Do you think you are responsible for teaching moral education as a form tutor and subject teacher in your practice? Which subject area do you think is more responsible for teaching moral education? Why? Given the unique challenges that teachers and researchers were facing due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in-person interviews were not possible and were replaced by remote interviews conducted via video or telephone conference using various applications such as Zoom, Teams, and WhatsApp.

In total, eighteen secondary school teachers were recruited through snowball approach from a variety of subject areas including religious education, English, physical education, maths, science, modern foreign languages, and other humanities subjects; and from different school types, including grammar, faith, mainstream schools, and academies. In addition, demographic information such as gender, age, years of teaching experience, and professional roles was collected, as these factors may influence the interpretation of the data (see Appendix 2).

### **Data collection and data analysis**

Before data collection, the necessary permissions for the current research were obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Brunel University London (25341-LR-Oct/2020-28054-2). The data was collected between November 2020 and March 2021. The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview protocol comprising open-ended questions in the interview sessions. The formula-

tion of the questions within the protocol aligned with the primary objective of the study, which is to conduct a thorough exploration of the perspectives and experiences held by secondary school teachers across diverse subject areas.

A total of 18 secondary school teachers from diverse subject areas were interviewed using online semi-structured interviews, and the collected data was analysed using the qualitative analysis software NVivo. Before initiating the analysis, all interviews were transcribed verbatim, anonymized, and uploaded to NVivo to facilitate the subsequent organization and analysis. Organizing and classifying collected data is a crucial step in qualitative data analysis, as it enables the establishment of a systematic process for findings (Neuman, 2014, p. 477-512). Thematic coding was employed to facilitate this process, enabling the researcher to revisit earlier stages of the study, make revisions if necessary, and reshape the analysis when appropriate (Charmaz, 2006, p. 123; Neuman, 2014, p. 477-512). Thematic coding was used to identify categories and understand the relationships between them. Strauss's three types of coding strategy - open coding, axial coding, and selective coding - were utilized in the process (Strauss, 1987, cited in Neuman, 2014, p. 474).

## **Findings and Discussion**

The historical overview highlights the existence of numerous philosophical theories of moral education. Despite its philosophical background, character education stands out as the most organized and comprehensive approach to moral education, as argued by Lickona (1997, p. 45-47). The four-dimensional taxonomy of character education underscores the significance of integrating character education across diverse subject areas to foster the development of moral, intellectual, performance, and civic virtues (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 4-8). As these dimensions also emerged organically from the interview data, each will be used as a thematic lens for presenting and discussing the findings.

When asked about their opinions about their role in teaching moral and character education as a subject teacher and form tutor, fifteen educators asserted the shared responsibility of all teachers to impart moral education when feasible, while the remaining three did not explicitly address all subject areas but referred to most of the subject areas (see Appendix 3). Moreover, when asked what the values or virtues are they are teaching in their practice, teachers listed most of the values or virtues that are part of moral, civic, intellectual, and performance dimensions of character education.

## **Moral Virtues**

Moral virtues are habits or dispositions to act in ways that promote the common good and contribute to human flourishing (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008, p. 102-105). These virtues include qualities such as honesty, compassion, courage, and fairness, which are essential for individuals to act ethically and responsibly in different contexts (Jubilee Centre, 2017, p. 5-8).

Humanities subjects such as RE, history, literature, and philosophy have been recognized as significant avenues for promoting character education based on the Jubilee Centre's four-dimensional taxonomy (Jubilee Centre, 2017, p. 5-8). These subjects offer unique opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking, reflection, and dialogue about moral and ethical issues (Fadel, 2015, p. 3-4). In line with this, the six of the participating teachers identified humanities subjects as primary context for the cultivation of moral virtues. Chris highlighted the relevance of humanities subjects like sociology, religious studies, and psychology, emphasizing their inherent capacity to delve into moral topics. Sera, with a background in geography, acknowledged the contextual emergence of moral discussions, particularly in areas like human development and human rights. Similarly, Kate underscored the natural alignment of literature, history, philosophy, ethics, sociology, and even geography with the moral education landscape.

I think, literature more than any other subject, lends itself naturally to this. But I'm sure that history, philosophy, ethics, and sociology—and even geography—all play an important role in teaching morals. (Kate, English)

The rationale behind the prioritization of humanities as the primary domain by these six teachers lies in the suitability of the content for addressing moral issues. Notably, it is worth emphasizing that teachers did not merely refer to humanities in broad terms, but singled out specific subjects, with Religious Education (RE) being the most prominently cited. Thirteen instructors named RE as the most appropriate subject for conveying moral values.

I think each subject naturally deals with certain things because of its nature. So, for example, when it comes to morality, it would be more appropriate within RE. (Julia, PE)

In terms of moral virtues, religious education can help students develop moral values and ethical decision-making skills. When asked, Julia explained that morality involves “understanding what and why to believe something, reasoning, and justifying one's understanding,” and therefore identified RE as the primary subject for teaching morality. Similarly, Robert said:



If we are talking about RE and maybe talking about things like, they might discuss kind of abortion, for example, and in a Catholic school, obviously that would be kind of a contentious theme. There'd be kind of debate around that, but, central to that would be about students making a moralistic judgment at the end of the day. (Robert, Teacher of PE)

He emphasised the virtues of humility, loving kindness, selflessness, respect for ones beliefs and religion as part of his understanding of morality. Moreover, subjects such as ethics and religious studies were found to offer valuable opportunities for students to explore and reflect on ethical issues.

And of course, RE because that is what it is all about really. There is a lot of stuff about what is right and wrong, and ethics and things like that. (Michael, MFL & RE)

RE, furthermore, has been identified as a key subject for character education, as it provides students with opportunities to explore and reflect on their own values and beliefs, as well as those of others, in a safe and supportive environment (Berkowitz, 2002, p. 43-63).

I think RE is the best place for it to be done. I mean to help pupils to acquire certain beliefs and values, for them to understand difference between right and wrong, and to learn how to make well informed judgements. (Jane, Teacher of Maths and Economics)

Jane continued that RE is the place where students easily find an opportunity to talk about values and beliefs regarding to different religions, therefore it supports moral development of the students.

Another study by Arthur and colleagues (2015, p. 14-22) explored the role of RE in promoting character virtues such as empathy, compassion, and forgiveness, that found that it can provide a unique context for promoting these virtues by fostering a sense of community, promoting ethical values, and encouraging students to reflect on their own beliefs and values. Martin emphasised that RE is a great place where they talk about different religions and cultures regardless of the students' religions in his classroom, as argued by Berkowitz (2002, p. 43-63), and stated that:

For example, in our GCSE RE, we do Christianity and Islam as one paper, then the other paper is thematic, and we're looking at crime and punishment, peace and conflict. And we look at different religious perspectives on that and we look at the core religion and life. So, things like abortion and euthanasia, and all of those kinds of kind of topics. So, it's absolutely loaded with moral conversations, and you are morally educating and challenging them. (Martin, Teacher of RE)

Overall, teachers identified RE as the primary subject for teaching moral values, due to its appropriateness for discussing ethical issues and fostering moral development. They noted that RE provides students with opportunities to explore and reflect on their own beliefs and values, as well as those of others, while promoting character virtues such as empathy, compassion, and forgiveness. Teachers emphasized the importance of engaging with diverse religions, cultures, and worldviews within RE to support moral education and to encourage students to make well-informed moral judgments. In addition to RE, teachers also highlighted other humanities subjects—such as history, geography, philosophy, and literature—as effective contexts for teaching moral virtues.

Geography, for example, has the potential to contribute to moral and character education by providing opportunities for students to engage with issues related to social justice, environmental sustainability, and global citizenship. It fosters empathy, compassion, and a sense of responsibility towards others and the environment. Furthermore, geography education allows for the exploration of diverse cultural and ethical perspectives on contemporary issues. (Noddings and Brooks, 2016, p. 9-11; Edwards, 2002, p. 31-40). Four participants found geography as an important place for teaching moral virtues and discussing moral issues.

Martin, with a background in Religious Education (RE), emphasized the moral dimension inherent in geography education, particularly in discussions regarding our ethical responsibilities towards the planet.

So, when you are teaching geography, you are talking about how we morally looking after the planet and what our obligations are to the planet. (Martin, RE)

David, who teaches both geography and RE, highlighted the role of geography in fostering discussions on fairness and morality. Through the lens of geography, he encourages students to critically examine societal disparities, drawing attention to issues like income inequality. By prompting students to evaluate the fairness and morality of such discrepancies, David aims to instil a sense of ethical reasoning and perspective-taking.

When talking about differences, we often ask the question, is that fair? ... So, it's asking about this idea of something fair, and is it moral? A footballer in the UK for example gets paid a million pounds a week, whereas we're paying a nurse in the UK 22,000 pounds a year, we tried to draw out those differences and our students to make up their own minds about what they see, as fair and what is fairly good to them. They can come up with arguments on both sides for most of the time. (David, Teacher of Geography and RE)

Research suggests that history education can be effective in promoting critical thinking, empathy, and moral reasoning skills in students. It achieves this by examining historical events and considering the perspectives of those involved, as well as through the study of historical controversies and the examination of multiple perspectives. Additionally, history education can contribute to character education by promoting moral values such as civic responsibility, courage, and empathy (Peterson, 2017, p. 191-201), and six teachers stated that history is a good place for talking about and teaching moral virtues and values.

There really are whole point of history being to create questions that make students think about both sides of the argument and debate it and that's where the morality comes into things as well. (Jennifer, Teacher of History and RE)

She continued with listing the contribution of history including 'respecting others and the community around them', 'having virtues like integrity, honesty, loyalty', and 'being a good citizen', as stated by Peterson (2017, p. 191-201).

When you look at history, you have got huge moral questions, like things about the Second World War, for example, looking at why that happened. There are huge morality questions in that. And I think in the past maybe a history teacher would see it as part of their job to just teach the events. But I think now, there is the way the context is that does lead to morality question, I think we are better at appreciating that than we used to be. (Julia, Teacher of PE)

Furthermore, the study of history can offer students an insight into the development of various values and virtues over time. While Julia's discussion pertained to the changing approach to history education, it can still be viewed as a significant contribution to the moral dimension of history teaching due to its critical nature. Besides history, literature can also support the moral aspect by helping students explore the complexities of human nature and the consequences of moral choices. Six teachers indicated that English literature serves as an effective medium for moral education, as it allows students to engage with ethical themes across diverse literary forms, including novels, poetry, and plays. The teachers noted that moral discussions frequently arise during class discussions of literary characters and their actions.

I think, some of the most emotional reactions I have had and some of the morals that I formed have been from reading books or reading poems, and certainly by looking at the way in which others right. So, I think English is a fantastic medium to deliver that. (David, Geography & RE)

Teachers found that literature education can promote moral virtues by encouraging students to explore different perspectives and develop a deeper understanding of human experience. Kate, a teacher of English, particularly emphasized that literature offers meaningful opportunities for students to engage in moral reflection and cultivate empathy and perspective-taking.

I'm not trying to tell them what to do, but I'm sort of creating a space where we can explore. I think Literature is a really cool mirror for understanding. In the end, everybody has their own decisions. (Kate, English)

Finally, Adam and Mariam, who teach psychology, stated that, besides other humanities areas, their subject area also support cultivation of morality.

There is always a way of linking what you are teaching to what is happening outside, and what is right and wrong and how they need to be acting in certain situations, and my curriculum has a lot to do with morality. (Mariam, Psychology)

It is seen that humanities subjects, such as RE, history, literature, and philosophy, can play a significant role in promoting character education and moral development in students. Teachers believe that these subjects offer unique opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking, reflection, and dialogue about moral and ethical issues, and are appropriate for addressing moral concerns. RE emerged as the most prominent subject for teaching morality, as it allows students to explore and reflect on their own values and beliefs, as well as those of others, within a safe and supportive environment. Furthermore, RE can help students develop moral values and ethical decision-making skills, and that it can provide a unique context for promoting character virtues such as respect, empathy, compassion, and forgiveness. Besides RE, geography, history, literature, and psychology can each promote a range of virtues and contribute meaningfully to character education, particularly within the framework of the moral dimension in the four-dimensional taxonomy.

Notwithstanding the undeniable role of humanities subjects, it is worth noting that there exist other subjects capable of addressing moral issues. This was emphasized by Leena, a science teacher, who underscored the significant role her subject area plays in cultivating morality.

We've got lots of points in science, between belief and disbelief, like all these ideas of abortion, contraceptives, donating organs, or giving blood, blood transfusions, and stuff like that. We come across lots of topics where lots of moral arguments and different backgrounds refuse to agree. And you have to form a

good platform for discussion, without arguing as persons on a different level just like is acceptable in the school environment. You've got to make them understand that you have to respect others' views, and we have to get them to say 'you can argue this scientific fact, but you cannot argue, the class between each other' because the facts are facts, and it is different than hating or loving one of your other students. (Leena, Teacher of Science)

She asserted that science presents numerous prospects for moral discourse, as well as offering practical means of fostering respect through such conversations. Moreover, the subjects of drama (n:4) and arts (n:3) were brought up, in which students are afforded the chance to delve into, act out, and evaluate morals through their role-playing experiences.

They're also well-exploited drama you know where pupils will get to act out some of these things, maybe the big moral questions. I know, at the moment they are performing Blood Brothers, and that's a really good example of a play with a moral message. (Julia, Teacher of PE)

Based on the responses of the teachers, it is evident that moral virtues can be nurtured in a majority of subject areas, albeit to varying degrees. However, it is worth noting that the role of humanities subjects, particularly Religious Education (RE), appears to be more prominent than that of other areas. It's worth nothing that in addition to its curriculum, RE also carries a historical responsibility. As discussed in the literature review, RE has had a close association with moral education since the inception of schooling in Britain. Initially, its primary objective was to impart Christian morals, but it subsequently evolved into a platform for exploring the morals and values of various religions. Presently, RE is viewed as a domain where students can make moral justifications for their beliefs and values, and acquire virtues such as respect, in addition to investigating the morals and beliefs of world religions.

## **Civic Virtues**

As well as the individual flourishing, Jubilee Centre put the societal flourishing as the main goal for character education. Civic virtues help students to "understand their ties to society and their responsibilities within it" and so promote social responsibility, civic engagement, and the achievement of the common good (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 8). These civic virtues include respect for others, responsibility, compassion, honesty, and integrity (Arthur et al., 2015, p. 8, Jubilee Centre, 2012, 2017, 2022),

and “civility, service, citizenship, and volunteering”, that are essential for responsible citizenship and contributing positively to society (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 8).

Seven teachers stated that teaching how to be a good citizen is part of moral development of the students. Denis stated that:

Delivering the moral values, social values, and the cultural values diversity, and being a good and responsible citizen, abiding by the rules and law... All of these are in our responsibility regardless of our expertise. But I think social sciences are more inclined into. (Denis, Teacher of Maths)

He did not refer to Maths while teaching these in their practice but emphasised that it's their duty to support community cohesion. Michael, teacher of MFL and RE, from another point, stated that in MFL they focus on cultures and community issues such as equality, immigration, and racism, and values of the community. Kate, on the other hand, referred her subject area, English, when asked about contributing the society.

I think literature offers this incredible mirror to society, and it's almost like a snapshot of society at different points. That's why I really believe it's important to study literature from different areas, not just the 16th centuries, but also the 21st century. And what are the differences? And what do they reveal about? And so almost in so doing, you create a space where pupils can debate and analyse what is moral or what was moral then and now. (Kate, Teacher of English)

History education can provide opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking about moral and ethical issues, develop a sense of empathy and compassion, and become more engaged citizens. In accordance with this, Jennifer explained that in the study of history, a range of topics related to democracy, government, and law, such as communism and capitalism ideologies, understanding democracy and its advantages over dictatorship, are covered comprehensively. She exemplified that:

In A-level history, we do a module on the civil rights movement, and students had quite a large debate about what it was between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, but the basis of the argument was about whether violent methods versus peaceful methods are more efficient. And obviously, with that in we had to debate what is how? How can we judge what is good and bad violence? So, we're teaching morality through judgement and using evidence for that. (Jennifer, Teacher of History)

As Jennifer's response indicates, it can be challenging to differentiate civic virtues from morality, as noted by Arthur et al. (2015, p. 2-14). Civic virtues refer to the

qualities necessary to fulfil one's obligations and responsibilities as a citizen in a democracy and a broader society, allowing individuals to pursue a good life with others and fall under the classification of moral virtues (Arthur et al., 2015p. 2-14).

Moreover, some of the participants articulated that they aim to develop students' understanding of how to be a good member of the society as part of their school ethos. Laila, for example, illustrated this commitment by describing community-focused initiatives at her school, such as organizing charity collections and undertaking a "green walk" to clean up litter in the vicinity.

Similarly, Julia highlighted a range of extracurricular activities geared towards instilling a sense of community participation and character development among students. She emphasized the integral role of these activities in fostering an understanding of students' place in the broader world, their personal responsibilities, and their contributions to the community. Examples included school trips, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and active participation in charity events, including food bank collections.

So, things like, we've just collected for the food bank this week, so that they understand that not everybody gets well fed and that they can contribute to helping somebody else in their wider community. So, I mean we have roles and responsibilities that pupils would take. We have a charity rep for each class, and they all contribute to charity events that we run. I think that's all part of what I would say is the character building. I think it's endemic to the school that rather than it being anything that's specifically taught. (Julia, Teacher of PE)

The Jubilee Centre (2022, p. 26-27) emphasizes that character education should aim for both individual and societal flourishing, with civic virtues playing a crucial role in promoting social responsibility, civic engagement, and the common good. Although the term 'civic virtues' was not explicitly mentioned, the teachers in the study were found to consider contributing to the wider community as an important part of students' moral development. This was exemplified through various subject areas, such as history and English, and extracurricular activities that focused on developing students' understanding of being good citizens and their responsibilities within society. The teachers' views align with the Jubilee Centre's perspective on the importance of civic virtues in four-dimensional taxonomy of the character education.

## **Intellectual Virtues**

According to the text, intellectual virtues are qualities that individuals need to possess to guide their quest for knowledge and information. These virtues include curiosity, critical thinking, and open-mindedness, (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 8-9). However, one intellectual virtue that deserves special mention is phronesis or practical wisdom, which is the overall quality of knowing what is desirable and what is not desirable when the demands of two or more virtues collide and being able to integrate such demands into an acceptable course of action (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 8-11). According to Battersby and Bailin (2018, p. 241-251), possessing these intellectual virtues is essential for developing a well-rounded and informed individual.

Teaching intellectual virtues is an important aspect of education, and subject areas can play a crucial role in this process. Battersby and Bailin (2018, p. 241-251) suggest that teaching intellectual virtues within subject areas not only helps students develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter but also cultivates their intellectual character. Research has shown that different subject areas can play a significant role in teaching intellectual virtues. For instance, Berkowitz (2002, p. 43-63) found that science education can help in developing curiosity and scepticism, which are vital intellectual virtues for scientific inquiry. When Robert said:

So, whilst it is more prevalent in subjects, like, PSHE or RE, or maybe some humanity subjects, it would be fairly apparent, in subjects like science too, which lends to kind of sometimes making moralistic decisions and judgments about certain things. (Robert, Teacher of PE)

He regarded science as a domain in which students can render moral judgments. Leena, a science teacher, likewise affirmed that science offers a conducive forum for engendering discourse on moral issues such as abortion, blood transfusion, and the like, via scientific inquiry.

You must teach them what to do and how to do everything within the correct scientific knowledge. (Leena, Teacher of Science)

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that none of the teachers, including Robert and Leena, alluded to the role of science in teaching students how to pose inquiries, seek evidence, and challenge assumptions, which fosters a sense of curiosity and scepticism.

Furthermore, research has shown that teaching intellectual virtues through specific subject areas can have a positive impact on students' overall intellectual development.



Three teachers, Jennifer, David, and Leena expressed that history is a good place to create questions to understand different perspectives and making judgements.

The whole point of history is to create questions that make students think about both sides of the argument and debate it. (Jennifer, Teacher of History and RE)

Similarly, history education can teach critical thinking and open-mindedness. As students learn about past events, they are exposed to different perspectives and interpretations, which requires critical thinking and open-mindedness to evaluate the evidence and draw conclusions (McPeck, 1990, p. 10-12). In line with this, David, Geography and RE teacher, articulated that he sought to direct students' focus toward diverse lifestyles as this entails ensuring that students comprehend the existence of varied choices individuals make in life, choices that can be subject to diverse interpretations. Importantly, his approach is not aimed at instructing students to adopt specific choices; rather, it is centred on equipping them with the analytical skills necessary to assess arguments and formulate independent evaluations.

As the data reveals, by engaging in historical inquiry, students can learn to evaluate evidence and arguments, recognize biases and fallacies, and make well-reasoned judgements. Similarly, religious education can help students develop moral values and ethical decision-making skills through judgements. Julia and Jane stated that students can explore values and beliefs in RE and make up their minds about their own preferences.

Understanding what and why to believe something, reasoning and justifying their understanding is important part of moral education, and RE is a place where students can do this. (Julia, Teacher of PE)

In summary, subject areas can play an essential role in teaching intellectual virtues, with science education in teaching curiosity and scepticism, history and RE in teaching critical thinking and making individual judgements. Such an approach can help students develop their intellectual virtues and ultimately contribute to their overall intellectual development.

### **Performance Virtues**

Performance virtues refer to the qualities that enable individuals to perform at their best and achieve success in their endeavours (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.8). These virtues generally referred as 'soft skills' which include perseverance, self-discipline, grit, determination, confidence, teamwork, and resilience- which is accepted as the most significant one described as "the ability to bounce back from negative expe-

riences” (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 8). Research has shown that these virtues can be taught and developed through specific subject areas and educational practices. Six teachers articulated that physical education (PE) can play a significant role in developing performance virtues such as perseverance, resilience, teamwork.

Robert, PE teacher, emphasised that PE provides opportunities for moral education through the teaching of fairness, sportsmanship, comradeship, and coping with defeat and loss. The competitive aspects of physical education, such as invasion games, can develop qualities in young people, including honesty and the ability to display class under pressure. Such character-building opportunities are central to developing moral education in students.

I think PE is a wonderful conduit for moral education... You know, people from different backgrounds coming together on the same team, that play hard but play fair, that ability to cope with defeat and loss and how you react to that and how that makes you as a person, that competitive side of you not spilling over into something that becomes unpleasant. I would say some of those very much what I would call kind of character-building opportunities that you find in PE are central to developing a moral education in students in terms of how to behave sometimes in difficult, high-pressure, and high-emotion situations. (Robert, PE)

According to a study by Thorburn (2017, p. 453-463), physical education can help students develop perseverance by providing opportunities for them to set and achieve goals, face challenges, and develop resilience. Similarly, Julia supported this role of PE and stated that besides teaching things like the difference between right and wrong, following the rules, respect for your opposition, not cheating, avoiding gamesmanship, PE is a great place for teamwork activities.

PE is quite a good and deliberate unit where we teach them responsibility. You make every member of a group add responsibility... it's not about being the winning team in a competition but it's about being a team that's effective and functions well together and is supportive of each other. It's surprising a lot of people think that you can't teach responsibility, but we can in PE. (Julia, Teacher of PE)

Since Robert and Julia were PE teachers, they were aware of the role of PE in developing performance virtues, besides other aspects. In agreement with this, Denis, Maths teacher, also stated that PE is a great place for developing sense of responsibility and patience. Moreover, Michael, MFL and RE teacher, referred to role of PE by saying:

I think, subjects where people are working together are the best ones. I mean things like PE, whether working as a group, and playing team sports, well then, I think that is a good place for things to come in.' (Michael, MFL & RE)

In addition to PE, research show that other subject areas can also play a role in teaching performance virtues, such as language arts, and drama. For example, language arts education can help students develop the performance virtue of creativity. Through reading and writing, students learn to express themselves in imaginative and innovative ways, which requires creativity and originality (Craft, 2005, p. 1-9; Efland, 2002, p. 519-524). David was the only teacher reflecting this role of literature among the participants.

The reason is that I'm thinking about English, I'm thinking about poetry and literature, creative writing, talking, and thinking about ways of experiencing different cultures through different reading material, not necessarily the English language as a means of communication, but certainly a way to look at how different people react. So, I think English is a fantastic medium to deliver that. (David, Teacher of Geography and RE)

Similar to literature, drama was found to be an effective way of teaching performance virtues such as teamwork, communication, and empathy (Bolton, 1985, p. 151-157). Collaborative performance projects can promote teamwork and effective communication (Cerkez et al., 2012, p. 109-120), while role-playing activities can help students develop empathy towards others by exploring different perspectives and emotions (Wagner, 2002, p. 53-57). Kate and Julia expressed the importance of arts and drama in moral education, with Kate stated that they provide great opportunities for teamwork and develop sense of empathy, as well as exploring morality in the roles that students play.

Drama and arts can look at how the concept of democracy is presented, whether it has the concept of power or beauty through a play. Students also explore and develop social and emotional skills through the roles they play. (Kate, Teacher of English)

All in all, drama and art can serve as valuable instruments for imparting performance virtues. Furthermore, studies have indicated that music can also facilitate the development of performance virtues such as self-discipline and the ability to set long-term goals (Hallam, 2010, p. 269-289). Nonetheless, the data is constrained in terms of instances of how drama, arts, and music can contribute to character development, owing to the scarcity of participants from these subject areas.

Overall, the concept of performance virtues, which are also called soft skills, enable individuals to perform at their best and achieve success in their endeavours. It is clear that PE can play a significant role in developing performance

virtues, such as perseverance, resilience, and teamwork. Other subject areas such as literature, arts, and drama can also contribute to performance virtues and so character development.

In sum, the study highlights that character education should not be confined to a specific subject area but rather integrated across all areas of the curriculum. Teachers should strive to cultivate students' moral, civic, intellectual, and performance virtues as part of a holistic approach to character development, thereby contributing to both individual growth and the well-being of society.

Indeed, the four categories of virtue are interdependent and cannot be effectively taught in isolation. Character education is all about their integration, guided by the overarching intellectual virtue of practical wisdom or 'good sense'. (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 8)

The primary objective of the four-dimensional taxonomy of character education is to foster both individual and societal flourishing. Achieving this goal requires more than just subject teachers focusing on cultivating the desired values or virtues in their students. It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to be involved in this effort.

The overwhelming consensus among the study participants, comprising fifteen out of eighteen teachers, is a shared belief that moral education, encompassing the imparting of values and virtues to students, is a collective responsibility applicable to all members of the school community, regardless of their roles or positions. Although the remaining three teachers did not explicitly express this view, their responses strongly suggest alignment with the broader perspective.

## **Conclusion**

As stated in the literature review, the Character Education Framework Guidance (2019) is the latest official document of English Education system regarding character development of the students. Although the official document is just a guidance for schools, it has clearly stated that the "benchmarks proposed in the guidance are intended to reflect these features of good schools" (DfE, 2019). The document also states that the curricular and extracurricular activities in schools including assemblies, subject lessons, dedicated character education lessons and other school activities can help students to explore and express their character and build the skills that they need (DfE, 2019).

Although the Jubilee Centre's taxonomy is not part of the Character Education Guidance, it complements the benchmarks and recommended activities outlined in the guidance through its four-dimensional framework. As emphasised with the Character Education Guidance and the four dimensional taxonomy this study suggests that character education should not be confined to a single subject area, but rather integrated across the entire curriculum

This study found that while humanities subjects such as Religious Education played a more prominent role in nurturing moral virtues, other subjects like science, history, and English also played a crucial role in developing students' moral understanding. Furthermore, the importance of civic virtues in character education, which are essential in promoting social responsibility, civic engagement and the common good was highlighted. The participant teachers emphasized that contributing to the wider community should be an integral part of students' moral development. This objective can be supported across various subject areas, such as history and English, which help students understand their responsibilities within society and develop critical thinking skills.

In addition to moral and civic virtues, subject areas can also contribute to intellectual and performance virtues. Science education can teach curiosity and scepticism, while literature, arts, and drama can contribute to developing creativity and empathy. Physical education, on the other hand, can play a significant role in developing performance virtues such as perseverance, resilience, and teamwork.

Considering the study's findings, it is emphasized that character education must not be confined to a specific subject area, but instead must be incorporated into the curriculum of all subjects. The responsibility of teachers is to foster the moral, civic, intellectual, and performance virtues of their students, thereby facilitating their comprehensive character development and enhancing individual and societal well-being.

However, the framework of the Jubilee Centre's taxonomy includes the practical wisdom as part of intellectual virtues, which entails "considered deliberation, well-founded judgement, and the vigorous enactment of decisions" (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 8). The process of character development places practical wisdom at its core, as it is widely recognized as the unifying virtue encompassing all facets of the four-dimensional taxonomy. However, none of the participants offered a clear explanation regarding how moral decisions are enacted in practice. While a few teachers mentioned school activities such as badge collection or point accrual for adhering to the school's values or ethos, it appears that the practical dimension of character development was not given due consideration in their responses.

## Genişletilmiş Özet

### Giriş

Karakter eğitimi, erdemleri ve ahlaki karar verme süreçlerini geliştirmede temel bir unsur olarak bireylerin bütüncül gelişiminde hayati bir rol oynamaktadır (Jubilee Centre, 2012). Hem açık hem de örtük eğitim faaliyetlerine dayanan karakter eğitimi, insan gelişiminin çok boyutlu yönlerini ele alarak bireysel ve toplumsal refaha katkı sağlayan erdemlerin kazandırılmasını amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Birmingham Üniversitesi'ne bağlı Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue tarafından geliştirilen Dört Boyutlu Karakter Eğitimi Taksonomisi, ahlaki, entelektüel, performans ve vatandaşlık erdemlerinin geliştirilmesine odaklanması nedeniyle, karakter eğitiminin farklı ders müfredatlarına entegre edilmesi için değerli bir çerçeve sunabilir.

Karakter eğitimi, bireysel ve toplumsal refaha katkıda bulunan olumlu niteliklerin kazandırılmasını amaçlayan kasıtlı bir yaklaşımdır. Bu sistematik yaklaşım, bireyleri etik açıdan özerk kararlar almaya teşvik eder ve ahlaki-akıl yürütme becerilerinin gelişimini destekler. Karakter gelişimi, taklit, alışkanlık kazandırma ve duygu, dikkat ve algı gibi farklı boyutlarda eğitim gibi çeşitli unsurları içerir.

Geniş çapta kabul gören Dört Boyutlu Karakter Eğitimi Taksonomisi; ahlaki, performans, entelektüel ve vatandaşlık erdem boyutlarını içeren kapsamlı bir modeldir. Her boyut, karakterin bütüncül gelişimine katkı sağlayan belirli erdemleri içerir:

- **Ahlaki boyut**, dürüstlük ve nezaket gibi etik davranışlarla ilgili erdemlere odaklanır.
- **Performans boyutu**, azim ve öz denetim gibi başarı ve performansla ilgili erdemleri içerir.
- **Entelektüel boyut**, merak ve açık fikirlilik gibi bilişsel yetilerle ilişkili erdemleri kapsar.
- **Vatandaşlık boyutu**, sorumluluk ve sosyal adalet gibi toplumsal katılımı teşvik eden erdemleri içerir.

Müfredattaki farklı dersler, içerikleri ve sınıf içi etkinliklerine bağlı olarak bu dört boyutun bir veya birkaçını geliştirmeye katkı sağlayabilir.

## **Yöntem**

Bu çalışma, İngiltere’de farklı branşlardaki ortaokul öğretmenlerinin karakter eğitime dair algılarını ve uygulamalarını dört boyutlu karakter eğitimi taksonomisini teorik çerçeve olarak kullanarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Öğretmenlerle yapılacak yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar, karakter eğitiminin farklı branşlar tarafından nasıl ele alındığına dair değerli perspektifler sunabilir. Araştırma, farklı branşlardan öğretmenlerin deneyimlerine ve algılarına odaklanarak mevcut literatürde sıklıkla göz ardı edilen bir boşluğu doldurmayı hedeflemektedir.

Veriler, çevrim içi yarı yapılandırılmış nitel mülakatlar yoluyla toplanmıştır. Toplamda, dini eğitim, İngilizce, beden eğitimi, matematik, fen bilimleri, modern yabancı diller ve diğer beşeri bilimler gibi farklı branşlardan ve genel, dini, seçkin (grammar) okullar ile akademiler gibi çeşitli okul türlerinden on sekiz ortaokul öğretmeni kartopu örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiştir. Veriler, NVivo yazılımı ve yansıtıcı tematik analiz yöntemi kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Analizden elde edilen temalar, tümdengelsel ve tümevarımsal süreçler aracılığıyla geliştirilmiştir.

## **Bulgular**

Bulgular, dini eğitim gibi beşeri bilimler derslerinin ahlaki erdemlerin geliştirilmesine önemli katkılar sunduğunu, ancak fen bilimleri, tarih ve İngilizce gibi derslerin de öğrencilerin ahlaki anlayışını şekillendirmede kilit roller oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Ahlaki erdemler bağlamında, özellikle dini eğitim, öğrencilerin etik meseleleri ele alarak dürüstlük, merhamet ve adalet gibi değerleri geliştirmeleri için güçlü bir platform sunmaktadır. Farklı inanç ve değerleri keşfetmeye odaklanan dini eğitim, öğrencilerin kendi ahlaki pusulaları üzerine düşünmeleri için benzersiz bir ortam sağlamaktadır.

Vatandaşlık erdemleri açısından, tarih ve İngilizce dersleri, toplumsal yapıların ve vatandaşlıkla ilgili meselelerin incelenmesi yoluyla öğrencilere toplum içindeki rollerini anlama fırsatı sunar. Bu geniş perspektif, bireysel ahlaki gelişimin ötesine geçerek ortak faydaya yönelik kolektif bir taahhüt oluşturulmasını teşvik etmektedir.

Entelektüel erdemler açısından, eleştirel düşünme ve yaşam boyu öğrenmeyi teşvik eden özellikler, çeşitli dersler aracılığıyla geliştirilmektedir. Fen bilimleri eğitimi, merak ve şüphecilik yoluyla sorgulayıcı bir bakış açısının temelini atar-

ken; edebiyat, sanat ve drama gibi alanlar, yaratıcılığı, empatiyi ve farklı bakış açılarını anlamayı teşvik ederek entelektüel gelişime katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Performans erdemleri bağlamında, kişisel ve mesleki başarı için kritik öneme sahip beceriler özellikle beden eğitimi derslerinde öne çıkmaktadır. Beden eğitimi derslerinin iş birliğine dayalı doğası, azim, dayanıklılık ve takım çalışması gibi becerileri geliştirerek öğrencileri akademik dünyanın ötesindeki zorluklara hazırlamaktadır. Drama ve sanat dersleri de performans erdemlerinin geliştirilmesi için uygun alanlar olarak değerlendirilmiş, bu derslerin iş birlikçi çalışma fırsatları sunduğu vurgulanmıştır.

## **Sonuç**

Çalışma, karakter eğitiminin belirli bir dersle sınırlı olmaması, tüm müfredat içerisinde entegre edilmesi gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Öğretmenler, ahlaki, vatandaşlık, entelektüel ve performans erdemlerini teşvik etme sorumluluğunu taşıyarak öğrencilerin karakter gelişimine katkı sağlamaktadır. Bulgular, karakter eğitiminin bireysel ve toplumsal refahı artırmadaki önemini vurgulamakta ve İngiltere’de karakter eğitiminin okul kültürü ve müfredatına entegrasyonu ile örtüşmektedir.

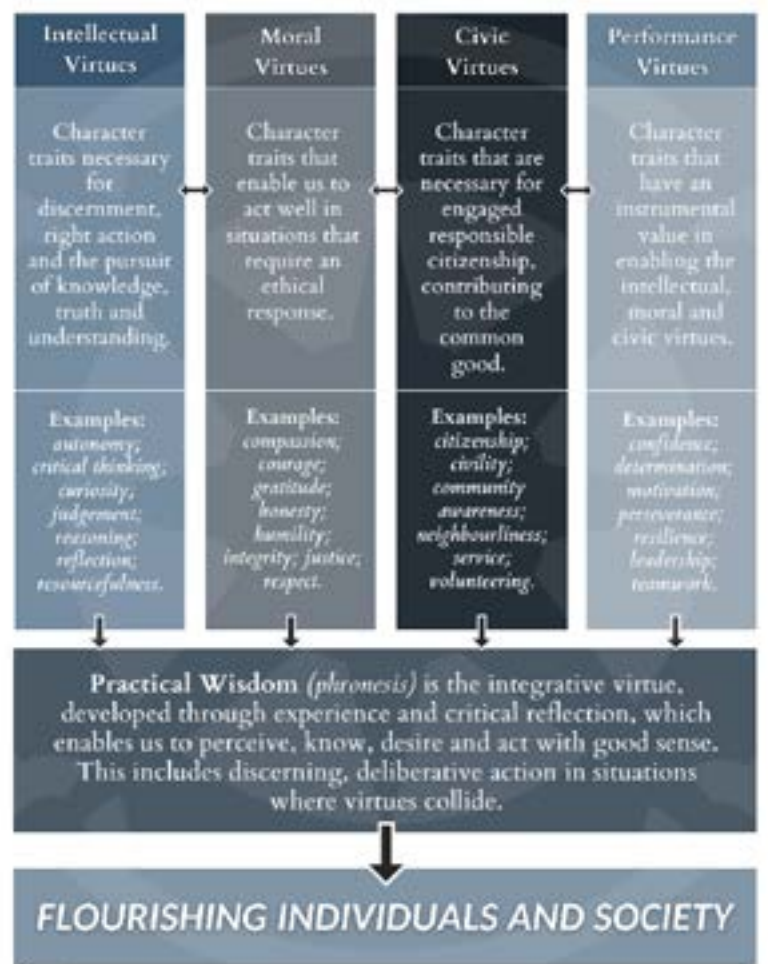
Çalışma, karakter gelişiminin pratik boyutu, özellikle kararların uygulanması konusunun, yaşama bilgeliği (practical wisdom) çerçevesinde ayrıntılı bir şekilde ele alınmadığını kabul etmektedir. Gelecekteki araştırmalar, okulların karakter eğitimi öğrenciler için pratik ve uygulanabilir stratejilere nasıl dönüştürdüğünü daha derinlemesine inceleyebilir.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Four-dimensional taxonomy for Character Education in schools (Jubilee Centre, 2022)

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CHARACTER



“Character virtues should be reinforced everywhere: on the playing fields, in classrooms, corridors, interactions between teachers and pupils, in assemblies, posters, head teacher messages and communications, staff training, and in relations with parents and families.”

## Appendix 2: Participants' Demographics

**Table 1.** Participant Demographic Information

People	Age	Gender	Years Of Experience	Subject Areas 1	School Type	Role
Laila	31-40	Female	6-10	MFL	Mainstream	Teacher
Robert	NA	Male	21+	PE	Catholic Academy	Head of School
Adam	31-40	Male	11-15	Psychology/PE	Mixed Comprehensive	Teacher
Leena	51-60	Female	16-20	Science	Mainstream	Teacher
David	41-50	Male	11-15	Geography/RE	Grammar	Head of Department
Mariam	31-40	Female	11-15	Psychology	Comprehensive Girls School	Teacher
Rita	25-30	Female	0-5	MFL	Mainstream	Teacher
Ahmad	31-40	Male	0-5	ICT/Computing	Mainstream	Teacher
Denis	60+	Male	21+	Maths	Mixed Comprehensive	Teacher
Jane	NA	Female	0-5	Maths/Economics	Mainstream	Teacher
Chris	41-50	Male	0-5	MFL	Mainstream	Teacher
Sera	51-60	Female	21+	Geography	Grammar	Teacher
Julia	51-60	Female	21+	PE	Grammar	Teacher
Michael	31-40	Male	6-10	MFL/RE	Grammar	Teacher
Matthew	41-50	Male	16-20	PE	Academy	Assistant Head Teacher
Martin	41-50	Male	6-10	RE/RS	Church of England	Deputy Head
Kate	25-30	Female	0-5	English	Church of England	Teacher
Jennifer	25-30	Female	0-5	History/RE	Academy	Teacher

**Etik Beyan / Ethical Statement:** Bu çalışma, etik kurul izni gerektirmeyen nitelikte olup kullanılan veriler literatür taraması/yayınlanmış kaynaklar üzerinden elde edilmiştir. Çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur./This study does not require ethics committee permission and the data used were obtained through literature review/published sources. It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were complied with during the preparation of the study and all the studies utilized are stated in the bibliography.

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**Yazar (lar) / Author (s):** Mukaddes Zikra GÖKÇELİ

**İntihal / Plagiarism:** Bu makale, en az iki hakem tarafından incelendi ve intihal içermediği teyit edildi. / This article has been reviewed by at least two referees and scanned via a plagiarism software.

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